**About English for New Bostonians**

**Developed by Susan Klaw**

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English for New Bostonians (ENB) invests in the future of our region by fostering a high-quality ESOL system that prepares immigrants to pursue their educational, economic and civic aspirations. Through grant making, training teachers, and building public awareness, ENB expands the number of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) seats, improves program quality across agencies, customizes curricula to diverse subpopulations, and leverages private and public resources. Founded in 2001 by the Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA), immigrant leaders, and local foundations, ENB now involves several city departments, approximately 20 public and private funders, and numerous community organizations.

**About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Initiative**

Through ESOL for Parents and Caregivers, ENB guides ESOL providers and immigrant-rich schools in building partnerships to facilitate parent engagement in schools, enabling parents/caregiversto improve their English and digital literacy skills, navigate school systems, and understand expectations and opportunities for school involvement and ways to optimize children’s learning. At the same time, ESOL for Parents helps adults prepare to pursue their own educational and employment goals, *while* supporting children’s learning – *aiming to eliminate multigenerational poverty*.

**About Susan Klaw**

Susan Klaw has directed, taught in, and developed original curriculum materials for Boston-based parent ESOL programs since 1991. She has delivered extensive training locally and nationally on various aspects of Family Literacy and been named a “Literacy Champion” by the Massachusetts Literacy Foundation, Parent Educator of the Year by the Children’s Trust Fund, and Adult Educator of the Year by the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education.

**About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum**

The Curriculum (on ENB website and available free of charge) gives ESOL teachers background materials, lessons and activities designed to help immigrant parents learn English and become more effectively involved in their children’s education. Selecting curriculum units and lessons relevant to their classes, ESOL teachers can orient immigrant parents to the U.S. school system and provide practical skills such as interpreting report cards, participating in teacher conferences, advocating for children, and supporting children's learning at home. While some information is Boston specific, much can be used in any locale. ENB can assist in adapting materials for school districts. Additionally, ENB offers a Companion Middle/High School Guide, as well as a Digital Learning Guide to support online instruction.

**Using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum**

All materials are intended to be downloaded and widely used. Please cite English for New Bostonians and credit English for New Bostonians on all reproductions. We welcome feedback and stories on how you and your students are using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum!

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**ACTIVITY #1: REPORT CARD OVERVIEW**

**(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)**

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| **Note to Teachers:** This unit has multiple activities and will take a number of classes to complete if one chooses to do all of them. The BPS report card, like those from most school districts, is so full of information, vocabulary and educational concepts that one could build an entire semester of Parent ESOL around it. This unit is best done prior to the first marking period of the year which for Boston public elementary students is in early December. It would also be timely in March, prior to the second report card coming home. In either case, wait until mid March to do Activity #5 which helps parents understand the Kindergarten Report Card and what they can do at home to support their child’s development. Kindergarten students do not get a report card in the first marking period. Note that many parents do get the report card in a second language as well as in English, which makes it somewhat more comprehensible for them. For teachers whose students attend schools in other school districts, use the report card of your district and adapt the concepts of this unit.  More generic and in some cases simpler report card activities appear in various textbook series. Check the ones you have access to. For example:  From Home to School 2, New Readers Press, Lesson 7, The Report Card, Futures 3, Pearson Longman, Lesson 8, Read a Report Card,  Futures 4, Pearson Longman, Lesson 3, Interpret and respond to a report card, Side by Side 3, Pearson Longman, Life Skills Reading. |

**Rationale:**

BPS report cards contain critical information that helps parents understand how their children are progressing in school. However, the vocabulary, educational concepts and layout are complicated for many parents, including, but by no means limited to ELL parents. In the following series of report card activities, that information is broken down into more comprehensible parts.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will learn what a marking period is and be able to identify when their children will get their next report cards.

▪ Students will be able to identify the five basic sections of the report card and the core content subjects students study in elementary school.

**Materials:**

▪ Boston Public Schools Report Card Schedule. Copy from inside back page of the current Guide to the Boston Public Schools for Families and Students. Ideally you will have print copies of the Guide. If not, go to the BPS website and search for it.

▪ Handout: Sample Actual BPS Report Card for Grades 1-5 (Retyped and formatted to make more legible)

▪ Highlighters and masking tape

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Opening discussion questions: *What is a report card? Did you get report cards in the schools you went to? What is a grade? Did you have letter grades? Number grades?*

3. Distribute the Report Card Schedule. Write key vocabulary on board and explain: marks, marking period, distribute. Point out that this schedule will not include students in charter schools. Then help students read the charts, asking such questions as:

*▪ How many times a year do children in grades K-5 get report cards?*

*▪ When does a child in grades K-5 bring home the first report card?*

*▪ How many times a year do children in grades 6-12 get report cards?*

*▪ When does a child in grades 6-12 bring home the first report card?*

Write the following sentence stems on the board for parents to copy and complete.

My child is in \_\_\_\_\_ grade. They will get the next report card the week of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Distribute the Handout: Sample Actual BPS Report Card for Grades 1-5. Make multiple copies to have on hand because you will be using these in the next few activities as well. Explain that while this is an actual first grader’s report card, it has been retyped so that it is easier to read. Thus the format will look different.

5. Explain that the same report card is used for grades 1-5. K2 students get a different report card and they do not get one the first marking period. K1 students do not get report cards.

6. Write on the board the five sections of the report card: Core Content Subject Areas, School Leadership and Social Development Standards, Attendance, Comments, Academic Grading System. See if students can find and highlight those five sections of the report card.

7. Direct student attention to the Core Content Subject Areas. Ask them to identify the five subject areas and write these on the board. Point out that “reading” and “writing, listening, speaking” are often combined and called English Language Arts or ELA. Explain that these are the subjects students study in elementary school and that most of the time is spent on ELA and Math which children have every day. Parents are interested to learn that all children in Boston elementary schools study the same core subjects and use the same text books. The specialty subjects however

differ from elementary school to elementary school. Students usually have these

subjects once a week.

8. Direct student attention to Specialty Subject Areas. These “specials” differ from school to school. Also, not every child has each specialty subject every marking period as can be seen in the sample report card.

9. Write the following questions on the board, or create a discussion guide handout and have students discuss the questions in pairs.

▪ Did you study the same subjects when you were in elementary school?

▪ Did you have more subjects? Fewer subjects?

▪ Do you think there are other subjects children should also study? Do a brief wrap-up of the paired discussions. Note on the board ideas for other subjects children might study.

10. Focus on the box at the bottom of the second page of the sample report card. This explains what the numbers mean. Ask parents which is highest, a (1) or a (4). When BPS changed from letter to number grades some years ago, many parents initially assumed (1) was the highest mark. Ask parents how they can tell or how they know what the numbers mean. Clarify the concept of standards (exceeding, meeting, etc) with the following fun broad jump game.

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| **The Broad Jump Standards Game:** Clear space in the classroom or better, move into a hallway. Mark a starting point on the floor with a piece of masking tape. Take a big jump and have a student mark with tape the spot where you first landed. Explain that you represent the school and that this distance, between the two pieces of tape, is now “the standard.” Ask for a volunteer to go next. Mark with tape where that person landed. Have students compare that person’s distance with your own. Did she jump farther? The same? Not as far? Then rephrase into the language of standards. Did she **meet** my standard? **Exceed** my standard? Show **some evidence of meeting** my standard? Have as many students as possible do the broad jump. Each time mark their landing spot, and have the class decide how the current jumper did vis a vis the standards. After four or five jumpers, have the class switch from saying whether standards were met or exceeded to assigning a number to that jump. Was it a (3)? Was it a (4)? Was it a (2)? |

11. Turn back to the sample report card. Direct students to look at the Core Content Subject Area, Spring marking period. Ask whether the child in the spring **met** or **exceeded** the standards.

**Handout: Sample Actual BPS Report Card for Grades 1-5**

**This is a real report card of a child in 1st Grade at the Otis School, school year 2010-2011.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CORE CONTENT SUBJECT AREAS | Fall | Winter | Spring |
| **Reading Standards Area** |  |  |  |
| Reads with fluency & accuracy | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Understands what is read | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Reads a variety of material on level | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| *Overall Reading Effort* | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Writing, Listening, Speaking Standards Areas** |  |  |  |
| Spelling & vocabulary | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Mechanics & usage | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Content & organization | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| *Overall Writing Effort* | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Understands spoken English in social and classroom situations | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Uses spoken English in social and classroom situations | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| *Overall Listening/Speaking Effort* | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Math Standard Areas** |  |  |  |
| Demonstrates fluency/accuracy in number sense | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Develops and explains strategies to solve problems | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Understands and applies mathematical thinking | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Overall math effort | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Science Standard Areas** |  |  |  |
| Written work & knowledge | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Projects & experiments | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| *Overall Science Effort* | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Social Studies Standard Areas** |  |  |  |
| Written work & knowledge | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Overall Social Studies Effort | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| SPECIALTY SUBJECT AREAS | Fall | Winter | Spring |
| **Art** | 3 | 3 |  |
| **Computers** |  | 3 | 3 |
| **Music** | 3 |  |  |
| **Drama** |  |  | 3 |
|  |  |  |  |

**Attendance**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fall | Winter | Spring | Total |
| Present | 59 | 55 | 65 | 178 |
| Absent | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Tardy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***School Leadership and Social Development Standards*** | Fall | Winter | Spring |
| Works hard and strives for excellence | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Actively participates in discussions | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Is able to work independently | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Knows where to find information | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Gets help when necessary | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Organizes workspace & materials | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Turns in neat, legible work | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Completes and returns homework assignments | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Observes classrooms & school rules | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Shows self-control | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Respects others rights & opinions | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Respects cultural differences | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Works cooperatively with peers | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Accepts suggestions and learns from mistakes | 3 | 3 | 3 |

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| **Academic Grading System**  4=Exceeds the standard 2=Shows some evidence of meeting the standard 3=Meets the standard 1=Shows little evidence of meeting the standards  **School Leadership &Social Development and Specialty Subjects Grading System**  4=Demonstrates exceptional effort 2=Work shows some evidence of effort 3=Work demonstrates solid evidence of effort 1=Shows little evidence of effort |

**ACTIVITY #2: REPORT CARD VOCABULARY**

**Rationale:**

In order to understand the report card and to aid comprehension in parent-teacher conferences and school meetings, parents need to learn key report card vocabulary.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will learn the meanings of 10 key words used in the Report Card.

▪ Students will understand the concept of evidence as used in the Report Card.

**Materials**:

▪ Handout A: Sample Actual BPS Report Card for Grades 1-5 (see Activity #1)

▪ Handout B: Key Vocabulary to Understand the Report Card

▪ Handout C: What’s the Evidence?

▪ Handout D: Understanding Report Cards

▪ Handout E: Homework Using the Key Vocabulary

▪ Highlighters

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Distribute the Handout B: Key Vocabulary to Understand the Report Card.

* Review the words and definitions in whatever ways you have found works best with your particular class. Make sure to practice pronouncing the words aloud so that when students hear the words they recognize them. Remind students of the standards broad jump game they played in Activity #1.
* Give students a fresh copy of the sample report card and ask them to highlight vocabulary words from the list wherever they see them on the report card. Have them compare with a partner to see if they missed any.

3. Distribute Handout C: What’s the Evidence? Have students complete it. Correct it as a group.

4. Distribute Handout D: Understanding Report Cards**.** Have students work on this in pairs. When they are finished, have them compare answers with another pair and make any corrections necessary.

**5.** Homework:Handout E: Homework: Practice Using Report Card Vocabulary**.** This is a good assignment for homework because students need to work on it individually. It asks them about their child. Explain that they will need to refer to both the sample report card and their vocabulary word/definition list as they do the homework.

**Handout B: Key Vocabulary to Understand the Report Card**

1. **Grade:** A school score. These may be numbers or letters. They are also called **marks.** Example: My daughter always gets **good grades** in math.

**Grade** also means educational level.

Example: My son is in **third grade.**

2. **Marking Period:** the division of time the marks (grades) refer to. In Boston, elementary students have three **marking periods** in the year.

3. **Standards:** What you should know and be able to do at each grade level If you **meet the standards,** you can do the work at your grade level.

If you **exceed the standards,** you are advanced for your grade level

4. **Evidence:** Words, objects or actions that support the truth of something.

Example: Teachers take attendance every morning so they have **evidence** of how many days a student is **absent.**

5. **Absent**: not in school

6. **Present:** in school

7. **Tardy:** late for school

8. **Core Content Subject Areas:** the main subjects all elementary school children in BPS study: reading, writing, math, social studies, science.

9. **Specialty subjects:** Different elementary schools in BPS have different “specialty subjects.” The Otis Elementary School, has, for example, Science, Art, Music, Computers and Drama.

10. **Effort:** an attempt, a try.

Example: Your son made an **effort** to improve his grades after the first report card.

11. **School Leadership/Social Development:** How you behave and how much **effort** you make to be a good student

**Handout C: What’s the Evidence?**

1) I am a detective, trying to solve a murder. What **evidence** from the list below would be most useful to me? Circle one.

▪ Finding the weapon used in the murder

▪ Finding the murderer’s dog

▪ Talking to all the neighbors

2) What kind of **evidence** does an elementary teacher look at to decide what grade to give a student? Circle one.

▪ test scores

▪ quality of homework

▪ participation in class

▪ all of the above

3) I am an ESOL teacher, teaching parents English. Every day I take attendance in my class and write it in my plan book. The principal at the school asks me one day, “Do you have good attendance in your class?” I answer, “Yes, very good.” She says, “What **evidence** do you have?”

What should I answer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) Look at the Attendance Box on the sample report card. Does this student have good attendance? Circle one.

▪ Yes

▪ No

How do you know? What’s the **evidence?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) Does your child make an effort with his homework? Circle one.

▪ Yes

▪ No

How do you know? What’s the **evidence**?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Handout D: Understanding Report Cards**

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| **Directions:** Look at the sample report card. Answer the following questions. Vocabulary words are in bold. |

1. This is an example of the Boston Public School (BPS) report card for which grades? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is this report card for one **marking period,** or for the whole year? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How do you know? What’s your evidence:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. How many days was this student **absent?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **tardy?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. In general, this student got mostly **3’s.**

* For her academic subjects, (3’s) mean that she \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* For her school leadership/social development (3’s) means that her work

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) This student got only one **4** in the School Leadership section. What does a **4** mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* In what category did she get a **4** ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Handout E: Homework: Using the Report Card Vocabulary**

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| **Note:** To answer these questions you will need to refer to the Vocabulary list and the sample report card we used in class today. |

1. What is your child’s favorite subject from the **Core Content Subject Area** of the report card? Ask your child if you don’t know. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your child’s favorite? **Specialty Subject** Ask your child if you don’t know.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Approximately how many times has your child been **absent** since the beginning of the school year? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Approximately how many times has your child been **tardy** since the beginning of the school year?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does your child make an effort with his or her homework? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ How do you know? What is your **evidence**?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY #3: THE EFFORT GRADES**

**Rationale:**

Parents should pay particular attention to the section of the BPS report card labeled **School** **Leadership and Social Development Standards**. These are grades based on students’ efforts to learn good work habits and develop critical social skills. Whereas ELL parents sometimes cannot help their children with their academic work, they can help their children develop these skills.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will demonstrate understanding of the grading system for the School Leadership and Social Development Standards section of the report card.

▪ Students will gain problem solving skills around report card issues.

**Materials:**

▪ Handout A: Sample Actual BPS Report Card for Grades 1-5 (see Activity #1)

▪ Handout B: School Leadership and Social Development Standards Case Studies

▪ Handout C: What would you do if this were your child?

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Write key words **effort, to make an effort, and evidence** on board and review what the words mean.

3. Write some quick sentence stems on board and ask students to complete them orally:

▪ When I make an effort to speak in English more, I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

▪ When I make an effort to come to class every day, I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

▪ When I make an effort to do all my homework, I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Summarize by asking why effort is so important, e.g. the harder you try, the more you learn.

4. Distribute the sample BPS report card and ask students to find the “School Leadership and Social Development Standards” section. Explain that you refer to these as the Effort Grades, because they all have to do with how hard you try. Students get grades depending on their effort. Read over these items together, pausing for clarification and asking for examples. There is some very useful vocabulary here, so you might want to develop a vocabulary lesson to use before you examine these standards or as a follow up.

5. Have students check which of these items they can help their children with. Then ask them to explain (to you, to a partner or to the group) what it is they can do to help in the area checked.

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6. Summarize: these School Leadership and Social Development standards are a very important part of the report card for parents to pay attention to. Sometimes you can’t help your children do better in writing or reading or math, but these are things you can help your children with.

7. Look together at the grading key. Review what the numbers mean here by asking a few questions:

▪ If a student gets a (3) in “Actively participates in discussions,” what does that mean?

▪ If a student gets a (4) in “Completes and returns homework assignments,” what does that mean?

8. Distribute Handout A: School Leadership and Social Development Standards Case Studies. Have students work in small groups to complete handout. They will be assigning effort grades to imaginary students. Meanwhile, make a chart on the board (five case studies along one axis, number of student groups along the other) to record the grades given.)

9. As groups report back and the scores are recorded, have them explain/defend their decisions in cases where there is disagreement.

10. Distribute Handout B: What would you do if this were your child? Divide students into two groups. There can be several Group 1’s and Group 2’s if the class is large. Explain that before they start discussing and answering the questions, they should choose someone in their group who will report back to the entire class.

11. As the groups report back to the class, write their questions (Group 1) and suggestions (Group 2) on the board, correcting the grammar. After each group reports back, make sure to ask if anyone else in the group has anything to add.

12. Read aloud with students the questions and suggestions and have students copy them in their notebooks.

**Handout B: School Leadership and Social Development Standards Case Studies**

Work together in small groups. Using the Effort Grading Scale, decide together what “effort” grade you would give each of the following imaginary students.

4 = demonstrates exceptionable effort

3 = work demonstrates solid evidence of effort

2 = work shows some evidence of effort

1 = work shows little evidence of effort

**Maria:**

Maria always raises her hand in class to answer questions. She volunteers to read aloud. She likes to share what she is thinking with her classmates and teacher.

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| --- |
| *Actively participates in discussions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_* |

**Juan:**

Juan returns his homework about 75% of the time. Sometimes it is complete. Other times it is only half finished.

|  |
| --- |
| *Completes and returns homework assignments \_\_\_\_\_* |

**Debbie:**

Debbie likes to have the teacher or another student help her with her work in class. She often asks the teacher to come help her. At home, she wants her mother to do all the homework with her. When the teacher explains the assignment to her and encourages her to try it by herself, she says, “I can’t do it alone.”

|  |
| --- |
| *Is able to work independently \_\_\_\_\_\_* |

**Carlos:**

When Carlos doesn’t understand something, he will ask the teacher or another student to help him.

|  |
| --- |
| *Gets help when necessary \_\_\_\_\_\_\_* |

**Yvette:**

Yvette likes to work in groups with her classmates. She helps other students in her group. She listens to other students in her group. She knows how to take turns. She helps the group follow the teacher’s directions.

|  |
| --- |
| *Works cooperatively with peers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* |

**Handout C: What would you do if this were your child?** Imagine that these are the effort grades your 3rd grader received:

|  |
| --- |
| Works hard and strives for excellence: 2  Actively participates in discussions: 1  Is able to work independently: 2  Knows where to find information 2  Gets help when necessary 1  Organizes workspace and materials 1  Turns in neat, legible work 1  Completes and returns homework assignments 1  Shows self control 3  Respects others rights and opinions 3  Works cooperatively with peers 2  Accepts suggestions and learns from mistakes 2 |

**Group 1**: You want your child to improve. You ask for a teacher conference after you get the report card. What would you ask your child’s teacher?

∙ On a separate sheet of paper, write down at least three questions to ask the teacher. Work as a group. Assign one person to report back to the whole class.

**Group 2:** You want your child to improve. What can you do to help at home?

∙ On a separate sheet of paper, write down at least three suggestions. Work together as a group. Assign one person to share your suggestions with the entire class.

**ACTIVITY #4: WHAT DO THE CORE CONTENT SUBJECT AREA GRADES MEAN?**

**Rationale:**

While students may not understand the meaning of all of the academic standards, they can learn how to interpret what the grades mean and whether there has been improvement.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will be able to interpret the meaning of the grades in the Core Content Subject Areas section of the report card.

▪ Students will be able to demonstrate what it means to read or speak with fluency.

▪ Students will be able to explain what “reads a variety of materials” means.

**Materials:**

▪ Handout A: Sample Actual BPS Report Card for Grades 1-5 (See Activity #1)

▪ Handout B: The Core Content Subject Areas

▪ A children’s book you will read as a demonstration, ideally with multiple copies.

▪ A variety of children’s books, representing different genres

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Review key vocabulary:

▪ Standards: What you should know and be able to do at each grade level.

▪ On grade level: Able to do the work expected for your grade, e.g. meeting the standard.

▪ Overall Effort: How hard you try

▪ Marking period: The division of time the marks (grades) refer to. In Boston, elementary students have three marking periods a year.

▪ Fluency: able to read, speak or do math easily, without hesitation. (See below, #5 )

▪ Improve: to get better

3. Distribute copies of the Sample Report Card and ask parents to find the Core Content Subject Area of the report card. Review from Activity #1: *What are the five core subjects students study in grades 1-5?*

4. Focus on the Reading Standard Areas because reading with children and encouraging children to read at home is the most important thing parents can do to help their children do well in school.

▪ Ask*: What do you think it means to read with* ***fluency?*** Demonstrate fluency by reading aloud from a children’s book. Ideally students can also have

copies of the book (or copies of the pages you will read) so they can follow along. You might first read a page or two very haltingly and ask *Is this reading with fluency?* You could then reread the same passage, this time with ease. Ask again, *Is* ***this*** *reading with fluency?* Ask students whether they read with more fluency in their first language or in English. Ask whether their children read with more fluency in their first language or in English.

▪ Repeat the same process with the concept of **accuracy,** asking what students think it means and then demonstrating what reading is like when you make a lot of mistakes versus reading with accuracy. If you as teacher can speak a second language, you can also demonstrate fluency and accuracy by

comparing how you speak or read in the two languages.

▪ Pair up students to talk briefly about the process of their children learning to read. How old were they? Did they read with fluency? Did they read with accuracy?

▪ Ask: *What do you think it means to read a variety of materials on level?* To demonstrate a variety of materials, have examples, ideally children’s books, of a non fiction book, a biography, a work of fiction, poems, a fairy or folk tale. Show these to parents and describe these genres. Distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. Remind them that on the ELA part of the MCAS, students are asked to read different types of material. They might read a folk tale and a biography, or part of a novel and an article on animals. Talk about how it is important when they go to the library to help their children choose different kinds of books to read--some stories, and some about subjects they are interested in, like animals.

▪ Do a quick review with the class:

*What does it mean that this student got a (3) in the Spring Marking*

*period on Reads with Fluency and Accuracy?* *Did this student improve over the year?* Reemphasize that “meeting the standard” is the same as “on grade level.”

5. Distribute Handout: The Core Content Subject Areas. Have students work in pairs to answer the questions, then review answers with the whole group.

**Follow-Up:**

▪ Have parents bring in actual report cards and show you areas in which their children have improved or need to improve. Have them brainstorm in pairs what they could do to help their children improve.

▪ Do a more extensive lesson on different genres of written material. This is something children learn in the early grades as part of their reading program and it is helpful for parents to have the same vocabulary and experience with a variety of

materials. This can be taught as a vocabulary lesson which is amplified by sample readings from the different genres and discussions with parents about what they and their children like best. See Topic 3, Supporting Children’s Learning, Unit 3: Reading with Children, Activity #5: Book Related Vocabulary for a vocabulary list which includes different genres.

**Handout B: The Core Content Subject Areas**

|  |
| --- |
| **Note:** To answer these questions, look at the sample report card we have been using. |

1) In the fall **marking period**, what subject area does the student do best in? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2*)* Look at the **Reading Standard Area** to answer the two questions below.

a. Does the student i**mprove** in “Reads with Fluency and Accuracy” between the Fall and Winter marking periods? YES or NO

b. Does the student **improve** in “Reads with Fluency and Accuracy” between the Winter and Spring marking periods? YES or NO

3) Look at the Math Standard Area: Is this student working **on grade level in** math? YES or NO 4) Look at the **Science Standard Area** to answer the four questions below.

a. What grade did the student get for “Written work and Knowledge” in the fall? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Did she improve during the year? YES or NO

c. What does a **2** mean?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

d. What could you do as her parent to help her improve her knowledge of science? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY #5: HELPING YOUR CHILD MEET KINDERGARTEN STANDARDS**

**Rationale:**

Whether they realize it or not, parents are the primary teachers of their children. Much of what children are expected to be able to do in Kindergarten their parents can and often do teach them at home.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will understand that things they do at home with their children can help their children do well in Kindergarten.

▪ Students will be able to name two activities they could do at home to help children meet kindergarten standards.

**Materials:**

▪ Handout: Sample K2 report card

▪ Handout: Team 1: What can I do at home to help my child meet the Kindergarten standards for Speaking, & Listening and Language Arts ?

▪ Handout: Team 2: What can I do at home to help my child meet the Kindergarten standards for Beginning Reading and Responding to Literature?

▪ Handout: Team 3: What can I do at home to help my child meet the Kindergarten standards for Writing?

▪ Index cards

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Opening explanation: K2 students get a different report card from older students. They don’t get any report card during the first marking period, so the first report card for Kindergarten students comes in March. This report card is easier to read. It tells you what kindergarten students should be able to do. What we are going to focus on are the things parents can do at home to help children ages 3-5 meet the Kindergarten standards.

3. Distribute the sample K2 Report Card. Give students time to read it over themselves. Assure them they do not have to understand every word, but they should ask if there are words they want clarified. Write these words and their meanings on the board.

4. Look together at the grading system. It is a simplified version of the one used for Grades 1-5.

5. Read aloud together the Language Arts Standards, clarifying as you go along. Ask students for initial ideas of what they could do at home to help their children meet any of these standards.

**Example:** If you help your child recognize letters when she sees them on street signs, what standard would that help the child learn?

6. Tell students they are now going to work in teams to brainstorm ideas about what they can do at home to help their children meet the Kindergarten Language Arts Standards. Each team will look at one standard and see what activities could be done at home to help a 3-5 year old meet that standard. Give an example on the board in the same format of the worksheet the teams will use:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard** | **What you can do at home** |
| I use new vocabulary words when I am speaking | Teach children new words when you doing things together |
| I use pictures to help tell my story. | Encourage children to draw pictures and then tell you what the picture is about. |

Continue with brainstorming examples until students understand the concept.

7. Divide students into teams and give them the appropriate worksheet to complete. Ask the most advanced student in each team to record ideas on the worksheet. Assure team members that they may not be able to think of a home activity for each standard.

Team 1: Speaking and Listening and Language Arts.

Team 2: Beginning Reading and Responding to Literature

Team 3: Writing

Have teams report back by describing the activities they came up with. Writing them all on the board will probably take too long. Teams might also be asked to demonstrate through a role play one of the activities they generated. Tell other students to listen closely to their classmates and question them if they don’t understand an activity. After the teams have reported back, each student will be asked to choose one activity they plan to do at home.

8. Hand out an index card to each student. Ask them to write down one activity they will try at home from among those their classmates generated. Go around the room and ask each student to share the activity chosen.

**Follow-Up:**

▪ If the group liked this activity, you could repeat it, this time using the Mathematics standards instead.

**Handout: Sample Actual Kindergarten Report Card**

This is a real report card of a child in Kindergarten at the Otis Elementary School, school year 2012-2013. It was re-typed to make it easier to read.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CORE CONTENT SUBJECT AREAS** | **Winter** | **Spring** |
| **Language Arts** |  |  |
| **STANDARD: Speaking & Listening** | | |
| I listen to and follow directions. | 2 |  |
| I talk about my personal experiences expressing feelings and opinions. | 2 |  |
| I am learning the rhymes and rhythms in poems, chants, songs and nursery rhymes. | 3 |  |
| I have ideas and questions to contribute to group discussions. | 3 |  |
| **STANDARD: Language Use** | | |
| I use new vocabulary words when I am speaking. | 3 |  |
| I am learning to use correct grammar when speaking. | 3 |  |
| I use “describing” words to talk about people, objects and events. | 3 |  |
| **STANDARD: Beginning Reading** | | |
| I identify upper and lower case letters of the alphabet |  |  |
| I understand how a book works. |  |  |
| I use pictures to tell what might happen in a story. |  |  |
| **STANDARD: Responding to Literature** | | |
| I tell the main ideas of a story (who, what where, when, why and how). |  |  |
| I listen to and respond to non-fiction stories. |  |  |
| I think about what I already know to help me understand stories. |  |  |
| I ask questions when I do not understand something in a story. |  |  |
| **STANDARD: Writing** | | |
| I draw pictures to help tell my story. |  |  |
| I put my thoughts down in writing. |  |  |
| I use beginning, middle and ending sounds in my writing. |  |  |
| I know how to write so others can read my writing. |  |  |
| I write words by myself. |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Math** | **Winter** | **Spring** |
| **STRAND: Number Sense** | | |
| I can count and recognize numbers. | 3 |  |
| I can count collections of objects and compare them to each other. | 3 |  |
| I can estimate and verify the size of a collection. | 3 |  |
| I can find the total of two quantities. | 2 |  |
| **STRAND: Patterns and Relationships** | | |
| I can sort and group objects by color, shape, size, number, and other properties. | 3 |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I can identify, reproduce, describe, extend, and create different types of patterns (color, rhythmic, shape, number, and growing patterns). | 3 |  |
| **STRAND: Measurement** | | |
| I know different units of time (within the calendar) and can use appropriate language to compare and discuss them | 3 |  |
| **STRAND: Data** | | |
| I can take surveys, record the results and make a representation of the data. | 2 |  |
| I can discuss information in a data representation | 2 |  |
| **STRAND: Geometry** | | |
| I can identify shapes and can describe their features (e.g. number of sides, corners) |  |  |
| I can put shapes together to fill puzzles and make designs |  |  |
| **STRAND: Problem Solving & Reasoning** | | |
| I understand what a problem is asking me to do and I can use one or more strategies to solve it. |  |  |
| I can explain my strategy and solution orally. |  |  |
| I can explain my strategy and solution in written form. |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Social Studies** | **Winter** | **Spring** |
| I understand the relationships and responsibilities within the family, school and community | 2 |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Special Subjects** | **Winter** | **Spring** |
| Music | 3 |  |
| **Social Development** | **Winter** | **Spring** |
| I follow rules and routines in the classroom | 4 |  |
| I play and share cooperatively with other children | 4 |  |
| I work out my problems/conflicts with others | 4 |  |
| I respect, share and care for people and things around me | 4 |  |
| I can transition successfully throughout the day | 4 |  |

**Attendance**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Fall** | **Winter** | **Spring** | **Total** |
| **Present** | 27 | 54 |  | 81 |
| **Absent** | 2 | 4 |  | 6 |
| **Tardy** | 2 | 1 |  | 3 |

**Academic and Social Development Grading System**:

1 = Beginning

2 = Developing

3 = Meets the Standard

4 = Advanced

N/A = Not applicable at this time

Students are scored using system-wide rubrics. Levels of Performance are determined by the results of daily assignments, student work analysis, assessment data and teacher judgment.

**Handout: Team 1: What can I do at home to help my child meet the Kindergarten standards in Speaking & Listening and Language Use?**

**Speaking & Listening and Language Use Standards**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard** | **What you the parent can do at home** |
| I listen to and follow directions. |  |
| I talk about my personal experiences expressing feelings and opinions. |  |
| I am learning the rhymes and rhythms in poems, chants, songs and nursery rhymes. |  |
| I have ideas and questions to contribute to group discussions. |  |
| I use new vocabulary words when I am speaking. |  |
| I am learning to use correct grammar when speaking. |  |
| I use describing words to talk about people, objects and events. |  |

**Handout: Team 2: What can I do at home to help my child meet the Kindergarten standards in Beginning Reading and Responding to Literature?**

**Beginning Reading and Responding to Literature Standards**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard** | **What you the parent can do at home** |
| I identify upper and lower case letters of the alphabet. |  |
| I understand how a book works. |  |
| I use pictures to tell what might happen in a story. |  |
| I tell the main ideas of a story (who, what where, when, why and how). |  |
| I listen to and respond to non-fiction stories. |  |
| I think about what I already know to help me understand stories. |  |
| I ask questions when I do not understand something in a story. |  |

**Handout: Team 3: What can I do at home to help my child meet the Kindergarten standards in Writing?**

**Writing Standards**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard** | **What you the parent can do at home** |
| I draw pictures to help tell my story. |  |
| I put my thoughts down in writing. |  |
| I use beginning, middle and ending sounds in my writing. |  |
| I know how to write so others can read my writing. |  |
| I write words by myself. |  |

**ACTIVITY #6: PROBLEM SOLVING: A HOME/SCHOOL STORY**

|  |
| --- |
| **Note to Teachers:** If you do a report card unit before the first marking period, this activity could be used later as a way to review report cards before the second marks come out. It can also be used as part of the original unit. |

**Rationale:**

Usually children’s grades improve over the course of the three marking periods or they remain constant. When children’s grades go down, parents should take note and try to figure out with the child and the teacher what might have caused this.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will practice problem solving about a school related issue. ▪ Students will show they can read and interpret a story about the report card.

**Materials:**

▪ Handout: Report Cards: A Home/School Story

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Opening discussion: *Have you ever felt confused about something on your child’s report card? What did you do?*

3. Distribute Handout: Report Cards: A Home/School Story and read it aloud together. Divide students into small groups or pairs to read it again and discuss the questions. This is an oral exercise; they do not need to write anything down.

4. As each group reports back, record responses on a three column chart you have drawn on the board. Read over as a group the different ideas about what Carmen should do, who she should talk to and what she should ask.

5. Ask students to speculate: What do you think might explain this situation? What is going on with Melissa?

**Handout: Report Cards: A Home/School Story**

Melissa brought her winter report card from the Otis School home on Wednesday March 30th and showed it to her mother, Carmen. Carmen and Melissa sat down together and went over the report card carefully.

One of the first things Carmen noticed was that it said that Melissa had three absences in the winter. Carmen was confused because Melissa had been out three days with the flu, but Carmen had sent in a doctor’s note for the teacher. She thought that was what she needed to do to get Melissa’s absences excused.

Another thing Carmen noticed was that Melissa did not seem to be doing as well as she had on the fall report card. Under the Reading standards, Melissa in the fall had gotten all **3’s.** Now the teacher gave her all **2’s.** The teacher wrote in the space for comments that Melissa wasn’t making an effort in reading.

In the section of the report card called “School Leadership and Social Dev. Standards”, Melissa had also gone down since the Fall report card. For example, in the fall she got a **3** in the standard “Actively participates in discussions”. In this report card, she got a **2.**

Carmen didn’t understand. Melissa seemed the same at home as she had been all year. Melissa said she liked to read pretty well (although she preferred math) and she did raise her hand in class sometimes. So Carmen was confused about what had changed.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**WHAT SHOULD CARMEN DO?**

**WHO SHOULD SHE TALK TO?**

**WHAT SHOULD SHE ASK?**

**ACTIVITY #7: HOMEWORK: REVIEWING YOUR CHILD’S REPORT CARD (Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Note:** This homework assignment should be given out after you have used the previous exercises to help familiarize parents with the BPS Report card. It is designed to be given out during a week that report cards come home. |

**Rationale:**

It is helpful if parents are encouraged to talk with their children about their report card.

**Student Objectives:**

▪ Students will talk to their children about their report card.

▪ Students will demonstrate their ability to read and understand the report card.

**Materials:**

▪ Boston Public Schools Report Card Schedule. Copy from inside back page of the current Guide to the Boston Public Schools for Families and Students. Or download the Guide by searching for it on the BPS website.

▪ Handout: **Homework: Reviewing Your Child’s Report Card**

**Activity Outline:**

1. Explain objectives.

2. Opening discussion: What do you do when your child brings the report card home? List student responses on the board and circle any which involve talking with their children about their grades and stress their value.

3. Use the BPS report card schedule to review with students when they should be getting a given report card, if they haven’t already.

4. Give out the homework. Review key vocabulary as a group before students take it home**: praise, successes, review, improve.**

5. Collect the homework and review it individually. This will be a good way to assess what students have learned from the Report Card Unit.

**Homework: Reviewing Your Child’s Report Card**

|  |
| --- |
| **Directions:** Report cards will come home this week. When you get your child’s report card, look at it and talk about it with your child. |

1) Praise your child for all successes (3 and 4’s, attendance, teacher comments)

2) If your child has 1 and 2’s, talk to your child about what is hard for them. Tell your child you want to help them more with these areas so they can improve on the next report card. Tell your child you will talk to their teacher to see what you can do extra at home to help.

|  |
| --- |
| **Directions:** Later, review the report card yourself and answer the following questions: |

Your Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Which Core Content Area did your child do did best in-- Reading, Writing, Math Science or Social Studies?

2. Which Core Content Area could your child improve in—Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, or None?

|  |
| --- |
| **Directions:** Look at the School Leadership and Social Dev. Standards and answer the following questions: |

1) Which standard do you think is most important?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Are there any areas in which your child needs improvement? Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3) What can you do as a parent to help your child improve?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_