



Lawrence Public Schools
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Office of Teaching and Learning



Standards Based Grading and Reporting Grades K-8

Why should the Lawrence Public Schools shift to Standards Based Grading and Reporting?

Standards-based grading and reporting are designed to assess student performance against a specific and observable set of grade level skills. Most importantly, a standards-based system measures each student against the identified, concrete standard, instead of measuring how the student performs compared to other students. The type of reporting instrument keeps teachers, parents, and students themselves focused on the desired outcomes for “year-end” learning goals.

How are Performance Indicators different from letter grades?

The traditional report card usually provides only ONE grade for each subject (reading, math, science, etc.). On a standards-based report card, each subject is divided into a list of content and skills that students are responsible for learning. Performance indicators or “marks” are different from traditional letter grades. Letter grades are most often calculated by combining how well the student met his/her teacher’s expectations, how he/she performed on assignments and tests, and the level of effort as determined by the teacher. Letter grades do not tell parents which content and skills their children have mastered or whether they are working at grade level. Performance indicators reflect student progress on a continuum of standard mastery typically notated as “emerging”, “developing”, “progressing”, and “mastering”.

The standards are grade level benchmarks that specify what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. They are the basis for curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Performance indicators are broad, categorical levels used to report student progress along a continuum of learning from emerging to developing and from progressing to mastering. These levels are used to describe the knowledge, skills, and practices students are able to demonstrate with consistency.

How will this shift support the alignment of curriculum, resources, and instructional practices?

Curriculum has changed, instructional methodology has expanded, and research has extensively informed the teaching and learning process in powerful ways. A common understanding of what is expected of each student, as well as a clear understanding of each student’s progress toward his or her full potential, is essential in communicating accurate and transparent information about a student’s performance.

The recently adopted Massachusetts State Framework for English Language Arts and Math reflect the national Common Core Standards and will be used to select the most appropriate grade specific standards. They will reflect what students need to know, understand, and be able to do by the end of the academic year. Each Lawrence Public School is committed to a strong home-school partnership. Advances in grading and reporting will be important tools for encouraging shared understanding about student growth in both academic areas and prosocial skills.

What is the timeline for this process?

The work to engage additional stakeholders, define grade specific standards for inclusion, draft a proposed report card template, and prepare for messaging and professional development will continue as follows:

March-June 2017 Seek feedback and support from all stakeholders (informational meetings, surveys, etc.)

August 2017-June 2018 Convene cluster grade-specific content teams to identify, select, and recommend grade-by-grade standards, prosocial skills, and indicators

Summer 2018 Schedule student and parent informational meetings

Launch 2018-2019 School Year Issue Lawrence Public Schools Standards Based Report Cards; Encourage schools to host additional informational sessions for parents.

For more information please reach out to the Office of Teaching and Learning – Mary.toomey@lawrence.k12.ma.us