



## Helping Parents Understand Standards-Referenced Report Cards

In the Carthage R-9 School District, report cards are issued four times a year. Carthage R-9 has established grade level learning objectives based upon the Missouri Learning Standards. A revised Standards-Referenced Report Card has been developed for grades K-3 (at this time). The purpose of this report card is to communicate student progress toward achieving these end-of-year learning objectives. A standards-referenced report card:

- provides a clear message to parents about which skills and concepts students know and are able to demonstrate in relation to established state standards;
- helps teachers and students focus on identified end-of-year expectations from the very beginning of the year, giving students a direction for their learning;
- aligns instruction, assessment, and grading with standards.

### Why are we hearing so much about standards?

Teaching and learning should be aligned with state/district standards or goals, stating what students should know and be able to do.

Our curriculum – **what** we teach

Our textbooks/programs/materials – the things we **use** to teach are developed, written, and purchased with standards as the guiding influence

### What are standards-referenced report cards?

Standards-based reporting is based on the belief that every child can learn given adequate instruction and opportunity for practice. It allows teachers to accurately communicate achievement of learning targets or benchmarks (based on standards) to students and parents, as well as provides information for teachers to plan for instruction.

### What is the difference between traditional grade reporting and standards-referenced grade reporting?

Traditional reporting uses averaging of student work over time, and other student characteristics such as work habits, attendance, homework, and effort. Standards-referenced reporting focuses solely on a student's academic achievement and evidence that indicates a true measure of the student's grasp of learning targets (such as the ability to write a paragraph or add and subtract whole numbers). Standards-referenced report cards display skills a child has mastered or whether they are working below, at, or above grade level on each skill. Parents can see exactly which learning objectives their child has mastered; factors such as work habits and effort are assessed and reported separately.

Standards-referenced subject areas are broken down into big ideas and learning targets that students need to learn or master. On traditional report cards, students receive one grade for reading, one for math, one for science, and so on. On standards-referenced report cards, subjects are divided into a list of skills and knowledge that students are responsible for learning. Students receive a separate mark for each standard.

## Do the performance descriptors on the report card correlate with letter grades?

No. The following performance descriptors are used to indicate a student's progress, to date, in meeting academic learning standards for the year:

|                               |                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 – Advanced                  | The student has mastered this standard, can teach it to others, and can do new, creative things with it. |
| 3 – Mastery                   | The student has mastered the standard consistently and independently.                                    |
| 2 – Approaching Mastery       | The student is in the process of mastering the grade level standard.                                     |
| 1 – Beginning                 | The student is beginning to understand the standard.                                                     |
| X – Not assessed this quarter |                                                                                                          |

## Isn't a 3 just another way of saying the student earned a C or a 75%?

This is the biggest difference between a traditional letter grade system and a standards-referenced report card. A 3 shows mastery of grade-level standards, and ***it is the goal for all students for the end of the year.*** It does not mean that the student has earned a 75%; it means that the student has mastered the skill and is now ready to excel.

|                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |
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| <p><b>4 Advanced</b></p> <p>The student has demonstrated mastery and can apply knowledge above and beyond the standard.</p> | <p><b>3 Mastery</b></p> <p>Student has mastered the standard.</p>  | <p><b>2 Approaching Mastery</b></p> <p>Student is able to demonstrate some understanding of the concept required by the standard but lacks mastery in key areas.</p> | <p><b>1 Beginning</b></p> <p>Student has difficulty demonstrating understanding and needs support to complete key tasks.</p> |
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