

# STANDARDS BASED GRADING & REPORTING



## WHY STANDARDS BASED GRADING AND REPORTING?

As instructional strategies have evolved in schools, our traditional grade reporting system no longer aligns with best practices in instruction. A standards based grading and reporting system allows teachers to more accurately and consistently report student achievement to students and parents relative to state and local learning standards. A standards based grading system focuses on student learning of course content and application of skills as opposed to the accumulation of points.

In a standards based grading classroom, student work is evaluated as evidence of learning. Teachers and students use established criteria to determine what level of learning is evident from the artifact (work) the student produces. Variables other than evidence of learning, are not included in the final grade mark assigned to a student. The transition to the standards based platform will result in more consistent course and grade level expectations.

“ A grade should give as **clear a measure** as possible of the best a student can do. Too often, grades reflect an unknown mixture of multiple factors...Unless teachers throughout a school or district completely agree on the elements and factor them into their grading in consistent ways, the meaning of grades will **vary** from classroom to classroom, school to school.

*Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006m p. 133*

Grades are the ultimate form of feedback to students about their progress towards mastery of the standards. Grade marks need to be accurate and meaningful so that parents and students know exactly what has been learned and what opportunities there are for growth. Grades need to be a clear and meaningful reflection of student learning. Grading and reporting aligned to specific standards, accompanied with ongoing assessment, and feedback to students, has been shown to significantly boost both motivation and achievement for students. Research by Black and Wiliam (1998) and Hattie (2009) indicates that high quality formative assessment (informal assessment that occurs in the classroom to inform the teacher as to where students are in the learning cycle) and feedback that is directly related to specific standards for learning have a powerful impact on student learning, showing an effect size on standardized test that exceeds the impact of most known educational interventions.

THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT WE HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE FOR DEMONSTRATING **DURING** THE LEARNING CYCLE VERSUS WHAT WE HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE FOR DEMONSTRATING ONCE THE LEARNING HAS **COME TO AN END.**

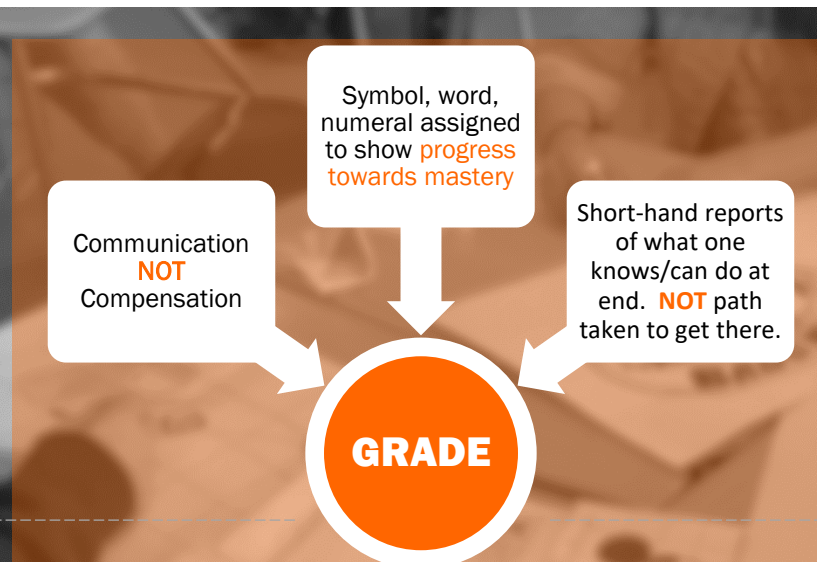
RICK WORMELI, 2015

## **WHAT DOES A GRADE REPRESENT IN A STANDARDS BASED PLATFORM?**

In its most simplistic definition, grades are used to show a student's understanding of content and ability to demonstrate the acquisition of learned skills. Traditionally, we are all used to seeing grades as a letter (A, B, C, D or F). Standards based grading goes beyond a letter grade to provide a more concise and accurate approach to signify different levels of understanding and/or demonstration of skills.

**The purpose of grading is to report to all stakeholders, including students, achievement toward specific standards.** The reality is that we can learn without receiving an A, B, C, etc., but we cannot learn without descriptive feedback that helps guide us to mastery. The purpose of the Unit 5 report card is to communicate student achievement of learning expectations, identify areas of strength, and guide improvement.

Providing an accurate grade means assessing and grading only in reference to evidence of academic standard(s), or course specific skills. If an activity or project is part of the course curriculum and is aligned to course standards, then it can be evaluated and included as evidence on a report card. **In reality, there are things that often influence a student's grade that are not related to their mastery or understanding of content.** These things are typically related to behaviors such as not completing homework, turning in work late, or not at all, or not participating in class. While these learner characteristics speak to the habits of the student, they may not reflect the student's understanding of content and/or the application of skills.



In standards based classrooms, student mastery of standards is recorded over time, with the most recent evidence of learning having the most value. Thus, students are not penalized for not knowing content at the beginning of a course/unit of study, as was past practice when overall course grades were calculated by averaging all grades earned throughout a quarter or semester. Additionally, student grades are not reduced as a result of turning in late work, not participating in class or turning in an assignment and forgetting to put a name on it. *Teachers will have the opportunity to report these habits/learner characteristics on a separate portion of the report card.*

# UNIT FIVE

## PRINCIPLES *of* GRADING *in a* STANDARDS BASED PLATFORM



- 1 Grades should only be based on **clearly defined standards and learning goals** that are found within the district approved curriculum map and companion documents
- 2 Student evidence (work products and/or assessments) will be evaluated based on district defined **proficiency levels/performance levels** as opposed to a traditional point accumulation system and 100 point scale.
- 3 Evidence used for grading should be **valid** and should **represent what a student knows or can do/apply** in a specific course.  
  
*Items that should not influence the course grade are daily homework assigned early in the learning cycle (practice), late work penalties, daily formative assessments, neatness, extra credit, behaviors.*
- 4 Students should be given **feedback** throughout the learning cycle but only assessed after the learning has occurred.  
  
Students should have the opportunity to demonstrate additional learning and understanding through both reassessment and resubmission. Departments will create reassessment/resubmission policies.
- 5 The **most recent scores**, within a standard, should be used to calculate overall grade. Final grades should not be an average of all evidence as the most recent score should carry the most weight.  
  
The most recent scores should represent the student's **level of mastery** at, or close to, the time of reporting.
- 6 Achievement (product criteria) and other factors (behaviors / process criteria) will be reported **separately**.



## UNIT 5 PERFORMANCE LEVELS

No Evidence (0)	Beginning (1)	Progressing (2)	Proficient (3)	Exceptional (4)
Student has not submitted or produced evidence of understanding/application of skill.	Unable to demonstrate understanding or show application of skill without significant support	Inconsistently or with support is able to demonstrate understanding or show application of skill.	Consistently demonstrates complete understanding /application of skill or concept.	Demonstrates complete understanding/application of skill or concept <u>and</u> deeper learning of concepts or skills beyond the level explicitly taught.

High school courses will utilize performance levels throughout the semester but will convert from performance levels to a letter grade upon conclusion of the semester. Final transcripts will reflect a letter grade. The conversion is below:

PERFORMANCE LEVEL OVERALL SCORE	LETTER GRADE ASSIGNED
3.0 - 4.0	<b>A</b>
2.5 - 2.99	<b>B</b>
2.0 - 2.49	<b>C</b>
1.0 - 1.99	<b>D</b>
0 - 1.0	<b>F</b>

## Academic Marks/Grades Will be Reported **Separately** from Learner Characteristics

In a standards based classroom there should be a complete separation of reporting information of content mastery (academic indicators) and the reporting of behaviors or learner characteristics (non-academic indicators). While all teachers and parents value learner characteristics/behaviors, these should not be included as part of the academic grade and/or should not influence the overall calculation of the academic grade but rather should be reported separately on the report card. Learner characteristics will be reported at the end of each grading period.

**This practice aligns with our definition of an academic grade simply communicating content mastery or skill acquisition in the areas of academics.**

### High School Reported Learner Characteristics

Process Criteria	Does Not Meet -	Meets +	Possible Evidence (for teachers only)
Respect	Makes poor choices in class behavior and attitude and shows inconsistency in following directions	Shows positive behavior and attitude and shows consistency in following directions	Referrals; tardies to class; constant redirection
Collaboration	Has difficulty cooperating with peers and shows minimal participation in group work and in class discussions	Cooperates respectfully with peers and participates in group work and class discussions	Participation points; checklists; data from group work; peer evaluations
Responsibility	Rarely completes outside of class assignments and shows little initiative by coming to class unprepared	Consistently completes outside of class assignments and takes initiative by showing daily class preparation	Homework completion; daily work completion; online quiz completion; number of times leaving class
Invested in Learning	Does not take opportunity to revise work and shows little effort in the learning process	Revises work and advocates for self in learning process	Revises work for improved score; shows initiative in class work; meets with teacher outside of class time; seeks out assignments when absent

## **SHIFTS IN CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

### ***Retakes and Re-Submission of Work***

If grades are to represent what a student knows and can do, students should have the opportunity to continue their learning and demonstrate additional learning even after the conclusion of a unit, etc. In a standards based classroom students are allowed to re-submit work or retake an assessment if their grade mark is not at the level they would like and students adhere to teacher/department protocols for reassessment or resubmission. Educators understand that students all progress at different rates. While teachers set deadlines/timelines for units to end and assessments to be given, these are often based on when the majority of students are ready to assess.

- If a student scores a 1 on our 4 point scale, a teacher initiated reassessment or resubmission will occur.
- If a student earns a 2, a reassessment or resubmission is possible (and encouraged). Student initiates reassessment or resubmission.
- If a student earns a 3, the student may initiate a plan with the instructor to demonstrate learning beyond standard expectation.

The student completes additional learning opportunities prior to the reassessment. Departments have discretion with their re-take policies and practices so students need to familiarize themselves with the resubmission/reassessment protocols within each department. Student's most consistent and most recent score or piece of evidence will be considered in the overall calculation of the grade.

### ***The Role of Formative Assessment in a Standards Based Classroom***

By establishing clear criteria and proficiency levels for standards and skills, all stakeholders should be able to use student evidence and determine overall level of performance. Students need frequent, targeted feedback to help move them towards proficiency and beyond. While fewer summative pieces of evidence may be collected in a standards based classroom, there should be frequent opportunities for students to receive and act on feedback from their teacher. Teachers should use formative assessment strategies regularly to determine current performance levels for their students to inform whole class, small group and individualized instruction as well as to provide targeted feedback to students.

## *Summative Scores*

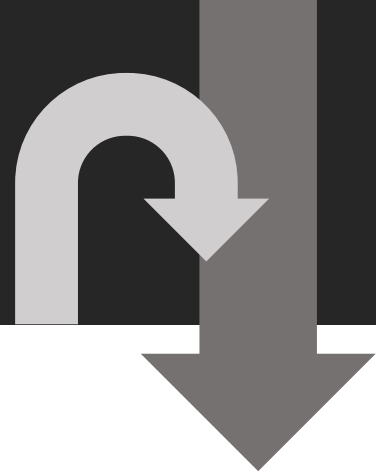
The summative scores/pieces of evidence recorded in the gradebook (and used in overall grade calculation) are typically fewer than the number of scores recorded in a traditional gradebook. In a standards based platform, teachers do not include practice grades (homework/assignments given early in the learning cycle) in the calculation of the overall grade but rather grade summative assessments, performance based assessments, projects, etc. Experts recommend one - two summative scores/pieces of evidence each week.







# U5 SBG ROAD MAP



## Department Decisions/Discussions

**Reassessment Protocol** - departments will define the process by which students will communicate their desire to reassess. Department should include timelines, remediation activities including teacher conferences, that may be required prior to reassessment. Protocol should include times /situations in which reassessment is not possible (end of grading period, individual student reasons).

**Resubmission Protocol** - resubmission protocols will guide students that choose to re-submit a piece of evidence (something other than a traditional summative assessment) after additional learning has occurred. Departments should consider the same elements described above in the reassessment protocol section.

## The Road to Standards Based Reporting (Department Task Force Work)

Task force members will be asked to read, “Grading from the Inside Out; Bringing Accuracy to Student Assessment through a Standards Based Mindset” by Tom Schimmer prior to task force work commencing. Time spent on reading will be part of the compensated task force time.

### Step 1 Ensure Course Curriculum is Standards Aligned

### Step 2 Determine Reporting Standards

The reporting standards or strands will show on the report card for each course. Some standards are organized in a manner in which the reporting standards/strands are clear. For example, the common core organizes math standards into large strands called domains. The domains are broad categories such as geometry, expressions and equations, statistics, etc. Under each reporting standard are the standards that make up the course. These will be visible within the standards based gradebook. Within each standard there are skills/targets that teachers will collect evidence for. The pieces of evidence will be entered similar to the way assignments were entered into Skyward.

This is what the organization of a math course on a report card might look:

MATHEMATICS				
	Term			
	T1	T2	T3	T4
Overall Mathematics Achievement				
ACADEMIC STANDARDS				
Number Sense & Algebra				
Geometry & Measurement				
Data & Probability				
WORK ETHIC				
Math Preparation				
Math On-Task				
Math Work Completion				

You will notice that learner characteristics (categorized above as work ethic) will be reported separately and a symbol will be assigned to each learner characteristic as opposed to a grade.

Departments may choose the same reporting standards/strands for all courses in their department OR there may be different reporting standard by course. Experts recommend between 4-6 reporting standards per course. Any more than 6 reporting standards becomes cumbersome and confusing for parents.

Ultimately, the standards based grade book will reflect this type of organization.

See snapshot below of sample standards based grade book.

Subject: Q1 SELA 5th Grade English Language Arts (Section 1)															
expand all collapse all	Overall	Reading													Writing
		Literature										Informational Text			
		ELA.5.R1					ELA.5.R2	ELA.5.R3	ELA.5.R4						
		Reading Log 1	Reading Log 2	Reading Log 3	Reading Log 4	Reading Log 5	Evidence								
		9/2	9/9	9/14	9/21	9/28									
Average:	2.93	1.6	2.21	2.64	2.87	3.33	2.57	2.9	3.2	3.23	2.98	2.97	2.97	2.88	
Benson, Jeremy	2.9	2	2	3	2	3	2.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.25	3	3.13	2.67	
Fitzgerald, Anna	3.05	1	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	2.5	2.75	3.34	
Gibson, Kayla	2.65	2	2	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	2.75	2.5	2.63	2.67	

### Step 3 Determine which standards fall under each reporting standard/strand

Most state standards are organized in this manner with broad topics within the discipline and more discrete skills/content standards are organized under these large strands.

### Step 4 Use district performance levels to create a companion document (or course companion document)

Companion document should contain standards and should specify what students would be able to do or show for each performance level. Departments will also create skill based rubrics, based on performance levels, for major projects and assessments.

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Companion documents list each standard covered and provides a leveled descriptor specific to the standard. General performance level descriptors are included below.

## Unit 5 Performance Level Descriptions

### (1) Beginning

The student is in the very early stages of understanding this new concept or skill. At this point, the student needs significant support from the teacher to understand what is being asked of him/her. The student is not ready to complete tasks or answer questions relating to this concept or skill.

### (2) Progressing

The student is beginning to grasp the concept or skill. He/she may struggle to independently complete tasks or answer questions relating to the concept or skill, but with support/prompting from the teacher the student is able to show limited proficiency. It is also possible that the student is able to show proficiency at some times, but is not yet consistent in his/her proficiency.

### (3) Proficient

The student is able to complete tasks or answer questions relating to the skill independently. He/she consistently shows grade level proficiency with this concept or skill. The student performance matches grade level expectations.

### (4) Exceptional

The student has such a deep understanding of the concept or skill that he/she independently applies their knowledge or skills in a way that has not been explicitly taught. This level indicates the student has demonstrated a very deep understanding and application of skills and concepts and may be working above the grade level band with that skill.

## Step 5 Identifying tasks that provide evidence of learning for each standard

Teachers should identify which products, assessments or projects provide **valid evidence of student learning** - by standard (target). Teacher teams should also discuss opportunities for students to demonstrate a **deeper understanding of content** or an extension of skills/concepts discussed in class.



## Step 6 Ensure assessments are aligned to standards

Many assessments include questions from more than one standard. Ensure questions are grouped by standard or learning target and record the performance of each segment separately. One assessment may result in multiple data points in the grade book.

## Step 7 Use companion documents and rubrics to evaluate student work samples (PRACTICE)

To familiarize teachers with performance levels and ensure the companion documents contain enough detail, teachers should collect student work samples and assess independently and then discuss results as a group. Additional details that help to define performance levels (by standard) may be added to the companion documents. **The more clearly the performance level descriptors, the more reliable the tool.** Continued practice with student work samples is necessary for teachers to feel comfortable looking at pieces of evidence and determining the student's performance level.

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# Projected Timeline for Roll-Out

Fall 2017

*Department Task Force Work*

English  
FCS  
Music  
Technology  
Business

Spring 2018

*Pilot*

Fall 2018

*Full Roll - Out*

Fall 2018

*Department Task Force Work*

Foreign Language  
Art  
Social Studies  
PE  
Ag

Spring 2019

*Pilot*

Fall 2019

*Full Roll - Out*

Fall 2019

*Department Task Force Work*

Science  
Math  
Special Education  
ESL

Spring 2020

*Pilot*

Fall 2020

*Full Roll - Out*

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