

Standards-Based Report Card To Be Implemented in 2006 – 2007 School Year

The Sulphur Springs School Board of Trustees voted to implement the new standards-based report card for the 2006 – 2007 school year. Standards-based education is not new to our district or the state. Standards have been an important part of our curriculum for many years now - our textbooks are standards-based, our state tests are standards-based, the state requires all students to receive instruction in and master the standards for each grade level. With all of these factors in place there was a need to base our report card on these same grade level content standards.

A standards-based report card informs parents about what their children know, what they are able to do, and what they need to learn in relation to the standards. The state standards are supported by classroom instruction. The standards-based report card is another tool for communicating student progress. Your child will know what is expected in his/her learning and teachers across the district will have a common understanding of what each child should know and be able to do at each grade level. You will understand the expectations and be able to help more specifically at home.

Standards-based grading is different from the way most of us received grades when we were in school where grades were averaged at the end of a quarter or semester. If we started out poorly, but finished with strong scores we still received the average grade and maybe our improvement was noted in the comments written by the teacher or in the effort grade. In a standards-based reporting system, your child's progress towards mastering a standard will be looked at for each grading period. A child that starts out slowly, as many do when the concept is brand new, but practices, studies and shows definite improvement and even mastery of the standard will have their "grade" reflect where they ended the trimester.

Ideally a report card is an ongoing conversation between teachers, students, and parents about what is expected and how to help them be successful in a rigorous academic program. The standards-based report card is designed to communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do. There will be four levels of performance (4, 3, 2, 1) a child may receive on any standard. A "4" or "Advanced" represents a student who has mastered the standard and can extend the learning, a "3" is "Proficient" and reflects students who have mastered a standard, a "2" is "Basic" and demonstrates a student is working towards understanding the standard (at times they may have show an understanding, but still requires more practice to master the standard), and a "1" is "Below Basic" and shows that a student has not yet shown they know the standard.

As the new school year begins there will be many opportunities for you to learn more about the new standards-based report card – special parent meetings, Back to School Night, and Parent Teacher Conferences. Watch for information from your school site and the district.