



Lexington Public Schools

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To: Dr. Paul B. Ash
Members of the Lexington School Committee

From: Carol A. Pilarski

Re: Executive Summary
Standards-Based Report Card

Date: April 24, 2012

The Lexington Public Schools is proud to introduce the pilot implementation of the district's newly created Standards-Based Report Card for students in grades K-5. A committee of teachers, curriculum leaders, and administrators has worked diligently over the course of the past three years to develop this new reporting tool that will more effectively communicate the status of student progress in meeting appropriate grade level, year-end goals. This new reporting instrument specifically outlines those standards that should be met by each student, at each grade level, in all academic areas, including pro-social behaviors.

After having completed considerable research on this topic, collecting and reviewing similar reporting instruments from other communities, the committee is proud to report that we are prepared and eager to implement a standards-based report card that reflects the newly adopted Common Core standards as embedded in the Massachusetts State Framework. In the next academic year, 2012-2013 we are planning for the first year of a pilot implementation. Although our work and thinking in moving forward with this project have been thorough and extensive, we recognize that there is always room for improvement . . . especially in an area that represents significant change from the current report card. Upon the conclusion of this pilot year, we will be seeking feedback and evaluation from teachers and parents alike in order to determine the need for any adjustments, revisions, and/or refinements.

In an effort to outline some of the most frequently asked questions, I have provided answers in the following format:

1. What exactly is a standards-based report card?

A standards-based report card is 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. This type of reporting instrument keeps teachers,

parents, and students themselves focused on the desired outcomes for “year end” learning goals from the very beginning of the year.

2. Why the change?

The current K-5 report card has been in place for over a decade. It is significantly outdated and does not accurately and effectively communicate the specific information teachers need to share, nor what parents and students need and want to know about a child’s academic growth and progress. Curriculum has changed, instructional methodology has expanded, and research has extensively informed the “teaching and learning” process in powerful ways. Our classroom teachers have expressed the need for a new tool that more accurately represents what students know and are able to do. In keeping with Lexington’s two primary goals, the newly created standards-based report card is clear and specific about both the academic expectations and pro-social standards i.e. *what all students need to know and be able to do in each domain, at each grade level.*

3. How were these standards selected?

The 2011 Massachusetts State Frameworks, which reflect the newly adopted Common Core Standards, were used to create our report card across the content areas. The Lexington Public Schools Elementary Report Card will reflect what students need to know, understand, and be able to do by the *end* of a given academic year.

It is our belief that a common understanding of what is expected of each student, as well as a clear understanding of each student’s progress towards his or her full potential, is essential in communicating accurate and transparent information about a student’s performance. The Lexington Public Schools places a strong value on its home-school partnership and we view the new report card as an important tool in furthering our shared understanding about student growth in both the academic areas and the pro-social skills, including each child’s unique approach to learning.

4. How will students be “graded” in the Academic Areas?

A Standards-based Report Card uses academic performance indicators that are observable and objective. The standards themselves are actually grade level benchmarks that specify what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. They serve as a basis for our curriculum, instruction and assessments based upon a child’s individual achievement.

Below is a detailed explanation of each of the academic performance indicators.

M - Indicates that the student consistently and independently demonstrates mastery of/proficiency in the grade level standard.

Students who receive an **M** are completing the expected learning in that end-of-year grade level standard. “Mastery of” or “Proficiency in” the standard does not mean that teaching and learning end; rather, it indicates that the student has reached a level of performance expected of grade level students for that standard with consistency, accuracy, independence and quality. Instruction will focus on more complex problems within the standard, will offer more levels of challenge for the learner in applying that standard, and will provide more in-depth and critical thinking in the area of that standard. As is true in current practice, teachers will continue to plan challenging learning tasks for students who meet the end-of-year standard.

P - Indicates that the student is progressing appropriately toward consistent and independent mastery of/proficiency in the grade level standard.

Students who are progressing toward the standard are demonstrating a level of understanding that is typically/appropriately expected during the course of the academic year.

B - Indicates that the student is beginning to progress toward the grade level standard with additional time and support.

Students who are beginning to progress toward a standard may require regular support, monitoring, and/or assistance from an adult for clarification in order to progress.

N - Indicates that a student is not yet demonstrating progress toward the grade level standard.

Students receiving an N are still acquiring pre-requisite skills in order to understand the content of the grade level standard. Students need additional adult assistance, increased time, smaller chunks of learning, and/or alternative strategies for gaining foundational standards that will lead to the grade level standards.

/ - Standard not addressed at this time.

When a / or a shaded area appears next to a standard, it indicates that the standard was not addressed during the months leading up to the report card. Some standards will be addressed during a specific portion of the year, while others will be addressed throughout the year.

5. How will students be “graded” in the Pro-Social Skills/Learning Approaches?

The pro-social skills encompass Personal Development and Classroom and Community Skills in one section and Learning Approaches in the second section. Please refer to the buff colored pages in your packet to view these skills. You will notice that they are grouped as K-2 skills and then again as grades 3-5 skills. Numbers will be given to indicate progress in these areas, as follows:

- 4** – Student consistently demonstrates this skill
- 3** – Student demonstrates this skill most of the time.
- 2** – Student demonstrates this skill some of the time
- 1** – Student requires on-going intervention to develop this skill.

6. What will the standards-based report card “look” like?

The standards-based report card will be incorporated into our district’s student information system (X2/Aspen). The company, as well as our technology department, is currently working on the format of the report card and a DRAFT sample copy of a Grade 3 report card is included in your packet at the end of this report. The advantage for teachers in using this system is that teachers may enter student information onto the report card from school or from home.

A training program is being developed this summer for teachers and staff members so as to ensure that all necessary personnel are equipped with the skills they will need to make the electronic entries and to print the reports for student/parent distribution.

7. What types of Professional Development/Training will be provided to teachers?

It should be noted that in this transition, our primary focus in professional development for the K-5 staff in the spring, summer, and fall of 2012 will be on standards-based reporting.

Professional development is currently underway to address the training and understanding of the academic standards and the application of the performance indicators. Members of the standards-based report card committee presented an overview of their work to colleagues at each of the elementary schools on January 19. This was followed on March 22 with a content specific, interactive workshop in Mathematics. Part 2 of this Mathematics segment is scheduled to take place on May 3. Also scheduled on May 3 is a workshop specifically designed for our special educators who work in tandem with our general education teachers in instructing and assessing the progress of student performance. This work is scheduled to continue in November.

On-going workshops are scheduled over the summer and throughout the next academic year as outlined below:

- Sub-committee work on the development of Parent/Teacher Handbook information - Summer
- Development of a “Train the Trainer” model for technical assistance in X2/Aspen, the district’s student information system – August
- Literacy standards workshops - September, October
- Technical Training, Part 2 - October for trainers, administrators, administrative assistants
- Social Studies and Science standards workshop – November
- Technical Training for K-5 teachers in X2/Aspen - November

8. How will parents/guardians learn about this change?

A task force of the Report Card committee is at work assembling a Parent Handbook for online distribution or hard copy as required by some who may not have internet access. Additionally, we will be planning for several parent forums this summer and fall. These forums will be scheduled to take place both during the day and in the evening to provide greater access for all interested parties. My plan also includes the creation of a videocast of important information about the standards-based report card. This video will be posted on the district’s website where it can be viewed conveniently at any time. It will contain all of the essential information and the FAQs as outlined in this memorandum.

9. Aside from the standards, will there be any other noticeable changes?

The implementation of the pilot of the new standards-based report card will require some other changes. These are outlined below:

- a. Instead of three marking periods, there will now be two marking periods for the standards-based report card. The first report card is scheduled to be distributed on December 14, 2012 and the second report card at the close of the school year.
- b. There will continue to be two sets of parent/teacher conferences. There has been a change, however, in dates for one week of the elementary fall conferences (please see the revised 2012 -2013 calendar attached to the end of this report). Elementary conferences will take place in the fall on October 24 and 25 and the following week October 31 and November 1.
- c. Please note that we have also shifted the date of the first district-wide professional development afternoon from Thursday, September 13 to Thursday, September 6.

CLOSING

Louise Lipsitz, principal of the Hastings School, and my co-chair on this committee, and I will look forward to meeting with you on Tuesday, April 24 to present the highlights of this information and to answer any questions you might have. I have also invited our committee members to be present, as well. I must express my gratitude and acknowledgement to them for their expert work and untiring commitment to this project. They have been an amazing group of professionals to work with! I have included their names below for your information.

Standards-Based Report Card Committee	
Carol Pilarski	Laura Lees
Louise Lipsitz	Jeff Leonard
Marie-Louise Bean	Lisa Maffei
Michele Carter	Kathy McCarthy
Patty Cascio	Karen McCarthy
Robyn Grant	Lynne Murray
Amanda Doyle	Katherine Pyskaty
Jen Dugan-Agne	Susan Sepe
Denise Dundon	Eamonn Sheehan
Iris Goldfarb	Ellen Silberman
Sean Hagan	Lauren Stebbins
Ryan Heeden	Leonard Swanton
Jane Hundley	Kirsten Sweet
James Kane	Karen Tripoli
	Mary Yardley