



**MERIDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**STANDARDS-BASED  
REPORT CARDS**  
Grades K-5

**HANDBOOK**

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## **Teaching and Learning Message**

Teachers in Meriden Public Schools are among the most highly skilled professional educators in the state. Their commitment to continuous learning has created classroom instruction that is exemplar in every respect. Because they will be teaching the district's standards-based curriculum with fidelity, standards-based grading is a natural complement to the work they do in the classroom daily. The older report card was designed before state standards and did not adequately reflect everyday practice.

The elementary standards-based report card cross town collaboration committee met to suggest revisions and will continue to meet through the first year of implementation in order to provide support to teachers. We are confident that the new reporting system will meet the highest standards for accurately communicating student academic progress. Thank you in advance for your commitment to increased academic achievement for each of our students.

## **REPORTING PROCESS**

Reporting student progress occurs throughout the year and takes various forms. The overall process helps parents understand the topics studied in each learning area, the skills and concepts introduced, and the expected level of performance at each grade level. Progress reports will be discussed during December and March at parent conferences monitoring student progress of grade level goals. A final report card will be distributed in June which indicates student mastery of end of the year grade level goals.

## **ONGOING COMMUNICATION**

Open House  
Newsletters  
Phone/Email Conversations  
Samples of Student Work  
Parent Portal

## **REPORTING PROCESS**

December – Conference  
March – Conference  
June – Final Report Card

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Meriden Public Schools Website**

<http://www.meridenpublicschools.org>

### **Connecticut State Department of Education Common Core Documents**

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

The link sends readers to a document that describes and lists the new national curriculum adopted by the Connecticut State Department of Education in July 2010. From here, readers may skim either the language arts (reading and writing) or math objectives expected within each grade level. Additional subject areas may be added in the future, based on legislative actions.

### **Connecticut State Department of Education Standards and Grade Level Expectations**

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&Q=320954>

The link leads to the Connecticut State Department of Education curriculum home page. After choosing and clicking on a particular subject area on this page, the reader can examine the current state standards and grade level expectations for science, social studies, physical education, health, library, art, and music.

"By comparing one child's performance to a clear standard, parents, children, and teachers all know what is expected. Every time a student attempts a task, the performance is compared to the standard."

--Doug Reeves, 2004

## **STANDARDS-BASED REPORTING SYSTEM**

The purpose of the reporting system is to report separately:

- Student achievement based on content standards with end of the year expectations
- Student social development and work habits

This handbook has been created to help teachers and parents better understand the new reporting system that is aligned with national and state standards. The Meriden Public School system values the partnership between home and school that supports the successful development of each child. Ongoing communication between teachers and parents is essential and the standards-based reporting system is another tool to promote communication.

## **BENEFITS OF A STANDARDS-BASED REPORTING SYSTEM**

- Measure what a student should know and be able to do by the end of each grade in each learning area.
- Identify the concepts and skills in each learning area based on these standards.
- Indicate what skills students have mastered, as well as their strengths and areas for growth.
- Progress will be reported for each of the grade level standards identified rather than a single grade each subject area.
- Alignment of the Meriden Public Schools curriculum to the national and state standards including assessments to measure learning and the extent to which students meet learning targets.
- Students, parents, and teachers work together toward shared goals to ensure that students make progress each year.
- Students will know exactly what is expected to master goals for a particular subject area and parents will be better able to support their child's learning at home.
- All teachers across the District will have the same expectations and common understandings about learning targets at each grade level and be able to build student knowledge based on student mastery of the previous year's grade level goals.

## **CHANGES TO THE REPORTING SYSTEM**

The progress reports and report cards will align to the Common Core Learning Standards and reflect updates to the Meriden Public Schools curriculum and instruction. The new report card will provide more information about how a child is progressing toward meeting the key standards expected at each grade level.

Teachers will find the following elements in the new reporting system:

1. Reporting titles for each section of the report card that reflect the Connecticut and District standards for instruction. These standards are based on the Common Core Learning Standards.
2. Grading Keys will reflect the language in the Connecticut reporting system. The keys will define student progress toward the Common Core Learning Standards and be presented on a 4 point scale.
3. Alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which articulate what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level are aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> Century college and career readiness expectations.

How will CCSS help students?

- Prepare them to succeed in a global economy/society.
- Prepare them to apply knowledge and actively problem solve.
- Provide consistent focus on high level skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening and language.

## **PRINCIPLES OF GRADING**

- 1. Reporting Should Be Based on Clearly Specified Learning Goals and Performance Standards**
  - a. All students in the same grade level in Meriden Public Schools, no matter their school, will be evaluated using the same standards.
- 2. Evidence Used for Grading Should Be Valid**
  - a. Students are assessed on what they are taught.
- 3. Grading Should Be Based on Established Criteria, Not on Arbitrary Norms**
  - a. On an assessment, students are graded on the standards assessed, not on arbitrary norms such as poor handwriting or no name on their paper.
- 4. Not Everything Should be Included in Grades**
  - a. Students are not graded as they are learning the information, but after the learning has occurred. Students need to have enough “practice” in order to be successful in the end result. Practice is learning time.
- 5. Avoid Grading Based on Averages**
  - a. Traditional mean grading: the average of all graded assignments
  - b. Standards-based mode grading: the grade that appears the most often throughout a period of time
- 6. Focus on Achievement, and Report Other Factors Separately**
  - a. Students’ achievement should be the only aspect included in their grade. Students’ grades will reflect their achievement. However, their work habits and responsibilities will be reported separately

## ACADEMIC STANDARD EXPECTATIONS

Meriden Public Schools Standards-Based Reporting Systems include student evaluation and achievement information about different subject areas. Teachers base each student's evaluation on individual mastery of the learning objectives taught and practiced. Evaluation will be based on a standard rating that will indicate how closely each student comes to meeting the grade level standard. The following information describes academic content learning areas and topics evaluated in each subject area.

### English Language Arts

Students' end of the year achievement in English Language Arts is based on the following domains.

<b>Kindergarten-Grade 5</b>
Reading Standards for Literature
Reading Standards for Informational Text
Reading Standards: Foundational Skills
Writing Standards
Speaking and Listening Standards
Language Standards

Specific grade level indicators are addressed within each domain. Each indicator will be assessed through a balance of content and standard-based formative assessments, performance tasks, and curriculum unit assessments. Progress will address grade level content and indicators specific to each reporting period.

### Math

Students' end of the year achievement in mathematics is based on the following domains.

<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Grades 1 -2</b>	<b>Grades 3-5</b>
Counting & Cardinality	Numbers & Operations in Base Ten	Numbers & Operations in Base Ten
Operations & Algebraic Thinking	Operations & Algebraic Thinking	Operations & Algebraic Thinking
		Numbers & Operation with Fractions
Measurement & Data	Measurement & Data	Measurement & Data
Geometry	Geometry	Geometry

Specific grade level indicators are addressed within each domain. Each indicator will be assessed by a combination of formative assessments, performance tasks and curriculum unit assessments. Progress reports will address grade level content and indicators specific to each reporting period.



## **Science**

Student achievement in science is based on four content learning areas:

- Scientific Inquiry and Processes
- Physical, Life, and Earth/Space Science

## **Social Studies**

Student achievement in social studies is based on four content learning areas:

- History, Civics and Government, Geography, and Economics
- Inquiry-based instruction

## **Specialty Areas:**

### **Art, Music, and Physical Education, Technology, ESOL**

Student achievement is assessed on learning objectives based on state standards. Specific grade level skills are addressed within each category.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS/CHILDREN AT HOME**

- Keep communication open by asking your child about their day at school.
- Listen and comment on their answers.
- Be aware of their ongoing work and progress or concerns.
- Promote daily reading.
- Encourage your child's natural curiosity.
- Maintain open and on-going conversations with your child's teacher to understand your child's progress.
- Encourage responsibility and organizational habits with homework routines, which can help build strategies that will enable them to be independent learners.

## GUIDE TO THE MARKING SYSTEM

**Academic Effort and Social Development** indicators measure a student’s ability to be an independent and learner and a responsible and productive member of the school and community. These expectations contribute to higher student learning gains. The indicators for the *Academic Effort and Social Development Success* are:

- Y = Yes
- I = Inconsistent
- N = No

### **Academic Standard Indicators**

The following indicators are used to measure student achievement in all academic and specialty areas based on standards.

<i>Academic Indicators</i>	<i>Descriptor</i>	<i>What it looks like in the classroom</i>
4	<b><u>Exceeding</u></b> grade level learning standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance is characterized by extending <u>what is taught</u>.</li> <li>• Application of skills and concepts is demonstrated with consistent accuracy and independence with a high level of quality and depth of understanding.</li> </ul>
3	<b><u>Meeting</u></b> grade level learning standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance is characterized by consistent mastery of grade level standards.</li> <li>• The student understands and applies concepts and skills with minimal errors and support.</li> </ul>
2  *	<b><u>Progressing toward</u></b> grade level learning standards.  <i>3<sup>rd</sup> Term Exception: Student has progressed but did not meet grade level standard. He/she has shown growth and is still working toward the year end standard.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance indicates developing skills with some application within the grade level range.</li> <li>• More reinforcement of skills is necessary to meet grade level standards, which <i>may</i> require additional support.</li> </ul>
1	<b><u>Not meeting</u></b> grade level learning standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance varies in consistency with regard to accuracy and quality.</li> <li>• Academic support and guidance are needed for understanding and demonstration of concepts and skills.</li> <li>• Time and experience are required for grade level standards to develop.</li> </ul>
NA	Skills not assessed at that time. While some learning standards will be addressed throughout the entire year, others will be phased in as the year progresses.	

## **OVERVIEW OF CONTENT ACHIEVEMENT CRITERIA FOR SCORING**

(This is an overall description of student performance. It is not a description of performance on individual assessments.)

### **Academic Indicator 1: Not Meeting**

Students at this level are beginning to identify concepts, vocabulary and/or use skills. They are unable to make connections among ideas or extend the information. While it might be expected that all students are performing at this level when learning begins, subsequent practice should lead to increased levels of performance.

### **Academic Indicator 2: Progressing**

The difference between a Level 1 and a Level 2 student is the ability to demonstrate some understanding. At Level 2, a student can correctly identify some concepts and/or vocabulary, and/or use some skills. Students at Level 2 do not make connections among ideas nor are they able to demonstrate their learning without support.

### **Academic Indicator 3: Meeting**

Level 3 represents those students who are independently able to meet the standards. Students who are performing at Level 3 understand and use concepts and/or vocabulary and/or skills independently. These students understand not just the “what,” but can correctly explain and/or demonstrate the “how” and “why.”

### **Academic Indicator 4: Exceeding**

A student who is able to consistently perform at Level 4 is one who independently demonstrates extensions of his/her knowledge. Students should be able to create analogies and/or find connections, integrating areas of study.

## **MODIFIED GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS**

### **Students with Disabilities**

All students must be graded according to grade level priority standards, in line with their peers, on the grade level progress reports and final report card. Proficiency levels given in the new standards-based reporting system must be based on expectations for that grade level.

Students who have an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan) or a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, may require modifications to the grade level objectives in one or more of the content areas. This means that the grade level objectives for this student will be different from the objectives for the other students in that grade.

A check beside a standard on the progress reports and final report card indicates that the student's IEP or Section 504 Team has determined that the grade level objectives in that content area have been modified for this student. Teachers should refer to their child's IEP/Section 504 Plan and/or ask the student's special education teacher to collaborate when determining how the grade level objectives need to be modified for each student. The intent of a modified grade level objective is to give a more accurate report of a student's individual progress and academic achievement, even though he or she may not be achieving the grade level objectives.

The goal is to have all students strive toward achieving the grade level objectives, but also to acknowledge that due to the impact of a disability, modifications that have been made to the objectives for this particular student.

### **English Language Learners (ELL)**

All English Language Learners (ELL) must acquire the English skills necessary for academic success and ultimately for success in a global, multicultural, and multilingual society. Consequently, ELL student progress is recorded according to grade level priority standards in line with their peers in the new reporting system. Proficiency levels given in the new reporting system must be based on expectations for that grade level.

The English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) specialist in the building will consult with teachers when determining Academic Standard Indicators. Please note that students are expected to meet the same standards, and, as a result, a student who is still acquiring English skills may not reach that expected standard. However, if a student is making adequate progress in English, this will be noted in the new reporting system through Academic Standard Indicators. Over time, as the student acquires additional language and increased competency in reading and writing in English, s/he will most likely be able to meet the standards.

## FAQ

### **Why are only some of the standards listed on the progress reports and report card?**

Teams of teachers reviewed the Meriden Public Schools standards for each grade level in the process of developing the reporting system. In their review, the teachers chose the descriptors which were considered most significant for student growth in each subject area and at each grade level. These standards are often referred to as "priority standards." It does not mean that the other standards are less important, or that they will not be taught. In order to effectively communicate student progress, specific standards were selected to efficiently report growth during each of the three marking periods.

### **What should the expectations for my child be?**

Remembering that every child learns differently, the goal for students is to reach a level 3-Proficient when the teacher has completed a topic.

### **Can a student perform at a level 3 during one marking period and then receive a level 2 or 1 in subsequent marking periods?**

The expectations change from one marking period to another as the student moves toward the grade level expectations for the end of the year. As such, a student may find that expectations have increased in each marking period. This may result in very different levels of proficiency. A student could receive a 3 in the first marking period, and a level 2 or 1 in the subsequent marking periods.

### **Some areas on my child's report card were not evaluated this marking period and the report card shows N/A, or not applicable. Why wasn't this standard evaluated?**

Some standards will be taught each marking period. These standards will be assessed more frequently, and progress will be reported every marking period. The level of difficulty in the task and/or text may change, or the level of text complexity may change, making the expectation more demanding (i.e.: main idea). In other areas, the skill can progress to something more difficult. Other standards require an entire unit of study that may be unrelated to the current topic. In this case, the unit may be greyed out for a marking period since the skill may not have been assessed at that time. When the standard is taught, the standard is evaluated.

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Academic Standard Indicators:** The numbers 1 through 4 will be used on the standards based report card to indicate a student's level of understanding and performance.

**Assessment:** Ongoing process by which teachers gather data to determine a student's progress relative to a standard.

- **Formative Assessment:** ongoing information about a student's progress in learning (e.g. homework, quizzes, conferencing, logs and journals, drafts, anecdotal observations).
  - **Content Based:** assessments consisting of selected responses and a short constructed response on the content taught that month/term
  - **Standard-Based:** assessments consisting of the same format as the content based, but measuring the understanding of the standard application
  
- **Summative Assessments:** end of unit information determining what students have learned (e.g. tests, performance tasks, projects, final writing pieces).

**Benchmark:** A learning goal or target for a particular time in an academic year.

### **Common Core Standards**

The Common Core State Standards provide a national consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

**Mastery:** A student has met or exceeded targets for a given learning goal in a content area or grade level.

**Performance Task:** End of unit application of skills.

**Priority Standard:** Learning objectives considered most significant for student gains in each subject area at each grade level.

**Rubric:** A scoring tool used to rate a student's performance relative to the degree at which a standard has been met.

**Standard/Learning Objective:** A statement that identifies the skill or concept that a student should know and be able to achieve at each grade level.

