PROFICIENCY BASED LEARNING

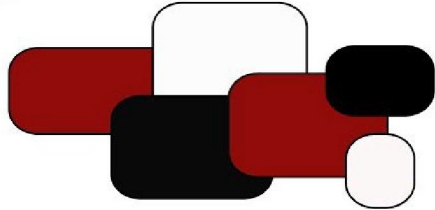## At

Killingly Intermediate School

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What is proficiency-based learning?

Proficiency-based learning refers to systems of instruction, assessment grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. Proficiency-based learning systems use adopted state learning standards to determine academic expectations and define "proficiency" in a given course, subject area, or grade level. The goal of proficiency-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are essential for success in school, college, career, and life.

Proficiency-based learning systems more accurately reflect and communicate a student's learning progress and achievement, including situations in which students struggled early on in the school year, but then put in the effort and hard work needed to meet expected standards. We have all experienced failures and recognize that learning to overcome them are some of the most important lessons we can learn in life.

In many traditional grading systems, behaviors such as class participation and homework completion are factored into final grades along with scores on projects and tests. While we know that class participation, effort, and time management are essential to success, averaging together behaviors with a student's acquired knowledge and skills can confuse our understanding of a student's progress and achievement. This makes providing appropriate support for struggling students more challenging as we might find ourselves asking: Has the student failed to master essential concepts, or did the student fail to turn in an assignment on time? Proficiency-based learning systems are designed to identify specific academic needs, which we can use to inform our instruction, interventions, and curriculum. That is why we assess and report Habits of Work, including perseverance, organization, and social awareness, separately from academic achievement.

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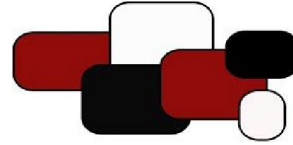
Killingly Intermediate School's Grading Beliefs and Practices

Belief 1: **All students learn best when they feel included, respected, and valued by their learning community.**
Practices at KIS that support this belief:

• Students are known as individuals and learners, and they are supported in developing positive relationships with each other and with adults in the learning community.

• We strive to create a learning environment and develop programming to reflect and honor student identities and interests.

Belief 2: **All students learn best when they are challenged and supported with consistent high expectations.**
Practices at KIS that support this belief:

• Establish clear, agreed-upon learning outcomes for every course and grade level.

• Common success criteria for meeting all learning outcomes is defined for every course and grade level.

• Learning outcomes, including long-term performance indicators, short-term learning targets, and habits of work are clearly articulated to students.

• Curriculum is designed to engage all students in critical thinking and the application of skills and knowledge throughout the learning process within and across content areas.

• Interventions and opportunities to revise and relearn are systemic and provided regularly to support all students in achieving common learning outcomes.

Belief 3: **All students learn best when they are supported by clear cycles of practice, feedback, assessment, and reflection.**

Practices at KIS that support this belief:

• All forms of assessment are aligned to a common set of performance indicators.

• Habits of work are assessed and reported separately from academic progress.

• Formative assessment provides opportunities for students to practice, receive feedback, and reflect on progress.

• Summative assessments, evaluated against common scoring criteria, are used to evaluate a student's level of achievement on performance indicators at a given point in time.

• Grades are intended to be used solely to communicate a student's current level of achievement, not for motivation or punishment.

• Students regularly reflect on their learning progress and are taught to evaluate and use feedback.
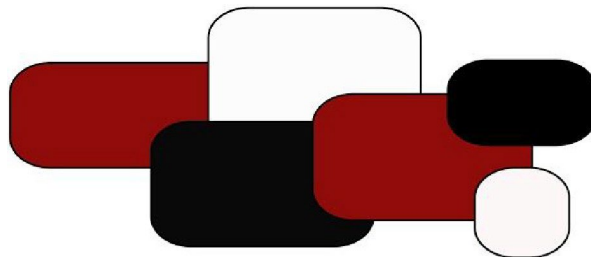
How is our Proficiency-Based Learning Framework Organized?

Habits of Work

One of the most important practices for improving instructional effectiveness and student learning is assessing and reporting academic achievement separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance, class participation, and turning work in on time. Killingly Intermediate School has chosen the most essential Habits of Work to report separately from academic proficiency to ensure that a student's reported academic achievement is not artificially inflated or deflated by work habits.

Proficiency Statements

Students demonstrate achievement of content-area content proficiencies through their aggregate performance on summative and formative assessments over time.

Performance Indicators

Summative assessments are used to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators.

Learning Targets

Learning targets guide the design of curriculum units and individual lesson plans that move students toward proficiency and the achievement of performance indicators.

How is student progress assessed?

Types of Assessment:

Formative Assessment
Formative assessments are used to monitor progress of student learning throughout an instructional unit. Formative assessment is used to provide ongoing feedback and determine target areas that need support. Formative assessments are used to give both the student and teacher information about their overall achievement on a performance indicator. They are a minor contributor to a student's overall grade and is weighted as a .1 in the gradebook.

Summative Assessment
Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning throughout an instructional unit. A majority of a student's score on performance indicators reflect their performance on summative assessments. Summative assessments are weighted as 1.0 in the gradebook.

What is the purpose of report cards?

The primary purpose of report cards is to clearly, accurately, consistently, and fairly communicate academic achievement and habits of work to students and families. Proficiency-based report cards are aligned to the most important instructional standards across grade levels and content areas.

A proficiency-based report card provides detailed information on how well your child is progressing towards mastery of year-end performance indicators.
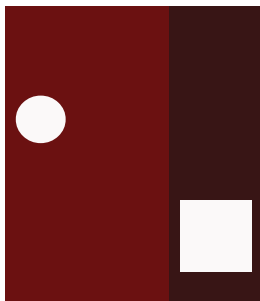
How are report card scores calculated?

Performance indicators are easy to communicate because they offer a clear, measurable point of knowledge, skill or habit of work. A student's growth toward proficiency is important to communicate as well. In order to achieve scores that represent the current level of proficiency, while also communicating the growth required for a student to achieve proficiency, we use a formula called Decaying Average.

Decaying average is a formula that gives greater weight to the most recent scores, recognizing students for how much growth they've made, without punishing them for where they started. Decaying Average uses a straightforward formula to calculate a student's level of mastery using a weighted average. When calculating grades, each new score is given a higher weight than the previous scores' weighted average. A typical equation for decaying average using a 65% weight looks like this:

SCORE 1:2

SCORE 2: 3 GRADE CALCULATION: $(2*.35) + (3*.65) = 2.65$

If a student completes a third assignment. Then, the equation takes the previous average and adds the weighted new score like so:

SCORE 3: 3 GRADE CALCULATION: $(2.65*.35) + (3*.65) = 2.88$

The decision to use Decaying Average assumes students' abilities will increase with practice, and errors will decrease with instruction and support. The calculation focuses on representing the growth occurring, which lends a good balance to proficiency and growth in grading.

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Why do we report using a 4-point scale?

Traditional grading systems that attempt to identify 100 distinct levels of performance distort the precision, objectivity, and reliability of grades.

They also create unsolvable methodological and logistical problems for teachers. Limiting the number of grade categories to four through an integer grading system allows educators to offer more sensible and reliable evaluations of students' performance.

Combining the score with proficiency level descriptions enhances it communicative value.

PROFICIENCY LEVEL

4
Proficient
The student independently and consistently understands and demonstrates knowledge of key concepts, processes, and skills to meet grade level content

2-3
Progressing
The student is beginning to understand and apply concepts, processed and skills. The student is progressing toward grade level content performance expectations, but more practice is needed.

1
Emerging
The student does not yet understand key concepts, processed and skills necessary to meet grade level content performance indicators. This is an area of concern.

0
No Evidence
The student has not submitted any evidence for the performance indicator.

HABITS OF WORK GRADING SCALE

PERSEVERANCE: STUDENTS WILL PERSEVERE THROUGH THE LEARNING PROCESS.

Perseverance	Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Proficient 3
Self- Motivated	I can: • with reminders, engage in work	I can: • with guidance, engage in work • ask questions	I can: • engage in work • ask questions • take risks
Active Learner	I can: • participate when asked • with reminders, use resources	I can: • understand feedback • participate when asked • with guidance, use resources	I can: • use feedback • participate • use resources

ORGANIZATION: STUDENTS WILL ORGANIZE THEIR TIME AND MATERIALS.

Organization	Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Proficient 3
Self-Management	I can: • with reminders, come to class prepared	I can: • with guidance, come to class prepared • with guidance, use time wisely	I can: • come to class prepared • use time wisely

SOCIAL AWARENESS: STUDENTS WILL WORK EFFECTIVELY WITHIN GROUPS

Social Awareness	Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Proficient 3
Personal Behavior	I can: • with reminders, follow classroom expectations	I can: • with guidance, follow classroom expectations • with guidance, respect classroom materials/space	I can: • follow classroom expectations • respect classroom materials/space
Collaboration	I can: • with reminders, listen actively • with reminders, speak respectfully	I can: • with guidance, listen actively • with guidance, speak respectfully • with guidance, respect others' thoughts and feelings	I can: • listen actively • speak respectfully • respect others' thoughts and feelings

How many assessments should I expect to see for my child?

Due to the fact that proficiency-based learning and grading promotes student growth over time, you will not see as many grades entered as a traditional grading system. A lot of work is used by teacher to provide feedback to student, rather than focusing on a final grade. As such, the following is what you should expect as a minimum for grading in JumpRope.

Summative assessments – All courses will enter a minimum of one summative per grading period (marking periods 1,2,3 and 4) Please see the school calendar for marking period ending dates.

Formatives assessments – Core classes will enter a minimum of one grade per week and Special classes will enter a minimum of one grade bi-weekly. The reason for this is Specials meet every other day.

All students will receive from all teachers a minimum or one grade for each of the five habits of work grades by the end of each month throughout the school year.

Our belief is this will provide students and parents sufficient evidence of progress as the year progresses.

STUDENT SUPPORT

If students fail to meet expected learning standards, we have a number of supports in place to help students as they work towards achieving proficiency.

At Killingly Intermediate School, all students have time in their daily schedule to receive extra help in a particular class or to explore enrichment opportunities. Teachers and students coordinate how to best utilize this time based on the student's needs.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH BASED INTERVENTION (SABI) AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (AII)

Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) emphasize successful instruction for all students through high-quality core general education practices, as well as targeted intervention for students experiencing learning, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties.

TIER 1 INSTRUCTION generally takes place in the classroom and is offered to all students at the same time.
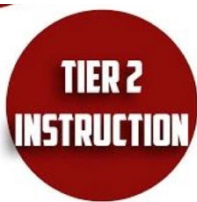
TIER 2 INSTRUCTION is offered when it becomes evident that a student needs additional or supplemental support in order to achieve proficiency in a particular subject area. When areas of need or weakness **in** a subject area have been identified, Tier 2 instruction helps students address those needs as they advance towards proficiency.

TIER 3 INSTRUCTION is offered to students who require more individualized attention and support as they work towards achieving proficiency. For some students, Tier 3 instruction occurs in place of Tiers I and 2.

ELIGIBILITY REQUJIREMENTS IN A PBL MODEL...

Habits of Work (HOW) Honor Rolls and HOW-informed are considered to determine eligibility for athletics and extracurricular activities. At Killingly Intermediate School, we are committed to creating a culture where learners value Habits of Work as much as academic achievement. HOW are reported separately on our progress reports and report cards and also determine whether students can access re-dos and re-takes to demonstrate growth on assessments.

SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

It is a student/teacher/family/community partnership. By working together will we graduate students who are well-prepared for college and careers.

FAMILIES CAN HELP US ACCOMPLISH THIS BY:

- Asking your child questions about their learning.

- Helping your child set learning goals that are connected to their interests and strengths, while remaining mindful of and attentive to areas in which they need extra help.

- Staying informed on what is going on in your child's classroom by reading newsletters, blogs and asking questions.

- Participating in school events.

- Understanding the types of assessments your child is given and how these are used to measure progress.

- Understanding how teachers use assessment data to plan and develop a learning path for your child.

- Encouraging your child to communicate their hopes and dreams with their teachers.

- Understanding that all children have different interests in different subjects, and that their progress towards proficiency in the various performance indicators will be impacted by those interests.

ROUTINELY ASK YOUR CHILDREN:

- What are you working on in class?

- Which performance indicators and/or Habits of Work are connected to what you are learning?

- How do you know if your work is proficient" and, if it isn't proficient, how do you know where you are in terms of becoming proficient?

- What have you learned so far, and what do you need to learn next?

- What can I do to support what you're learning at school?