

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding CRSS Report Cards:

Why do you do a standards based report card?

The standards based report card focuses on the mastery of a set of specific grade level learning targets. The knowledge of the standard can be separated from the amount of work turned in, or that the work was of poor quality or had gaps in understanding early in the trimester but is now mastered, or even from whether the student is a good or a poor test taker. The score reflects how the student is doing compared to the learning target and not to the group.

What is the definition of a strand, standard, and benchmark?

Each subject area is made of four **strands**. These are the four items listed under the subject heading on the report card. In English Language Arts for instance the four strands are Reading, Writing, Speaking/Viewing/Listening/Media Literacy, and Language.

In each strand there are **standards**. These are more specific, but not to the detail level yet. The standards break the strand into smaller sections. In English Language Arts, again, in the Reading strand you would find 10 standards that are common to all grade levels (sometimes you will hear these called anchor standards).

Each standard is then broken into **benchmarks**. Benchmarks define what students need to know and do. The verbs are very important in the benchmarks because they help to show the level of difficulty. In this section of the standards' document there are also examples given.

Sometimes the words standards and benchmarks are interchanged.

Are all of these standards being met each trimester?

It would be impossible for every standard and especially every benchmark to be taught and assessed each trimester. By integrating units of study, multiple standards and benchmarks will be addressed in any given lesson or set of lessons. Throughout the course of the year students will be given the opportunity to learn about all of the standards that make up each of the four strands in each of the core subject areas.

If there is an asterisk (*) next to a subject/strand what does it mean that it was not the "focus" of instruction?

As the teacher planned their instruction for the trimester they chose certain standards within each strand to focus on, certain units or concepts to teach, and certain assessments to give or to assign. The (*) means that the teacher did not place their focus of instruction or assessment in that strand of the subject. Most likely aspects of that strand were part of lessons in an introductory way or later in the year in a reviewing way. By the end of the year there should be a score – at least once – in every row of the report card.

If my child has a 3 in the Reading strand in English Language Arts does that mean that they are proficient in each of the items listed in the Subject Comments for Reading (these are in the right hand column on the report card and appear each trimester)?

A 3 in the reading strand would not necessarily mean that the student is proficient in each of the statements under reading in the Subject Comments. These statements are simply the highlights of what a student should be able to do in that strand. What a 3 does indicate is that for the multiple standards and benchmarks associated with the standard that the teacher assessed for the trimester the student was showing consistent achievement and mastery. Areas of weakness might be commented on specifically for each child in the individual student comment which is located just below the key on the report card and should be a topic of discussion during the January conferences.

How can my child improve from a 3 to a 4? My student only received a 3, is that okay?

Since a 3 on the report card means that the student is on target to meet the grade level standards we first want to say that a 3 is a good score. In order to move to a 4 the student would need to be regularly doing more than what the standard is asking them to do. For instance, if the project requires that the student compare two sources of information the student might on their own decide to compare three sources from three very different types of resources. Or, in math they might be routinely asking to move to the next level of complexity of a problem and then following through with practice and conversation with the teacher.

My child has mainly 2's, should I be concerned?

The score of a 2 on the report card means that the student is making progress toward meeting the many standards that make up math, or reading, or whichever subject you are looking at. The concern you might have about a 2 is how to determine which of the standards and benchmarks were being measured. A 2 indicates that your child is making progress. This would be a good time to ask the teacher which skills or concepts need more work and ways to provide extra practice at home on those skills or concepts.

Could my student receive a lower score for a subject strand next trimester compared to this trimester?

Yes, if the focus of the trimester is different standards within the subject the student may not have those mastered like they did the standards assessed the first trimester. If the student does not take the assessments seriously, has not taken as active a part in the lessons or in completing homework, or if they still need more time to master a particular standard their score may move to a 2 instead of a 3.

If I want to learn more about what my student is supposed to know where can I find that information? Are all of the standards on the report card?

A summary of what is expected learning for the student's grade level can be found on the report card in sections by subject. These statements are simply the highlights of what a student should be able to do in that strand. Since there are literally pages of standards and benchmarks for each strand of each subject we decided to summarize those. If you would like to view the specific standards or benchmarks that make up the pieces of our summary it would be best to visit the standards section at the Minnesota Department of Education website. The standards are a framework for organizing instruction and are not meant to determine how a teacher or school delivers the instruction. The standards are the basis for the statewide assessments held each year.

How do grades that I see on assignments, unit tests, or projects during the trimester become the 4, 3, 2, or 1 on the report card?

The grades on the daily assignments and projects may have a fraction score showing the number correct over the number of points possible, or a percent score, or comments detailing the positives or areas to improve in the work. This work in many cases is the practice work that the teacher uses to inform their instruction on a daily and weekly basis. The assignments or projects may be part of the assessment for a particular standard or benchmark and when looked at in addition to other assessments the teacher will determine where the student is in mastering the concept or skill. The key on the report card shows the different levels of mastery.

KEY

4 (Exceeds: shows significant achievement beyond mastery of the standards)

3 (Meets: shows consistent achievement and mastery of the standards)

2 (Progressing: shows progress towards mastery of the standards)

1 (Emerging: shows significant gaps in mastery of the standards)

* (This area was not the focus of instruction or assessment this trimester)

How do these grades compare to what they'll see in HS? What is work completion and how is it measured?

Most high schools in this area will have a letter grade reporting system based on percentage of the work that is correct, on attendance, on timeliness of turning in assignments, and sometimes on completing additional extra credit work. Our report card starting at sixth grade will show the mastery of standards with a number score and the work completion with either a number score or a percent. Work completion basically means that the work was turned in and as the year progresses students who do not do that in a timely fashion may be penalized in the work completion score. Those students earning 3's and 4's AND who have a high level of work completion and class participation will most likely do well in high school if they continue with those work habits. Students earning 1's or having low work completion scores will most likely find high school to be harder for them. The conference time would be an excellent time to talk about ways to help with either content mastery and/or work completion habits for continued school success.

What if my child has an Individual Educational Plan?

In addition to the report card students with an IEP will receive a progress report each trimester. The progress report will contain information about how your child is progressing on the individual goals determined by the team when the IEP was written. In some cases the report card score will be an asterisk if the instruction is not provided by the classroom teacher for a particular strand.

What can I do to help my child succeed at school?

There are many ways that all of us can help each child achieve the most they can at every grade level and every developmental stage.

- First and foremost please be partners with us in your child's education.
- All students at elementary and middle school need between 8 and 10 hours of sleep each night. Sleep allows their brains to process the information of the day and solidifies new learning.

- Every student needs breakfast each day and it is available at school for those wishing to participate in the program. A high protein breakfast is especially helpful for brain function—peanut butter toast, hard boiled eggs, yogurt and granola, and milk and cereal are some quick breakfast suggestions.
- Having a study routine at home is important. This includes a place to study with the appropriate supplies, a time set aside to study, and a willingness to try the homework with your child.
- Many students believe that listening to music through earbuds or headsets helps them learn when brain research out of the Advising and Learning Assistance Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute indicates differently. “Studying with headphones on tends to decrease retention/memory . . . Headphones have direct access to the brain by covering the ears, and this direct access can interfere with learning, especially if the material is new and the new material is difficult . . .”
- Ask questions about your student’s homework and follow up on the learning that is reported on the weekly peeks, check their backpacks, and help them to plan their time in order to complete homework and projects.
- Read with them and to them every day. Talk about current events, the book you are reading, or an article in the newspaper. Play board games to reinforce social skills of fair play and cooperation. Pose math problems based on everyday life-- double a recipe, add up some of the grocery list, compare the price of a bulk product to individually wrapped products, look for and describe patterns or ask what time it is on the clock.
- Encourage your child to ask questions about their learning. This kind of self advocacy is important and can start even at the kindergarten level.
- If you feel your child is struggling with the expected grade level learning, it is important to contact the teacher. You might send a note, call, attend conferences, or set up an extra appointment to make a plan to help your child feel successful.

Additional questions about the report card can be sent to CRSS Info and they will be routed to the person best able to answer them.