

The Public Schools of Brookline - Office of Teaching and Learning

2014-2015 Progress Reports

Parent/Guardian Guide

Overview

Over the past two years, Brookline has transitioned to a standards-based reporting format for Grades 1-5. This format provides parents with much more specific information about their student's learning with respect to the content area benchmarks that are described in Brookline's Learning Expectations. It enables teachers to:

- Assess student performance against a **specific** and **observable** set of grade level expectations.
- Assess each student against the identified grade level **end of year standard**, instead of how the student performs compared to other students.

Progress Reports (formerly called Conference Forms) are the tool used in Brookline to provide parents/guardians of students in Grades 1-5 with information about their child's learning progress. The reports also serve as a record of your child's performance over the course of the year and across the grades.

This year, classroom teachers will complete a fall Progress Report and hold a parent/guardian conference. In the spring, conferences will be held, as in the past, but teachers will not use the Progress Report form. The second documented report of student learning and growth will be an end of the year Progress Report, which will be sent home to parents/guardians. In addition to the classroom teachers' monitoring of progress, Special Education personnel and ELL personnel will maintain past practice of providing parents/guardians with fall and spring written progress reports. The table below summarizes what to expect for 2014-2015:

When	All Students	Special Education and ELL
Fall 2014	Parent/Guardian conference and written Progress Report	Progress Report
Spring 2015	Parent/Guardian conference only	Progress Report
End of Year 2015	Written Progress Report only	N/A

Why standards-based reporting?

Districts across Massachusetts and the nation are grappling with the question of how best to report student learning. The shift to using a standards-based model is based on the work of educational researchers like Thomas Guskey, who have studied how to make the reporting process consistent and authentic, providing meaningful information to students and parents.

In reviewing the research and examples of reporting forms from many districts, we recognized that our reporting forms needed to be less subjective and more consistent across the system in order to provide parents with a clear, consistent picture of where their students are with respect to the learning goals outlined in the Brookline Learning Expectations. The standards-based approach allows us to do this.

What is new for 2014-2015?

The transition to a standards-base format began with Mathematics in 2013-2104. For 2014-2015, Grades 1-5 English Language Arts, Science, and Grades 3-5 Social Studies will now be presented on the Progress Reports in a standards-based format. (NOTE: Grades 1-2 Social Studies will transition to a standards-based format in 2015-2016.) Classroom teachers will be discussing your child's progress in these subjects using the end-of-year standard as a benchmark.

How are students graded using a standards-based format?

A standards-based Progress Report identifies *end-of-year* benchmarks for students in each content area for the grade level. These benchmarks specify what students should know and be able to do at then end of each year. Students work towards this benchmark over the course of the year. In Brookline, our benchmarks are called Learning Expectations. *Essential Learning Expectations*, or ELEs are a subset or synthesis of the larger set of

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Learning Expectations that describe the key skills and understandings for students at a particular grade that are essential for them to master in order to be prepared for the next grade. The ELEs are listed on the Progress Reports.

What does standards-based reporting look like over the course of the year?

As students work through the curriculum, they move towards mastery of the standard or benchmark (Essential Learning Expectation or ELE). The descriptors reflect their progress towards mastery at specific points in the year. The descriptors in the reporting key are:

- EXT** Student demonstrates understanding of content and skills through **extension** and transference of knowledge; actively seeks and welcomes other opportunities to expand learning. (Extending)
→ The student has met the grade level standard, and is working to extend his/her learning in the standard, both independently and with the guidance of the classroom teacher. *This describes students who regularly and with understanding, apply the standard on their own and advance their level of understanding.*
- ESTB** Student **demonstrates understanding of content and skills** by independently applying the knowledge/skills, meeting grade level expectations. (Established)
→ The student, has met the standard, and achieved grade level expectations. *This is an expected descriptor for the end of the year or the completion of a unit of study.*
- DEV** Student is **developing** understanding of content and skills with support. (Developing)
→ As students work through the curriculum, they are gaining understanding and practicing skills, appropriately working their way to end-of-year proficiency. *For most ELEs, this is expected and typical mid-year progress.*
- BEG** Student is **beginning** to understand content and skills, requiring consistent support. (Beginning)
→ As the grade level curriculum topics are introduced, the content/concepts are new and students are learning to apply new skills. *For most ELEs, this is an expected descriptor of student progress at the beginning of a unit of study, typically in the fall.*
- NY** Student is **not yet** showing evidence of initial understanding, working below grade level, and having significant difficulty with new concepts and/or skills. (Not Yet)
→ *This descriptor indicates significant concern.* Teachers of students receiving this descriptor have been in consultation with the student's parents.
- N/A** **Not applicable** – skills and content not yet taught. (Not Applicable)
→ This descriptor may appear in the fall, as the content in the ELEs has not yet been covered.

About Work Habits and Thinking Skills

The skills named in the Progress Report are foundational abilities and understandings that students can learn and develop that prepare them to work effectively within and across disciplines, independently, and with others, through deliberate practice. As students practice these skills, they form habits of thinking and approaching tasks in a productive way.

Teachers observe how students work and think, and encourage the development and practice of these skills throughout the school day. This section is included in the Progress Report to create awareness of these important skills and foster a home-school partnership in nurturing the development of these skills in every student. The reporting is a simple frequency scale that indicates how students are progressing towards developing these habits of thinking.