

South Kingstown Schools



Kindergarten

Standards-based Report Card Handbook for Families

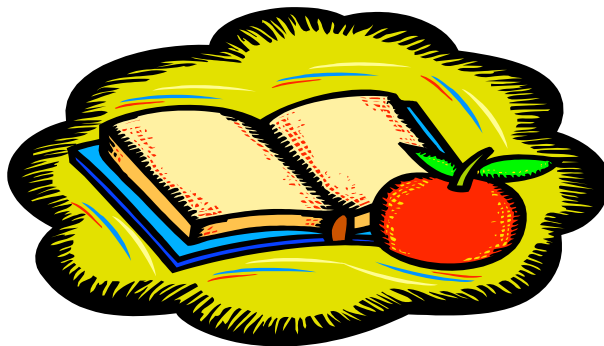
South Kingstown Schools

Mission Statement

The mission of the South Kingstown School Department is to educate the children of South Kingstown, in partnership with families and community, so that each student becomes a responsible individual who possesses the knowledge and skills for full productive citizenship.

We believe that:

- Every human being has intrinsic worth and each individual must be provided opportunities to become a life-long learner
- A well-balanced development of mind, body and spirit is important so that the total individual can flourish
- All children want to learn and do so in a variety of ways
- Each student will have the resources necessary to discover and develop his or her potential. They will be provided with equal opportunity to develop, accept, and exercise personal responsibility.
- Collaboration among diverse people builds and strengthens community
- It is the shared responsibility of family, students, school personnel, and elected officials to work together to create a positive educational environment.



Why have we moved towards a standards-based reporting system?

A report card is an ongoing conversation between the teacher, the student, and the parent about what is expected of students and how to help them to be successful in a rigorous academic program. For this purpose to be accomplished, however, the reporting system must accurately mirror the instructional model that exists in the classroom. In the past, grades reflected not only what had been achieved academically, but also how students behaved or how they compared with classmates. Reporting systems did not reflect the academic standards and performance assessments that exist in today's classrooms. Our instructional model has shifted away from a focus on basic skills and moved toward a deeper analysis of content that requires our students to think, plan, integrate, and construct. In this environment, the traditional grading system is inadequate.

Traditional Report Card	Standards-based Report Card
Subjects are listed by name	Major subjects are defined by curriculum or content standards and indicators
Letter grades (A – F) reflect an individual teacher's expectations and student achievement with effort as a factor.	Numerical levels indicate mastery of the grade level standards. Achievement and effort are reported separately
Curriculum and instruction are teacher centered, textbook driven, and not necessarily aligned to the state standards	Curriculum and instruction are aligned with state and district standards
Grading is based on teacher determined criteria	Student work is compared to state and district criteria and student performance is measured against predetermined performance levels.

Explaining Standards...

Standards are specified learning goals applied to all students. They provide consistent and clearly defined targets for students, teachers and parents to meet. Standards provide the basis for a compact between the district, the classroom, the child and parent about the expectations for all children. By defining students' academic responsibilities, standards by implication define the teaching responsibilities of the school.

At the heart of the standards movement is the belief that effort leads to ability. In other words, the harder students work, the closer they will come to achieving the standard. The standards movement strengthens the classroom ethic.

Additionally, standards provide clear expectations. Standards establish for all stakeholders what it is that students are expected to know and be able to do. Sustained effort over time should make it possible for all students to achieve these expectations because the standards always remain constant. The time needed to meet them, however, may vary from student to student.

In a standards-based classroom the focus is on student performance, not simply on taking quizzes and tests. Just as artists use portfolios to showcase their talent and a professional educator must first be a "student teacher," our students must be able to demonstrate their competencies through actual demonstrations, performances, and portfolios that show evidence of their learning.



What are Learner Qualities?

A reporting system should provide parents with a complete picture of their child as a learner. Parents expect to know where their child is academically, but it is also important for them to have feedback on their child's social development and work habits. This information allows parents to develop a clearer picture of their child as a learner, and it also helps parents to target improvement efforts where they are needed. These learner qualities, or life skills, impact academic achievement and help to prepare students for a successful future. Learner qualities represent habits of mind as well as habits of life.



Overview of the Progress Codes for Learner Qualities

4	Consistently/Independently	The student consistently and independently demonstrates the skills needed to be successful at this grade level
3	Usually	The student generally demonstrates the skills needed to be successful at this grade level
2	Sometimes	The student occasionally demonstrates the skills needed to be successful at this grade level
1	Seldom	The student seldom demonstrates the skills needed to be successful at this grade level

Overview of the Progress Report Keys

Achievement Key:

It is important to note that each standard reflects a level of difficulty that has been set for this grade level. Students are expected to meet this standard by the end of the school year. To examine each grade level standard in greater detail, visit the Rhode Island Department of Education web site at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/standards/default.htm>

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| 4 – Strongly in place: | The student produces work that meets or exceeds the Grade Level Standard. |
| 3 - Progressing: | The student is making consistent progress toward the Standard. |
| 2 - Beginning to progress: | The student is making an attempt toward the Standard. |
| 1 - Not yet evident: | The student shows limited evidence of progress toward the grade standards, and requires more time and practice to help increase understanding. |
| N/A | Some concepts and skills are not assessed until the end of the year. |



Some student expectations for reading:

Reading is the most important skill our students learn, and in our program we emphasize the five strands reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary and fluency. While our report card provides you with information on these areas, it is only a snapshot of the work that takes place in your child's classroom each day. Some examples of stories your child might be reading at the end of kindergarten include the Sunshine books such as *My Day* and *My Puppy*. Some students might even enjoy Eric Carle's *Have You Seen My Cat?* Others might want to read books such as *The Birthday Cake* or *The New House*.

Our goal is to get children to read and to love doing it. This goal requires your help as well and we look forward to sharing our work with you throughout the school year.

Some student expectations for writing:

In kindergarten students learn that writing begins with an idea and that ideas grow into a story line. Students also begin to use the writing process as they begin to draft simple stories using pictures and letters. The excerpt below comes from a kindergarten assignment that exceeded the end of year standard in writing:

Dre Teacher, I have a pee nut allergie. I am good at planting flayers an vegabolls. I do not like raisins... (spelling errors were part of student's essay).

Some student expectations for social studies:

Kindergarten students learn social studies through daily classroom routines and rituals. They learn to identify rules for different settings, for example the cafeteria and the classroom. They also learn about history and culture as part of their classroom reading and writing program, and some of the concepts they study include how events and people shape family and school life. K students also learn to identify symbols used to depict our shared democratic values, symbols such as the American flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Some student expectations for science:

Our elementary science program uses a kit-based approach to address the science standards. This approach enables students to explore first hand how things work. Gems-Net (Guiding Education in Math and Science Network) kits help students to construct their own knowledge of scientific principles and concepts and make these part of the way he/she

sees the world and makes decisions.

Kindergarten students use two kits during the school year. Seasons and weather helps students to study elements of weather such as cloud cover, temperature, precipitation, and wind velocity. The Balls and Ramps kit helps students begin to understand the use of tools and how they assist us to do things better.

To learn more about the Gems-Net kits, visit their web site – <http://espo.gso.uri.edu/~robp/GEMSNET/parent.html>

Some student expectations for math:

There are four math strands that students study each year. They are number and operations, geometry and measurement, functions and algebra and data, statistics and probability. Even at the kindergarten level, all four are addressed, but more than 50% of a child's work will be in number and operations. In addition to the skills listed on the report card, students also learn to recognize and name coins such as penny, nickel, dime and quarter. They measure temperature and estimate time. Their skills are further strengthened through problem solving. At this grade level, students would solve problems such as showing how 4 friends could share a square pizza equally.

Some student expectations for health:

Healthy children are better prepared to learn in school, and to help children lay a foundation for a healthy life, we begin in kindergarten to teach them about positive behaviors and the importance of physical activity. At this grade level, children not only learn about proper hygiene, they learn appropriate ways to express feelings. They even learn ways to protect the environment.

Special Subjects

Art, library, music and physical education enrich our children's lives. Our students at this grade level learn to express themselves through art, music and technology and they learn to cooperate through structured play and physical activity.

This is just a brief summary of grade level expectations for kindergarten. Again, to learn more about the content your child will study please visit the Rhode Island Department of Education website: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/standards/default.htm>



Report cards are just one way to share your child's progress. To learn more about the work your child does each day, we urge you to meet with your child's teacher, to volunteer in the classroom or serve as a chaperone on a field trip. Your involvement is a very important part of a successful school experience.



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