

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What are the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)?

The state of New Jersey has “standards” in each of the core subject areas taught in our elementary schools. Teachers use these standards to determine what to teach over the course of the school year. In each subject area, there are several standards that describe exactly what students will understand and be able to apply as a result of their learning. These standards are specific to each grade. For instance, the standards for children in 1st grade who are learning to read have very different reading standards than 4th grade students. For more information on NJSLS, [click here](#).

What is Standards-Based Grade Reporting?

A standards-based grade reporting system is designed to inform parents about their child’s progress towards achieving specific learning standards. The [New Jersey Student Learning Standards \(NJSLS\)](#) establish high and challenging performance expectations for all students. They not only describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year, NJSLS serve as the basis for the Hazlet Township School District instruction and assessment model.

The Standards-Based Report Card:

- highlights most important student skills in each subject area and grade level
- assesses “how well a child mastered each skill” within a subject area
- identifies areas of student strength and weakness to better inform instruction

What is the purpose of the Standards-Based Report Card? How does it differ from a traditional report card?

This report card allows parents and students to understand more clearly what is expected at each grade level. With this understanding, parents will be better able to guide and support their child to be successful in a rigorous academic program.

Unlike the traditional report card, the Standards-Based Report Card:

- students are assessed based on grade-level standards
- each grade-level has its own unique report card

Why did we switch from four marking periods to trimesters?

Our new standards-based report card is based on three marking periods, each approximately 13 weeks in length. The move to trimesters provides teachers with sufficient time to collect meaningful data about student-growth and enables students to explore the content and demonstrate their proficiency of standards. Through formative assessments and the strategic

placement of grade-wide benchmarks, teachers will consistently accrue and analyze key performance data.

Trimester 1: 9/12/18 - 12/14/18

Trimester 2: 12/17/18 - 3/20/19

Trimester 3: 3/21/19 - 6/27/19

How will teachers determine performance levels in Standards-Based grading?

Teachers use a variety of methods and tools to assess students' performance levels based on the standards for that grade. They look at evidence of student-proficiency by analyzing work samples and reviewing student-performance on activities, projects and assessments, such as quizzes and tests, as well as collecting classroom participation and anecdotal notes. This collected evidence of a student's learning is compared to what a student is expected to know or do according to the district's grade-level standards.

What are the Academic Assessment Performance Levels for grades 1-4?

Each performance level describes students' knowledge, skills, and practices, as well as the consistency with which they can demonstrate these. Performance levels use a scale of 1-4.

4 = Exceeds Standard Expectations

3 = Achieves Standard

2 = Approaching Standard

1 = Needs Support

What are the Academic Assessment Performance Levels for kindergarten?

Each performance level describes students' knowledge, skills, and practices, as well as the consistency with which they can demonstrate these. Performance levels use a scale of 1-3.

3 = Achieves Standard

2 = Approaching Standard

1 = Needs Support

Why do some areas receive "Not Assessed (NA)" on the report card?

Not all standards are taught during every trimester. Standards that have not yet been taught are indicated with NA (Not Assessed) on the report card.

How can parents explain to children what the performance levels mean?

One of the biggest differences between a traditional report card and a standards-based report card is assessing what students have "learned" not "earned" based on very clear and specific

expectations defined by NJSL. For example, a traditional “B” is an average of the points earned on tests, quizzes, assignments, and homework, along with effort and participation points. However, it does not clearly state what the student has really learned and achieved in terms of standards-based expectations for a specific grade-level, at a specific time, in the core content areas.

Therefore, it is important for parents to convey to their child that learning is a process that is developed over time. For example, “2” is appropriate when learning a new skill or concept. A performance level of “3” is to be celebrated since the child is demonstrating grade-level proficiency. “4” indicates a strength being recognized that is above and beyond the grade-level expectations. It is important for parents and teachers to have honest conversations with students. While some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, students can continually challenge themselves given time and motivation.