3228 Coles Mill Road Franklinville, NJ 08322-3029

#### Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you know, a standards-based report card pilot is occurring in grade 6 English/Language Arts and Social Studies classes this year. The pilot is part of current efforts to offer a better view of students' learning, as the report cards will provide more detailed information regarding the skills and academic concept areas being explored. Reporting students' levels of performance on learning standards within an academic subject benefits both parents and teachers, as it provides a comprehensive look at specific areas of weakness and strength; areas that can be examined in order to further students' learning.

On the grade 6 report card, you will notice the specific learning standards that are the focus of the current grade-level and subject area. Rather than using an overall letter or number grade for the entire subject area, students' performance of each of these learning standards are reported using the following scale:

E = Exceeds (Student is exceeding grade-level standards for the trimester)

M = Meets (Student is meeting grade-level standards for the trimester)

P = Progressing (Student is progressing toward grade-level standards for the trimester)

N = Needs Improvement (Student is demonstrating minimal progress and is at risk of not meeting grade-level standards for the trimester)

The use of the standards-based report card will hopefully provide valuable, detailed feedback regarding the progress your child is making toward the specific learning standards listed. In identifying students' performance within each of these standards, we will all have a better understanding of the learning that has occurred and be given particular areas of focus for future learning. If you have questions or would like to discuss elements of the report card pilot further, please contact a member of the district's Curriculum and Instruction Department or your child's teacher.

Sincere thanks for supporting your child's education.

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#### Grade 6 Standards-Based Report Card Pilot

The Caroline Reutter School is implementing a grade 6 standards-based report card pilot in the subject areas of English/Language Arts and Social Studies only during the 2016-2017 academic year. Efforts put forth through the standards-based report card pilot are fueled from the belief that report card improvements can be made in order to fully communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do as set forth by grade level standards. A primary aim of the standards-based report card is to provide parents, students, and teachers a more detailed outline of the expectations in students' academic areas. We believe that your understanding of school expectations, in combination with being aware of how well your child is progressing towards the goals at his or her grade level, is a crucial component of the learning process. It is our hope that the responses to the questions below will provide you with more of an understanding of the standards-based report card pilot.

#### What is a standards-based report card?

A standards-based report card is designed to inform parents about their child's progress toward achieving specific learning standards and skills. Learning standards in the state of New Jersey establish challenging performance expectations for all students at each grade level. They describe what students should know and be able to do and serve as a basis for the Township of Franklin Public School's curriculum, instruction, and assessment model.

#### Why was the report card changed to a standards-based report card for the pilot?

The report card was changed to provide more information to parents about student progress and degree of learning through the year. On a traditional report card, students receive one grade for reading, one for social studies, and so on. On a standards-based report card, each of these subject areas is further expanded by a list of skills and knowledge students are responsible for learning. Students receive a separate mark for each standard of learning that is being measured.

#### What is the purpose of the standards-based report card?

The purpose of the standards-based report card is to provide valuable, detailed feedback to parents regarding the progress their children are making toward specific content indicators and learning targets. This report card allows parents and students to clearly understand what is expected at the grade level. With this understanding, parents will be better able to guide and support their child, helping him/her to be successful in a rigorous academic program.

# How does the standards-based report card compare to the traditional letter grade system?

Standards-based reporting is different from traditional letter grade reporting. Traditional letter or number grades are often averages calculated by combining how well the student met a teacher's expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, how much effort the teacher believes the student put forth, and how the student is doing in comparison to classmates. Letter or number grades do not always tell parents which skills their child has mastered or where he or she is working at grade level. The standards-based report card measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to learning standards, not other factors that sometimes negatively impact an accurate measure of learning. This will give parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and encourage all students to do their best. Rather than using a number or letter on a report card, the following identifies the scale that will be used on the grade 6 report card:

	Performance Level Rubric
E = Exce	eeds
Exceedir	ng grade-level standard for trimester
M = Me	eets
Meeting	grade-level standard for trimester
P = Pro	gressing
Progress trimeste	ing toward grade-level standard for r
N = Nee	eds Improvement
	trating minimal progress and at risk of not grade-level standard

### What does it mean for a child to exceed the grade level standards?

Another change for students and parents is understanding the concept of exceeding the grade level standard. Exceeding is not the equivalent of an A on a traditional report card. For example, if a sixth grade student received A's on every test during the marking period, he or she would likely receive an A on a traditional report card. If those tests measured only the concepts sixth graders are expected to master, those A's would be the equivalent of meeting the standard on a standards-based report card; the student is performing very well in regard to grade level expectations, but not necessarily more. Standards-based report cards allow for students to demonstrate their ability to apply skills and knowledge beyond grade level expectations. Performance is characterized by self-motivation and the ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality beyond the current grade level.

## Why not just have a standards-based system as an additional reporting component to the traditional report card?

Traditional report cards do not always communicate to parents what teachers want them to know about their child's strengths and weaknesses. The elementary level is based on a growth-development model where learning is valued as a process. Traditional letter/percent grades and standards-based rubrics do not assess in the same way and therefore are not compatible to one another.

### How are parents expected to explain their child's performance as identified on the standard-based report card?

It is important that both parents and teachers have conversations with students regarding their learning process. Some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, but given time and motivation, students can continually challenge themselves and grow academically. Attitudes are contagious and it is important that adults convey to the child that learning is an active process that needs to be respected. A score of N = Needs Improvement indicates that the child is currently unable to, or has significant difficulty with, a particular skill that has been taught and practiced. A score of P = Progressing while learning a new skill or concept is appropriate. A score of M = Meets is acknowledgement that the student is able to perform at grade level expectations. A score of E = Exceeds indicates a strength being recognized that is above and beyond the grade level expectations.

The report card is an important part of our school-home partnership. We are excited to continue to seek ways to improve the quality of education that students receive. If you have questions or would like more information about the report card, please feel free to contact the Curriculum and Instruction office or your child's teacher.