



# FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT 79

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*Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Learning*

September 16, 2022

Subject: Standards-Based Grading in FSD79

Dear Fremont School District 79 Families:

*This is an installment to accompany a series of past communications regarding our implementation of standards-based grading across the district. [Our District website](#) has prior communications and additional resources posted.*

Fremont School District 79 began implementing standards-based grading with mathematics during the 2019-2020 academic year, followed by English language arts in 2021-2022. This year, all of our remaining subject areas are coming on board, resulting in full district implementation. This means you will now see a cleaner report card and a consistent reporting method, with the ultimate goal of more meaningful and specific feedback regarding student learning.

### ***Why Standards-Based Grading?***

Sound grading practices are as important now as ever. The impact of the pandemic resulted in lower student growth than we are accustomed to in FSD79, as was the case across the nation. Having a grading system that is focused and aligned to the progression and attainment of identified learning targets will best promote student growth and provide all of our students and families with the most meaningful feedback regarding that growth.

While there is no body of research to support traditional grading practices, there is a large mass of [research and literature supporting standards-based grading practices](#). Like many districts across the nation, we felt compelled to change our practices to best meet students' needs. We understand that no grading system is perfect and they all have levels of subjectivity. Our goal is to minimize subjectivity and provide our students and parents with the most objective, clear, and informative grading and reporting system possible.

### ***What is Standards-Based Grading?***

When we refer to standards-based grading, we are talking about a system of grading that focuses on measuring the attainment of specific learning targets aligned with an accepted set of standards. This system is meant to provide more precise and meaningful information to students, parents, and educators regarding student growth and achievement in comparison to a traditional letter grade and percentage system.

Students will receive academic grades on a four level scale, as shown in the scale below. Habits of success grades are reported on a three level scale (i.e. learning behaviors such as completing assigned tasks, using time productively, following directions, etc.), with “meeting” representing the highest level.

Academic and Habits of Success Scale	
4	Extending
3	Meeting
2	Approaching
1	Beginning
N/A	Not Assessed

### ***Can You Share a Relatable Example?***

As a point of comparison, let’s start with the experience of a child learning how to ride a bike. The child may fall down dozens and dozens of times before finally succeeding. If we were grading this child in a traditional grading system, we would average all of these attempts in learning together and calculate a final grade; the child would likely receive a low or failing grade. In a standards-based system, we instead focus on attainment. We would consider these early attempts in learning as practice and focus on whether or not the child ultimately attained the standard of successfully riding a bike.

Furthermore, we want to be clear in our measurements of student growth and achievement and separate out extraneous factors. If the standard we are focused on is riding a bike, we would not measure the child’s ability to draw a bike, to tell a story about a bike, to read about a bike, to ride a horse, or factor in their willingness to ride the bike. We are focused on measuring the specific learning outcomes we intended to have the child learn. We are not penalizing students who need more time than others to meet the expectation. We are also looking for ways to extend their learning and measure performance beyond the expectation (i.e. popping a wheelie or jumping off a ramp).

### ***How Can I Obtain More Information on This Topic?***

Additional information will be conveyed to you from the District level, the building level, and the classroom level as we proceed throughout the academic year.

Can’t wait? Our District’s [Standards-Based Grading Guidebook](#) and [our District website](#) have additional information one can peruse that will be articulated further in our future communications.

Questions? Classroom specific questions should be directed to your child’s teacher(s). If you have questions that are bigger picture, they should first be directed to your building principal.

Thank you,

Dr. Brian Bullis  
Assistant Superintendent of Learning

Fremont School District 79