



Standards-Based Grading

What is Standards-Based Grading?

Standards-based grading is a system of grading whereby the student's overall grade is determined by the mastery of specific curriculum standards. Traditional grading emphasizes the method of assessment (e.g. test, quiz, homework), but standards-based grading emphasizes what students know, understand, and are able to do related to a set of standards for each content and grade level.

While there are multiple ways to implement standards-based grading, all methods generally differ from traditional grading in the following ways:

- Teacher gradebooks and student assessments are organized by standards or key skills instead of by assessment method.
- The focus is on mastery of key information, concepts, and skills vs. just task-completion.
- It allows for more accurate reporting of exactly what students know and don't yet know.

Why are we implementing Standards-Based Grading?

There are several compelling reasons for implementing standards-based grading. All of these reasons contribute to increased student learning outcomes.

Among the reasons for implementing standards-based grading are:

- It empowers students to take charge of their learning and promotes a growth mindset.
- It empowers parents by giving them a more accurate picture of their student's progress.
- It empowers teachers to make instructional decisions based on what their students still need to master.

How are we implementing Standards-Based Grading?

In order to implement standards-based grading consistently among all grade levels, we have developed several guidelines and adopted key practices.

Among these guidelines and key practices are:

- Involving students in the process by communicating standards and success criteria for them to work towards
- Giving students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards
- Reporting end-of-unit (summative) assessments as grades, though student learning is monitored with multiple checks for understanding (formative assessments) during a unit of instruction

While all SBA teachers are implementing standards-based grading, there may be slight variations in the implementation at certain grade levels and in certain courses due to differences in the nature of courses and what is age-appropriate for each grade level.

