



BOZEMAN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Quality Education

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Standards-Based Grading

An informative handbook to provide the background and essential information needed to understand standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment and reporting.

Rationale

Standards-based grading provides an accurate picture of what a student has learned and still needs to learn.

Standards-based grading is

- assessing and giving more timely feedback to students on progress and growth toward learning goals;
- communicating real-time performance via the gradebook on learning targets/standards as well as attributes of a successful learner;
- a periodic snapshot using a report card which summarizes a student's progress on important themes in all content areas.

Preparation

Middle school committees made up of students, parents, teachers, technology staff and administrators have dedicated many hours to the research and integration of standards-based grading practices and the examination of a variety of report card formats from other school districts across the country. The work has been highly productive.

Information for parents, including videos, FAQs, and a parent reference guide may be found on our website. Counselors and teachers provide information to students on an ongoing basis. Students and parents are already familiar with many of these grading practices, as they have been implemented in our elementary schools for several years.

This will be a continuing middle school professional development initiative because it involves new and complex knowledge related to instructional practices, curriculum development, assessment development and implementation.

Major Components of Standards-Based Learning

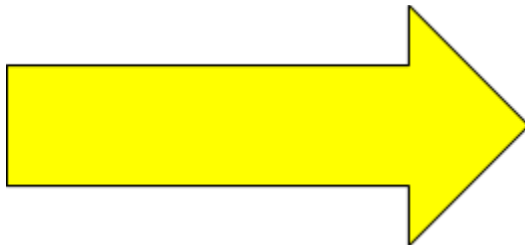


Standards

Statements indicating what we want our students to know and be able to do.

Instruction

Teaching focused on specific learning targets aligned to the standards for that subject.

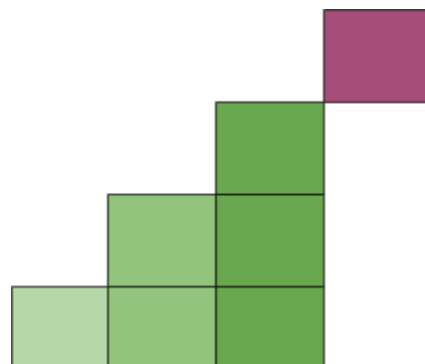


Assessment

Measurements of the level of student learning based on evidence.

Reporting

Communicating student learning of the standards at that point in time.



Learning Standards Levels and Nomenclature

In Standards-Based Grading, proficiency levels are used to indicate the current level of learning in a given class or subject. A numeric value is used to indicate the current evidence of student understanding and application of the significant standards of that subject. The goal for all students is to master concepts and skills--identified at proficiency level 3.

Academic Score Descriptors

Proficiency Level to Date	Descriptor	Actionable Language
3	Proficient	<u>Mastery of standards</u> . The student demonstrates mastery of concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the consistent ability to apply skills and strategies with accuracy, quality, and independence. A level of “3” is the goal for students to achieve.
2.5	-----	The student is showing significant progress toward the mastery of concepts and skills but has not yet reached it. Performance is becoming more consistent and higher quality, but student still requires support.
2	Developing	<u>Developing an understanding of standards</u> . The student is making progress in concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply skills and strategies with varied consistency, quality, and support.
1	Emerging	<u>Acquiring a basic understanding of standards</u> . The student is beginning to understand basic concepts and demonstrate basic skills. Performance is inconsistent and application of skills and strategies needs considerable support and guidance.

Other Scores		
4	Advanced	<u>Exceeds mastery of standards</u> . The student independently and consistently demonstrates advanced understanding of course standards. Performance is characterized by higher level thinking and application of skills in rigorous and complex situations. In some cases a “4” may not be an available level.
3.5	---	Has mastered all previous skills/concepts, and is progressing to the next level of learning.
I	Insufficient Evidence	Little or no evidence has been demonstrated.

Fair Grading Practices

The Bozeman Public Schools have fully adopted a series of research-supported Fair Grading Practices. These practices reinforce the intention to accurately report on student learning and growth while also recognizing other valuable skills important for school and career success. These practices are found in the procedures associated with District Policy 2420.

Guideline 1: Relate grades to the achievement of the District's course/grade level standards.

- BSD7 course/grade level standards provide the basis for determining grades for each course and grade level.

Guideline 2: Use agreed-on performance standards as the reference points when determining grades.

- The meaning of grades, whether letters or numbers, are derived from clear descriptions of performance standards (refer to grade level band instructions).
- Students earn the grade when they reach the goal, which means a bell curve is not used.

Guideline 3: Separate achievement from all other dispositions and behaviors.

- Behavior, attendance, participation, effort, attitude and other behaviors are not reflected in reported academic grades unless defined in state standards, benchmarks, essential learning expectations or District curriculum.

Guideline 4: Sample student performance. Don't score everything & don't include all scores in grades.

- Grades are determined primarily on a combination of assessments (both unit and course/grade level) and performance tasks.
- Rubrics, assessment checklists, and other types of scoring guides are used to provide formative feedback on various types of performance tasks (e.g., products, projects, and other performances).
- On any given learning goal, a grade assigned reflects the student's most recently consistent performance.

Guideline 5: Grade in pencil and maintain records so they can be easily updated.

- Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress related to the mastery of clearly articulated learning goals within timeframes established at the school and classroom level (i.e., end of units, end of quarter, end of semester).

Guideline 6: To determine grades at the end of the grading period, professional judgment will be used when considering the body of evidence.

- The most consistent level of achievement is used, with emphasis on the more recent performance when applicable.
- When averaging scores, use of median or mode, rather than the mean, is considered best practice.

- Best practice supports that zeros should not be assigned for missing or incomplete work.
- Extra credit opportunities may be provided only when relevant to demonstrating intended curriculum standards.

Guideline 7: Use quality assessments and properly record evidence of achievement.

- Assessments that meet rigorous design criteria (e.g., clear targets, clear purpose, appropriate match of target and method, appropriate sampling, and lack of bias and distortion) are used.
- Appropriate tools (e.g., portfolios, checklists) to record and maintain evidence of achievement as well as evidence of work habits/life skills are used.

Guideline 8: Involve students in the assessment and grading processes throughout the learning cycle.

- Students understand in advance how their grades will be determined (age appropriate).
- Students are involved in the assessment process, record keeping, and communicating their achievement and progress.

Attributes of a Successful Learner

Many skills are necessary for success in school and that further support academic learning. The Attributes of a Successful Learner are often prerequisites for achievement in college or career. The attributes have been separated from the academic reporting in each class to allow for accurate report on learning as well as to provide meaningful feedback on the development of each attribute. The following attributes have been identified as significant for success at the middle school and beyond:

- **Organization**
Prioritizes, sets goals anticipating needs and hurdles, properly manages time and meets deadlines.
- **Engagement**
Listens actively, participates and contributes, works well collaboratively and independently.
- **Perseverance**
Sustains a high level of effort through difficult concepts; demonstrates persistence in pursuit of excellence.
- **Universal Expectations**
Actively involved in a way that is safe, responsible, respectful, positive and kind.

Attribute Score Descriptors

Proficiency Level to Date	Descriptor	Actionable Language
3	Proficient	The student demonstrates this attribute. She or he rarely requires any prompting and often models this attribute for others.
2.5	-----	All of Developing and significant effort towards improving this attribute is apparent.
2	Developing	The student sometimes demonstrates this attribute and requires frequent reminders and support from the teacher.
1	Emerging	The student seldom demonstrates this attribute and requires constant reminders and support from the teacher.

Other Scores		
4	Advanced	The student always demonstrates this attribute without prompting, and encourages/helps others to do the same
3.5	---	All of Proficient and significant effort towards improving this attribute is apparent.
I	Insufficient Evidence	The student makes no effort in demonstrating this effort.

Structure of Report Card



SACAJAWEA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sacajawea Middle School 2018-2019

The purpose of this report card is to communicate to parents and students the student's level of achievement with regards to specific learning goals and successful learner attributes, as well as the student's progress towards those goals, areas of strength, and areas where additional time and effort are needed.

Student Information		Attendance	
Student Name: Amazing Student		T1	
Current Grade Level: 6		Days Absent	0
Advisory Teacher:		Times Tardy	0
School Year: 2018-2019		Days Enrolled	15

Proficiency Level to Date		
Proficiency Level to Date	Descriptor	Actionable Language
3	Proficient	Mastery of standards. The student demonstrates mastery of concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the consistent ability to apply skills and strategies with accuracy, quality, and independence. A level of "3" is the goal for students to achieve.
2.5	---	The student is showing significant progress toward the mastery of concepts and skills but has not yet reached it. Performance is becoming more consistent and higher quality, but student still requires support.
2	Developing	Developing an understanding of standards. The student is making progress in concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply skills and strategies with varied consistency, quality, and support.
1	Emerging	Acquiring a basic understanding of standards. The student is beginning to understand basic concepts and demonstrate basic skills. Performance is inconsistent and application of skills and strategies needs considerable support and guidance.
Other Scores		
4	Advanced	Exceeds mastery of standards. The student independently and consistently demonstrates advanced understanding of course standards. Performance is characterized by higher level thinking and application of skills in rigorous and complex situations. In some cases a "4" may not be an available level.
3.5	----	Exceeds mastery of standards. The student independently and consistently demonstrates advanced understanding of course standards. Performance is characterized by higher level thinking and application of skills in rigorous and complex situations. In some cases a "4" may not be an available level.
1	Insufficient Evidence	Little or no evidence has been demonstrated.

Course: English Language Arts 6 Teacher: Cale VanVelkinburgh		T1
Total Absences - 0 Total Tardies - 0		
Reads and Comprehends Informational Text		2.5
Reads and Comprehends Literary Text		2.5
Uses the Writing Process Effectively to Create Narrative Pieces		2.5
Organization		2.5
Engagement		2.5
Perseverance		2.5
Universal Expectations		2.5

Course: Social Studies 6 Teacher: Cale VanVelkinburgh		T1
Total Absences - 0 Total Tardies - 0		
Civics		2.5
Economics		2.5
History		3
Organization		2
Engagement		2.5
Perseverance		2
Universal Expectations		2

Course: Spanish 6 Teacher: Cale VanVelkinburgh		T1
Total Absences - 0 Total Tardies - 0		
Interpersonal Communication		2.5
Presentational Communication		3
Organization		4
Engagement		3
Perseverance		3
Universal Expectations		4

Structure of Gradebook

Grades and Attendance: d, Student

[Click Here](#) to see a list of all your students past assignments for this term.

		Attendance By Class															
Exp	Last Week					This Week					Course	T1	T2	Absences	Tardies		
	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F							
1(M)	6TH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SANDBOX 📧 Email Teacher, d	[i]	[i]	0	0		
2(M)	6TH HEALTH ENHANCEMENT 📧 Email Teacher, d	[i]	[i]	0	0		
3(M)	6TH MATH SANDBOX 📧 Email Teacher, d	[i]	[i]	0	0		
5(M)	6TH SCIENCE SANDBOX 📧 Email Teacher, d	[i]	[i]	0	0		
9(M)	6TH SOCIAL STUDIES SANDBOX 📧 Email Teacher, d	[i]	[i]	0	0		
Attendance Totals														0	0		

Current Simple Percent GPA (T2): 73.000
[Show dropped classes also](#)

To be updated when finalized with specific guiding notes.

Special Education

How will this affect students with IEPs? Students who receive Special Education services will continue to work on IEP goals just as they have in the past. Scores will seek to communicate a student's present level of achievement and understanding, but will also take into consideration a student's specific needs, accommodations and modifications. The goal, as always, will be to support students' in their learning!

English Learners

Understanding that academic English fluency can take between 4-10 years depending on several cultural and educational variables, English Learners (Levels 1-4) who are acquiring the English language may not yet have the academic vocabulary and the English Language Proficiency (ELP) skills to meet grade level content standards grading expectations. In these cases, teachers can identify that second language acquisition is a factor in the student not meeting the grade level standards by writing a comment in the comment section of the report card that states:

Although this English learner is working at a ____ (1,2,3) and has not mastered all of the concepts presented in the content curriculum, s/he demonstrated quality effort and engaged in the content curriculum at his/her English Language Proficiency Level with scaffolded supports.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why the change to Standards-Based Grading? Isn't traditional grading adequate?

Standards-Based Grading provides greater accuracy and additional information than traditional grading. SBG grades indicate the level of learning towards the grade level standards in each content area and demonstrates a student's growth in their learning. It focuses on the specific academic learning while also reporting on important skills (the Student Success Attributes) that impact learning, but are not the academic learning itself.

Are proficiency levels just another way of saying A, B, C, D and F grades?

No. The traditional grades should not be confused with the proficiency levels. The levels indicate progress towards mastery of the standards. Traditional grades are often based on percentages of correct/incorrect responses on assessments and have historically included many other factors (e.g. completion of work on time, effort, extra credit, etc.).

Is a proficiency level of 3 less than what a student should strive for?

A proficiency level of 3 indicates demonstrated mastery of that standard or theme. This is the level that all students should strive for. A level of 4 indicates not only mastery, but the ability to apply their learning in unique or creative ways. It is not more or more accurate, it is independently applied learning in a different setting.

Won't students be confused with a new reporting system?

Students typically adapt quite quickly to Standards-Based Grading for a number of reasons. There is greater clarity as to what is expected to be learned (the learning targets) and how it is demonstrated. There are multiple ways to demonstrate learning and often multiple opportunities (it is about growth). The focus is on the learning not the other factors that often are lumped into a grade. Finally, they can recognize their progression and growth which, in turn, is often quite motivating.

What about grade point average (GPA)? Will this impact high school or colleges?

At the middle school level, student GPA is not collected nor transferred to the high school. Currently, Bozeman High School is not adopting Standards-Based Grading school-wide, although certain teachers are using it in their classes. Should the high school adopt the practice, colleges have already indicated that they have the tools and means to evaluate student learning and college readiness beyond the GPA.

Additional Resources

PowerSchool

- [Log-In](#)
- [Setting up a PowerSchool account](#)

District Standards

- [Curriculum Standards](#)
- [Curriculum Resources](#)

Screenflows of Standards-Based Reporting

- **Link when ready for public--Cale**
- [How to View Assignments in PowerSchool](#)
- [How to View Proficiency Levels](#)