

# NEW ELEMENTARY REPORT CARDS

FALL 2004

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF FORT ATKINSON



## Unveiling Our New Elementary Report Cards - A Celebration!

You will notice that the report card you receive this year for your elementary child looks much different than previous years. It is! We are very excited to share the benefits of this new report card with our elementary families.

Three years ago, a group of elementary teachers joined together to discuss the elementary report card. The current report card at that time had been in use for 19 years! Over the past 19 years, many changes had been made in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. The group of teachers, along with parents and school administrators, formed a committee and set out to design a new reporting system for Fort Atkinson's elementary schools. The group agreed that the new report cards should be computerized, linked to our curriculum and the state standards, grade level specific and offer detailed information for parents.

The task before the committee was enormous! Many, many hours were devoted to preparing this new means of reporting. Teachers decided the report card format, contributed to the design of the software, and wrote the report card lines as well as the corresponding rubrics.

Under the supervision of John Ottow,

District Technology Coordinator, custom report card software was designed by Marcia Brenner and Associates of Madison, a leading company for student record software. The software allows teachers to log onto the computer and enter information. The report cards are then saved on the district network. At report card time, all report cards will be printed by the school offices. The software also allows the district to track and collect data regarding a single student, a group of students or the district as a whole. This data will be used to deliver extra help or challenge to individual students as well as guide district instructional improvement initiatives in the future.

The entire reporting system was piloted last year by ten teachers representing all grade levels and all elementary buildings. Feedback from parents and teachers was extremely positive.

Everything about this report card is dreamed, researched, designed and now implemented by Fort Atkinson teachers. We are extremely proud of the product we have created. We hope you feel equally as proud and pleased once you, too, have experienced the new elementary report cards.

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### For More Information about Report Cards Contact...

- ◆ Your child's teacher
- ◆ The building principal
- ◆ The district's Director of Instruction (563-7802)

## A Standards-Based Approach to Reporting

The new elementary report cards are *standards-based*. What does it mean to have standards-based reporting? We are so glad you asked.

Standards-based reporting means that students are measured quarterly against a set of district-wide academic standards for each subject area. Each grade level has a mid-year and end-of-the-year set of standards. Every student in that grade level, across the district, is receiving similar instruction and being assessed on the same expectations. Never has our elementary curriculum been so alive, uniformly delivered or well communicated to parents!

Who determined Fort Atkinson's standards? Teachers, with the help of

administration, determined and wrote our standards. The State of Wisconsin standards provided the starting point and, in many cases, Fort Atkinson's standards exceed the expectations of the state.

With this system, parents will now know exactly what their child is learning in each subject area and, each quarter, whether their child is "on track" with State and district academic expectations.

**Why standards-based?** Because we are dedicated to providing every Fort Atkinson child with a comprehensive and complete education as well as communicating each child's progress through the district's curriculum.

## What Do 4, 3, 2 and 1 Really Mean?



### ***Another Benefit of Standards Based Reporting:***

*On a traditional report card a student would receive only one grade for a subject.*

*On our new report cards, we report on many specific skills within a subject area providing the student and the parent much more detailed information about your child's strengths and weaknesses in that subject area.*

A student's progress on the report card is now represented by a proficiency level. What do these levels mean for parents and students?

Earning a "4" means the student has *advanced understanding* and *exceeds* grade-level expectations. A student receiving a 4 is *at least* 1 full academic semester ahead of the district's standard. A 4 is designed to provide academically gifted students challenge within the regular classroom. There are *very specific skills* indicated in the report card rubric that a student needs to be able to do to earn a 4. This student has to show initiative, challenge themselves and demonstrate this advanced knowledge at school. Since our standards are high, a 4 is difficult to achieve and indicates a high ability in an academic area or strand.

Earning a "3" means the student has *proficient understanding* and *meets* grade-level expectations. We want all of our students to reach a level 3. A student receiving a 3 is *right on track* with our high academic expectations. He or she is exactly where we, as a district, are hoping a student in that grade level will be. A 3 is something to be celebrated!

Earning a "2" means the student has *basic understanding* and *partially meets* grade-level expectations. A student receiving a 2 understands the basic concepts or skills, but has not yet reached the proficient level. A 2 should indicate to parents that their child may need some extra help on that concept to stay on track with district expectations.

Earning a "1" means the student has *minimal understanding* and *does not meet* grade-level expectations. A student receiving a 1 has serious academic delays according to our district standards. A 1 student needs targeted remedial help to learn and stay on track with district expectations.

IEP in a report card line indicates that this student participates in the district's special education program, and the student, due to his or her disability area, is unable to be assessed using the grade level rubric *for that report card line*. The student's academic progress for that line will be reported on the IEP Supplement page (last page of the report card).

We are confident that the new report cards will provide parents more extensive, specific information about their child's learning.

## How Do Teachers Determine Proficiency Levels? REPORT CARD RUBRICS

How does your child's teacher determine which proficiency level your child has earned? They do so with Report Card Rubrics.

A Report Card Rubric outlines exactly what your child needs to know or be able to do to earn a 4-3-2 or 1 for a report card line. Every report card line has a corresponding rubric, and rubrics change each semester to reflect new standards and our expectation for student growth.

Throughout the semester, teachers assess students. With the standards for that grade level in mind, they consider: knowledge of the child, evidence of student performance, and finally knowledge of what the child is expected to know or be able to do.

To begin, the teacher needs knowledge about the child. The teacher asks:

- What do I know about this child?
- How does this child learn best?
- In what way does this child communicate his or her learning?

Secondly, the teacher needs to look at evidence of student performance for each report card line:

- What work samples have I collected?
- How has the child performed on activities and assessments?
- What do my anecdotal notes say?

Finally, teachers consider what the child is expected to know or be able to do:

- What does the report card rubric say a child needs to know and be able to do to earn a 4-3-2 or 1?

After going through this process, the teacher assigns a proficiency level for each line of the report card.

District Report Card Rubrics are available to parents. We want you to understand exactly what your child knows and is able to do. They can be seen online at <http://admin.fortschools.org/instruction/rubrics/index.shtml> or paper copies are available by request.

## See For Yourself - A Sample Rubric

Report Card Line: Subtracts 2-3 Digit Numbers with Regrouping (Grade 3 / Semester 1)

Proficiency Levels		4	3	2	1
Specific skills are listed under each proficiency level to indicate what a student needs to do to earn a 4-3-2 or 1 for that report card line.	<b>Independently demonstrates proficient skills and:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatically uses facts when solving complex problems</li> <li>Applies mental math to a variety of situations</li> <li>Generates algorithm for subtraction</li> <li>Uses the commutative and associative properties for addition</li> <li>Subtracts money in problem solving situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent with all the basic facts of subtraction</li> <li>Uses mental math</li> <li>Selects and applies algorithms for subtraction</li> <li>Understands the concept of commutative and associative properties for addition</li> <li>Subtracts money</li> <li>Solves problems in vertical and horizontal format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent with most of the basic facts of subtraction</li> <li>Demonstrates some of the proficient skills and/ or requires some teacher help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent with few of the subtraction facts</li> <li>Demonstrates few of the proficient skills and/or requires intensive teacher help</li> </ul>

### Many report card lines have a rubric!

See them for yourself at <http://admin.fortschools.org/instruction/rubrics/index.shtml> or request a paper copy in your school office.

## What can a parent do to help their child? TIPS from the TEACHERS



*The School District of Fort Atkinson is committed to delivering the quality opportunities and services each student needs to achieve his or her academic and personal potential.*

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.fortschools.org](http://www.fortschools.org)

- Talk with your child about what they are learning in school.
- When you talk with your child about school, help them take ownership of their learning by focusing the discussion on specific skills and/or concepts. Use language from the report card or rubrics. For example: I see you are working on *adding decimals*; show me how you do that. Or how can I help you *brainstorm ideas* for your writing?
- Reinforce to your child that 3's are good work - something to be proud of.
- Take a few minutes and really look at your child's report card. What areas are they struggling in? Ask the teacher what you can do at home to help your child on specific skills.
- If your child has all 3's in an academic area, ask them if they have attempted to earn a 4? Discuss with your child's teacher whether a 4 is appropriate or attainable for your child.
- Look at report card rubrics together. Ask them to tell you about their own learning and set goals together.
- Read to your child. Even as they grow in independence, children need to hear other people read to gain the fluency and rhythm of our language.
- Listen to your child read. This is not limited to books. Reading is all around us: lists, road signs, magazines, etc. Oral reading is a skill that takes practice to develop. Children often feel more comfortable doing this at home.
- Set aside a study time. If your child has homework, do it during that time. If your child has no homework, have a basket with flash cards, spelling words, an educational software game or a fun book to read and let your child choose an activity. The purpose is to make learning a routine at home.