

**Bremerton School District**

**Standards-Based  
Report Card  
Grades K-5**

**TEACHER  
GUIDE**



June 2006



*Bremerton School District  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Bremerton School District is piloting new standards-based report cards in grades K-5 because the previous reporting method did not adequately reflect our Washington State Grade Level Expectations, nor did it provide detailed information about the learning of each child. Moving to a standards-based report card will provide the following:

- Consistency in grading from class to class, teacher to teacher, and school to school
- Specific information about student progress based on Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for the current grade level
- Clear information to parents and students

Standards-Based Report Card	Traditional Report Card
Reporting areas are defined by specific content standards.	Subjects are listed by name.
Numerical levels indicate mastery of the grade level standards. Achievement and effort are reported separately.	Letter grades A-F reflect an individual teacher's expectations, student efforts and achievement.
Instruction is aligned with state and district standards.	Instruction is teacher-centered, textbook-driven, and not necessarily aligned to the state standards.

In June 2004, a Report Card Task Force with teachers representing grade levels K-5 and administrators began examining research, existing standards-based report cards from other districts, and state grade-level expectations to devise new report cards to be piloted across the district for the 2005-2006 school year. During this year-long piloting process, input will be solicited from teachers and parents in order to make final revisions. It is important to note, though, that whatever the suggestions, the standards-based reporting philosophy will be sustained.

## WHY

Ideally a report card is an ongoing conversation between teachers, students, and parents about what is expected of students and how to help them be successful in a rigorous academic program. A mark on the report card is a summary statement of student performance in a subject area. Marks should be a statement of what students have achieved academically, not how hard they worked, how they compare with classmates, or how well they have behaved. Report cards should communicate how well students are progressing toward being proficient on a grade-level standard.

Standards-based report cards will require all of us to change the way we view the report card. Marks on the standards-based report card provide summary information on how well the student is meeting grade level expectations. These marks are based on teacher evidence of independent student performance against the Grade Level Expectations or GLEs. The marks may come from a combination of tasks that are scored using rubrics, graded classroom assessments, district assessments, teacher observations, or other criteria. Report card marks should only be based on summative assessments that students complete independently excluding some academic areas within first grade that are guided by the teacher/instruction.

It is crucial to note that standards are set for a student's achievement through the end of each period. Some standards will not be met until the end of the year while others may be completed in a specific grading period. This means a student could get "3s" and "4s" the first grading period and then earn a "2" at the end of the year if the child has not continued to make growth toward the grade level year end standards. For example, the standard at the beginning of the 4th grade for reading fluency is 98 words correct per minute. However, at the end of the year students are expected to read 115-125 words correct per minute. The "4" is an attainable goal and students do not have to perform above grade level to receive a "4."

## HOW

### Grading Philosophy

*"In order to have grades that have real, not just symbolic meaning, and enable us to focus on learning, not grades, grading must be seen not just as a numerical, mechanical exercise, but as an exercise in professional judgment."* Ken O'Connor

According to this philosophy:

- All summative assessments should reflect what the student knows or is able to do independently.
- Averaging grades is not considered a best practice because it does not account for students who gain skills and knowledge over time. Also averaging does not give a clear picture of where the student is at the end of each reporting time.
- Academic grades should not be based on home involvement (homework).
- Grades should be based on the most current student performance.
- Grades should be determined based on student performance as it relates to defined GLE's. In order to be consistent, grading should conform to a standards-based philosophy.
- Teachers should use formative assessments to guide instruction (e.g., pre-tests, daily assignments, and quizzes).
- Quality assessments use GLEs as targets and are evidence of the students' independent work and knowledge.
- Teachers should use summative assessments that determine achievement (e.g., end-of-unit assessments, tests, final drafts, and projects) as part of the reporting process.
- No student grade should ever depend upon what other students do (e.g., cooperative learning, group projects, and grade curves).
- No student grade should ever depend upon work completion or attendance. However, if a teacher does not have enough data to justify a grade, he or she will use an asterisk.
- Effort, participation, attitude, and other personal and social characteristics (behaviors) need to be reported separately from achievement.

## Descriptors of Standards-Based Report Cards

### 100 Yard Dash

One can think of the standards-based system as a 100 yard dash. All of the students left the starting line at the beginning of the year. At the first reporting period they should be 1/3 of the way to the finish line. Some students are right there at the 1/3 mark. These students are proficient or performing at the "3" level. Other students have sprinted ahead and are 2/3 of the way or closer to the finish level. These students are exceptional or at the "4" level. Students who are at the 15-yard mark would be approaching standard or at "2." The standards-based report card communicates achievement in academic areas according to a 4-point key.

Academic Descriptors Key (Grade Level Standard)		
4	<b>Exceptional</b>	The student demonstrates thorough, in-depth knowledge of basic and extended concepts and skills. Works independently.
3	<b>Proficient</b>	Demonstrates consistent performance of grade-level standards at this time.
2	<b>Approaching Standard</b>	Demonstrates skills and performance below standard at this time. Performance varies in consistency with regard to accuracy, quality, and level of teacher support.
1	<b>Not Achieving the Standard</b>	The student does not demonstrate understanding of basic concepts and skills. Performance is inconsistent even with guidance and teacher support.
NF	<b>Not enough information at this time</b>	Examples; students new to school, students with too many absences, subject area not yet taught.

If an asterisk \* is given on the report card without an explanation in the comment section, you can assume that the strand has not yet been taught (or taught to the point that it can be assessed) but will be taught later in the year.

A student who earns a "4" is an independent worker who easily catches on to new concepts and consistently demonstrates a high level of accuracy without teacher assistance. A "4" should be attainable for some students in every class.

A "3" can independently perform tasks after repeated exposure, needs minimal assistance, and has minor errors on summative assessments. For example, the student who sets up a problem correctly but has a minor computation error would receive a "3".

A "2" requires frequent teacher support and demonstrates partial understanding of basic concepts and skills, but lacks consistency. For example, this student cannot set up a problem or apply information.

A "1" student requires significant assistance and demonstrates minimal understanding of basic concepts and skills. For example, this student would need intense support at every step: pulling out information, setting up a problem, and computation.

## Effort

Under each subject area, there is an effort section that should be evaluated independent of the academic grade. The effort grade in one subject area could be different than the effort grade in another area.

Effort Key
Excels +
Satisfactory ✓
Below Expectations —

Information about effort is very important and has its own special place on the back of the report card. It is also true that behavior and effort usually influence achievement. It is quite possible that a highly capable student can meet the academic standard and receive a "3" yet puts forth very little effort, resulting in a "—" for an effort grade. It is also possible that a very hard working student cannot make the academic standard and will get a "1" or "2." yet can earn a "+" for effort. It would be a disservice to that student to be anything but honest about his or her achievement on grade level standards.

## Behaviors

The behavior key is a three-point scale: "+", "✓", or "—". Although it may be tempting to add levels in between, current research discourages this because it is less accurate and more subjective.

Behavior Key
Excels +
Satisfactory ✓
Below Expectations —

## GRADE BOOKS

There are several ways to set up a grade book. Teachers will need to develop one that works with their style. However, it should be organized by strands that align with each content area. For example, fluency and decoding assessments should not be combined. Often a single assessment will provide data for multiple strands. Summative assessments should be noted differently than formative assessments in your grade book. For example, they could be highlighted in different

colors or put on separate pages. Final grades should be based on summative assessments only. **Remember, computer programs that automatically average data do not align with the standards-based philosophy.**

## COMMENTS

Everyone has different ideas about comments on the report card. It will probably vary from student to student. Remember, this is the teacher's opportunity to communicate with parents whom they may rarely see, and a lot can be said in a sentence or two. If part of the information must be negative, it is generally a good idea to balance it with something positive about the student.

### Top 10 things teachers can do in the classroom to facilitate a standards-based system

1	Identify academic standards that all students will be expected to achieve as defined by the Grade Level Expectations.
2	Establish descriptive grading criteria for GLEs. (What do you want the students to know or be able to do?)
3	Create a rubric that breaks down performance scales for judging each standard and share these rubrics with your students. (How will you know your students achieved the goal?)
4	Use summative assessments and performance tasks for each identified standard (e.g., Bremerton Math Assessments, Everyday Math Assessments, Open Court Unit Assessments, Kindergarten Read Well).
5	Show samples of student work as anchor papers for each performance scale on the rubric.
6	Provide aligned instruction driven by the identified standards and rubrics.
7	Assess student progress and performance using established and published rubrics (e.g., Six Trait Writing, Rubrics.com, Rubrics4teachers.com, Rubistar.4teachers.org.)
8	Refine performance tasks and reassess them so students can demonstrate patterns of learning.
9	Develop and use a standards-based grading system that works for you and aligns with your team members.
10	Collaborate with your team to analyze student and classroom data to guide future instructional decisions.

## GRADE LEVEL COLLABORATION AND STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARD

Grade level meetings are critical to the implementation of the standards-based report card. Successful implementation requires continual communication and collaboration among teachers at a common grade level. Teachers at the same grade level have common standards they are addressing. Conversations among supportive grade level team members allow teachers to share their understanding of the specific standards. Team time also encourages teachers to figure out what students need to understand and be able to do in order to reach those standards.