

South Kingstown Schools



**A Family Guide to Standards-based Reporting for
Grades 4 and 5**

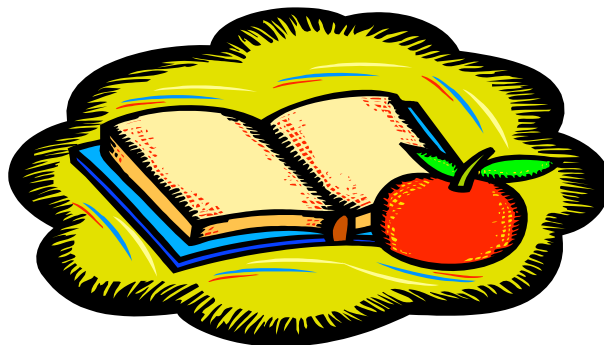
South Kingstown School Department Wakefield, Rhode Island

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 or guardian 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 families to meet. Standards provide the basis for a compact between the district, the classroom, the child and parent/guardian 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.



Overview of the Progress Codes

To provide families with the most comprehensive view of their child’s performance, classroom teachers will be assigning three grades: one for achievement towards end of year standards, one for quarterly progress or improvement, and one for quarterly effort.

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>

Performance toward End of Year Standard	Descriptor
4 Exceeds end of year standard	The student consistently produces work that exceeds the standard
3 Meets the end of year standard	The student consistently meets the standard
2 Making adequate progress toward the standard	The student grasps and applies the key concepts and skills needed to achieve the standard this school year
1 Not making adequate progress / requires help	The student demonstrates limited skill in grasping and applying the key concepts and skills for this grade level
N/A Not assessed this quarter	Some concepts and skills are not assessed during a quarterly grading period

Quarterly Progress	Descriptor
++	Quarterly progress exceeds expectations
+	Quarterly progress is on level
-	Quarterly progress is below level or in need of improvement

Quarterly Effort	Descriptor
Excellent	The student’s effort this quarter has been outstanding
Satisfactory	Effort is on level
Needs Improvement	The student will need to work harder in order to reach the end of year standard.

Some student expectations for reading:

By the end of grade 4, students should be reading and comprehending a wide range of grade appropriate materials – both fiction and non-fiction. At the beginning of the school year, students might be reading books such as: *Bunnicula* by Deborah and James Howe or *Homer Price* by Robert McCloskey. A beginning of the year non-fiction book might be Robert Ballard's *Exploring the Titanic*. At the end of the year, students might be reading George Seldon's *The Cricket in Times Square* or Patricia Polacco's *Pink and Say*.

Grade 5 students might begin the year with books similar to those at the end of 4th grade or they may be reading more challenging books such as *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes or *The Great Brain* by John Fitzgerald. By the end of the school year, the goal is to have students reading books such as Lloyd Alexander's *The Book of Three* or *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* by Paula Danziger.

To meet the 25 book standard, students making adequate progress toward this end of the year goal would be reading about 6 books by the end of the first quarter and about 15 to 18 books by the end of April.

Some student expectations for writing:

In grade 4, expectations for student writing have increased. Students are now beginning to use analysis and inference to develop a topic. They are beginning to use voice to engage the reader. The excerpt below comes from a 4th grade essay that exceeded end of year standards in writing:

I love dancing and I'm really good at it too. I'm especially good at leaps. Follow me and you'll learn how to do them perfectly. Before anything, though, you have to stretch and be wearing comfortable clothes....

This next excerpt comes from a 1st grade essay that met the end of year standard...

Dear....

I'm going to get right down to it. I don't want homework at the end of the year. This is one reason why I don't want homework at the end of the year. We want to play and get ready for summer instead of doing homework. It just makes life terrible.

Expectations for grade 5 students build on the previous year's goals. Now students should be practicing different styles of writing from expository to persuasive to narrative. All styles should use a voice that fits the topic, the purpose and the audience. By year's end, students should begin to experiment with original, fresh ways to communicate in writing.

The excerpt below comes from a 5th grade essay that exceeded end of year standards in writing:

Did you know you can enjoy fruit in a more fun and delicious way than just eating it? This guide will tell you how to make a smoothie, a tasty way to eat fruit in a

concoction of awesome ingredients, as a thick and fruity drink. I call this one the Kiwi, Banana Berry Blast smoothie.

This next excerpt comes from a 5th grade essay that met the end of year standard...
... Students don't get enough fresh air and oxygen stuck inside a building all day. When a student is stuck inside all day, they are more exposed to germs and bacteria. Do you really think it's a smart idea to expose kids to germs and bacteria all day?...

Some student expectations for social studies:

Our social studies program is theme based and addresses the following social studies strands: history, culture, geography, civics and economics.

Grade 4 students study Rhode Island in the Nation and in the World. This grade level focuses on several elements including the historical periods, places, people and events that led to the development of RI. In addition to the past, students will study and compare the character of RI's changing economy in both the past and the present.

Grade 5 students study early migration. During this school year, students will learn about our history from early migration through to colonization. For example, students will compare theories about how the First Peoples arrived in North America. They will learn about the Mayflower Compact and its importance in the functioning of Plymouth Colony.

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.

Each kit addresses inquiry skills, concepts and communication and specific grade level expectations in science. To learn more about the Gems-Net kits, visit their web site – <http://espo.gso.uri.edu/~robp/GEMSNET/parent.html>

Grade 4 students may use kits such as motion and design, electric circuits, and land and water.

Grade 5 students may use kits such as levers and pulleys, microworlds, and floating and sinking.

Some student expectations for math:

Students study four math strands each year: number and operations, geometry and measurement, functions and algebra and data, statistics and probability. While all four are addressed each year, at the elementary level more than 50% of a child's work will be in number and operations.

Some of the skills and concepts Grade 4 students will cover include:

- ∞ reading and writing numerals from 0 to 1,000,000
- ∞ mentally adding and subtracting whole numbers through sums of twenty
- ∞ solving two digit by two digit multiplication problems
- ∞ reading and writing fractional notations
- ∞ representing data in bar graphs, circle graphs and in Venn diagrams.

In addition to the concepts students focused on in Grade 4, Grade 5 students will:

- ∞ read and write numerals from 0 to 10,000,000 correctly.
- ∞ solve multi-digit addition and subtraction problems choosing an efficient strategy for any given problem
- ∞ solve addition and subtraction problems containing (positive and negative) proper fractions with like denominators.
- ∞ identify prime and composite numbers
- ∞ divide whole numbers by up to a two-digit divisor
- ∞ make conversions within systems such as inches to feet, centimeters to meters, ounces to quarts
- ∞ represent data using histograms

South Kingstown uses Everyday Math to support its mathematics curriculum. This program provides multiple exposures to a topic with frequent opportunities to review and practice the skills. A Grade Level Expectation may be introduced in September but mastery of that skill may not be assessed until June.

For additional information on our math program, go to the district math page for parents: <http://fc.skschools.net/elementarymath/Parent%20Resources>

Some student expectations for unified arts:

Our elementary students take classes in art and music and the curriculum in these two areas is based on the national standards. Students at each grade level have an opportunity to learn creative expression and to share their learning through school and community presentations.

From kindergarten to grade 5, all students have library class. This program is also based on the national standards and it prepares our students to be successful information seekers and users in our rapidly changing world.

Finally, all of our students also take part in a physical education program. This supports our wellness policy and promotes healthy schools and healthy lives.

This is just a brief summary of grade level expectations for grades 4 and 5. 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>



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	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



