

Standards-Based Report Cards (SBRC) FAQs

PARENTS

1. What is a standards-based report card (SBRC)?

The job of a report card is to clearly, fairly and objectively communicate how a child is doing in school. A SBRC tells specifically how a child is performing based on each standard listed and it indicates what areas may need additional attention. All teachers in a grade level measure student learning against set academic criteria, excluding other performance factors such as homework, attendance and effort. Although these are important parts of student work habits and should be communicated to parents, it is a misrepresentation of a child's ability level when it is grouped into an academic rating.

2. What is the purpose of SBRC at the elementary level?

SBRC provide direct feedback to parents/guardians regarding the progress their child is making toward the year-end standards that have been established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. It will allow parents and students to clearly understand grade-level expectations and what is necessary to be successful in a rigorous academic program.

3. Where do the standards come from?

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has developed or adopted grade-level standards in all subject areas. The most recently adopted standards are the Common Core State Standards for math and English Language Arts (2011). MA standards can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>.

*Please note that the state is moving to adopt new science standards, which are not represented on the above website because they have not been formally adopted yet. The new standards can be seen on the benchmark link that will be posted on the WPS main page in the very near future.

4. Why are there multiple standards under each subject?

By providing more specific descriptions of the learning expectations within each content area, students and parents can see where performance is proficient and where additional practice may be needed.

5. What do the academic ratings (1-4) mean?

4 – Works beyond the standard	The student is working beyond the end of year standard and consistently exceeds grade level expectations. A 4 indicates unusually high achievement. In some instances, it is not possible to work beyond a standard and therefore a 4 is not an available rating.
3 – Meets the standard or term benchmark	The student consistently and independently meets the standard or term benchmark and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the basic and extended concepts that have been taught. A 3 is something to be celebrated! Students will continue to receive instruction that is rigorous and challenging.
2 – Approaches the standard or term benchmark	The student is making progress, understands basic concepts and skills, but may vary in consistency and accuracy.

1 – Needs more time and support to develop.	The student demonstrates minimal understanding of the standard and is making slow progress. Performance is very inconsistent, even with support from classroom teacher and/or intervention from other school staff.
N/A	This standard has not been assessed during this term. Some standards are introduced but not formally assessed until later in the school year.

6. What is the difference between benchmarks and standards?

Standards are the end-of-the-year expectations. In order to monitor progress throughout the year toward mastering the ELA and math standards, we have created benchmarks at the end of terms 1 and 2. These benchmarks indicate which subset of skills should be obtained at the end of each term to measure whether or not a child is on schedule to meet each end-of-year standard. A link to these benchmarks will be on the district’s main website in the very near future. Since the science and social studies standards are not always taught in the same sequence by each teacher, the standards are not expressed by term benchmarks.

7. Since the standards are end-of-year expectation, how can my child get a 3 (meets the standard) in the first or second term?

The standards are end of year expectations but we have broken each standard down into three phases, the expectation at the end of the first term (i.e. term one benchmarks), the expectation at the end of the second term (i.e. term two benchmarks) and the end-of-year expectations (i.e. standard).

8. What if students meet the standard before the end of the year?

If a student shows early mastery of fundamental skills and concepts in a particular standard, the teaching and learning does not stop. The students who have met the standard can concentrate on more challenging work that is at a higher level of Bloom’s revised taxonomy (<http://goo.gl/Sw2Rrs>).

9. How should I prepare my child for these report card changes?

This tool serves a communication for students as well so it is important that they are aware of the rating system. We encourage you to have a conversation with your child to explain the ratings using age-appropriate language. For example, a third grade parent may tell his/her child the following:

“A 4 means that you are doing work at a *fourth* grade level. We don’t expect that from third graders, but there may be some students who have learned the third grade material and need some more challenges.”

“A 3 means that you have become an expert in exactly what you’re supposed to. You should celebrate every 3 you see on your report card!”

“A 2 means that you are on your way to learning that standard but need some more time. This is o.k. because all kids learn at different rates. With some extra practice, you will probably be a 3 very soon.”

“A 1 means that this standard has been hard for you so you, your teacher, and I will continue to work together on this one. We should do a little more practice on this standard at home so that it gets easier for you with time.”

10. How is assessment different for standards-based report cards?

SBRC assessing focuses solely on a student's academic achievement and continued mounting evidence that indicates a true assessment of the child's attainment of learning targets. Extraneous factors, like work habits, homework, attendance and effort, are assessed and reported separately.

Standards-based assessments evaluate progress toward mastery of learning targets. Each standard is assessed over time and the reported performance on the report card indicates whether or not a child has mastered the particular benchmark.

Teachers will be collecting data from formative and summative assessments to measure whether or not a child has met each standard or benchmark by the end of each term. This data can be in forms of classwork assignments, projects, observations, assessments, etc.

11. What do I do if my child scores a 1 or a 2 on a benchmark or standard?

This is not unusual because "the flowers bloom at different times". With SBRC, the teachers have a better tool to report exactly what your child can do, as well as the areas in which your child needs more practice/time to develop. Examine the new report card and the accompanying benchmarks (found on our district's website) so that you know which skills to focus on when you practice at home with your child. It is important that you communicate with your child's teacher as (s)he may have suggestions or strategies that you can use at home with your child to help him/her develop a particular skill.

12. How will students receiving special education services be graded?

Special education students are also given the elementary-SBRC. In accordance with the law, documentation of progress specific to IEP (Individual Education Plan) goals and objectives will be reported to parents on IEP progress report forms each term.

13. How will students receiving ELL (English Language Learners) support be graded?

English Language Learners will be given the elementary SBRC. The ELL teacher will provide a progress report each term.