



# A closer look at Standards-Based Grading



Davis School District

FAQ  
for students & parents

## What is Standards-Based Grading?

Standard-based grading (SBG) is a method used to assess student proficiency based on their knowledge of a standard. Teachers evaluate student performance and give feedback as students work toward clearly defined learning targets. Students who are not initially proficient are encouraged to retake assessments until they can demonstrate proficiency. A student's grade is then based on their level of understanding on the identified standard. In Davis School District there are DESK standards for each course. The primary focus for students and educators is proficiency.

## Why Standards-Based Grading?

Students today experience stress and anxiety at higher rates than ever before. Much of this stress comes from uncertainty about how to successfully meet the expectations put on them from a variety of teachers. Standards-based grading unifies and simplifies the grading process from teacher to teacher, providing a clear direction for students about learning expectations. Students who have participated in SBG classrooms prefer this method to traditional grading practices. Furthermore, teachers believe that standards-based grading allows them to better meet individual student needs in the classroom.

The primary research identified through DSD pilot schools comes from Dr. R. J. Marzano, *Classroom Assessment & Grading that Works*; Dr. T. R. Guskey, *On Your Mark*; and Dr. Tom Schimmer, *Grading from the Inside Out*. All are renowned scholars and authors on educational leadership and school-wide reform with proven research on the effects of standards-based grading for school and student improvement.

## What are DESK standards?

Davis Essential Skills and Knowledge (DESK) Standards were created by committees of teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists to align student learning across Davis School District. These committee members researched state and national standards to determine what students should know and be able to do within each

content area, at each grade level. DESK standards vertically align knowledge and skills so that students demonstrating proficiency in all standards should be prepared to be successful in the following course. Access [DESK](#) standards through the DSD Teaching and Learning department.

### *Have you ever...*

*Been confused about a teacher's expectations?*

*Wished for a second chance to prove that you*

*knew information on the test?*

*Wished for more opportunities to check your un-*

*derstanding before a big test?*

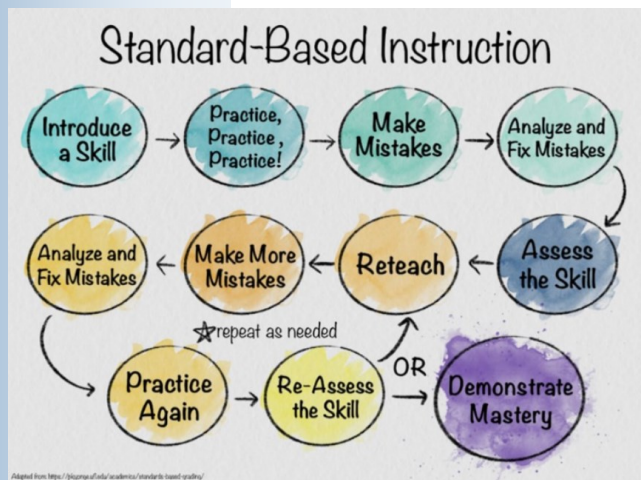
*Thought a grade would have been different if the*

*class was with a different teacher?*



### What will this look like in the classroom?

Standards-based grading classrooms embrace a growth mindset model that allows students to learn from their mistakes and demonstrate learning over time. The Model below is taken from developmental research at University of Florida. Teachers will be following this basic model in all content areas. This model allows students to understand concepts in a positive environment that turns mistakes into a learning experience. It also maintains the expectation that with practice every student can find success.



### How will this affect Special Education students?

Students who currently receive Special Education services will continue to work on IEP goals just as they have in the past. Teachers, special education or general education, will continue to support student learning with the use of accommodations determined by the IEP team.

### Who else is participating?

It is the district's intent that all secondary schools implement standards-based grading methods. The timeline for each school is dependent on the progress and movement of the school.

### How will this affect the grade?

Students will receive a variety of assessments for each standard in each of their classes. Each assessment will have a clearly defined rubric modeled after the school-wide rubric. The rubric allows the student to understand the expectation and how to achieve proficiency on the assessment. A student's performance on a series of assessments (both formative and summative) will be used to determine the student's overall grade in a course.

Practice assignments are just that, practice, and thus serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Parents should use practice scores as a reference of how to help their student at home. Teachers may require students to complete all practice work prior to allowing them to retake an assessment.

### How can we improve the grade?

Students can improve their grade through practice and reassessment. If a student's grade is lower than desired, it is because they do not understand a priority standard in that content area. Parents and students should review the student's scores in myDSD and the practice assignments associated with that standard. Students should review or redo practice assignments until they have reached proficiency or mastery. Then students interested in improving their grade should speak with the teacher to schedule a time to retake an assessment. Deadlines for retaking assessments will be established by the school's grading calendar (midterm and end of term). We encourage all students to take advantage of retakes in order to improve their grades.

*To ensure student learning on priority standards, extra-credit is not offered.*

DSD Secondary Proficiency Scale					
Proficiency Level	(-) No Evidence	(1) Beginning Proficiency	(2) Approaching Proficiency	(3) Proficient	(4) Mastery
Description	Little or no work submitted to show evidence of learning or not covered during grading period.	Demonstrates significant gaps in understanding the standard.	Emergent understanding of the standard with several gaps.	Meaningful understanding of the assessed standard with minor errors.	Complete understanding of standard with ability to apply the standard with consistency.