

Egg Harbor Township Public Schools

STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARDS

The Egg Harbor Township Public School District is proud to present our Standards-Based report cards for Grades K-5. The change to a Standards-Based report card comes from the belief that our previous report card did not fully communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do as set forth in the New Jersey & Common Core Curriculum Content Standards. This new report card will benefit students, teachers and parents/guardians. It will allow students to be more aware of what is expected of them. It will provide parents with a more detailed outline of the expectations in each of the major academic areas. We believe that your understanding of what is expected of your child and how well he or she is progressing towards the goals at his or her grade level is very important. We look forward to working together to provide your child with the knowledge and tools to be successful and to reach his or her fullest potential.

1. What is Standards-Based grade reporting?

A Standards-Based grade reporting system is designed to inform parents about their child's progress towards achieving specific learning standards. The New Jersey & Common Core Curriculum Content Standards establish high and challenging performance expectations for all students. They describe what students should know and be able to do, and serve as the basis for the Egg Harbor Township Public School's curriculum, instruction and assessment model.

2. Why was the report card changed to the Standards-Based report card?

The report card was changed to provide more information to parents about student progress on the New Jersey & Common Core Curriculum Content Standards. On a traditional report card, students receive one grade for reading, one for math, one for science and so on. On a Standards-Based report card, each of these subject areas is further expanded by a list of skills and knowledge students are responsible for learning. Students receive a separate mark for each indicator.

3. What is the purpose of the Standards-Based report card?

The purpose of the Standards-Based report card is to provide feedback that is more detailed to parents regarding the progress their children are making towards specific content indicators at each grade level. This report card allows parents and students to understand more clearly what is expected at each grade level. With this understanding, parents will be better able to guide and support their child helping him/her to be successful in a rigorous academic program.

4. How does the Standards-Based report card compare to the traditional letter grade system?

Standards-Based report card reporting is different from traditional letter grade reporting. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met a teacher's expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, how much effort the teacher believes the student put in and how the student is doing in comparison to classmates. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their child has mastered or whether he or she is working at grade level. The Standards-Based report card measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade level standards, not the work of other students. This will give parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and encourage all students to do their best.

5. How can your child excel at the Standards?

Another change for students is understanding the concept of excelling at the Standard. Excelling is not the equivalent of an A on a traditional report card. For example, if a fifth-grader received A's on every math test during the marking period, he or she would probably receive an A on a traditional report card. If those math tests measured only the concepts fifth graders are expected to master, those A's would be the equivalent of meeting the standard on a Standards-Based report card; the student is doing what he or she should be doing very well, but not necessarily more. Standards-Based report cards encourage students to demonstrate their ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality.

6. How does this system of grading affect students when they move on to Middle School?

The reporting process presently in the Middle Schools will remain in place.

7. Why not have a Standards-Based system as an additional reporting component to the traditional report card?

Traditional grading for elementary level students does not communicate to parents what teachers want them to know about their child's strengths and weaknesses. The elementary level is based on a developmental model where learning is valued as a process. Traditional letter grades and Standards-Based rubrics do not assess in the same way and therefore are not compatible to one another.

8. Won't the entire grade level receive the same grades, mostly P's and M's?

Learning is a process and it should be expected that repeated exposure and experiences are necessary to gain ownership of new skills and strategies. An assessment score of P indicated the student is progressing towards the standard. Once a student demonstrates thorough understanding of concepts and skills with a performance characterized by the ability to apply skills with accuracy and quality, he or she would receive an M. This move from a P to an M can take place at any point during the school year and is very student specific. If a student demonstrates he or she can meet the standard and consistently demonstrates an ability to apply skills with outstanding accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality, this may result in an E. This again is very student specific and can occur at any time during the school year.

9. My child has an IEP. How will he or she be assessed?

There are modifications and accommodations in your child's IEP to support his or her progress on grade level standards as assessed on a Standards-Based report card. A lack of indicated progress on the report card would require further exploration of additional modifications and accommodations.

10. Does this new system place more emphasis on daily interactions between teacher and student as opposed to standardized scores?

Neither traditional nor Standards-Based report cards rely solely on standardized test scores. A major characteristic of elementary assessment has always been the daily interaction throughout the process of learning. Standards-Based report cards better provide for in-depth communication on the continuum of learning.

11. How do you expect parents to explain to their children why they did not get an E?

It is important that parents and teachers have honest conversations with students. Some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, but given time and motivation students can continually challenge themselves. Attitudes are contagious and it is important that adults involved convey to the child that learning is a process that needs to be respected. A score of P while learning a new skill or concept is appropriate. A score of M demonstrating mastery is to be celebrated. A score of an E indicates excelling at a specific grade level expectation.

12. What if I still have questions?

This is meant to be a brief overview of the Standards-Based report cards. Be sure to view the samples for each grade level posted on our district website along with a video presentation and accompanying PowerPoint. Should you have additional questions, please contact your child's school.