

**Standards Based Reporting  
Manual  
2016-2017**

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## **Introduction**

The Richmond School District Standards Based Reporting (SBR) Handbook is designed to be a resource for parents and teachers. It includes information regarding the history and rationale of SBR at Richmond, definitions of SBR terminology, and a summary of best practices for assessing student learning. This document is intended to provide a rationale for moving to a different reporting system and an explanation of what the new reporting system means to students and families.

## **History/Rationale**

The movement away from traditional grading practices to a standards-based reporting model began at Richmond in 2009. Report cards at the kindergarten through second grade level were reworked to provide a clearer picture of student progress. The subject areas and categories were changed to reflect the Wisconsin State Standards in use at that time. Also, the marking system was changed to inform families how their students were progressing toward mastery on these standards. It was at this time that the descriptors appearing on the current report card first came into use: (BE) Beginning, (DE) Developing, (PR) Proficient, and (EX) Exceeding.

A plan was developed to implement the reporting system through the addition of one grade level each year until middle school. Each summer, teachers in the next implementation grade level met and identified the essential standards for their subject areas. For the 2016-2017 school year, the middle school will implement SBR. Implementation at the middle school level needs to occur at the same time for grades 6 through 8 since there are some classes that include multiple grade levels.

During the 2010-2011 school year, two Richmond teachers, Nancy Johnson and Lisa Koeppen, conducted a review of research and wrote a report detailing the need to move to standards-based reporting in the primary grades. The research detailed in their report served as the impetus for change. Excerpts from their report are below:

It is Richmond's intent to examine the K-3 report cards to ensure that they are properly aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and to make sure the language is consistent with a standards-based report card designed to provide meaningful communication regarding student progress. Additionally, Richmond will extend a standards-based reporting system to the fourth grade. Richmond will use a collaborative, research-based approach to this adoption. The new report cards will be in place for the 2013-2014 academic school year.

### *Research Regarding Grading and Grading Practices*

Grading in the academic setting traditionally serves many purposes. The major purposes of grading fall into six major categories according to Guskey and Bailey (2010):

- 1) To communicate information about students' achievement to parents and others
- 2) To provide information to students for self-evaluation
- 3) To select, identify, or group students for certain educational paths or programs
- 4) To provide incentives for students to learn
- 5) To evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs
- 6) To provide evidence of students' lack of effort or inappropriate responsibility

(Guskey and Bailey 2010, p. 27).

Communication regarding learning should be based on a scale or scoring guide.

Traditionally, report card systems can be as simple as the A, B, C, D, F scale. This scale's purpose is to communicate student learning in a broad subject area, such as mathematics, based on a percentage. In order to make grading a more effective communication tool for students, parents, and teachers, it should provide more detailed information in the form of descriptive grading criteria and detailed standards-based learning objectives. The primary goal of a standards based reporting system is for clear communication regarding student performance. For students, the use of performance descriptors (beginning, developing, proficient, exemplary) rather than traditional letter grades (A,B,C,D,F) is more affirming (Guskey and Bailey, 2010), "a single letter grade or a percentage score is not a good way to report student achievement in any subject area because it simply cannot present the level of detailed feedback necessary for effective learning" (Marzano, 2000, p. 106).

The work of Richard Stiggins in the area of assessment also stresses the importance of clear communication regarding achievement. He stresses that the use of common language regarding performance helps to convey meaning for all stakeholders (Stiggins, 2001). Common language provides a platform for discussing student learning.

Standards-based reporting systems should be meaningful and use terms that are student, teacher, and parent friendly (Guskey and Bailey, 2010). “For report cards to provide effective communication, they need to have an expanded format in which teachers can give information on student achievement of specific learning goals and of general learning skills or work habits” (O’Connor, 2002, p. 213). Clear learning objectives are important for reporting systems that enhance learning. Students, parents, and teachers are able to make more meaning from reporting based on clear expectations, and students are better able to achieve targets that are stable (Stiggins, 2001). According to Guskey and Bailey (2010) three types of information should be included in a standards based reporting system: the standards or learning goals that students are expected to meet, the level of individual student progress toward meeting those goals, and a progress assessment toward meeting those goals at the time of reporting. “In other words, a standards-based report card should clearly communicate what we want students to learn and be able to do, how well they are doing those things, and whether or not that level of performance is in line with our expectations at this time in the school year” (Guskey, Bailey, 2010, p 31).

Research in the area of reporting systems appears to have elements in common. They include the following recommendations regarding a reporting tool:

- 1) it should be meaningful to the student, parent, and teacher
- 2) it should reflect actual student achievement
- 3) it should be manageable for the teacher
- 4) it should match standards and be individualized for grade levels
- 5) it should separate behavior, effort, and work habits from achievement
- 6) it should provide room for comments as a tool for further communication
- 7) it should be a reasonable length

(Guskey and Bailey, 2001; O'Connor, 2002; Stiggins, 2001; Reeves, 2006; Marzano, 2000).

A standards-based report card must be part of a comprehensive multi-faceted communication system whose specific purpose is to provide meaningful feedback and information to parents and students. According to Guskey and Bailey (2010), such a system might include a standards-based report card, standardized assessment reports, phone calls or email messages, progress reports, open house events, newsletters, exhibits of student work, and student-led conferences.

Research related to reporting tools suggests that the report card “must be specific enough to communicate the knowledge and skills we want students to gain but not so detailed that they lose their meaning and effectiveness when shared with parents and others” (Guskey and Bailey, 2010, p. 31). A developmental scoring guide with clear scoring descriptors helps to provide clearer communication regarding student progress. Additionally, common language regarding learning is an important part of a reporting system.

### **Alignment to Standards**

The curriculum at Richmond is aligned to standards. Every year, each district in Wisconsin must vote on which standards it will use for curriculum alignment. At Richmond, the Common Core State Standards for English and mathematics were adopted. The Next Generation Science Standards were adopted for science, and the Wisconsin Model Academic State Standards were adopted for the other subject areas. In a standards-based classroom, teachers focus instruction on the essential standards that all students must learn. Students are assessed based on their level of mastery toward these standards. Teachers break down the standards for students by creating “I Can” statements. The “I Can” statements are written in student friendly language that is clear for students and provides a target for their learning. Students may be provided multiple opportunities to meet their targets.

“I Can” statements are a common practice at Richmond. Standards Based Reporting allows for a better alignment of student goals to standards on the report card. In a traditional

grading system, student achievement of goals and standards is unclear. If a math student receives a quarter score of 82% and a “B”, it is unclear which of the skills this student has mastered or those in which he needs additional instruction. Standards-based reporting does not change what is being taught; it is a change in how student learning is reported.

### **Reporting of Progress**

Performance descriptors are used to assess student progress toward mastery of standards. The same descriptions are used throughout the grades. In grades K-5, letters are used to report out student progress. At the middle school, whole numbers (1-4) and + signs (1, 1+, 2, 2+ etc) are used.

#### *Elementary Performance Descriptors*

EX = Exemplary- Student demonstrates an advanced understanding of concepts, skills, and processes taught in this reporting period. Exceeds the required performance.

PR = Proficient- Student consistently demonstrates an understanding of concepts, skills, and processes taught in this reporting period.

DE = Developing- Student is not yet consistent in demonstrating an understanding of concepts, skills, and processes taught in this reporting period.

BE = Beginning- Student exhibits emerging understanding of concepts, attempts to apply skills and processes, or needs regular assistance.

### *Middle School Performance Descriptors*

4= Consistently and independently demonstrates in-depth and advanced understanding of academic knowledge and skills drawn from grade level content standards OR exceeds grade level standards.

3+= In addition to 3 performance, partial success with 4 performance.

3= Consistently meets grade level expectations. Consistently demonstrates competency in academic knowledge and skills drawn from grade level content standards.

2+= In addition to 2 performance, partial success with 3 performance.

2= Partially meets grade level expectations. Demonstrates some competence in academic knowledge and skills drawn from grade level content standards.

1+= In addition to 1 performance, partial success with 2 performance.

1= Does not meet grade level expectations. Demonstrates limited academic knowledge and skills drawn from grade level content standards.

Each subject area has between 3-6 reportable standards. Since Reading/Language Arts encompasses reading, writing, and language arts, it is divided into smaller topics with their own reportable standards. Reportable standards are the standards that are the most important for understanding the subject area. It is important to note that there will more standards taught and assessed than will appear on the report card. The reportable standards are those that are deemed to be most important to truly knowing and being able to do the major concepts and skills in a subject area. Additional standards are taught and assessed throughout the course of the school year.

### **Grading for Learning**

Grading for Learning practices can occur independent of a standards-based reporting system. Many Grading for Learning practices are already implemented at Richmond. These practices include retakes for tests, an emphasis on homework as practice, differentiation of instruction based on pre-tests, and multiple opportunities to demonstrate one's knowledge

or skill. The traditional method for grading does not support the full implementation of Grading for Learning practices. For example, in a traditional grading model retakes of summative assessments are averaged into an overall grade. This practice does not reflect the full progress a student makes over the course of the grading period. The paradigm shift in this example is moving from making time the constant to making learning the constant. A SBR system better supports practices that promote learning.

### *Reporting Period*

Students will be assessed based on benchmarks for the grading period. This means that proficiency will be determined based on where students should be at the point in the year when the grading period ends. Therefore, a student could be considered proficient or receive a 3 for 1st quarter, but based on assessments may be considered a 2 or developing for the next quarter.

### *Homework*

Homework is used to practice the knowledge and skills that were taught. Students should make mistakes as they are learning and not be afraid to learn from mistakes. **It is an expectation that students will complete all homework assigned by their teachers.** Feedback on homework is shown to be most effective and mistakes should not be graded. Homework, or any student work that is used as practice, is a type of formative assessment. Students should not be penalized because of information and mistakes found on formative assessments. Asking your student about what they have learned in class is a great to support their learning. Grades should only reflect mainly summative assessments, which is the assessment of the learning process and after a teacher observes mastery of standards through formative assessments. Example of summative assessments include classroom assessments, district assessments, end of unit projects/presentations, etc.

Each teacher will share his or her own homework practices based on the District philosophy. Different subject areas require different expectations for homework and retakes. Individual teachers will communicate the homework practices and retake procedures for their subject area at the beginning of the school year.

## **Special Education**

Standards Based Grading is an effective approach for all students. Monitoring the learning progress is the responsibility of teachers and students. Students demonstrating knowledge and skills of grade level standards or Essential Elements is critical for individual growth.

Students with disabilities included in the general education classrooms should be evaluated on the same standards as the rest of the students in that classroom. The only time standards can be adjusted for a student is if they are taught using the Essential Elements. Essential Elements are alternate achievement standards for students with significant intellectual disabilities in Language arts, math, and science. In this case, students reporting standards can be aligned with the Essential Elements and not the Common Core State Standards.

Students who receive accommodations, supports, and differentiation within the general education setting should be evaluated according to grade-level expectations. Students in need of modifications to the curriculum require changes to content, rigor, and grade-level standards. It is necessary to communicate to parents if the curriculum is modified and that the child will not be evaluated according to grade-level standards.

## **Highly Able or Accelerated Students**

An article in *Ed. Leadership*, Oct. 2008, on SBR says: “Gifted and talented students can be truly challenged in a standards-based classroom because if they show early mastery of fundamental skills and concepts, they can then *concentrate on more challenging work that is at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy or that seeks connections among objectives.*” Teachers will communicate with students that demonstrate *proficiency* or *consistently meet grade level standards* what that next step will be. Students may work more in-depth, gaining an advanced understanding of the knowledge at grade level standards OR they may go

beyond, and work on standards at the next grade level. Students will understand the expectations to earn an EX or 3.5-4.

**Accelerated math students** are exceeding grade level standards simply because they are in the next grade level for math and the report card will reflect the standards for the **math grade level** they are working in. In order to earn an EX or 4, students will be expected to demonstrate in-depth and advanced understanding of the math knowledge and skills at the accelerated level, an expectation which mirrors the requirements for an A under the previous letter-grade system.

### **Expectations**

Clear expectations are essential to the success of any initiative. The expectations listed below are broken out by stakeholder group in order to facilitate meaningful and open communication regarding student progress.

#### *Administration*

- Provide time and resources for the development and implementation of SBR.
- Develop and update Standards Based Reporting Manual to families on an annual basis.
- Actively seek and respond to family and teacher feedback regarding the implementation of standards-based reporting.
- Conduct regular reviews of SBR with teachers and families to refine and improve SBR system.

#### *Teachers*

- Provide reportable standards and learning targets (“I can statements”) to families at the beginning of each unit in math and reading.
- Provide individual progress monitoring reports at the end of each unit in math and reading. Middle school teachers will use the portal to communicate individual progress. Portal will continue to be updated at least every two weeks.

- Provide an overview of grade level standards (specifically reportable standards) at Grade Level Curriculum Nights.
- Update grade level websites on a bi-weekly basis and send families reminders.
- Conduct one parent informational and learning session regarding standards based grading and reporting and writing workshop. (Some grades may also include Personalized Learning.) These learning sessions will be completed before the end of Semester One.

### *Families*

- Continue to be involved and engaged in the learning of your child(ren).
- Questions regarding student progress and progress monitoring reports will be directed to the classroom teachers.
- Attend and participate in fall parent teacher conferences and any additional meetings regarding standards based grading and reporting and/or student progress.

### **Academic Honor Roll and Charger Academic and Citizenship Recognitions**

#### **Charger Award (based on academics and citizenship)**

- This award will be given out during the first three quarters to students in **grades 6-8** who exhibit **Outstanding Academic Performance and Citizenship**.
- Student eligibility would be based on: **3+ or 4** on the Reportable Standards on report card (academic performance) AND ----School Success Skills (report card and teacher input)
- Overall school behavior (exhibited out of classroom) will also be considered as part of the administrative review for the award.
- Reward recipients (and their parents) will be invited to a Charger Celebration Breakfast after each of the first three grading periods. Awards will be given out to the students. The breakfast will be scheduled early enough to avoid overlapping into instructional time.

## **Academic Honor Roll**

- Students who earn a **3+ or 4** on all Reportable Standards on their report card (academic performance) are recognized as **honor roll recipients**.
- Recipients receive recognition in the form of a **certificate** in their report card each quarter.
- **Incentives:** Each time a student earns honor roll status, (three times possible), student will be entered into the end-of-the-year drawing for prizes

## **Definition of Terms**

1. **Formative Assessments:** Assessments that are used by the teacher and student to inform instructional practices. These assessments are not used for reporting.
2. **Grading for Learning:** A set of practices that incorporates best practices in assessing student work. The focus of these practices is to create a truer picture of student learning.
3. **Performance Descriptors:** Either terms (elementary) or numerical system (middle school) used to report student progress toward achieving standards.
4. **Priority Standards:** Standards that are taught and support the Reportable Standards. Although these standards are important, they do not appear on report cards.
5. **Reportable Standards:** The standards determined to be essential to understanding the objectives of the course. Reportable standards appears on report cards.
6. **School Success Skills:** A set of values and characteristics that influence but are independent of academic standards. School Success Skills are assessed in grades JK-8.
7. **Standards-Based Reporting:** A method of assessing student performance based on content area standards.
8. **Summative Assessments:** Assessments that are used to determine student progress toward achieving standards.