

Standards-Based Reporting System FAQs

The purpose of the primary reporting system is to communicate to parents, students and staff the progress each student is making toward accomplishing the performance-based standards.

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Q: What is different from the old report cards?

A: Goals on the new primary report cards are aligned with the Georgia Performance standards. Also, there are specific quarterly expectations identified for progress toward meeting the standard, including a well-defined rubric (continuum of learning) for students who have not yet met the standards but are in progress. The rubric is posted on the NCSS website at www.newtoncountyschools.org.

Q: Will the primary system be rolled up to higher grade levels?

A: Report cards reflect the development of the students served. Newton has two distinct reporting systems; one for primary grades (K-3) and the other for grades 4-12. For grades 4-12, letter grades will not be replaced but may be augmented with more specific criteria matching grade level/course standards. Teachers and schools are working to better define what is behind the letter grade.

Q: Is this report card “dumbing-down” instruction for our students?

A: The new primary report card helps to close the gaps between curriculum, instruction, and assessment. By accounting for student learning on the report card in more specific terms, parents are assured that instruction is provided directly related to Newton’s curriculum and state standards. Parents have more detailed information to assist at home or to ask questions to teachers.

Q: Is there significance to the order in which the standards/elements are listed?

A: The order is not necessarily the suggested order of instruction, simply the list for reporting.

Q: Why are all standards/elements not listed on the report card?

A: A standards-based reporting system is not the same as a standards/elements list. The committee developed our own reporting system to address standards deemed most significant to our students’ successful learning both in the student’s present grade level and as prerequisite for future learning.

Q: Can a student actually perform at a level 3, and then move to a lower performance level on the next quarter?

A: Yes. Each quarter has defined expectations towards achievement of the standards. A student may perform at a “3” one quarter, but not make sufficient progress to make the same mark the next, as defined by the quarterly rubrics (continuum of learning).

Q: What is the suggested use for the comments section of the report card?

A: It is recommended that comments be related to specific growth areas and areas in which the child is exceeding. If additional space is needed, an ongoing record may be maintained.

Q: How will parents know if their child is ready for the next grade or if their child has made successful progress?

A: The committee recognizes that communication with parents is key to this understanding, regardless of the reporting system in place. At the end of the year, the ultimate goal would be for every child to have met all the standards (all 3’s on the report card for the last

quarter). Recognizing that not all students will make this progress, however, this system should be tremendously helpful in defining areas of strength and weakness and providing a guide for future learning.

Q: When would a student not have made enough progress to be promoted and how would that be handled?

A: A student not making adequate yearly progress should be addressed through the retention review process as conducted at the local school. Through this process it may be determined that a student be recommended to be given an additional year. Or it may be determined that, considering all the factors, it would be best to place the child in the next grade, even though there was not satisfactory performance in meeting the academic performance standards.

Note: If a child is being given an additional year or placed in the next grade, the additional year action plan must have been completed and parents made aware.

Q: How do we indicate that a student meets standards at a later quarter than it is assessed?

A: By exception, a teacher may choose to indicate mastery by communicating this in the comments area, student agenda, or various forms of communication with parents.

Q: Who helped create the new reporting system pieces?

A: Grading and reporting committees comprised of teachers and administrators have conducted work the past several years and continually review tools used for communication. Specifically for the primary years report cards, teachers were recommended by school administrators to serve on grade level committees. Teams have continued to provide input and feedback on a yearly basis and report cards are revised to reflect feedback from teachers, administrators and parents.