



## Lincoln Public Schools

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To: School Committee  
From: Mary Sterling  
Re: Update on Standards-based Assessment and Reporting  
Date: November 29, 2012

One of our 2012-13 district goals addresses the final phase of introducing the standards-based report card: *Implement standards-based report cards for grades K-8*. To support this goal, the same topic appears in the district goal for professional development.

Since 2010, several reports have been presented to School Committee regarding a standards-based system of assessing and reporting. These reports have described the background for the standards-based initiative and explained some guiding principles of standards-based approaches. The reports have also described an initial pilot of a new standards-based report card at grades 4 and 5 and the subsequent implementation of new report cards at grades K-3 and grade 6.

This report offers an update on the refinement of report cards in grades K-6 and describes the development and implementation of a new standards-based report card at grades 7 and 8.

### **Refinement of K-6 Assessment and Reporting**

This past year, teachers in grades K-6 took important steps to implement the new report cards:

- Teachers refined their assessments to focus more directly on the key concepts and skills in each subject area.
- Teachers re-organized their system of record-keeping in order to track student progress on multiple standards.
- Teachers communicated with parents through curriculum nights, parent conferences, and informal conversations to explain how they are using the 4 point scale and giving feedback to students.
- Teachers used the new report cards, refining their assessments, record-keeping, and communication in each term.

This was no small undertaking! At the same time, administrators provided ongoing support by organizing opportunities for professional development and collaboration, hosting meetings with parents, developing and distributing a parent guide to standards-based reporting, and updating the website for parents and teachers with resources on standards-based assessment and reporting.

Refining the K-6 report cards also involved a re-examination of every descriptor at each grade with some guiding questions:

- Is this descriptor clearly aligned to larger standards?
- Does this descriptor capture some of the most important learning in this standard for this grade level?
- Does this descriptor *indicate the thinking level* (look at my 6-8 guidelines) of the learning it describes?
- Does this descriptor relate to development in the grade below and the grade above?

Curriculum leaders led teacher discussions about the descriptors and gathered suggestions for revisions to improve the focus and wording of the report cards for 2012-13. In one area, English Language Arts,

all the descriptors were re-organized and revised to meet the 2011 Massachusetts Standards, in which the national Common Core Standards are embedded.

### **Standards-based Report Cards in Grades 7 and 8**

The development of a standards-based report card in grades 7 and 8 began in the fall of 2011 and continued through the winter, spring and summer of 2012. Led by the middle school principals and the assistant superintendent, teachers in grades 7 and 8 met multiple times. They reviewed the principles of standards-based assessing and reporting, became acquainted with the systems for record-keeping, and examined examples of assessments scored on a 4 point scale on multiple measures. In a series of working sessions, teachers of grades 6-8 in each subject area collaborated on the development of report card descriptors, using the same guiding questions listed above. The middle school report card now reflects what teachers and administrators believe are the most important concepts and skills in each content area. Professional development for teachers of grades 7 and 8 in the summer of 2012 provided time and resources to work on the development of their practice in using standards-based measures of assessment.

During the year of preparation, the conversation among eighth grade teachers, administrators, and parents, led to a decision to try out a pilot version at grade 8. This version adds letter grades related to the standards-based scores for all three terms. As this pilot report card is used, conversations among teachers, administrators, and parents will be held to gather input and make a decision about the continuation of letter grades going forward. At the School Committee meeting of December 6, 2012, examples of the grade 8 report card will be reviewed and discussed.

A first version of a new standards-based report card for grades 7 and 8 will be distributed at the end of Term 1, in December, 2012, and at the end of Term 2 and Term 3. Teachers and administrators will monitor the roll-out, discuss the quality of descriptors as they are in use, and plan for any revisions to be implemented in the final version of the grade 7 and 8 card for September 2013.

# Update on New Assessment and Reporting System

December 6, 2012

# Background

- 2006 – 2013 District Goals
- 2006 Began Development of Lincoln Learning Expectations
- 2007 Began Work on Common Assessments, scoring 4 pt scale
- 2010 Pilot New Report Card gr. 4 & 5
- 2011 Implemented K-5 report card; pilot gr. 6 report card
- 2012 Pilot gr. 7 & 8 report card
- 2013 Final Versions gr. K-8 report card

# Purpose

“Grades are not about what students earn;  
they are about what students learn.”

~ Susan Brookhart

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 of year.

~ Tom Guskey and Jane Bailey

# Principles & Practices

In assessing student work, we strive to:

- be accurate and fair
- give useful feedback
- make progress possible
- provide challenge for students who show they ready for more

**Good assessment informs**

**our instruction!**

# This year's focus

- Teacher input from last spring: K-6 report card revisions
- ELA descriptors revised to align with new standards: K-8
- Gr. 7 & 8 new card: developed with teacher input last year, provided professional development this summer, working with the new system this fall
- Gr. 8 pilot: scores in every standard and letter grades for each term

# Parent Communication

- September Curriculum nights: teacher presentations,  
Family Guides distributed
- Parent conferences: discussion of scores
- Progress reports: emphasized Growth as a Learner
- Website: updated resources; podcasts
- Parent coffee conversation -- middle school
- Superintendent's bulletin: October 10
- Principal's bulletins: November 30
- PTO sponsored scoring session: December 7



# Grade 8 Pilot Report Card

- Same scoring structure as the cards in grades 6 & 7
- Letter grade assigned: five core subjects, each term
- Letter grade determined by “Decision Rule” not a traditional percentage basis
- Conversations with teachers, parents administrators, high school, will inform decisions for next year