



JACKSON R-2

Standards-Based Assessment and Reporting: Background Information

What are the “standards” in standards-based reporting?

At Jackson R-2, we have a *standards-based curriculum*. That means our students are taught the same curriculum, regardless of which building or classroom they are in. The curriculum was designed by district teachers to help students learn the grade-level Missouri Learning Standards and our local standards.

We also administer *common standards-based assessments*. These assessments were created by teams of district teachers and are designed to assess students’ progress towards mastery of a standard. These assessments have been designed for each of the standards-based report card items.

Standards-based grading ensures that the grades students receive reflect the level of mastery they have earned on each report card item. This method of indicating progress was chosen by the Jackson R-2 district to help every student understand where he or she is in relation to meeting standards so they can improve. It is based on the belief that every child can learn, given the right support and opportunity.

How were the Standards-Based Items and Rubrics, Performance Level Descriptors, and assessments developed?

A representative committee was assembled from Jackson R-2 elementary schools to prioritize Standards-Based Items for each grade level and formulate the Standards-Based Descriptors and Rubrics. These educators spent a significant amount of time examining our Standards-Based Items and the work done by other schools to create the Performance Level Descriptors and Rubrics for each Standards-Based Item. Committees then went on to develop assessments that fully measure the mastery of each Standards-Based Item on the report card.

Why did the Jackson R-2 School District move toward standards-based grading?

Many of the leading educational researchers in our country (Doug Reeves, Robert Marzano, Tom Gusky, Rick Stiggins, and Richard DuFour) have identified the educational benefits of improving the quality of feedback students receive on how they are performing in relation to clearly identified standards. By using a standards-based grading and reporting system, we are following the results of educational research and best practice. Teachers will focus on four essential questions:

1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know that they have learned it?
3. What will we do when they haven't learned it?
4. What will we do when they already know it?

What has been the timeline of implementation of standards-based grading in Jackson R-2 elementary schools?

The process of writing the performance descriptors and K-5 rubrics began in early 2010. The standards-based report cards were used for the first time during the 2010-2011 school year. District common assessments will be in place in all K-5 classrooms during the 2014-2015 school year. Rubrics, pacing, and assessments continue to be reviewed and revised to best meet the needs of students and teachers. All of this work is done by committees of district teachers.

What is the difference between formative and summative assessment, and how do they affect the Standards-Based Report Card score?

Jackson R-2 teachers use both formative and summative assessment information to assign a report card score.

Formative assessments are used prior to giving an assessment that will determine a report card score. These assessments are a way for teachers to “check in” with students. It is done while students are still learning. Formative assessments help teachers to diagnose their students’ progress and to modify the instruction accordingly. It also helps students to monitor their own progress as they get feedback from their peers and the teacher. Students find the opportunity to revise/refine their thinking by means of formative assessment. Formative assessments may include, but are not limited to: common grade-level assessments, independent work samples, checklists, anecdotal records, and running records.

Summative assessments are a way for teachers to evaluate/describe students' performance at a specific time. It is done at the end of a unit or instructional period. At Jackson R-2, we have district common summative assessments for each report card item. The teacher scores the summative assessment in order to summarize the development of the learner at a particular time. Summative assessments are administered after sufficient formative assessment and instruction have occurred.

What does a Jackson R-2 elementary classroom look like?

Classrooms within our district will vary in their appearance, but the content of the classes is very much the same. Because we share the same grade-level standards, levels of expectation, and assessments, students across the district are experiencing the same high-quality education. This can be seen through the 4Cs:

Communication: Clear learning standards are communicated to the teachers, students, and parents.

Clarity: Performance levels are meaningful for students and parents. Academic achievement is in relation to academic expectations.

Consistency: Standards-based assessment rubrics and assessments are consistent within the district.

Congruence: Performance levels are aligned with district curriculum and assessment. Standards and curriculum alignment are promoted vertically and horizontally.

What are some of the major differences between standards-based grading and the traditional grading system?

Questions	Standards-Based Grading	Traditional Grading
How do the report cards look?	Subject areas are sub-divided into items that specifically state the skills and knowledge required of students.	Grades are given for the basic subject areas.
How are grades determined?	Grades reflect the level of proficiency on each individual item. These grades are end-of-year goals, and students' scores may change over time as their learning progresses.	Grades reflect an averaging of points collected in each subject area. These points may be obtained from daily work, quizzes, tests, and homework. Each subject area receives one grade.
How are learning standards made known to students and families?	Grade-level learning standards are publically available and displayed for students within classrooms. The criteria for mastery of each item is on the item rubric.	Standards may not be made known to parents or students, and the criteria for mastery may differ from teacher to teacher.
Which scores are included on the report card?	The most recent scores are included on the report card.	All marked scores from the quarter are averaged.
How often can students take an assessment?	Students can re-assess after additional instruction and learning. The new assessment score replaces the old on the report card.	Some re-assessments may not be possible. Those that are given are possibly averaged with the earlier assessment score.
What are the advantages of each grading system?	Parents and students can easily see which standards students have mastered and which ones they need more work on. The individual items are very specific and progress over time can be shown.	Most adults are more familiar with this grading system.
What are the disadvantages of each grading system?	It takes time to build an understanding of the new system.	The summarized grades do not reveal to parents enough information about their children's level of proficiency on actual standards. In addition, that averaging affect can make it difficult to see the most recent learning.