

## **Frequently Asked Questions About CRSS Report Cards:**

### **Why do you do a standards based report card?**

A standards based report card focuses on the mastery of a set of specific grade level learning targets. By scoring the standards, in our case the standards that make up a particular strand in a subject, the score reflects the ability to perform the standard. 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.

### **Are all of these standards being met each trimester?**

It would be impossible for every standard to be taught and assessed each trimester. By integrating units of study multiple standards will be addressed in any given lesson or set of lessons. Throughout the course of the year students will have been given the opportunity to learn about the content in each of the larger strands within a subject, will have been asked to demonstrate their skills within the strand, and will have a score that indicates where they are in mastering those standards.

### **If there is an asterisk (\*) next to a subject/standards what does it mean that it was not the “focus” of instruction? Why doesn’t my student have a grade for a particular subject/standard?**

The (\*) means that as the teacher planned their instruction for the trimester they chose certain standards to focus on, certain units or concepts to teach, and certain assessments to give or to assign. The place where the (\*) is the teacher did not place their focus of instruction or assessment. Most likely aspects of that strand in the subject were part of lessons in an introductory 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 standard that is listed in the Subject Comments for Reading?**

A 3 in the reading strand would not necessarily mean that the student is proficient in each of the six summary statements under reading in the Subject Comments. This is because there are also standards and benchmarks under each of those summary statements that the teacher is looking at for each student. What it does indicate is that for most of the standards 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 Comment section 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. Remember that there are also multiple standards and benchmarks, a summary of those is in the Subject Comment area, that make up that 3.

**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 would have about a 2 is that it is hard to tell if it is in all of the standards in that area or many of the standards. This would be a good time to ask the teacher which skills or concepts need more work and how you might be able 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 unit or 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. 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.

**When will the social studies standards be completed?**

The last update from the Minnesota Department of Education stated that the social studies standards would be available by November 30<sup>th</sup>. We have not been given any other information at this time regarding a new date for release of the standards. In the meantime, we are using the 2004 standards for K – 5 and the draft 2011 standards for 6 – 8. In part this decision was made because of the availability of limited-term funds for textbook purchases at the upper levels.

**How do grades that I see on assignments 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 and when looked at with other assessments about that standard 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.

**How do you distinguish between a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4 with a specific music standard such as pitch or an art concept about color? Why aren't specialists (art, music, Chinese) giving an 'effort' score like before?**

For the music concept of pitch we have developed a rubric, a set of descriptors, that defines the differences between a 1, a 2, a 3, and a 4. The rubric may be teacher developed, or it might be adapted from another source, or some state standards actually have rubric examples that can be used. The effort score was eliminated when the key was simplified. We decided to focus on the content and standards. If a student is falling short in the area of participation, or work completion, or in their focus on doing the required activities during a lesson, the specialist teacher may add a comment about that or will share the observation with the classroom teacher.

**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.

**Why did the report card change?**

The staff felt that after two years of working with the previous report card that there were some difficulties with the formatting. The number of different scoring groups in the key made it hard to be consistent and seemed to be causing confusion. Since the standards in two of the major areas on the report card were changing due to state law (English Language Arts and Social Studies) this seemed like an opportune time to rework the report card.

**What can I do to help my child improve?**

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 this level need up to 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 to fuel their bodies. Energy drinks or other highly caffeinated beverages do not provide nutrition and can interfere with normal concentration. Caffeine has been shown to have greater affect on young adults with developing brains, and can result in higher blood pressure, heart rate, and disturb normal sleeping patterns.
- Many students believe that the constant 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, send a note, call and ask a question, attend conferences, or set up an extra appointment to make a plan, that includes school and home, if you feel your child is struggling with the expected learning.

**Additional questions about the report card can be sent to [info@cannonriverstemschool.org](mailto:info@cannonriverstemschool.org) and will be referred the person best able to answer the question. Questions we receive may be added to this FAQ document as necessary.**