Fremont School District 79

Standards Based Grading Guidebook

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Fremont School District 79
Standards-Based Grading Plan

Strategic Plan Target: Learning: We will measure learners' progression through standards

All students will identify specific standards they are learning and their current performance level on them.

All staff will align learning to standards and levels of progression through the standards.

Parents will be able to identify specific standards their child is learning and the child's performance level on them.

Fremont stakeholders will be informed on changing reporting methods.

Standards-Based Grading Plan
2018-2019 **Focus: Stage One Implementation** • SBG training for all ES, IS, and MS math • K-6 teacher pilots continue (commenced 17-18) • Regular SBG Committee meetings • Establish district SBG teacher handbook • Continued community education
2019-2020 **Focus: Stage Two Implementation** • Full implementation of SBG practices for PK-8 math • SBG training for MS ELA • Regular SBG Committee meetings • Continued community education
2020-2021 • Plan Pause
2021-2022 **Focus: Stage Three Implementation** • Full implementation of SBG practices for PK-8 ELA • SBG training for all remaining subject areas • Regular SBG Committee meetings • Continued community education
2022-2023 **Focus: Full District Implementation** • Full implementation of SBG practices for all subject areas • Continued community education

Section 1 - Purpose of Standards Based Grading

Purpose Statement - The purpose of the Fremont School District 79 report card is to communicate to parents/guardians and educators the learner's level of progression of the standards to show evidence of learning and areas for continued growth.

Principles that Guide our FSD79 Purpose (adapted from Spokane Public Schools):

Principle 1 - Grades and Reports Should Be Based on Clearly Specified Learning Goals and Performance Standards.

All students in the same grade in the same course, no matter their instructor, will be graded using the same standards.

Principle 2 - Evidence Used for Grading Should Be Valid.

Students are assessed on what they are taught. There are no trick questions and no surprises.

Principle 3 - Grading Should Be Based on Established Criteria, Not on Arbitrary Norms.

Students are graded on the standards assessed, not on arbitrary norms such as poor handwriting or no name on their paper.

Principle 4 - Not Everything Should be Included in Grades.

Students should not be penalized for early attempts in learning. Students are not graded as they are learning the information, but after the learning has occurred. Students need to have enough "practice" in order to be successful.

Principle 5 - Avoid Grading Based on (Mean) Averages.

When reporting student progress on a standard, teachers can use any and all evidence to gauge a student's progress. Averaging and algorithms are unnecessary in reporting whether or not a student has met a standard.

Principle 6 - Focus on Achievement, and Report Other Factors Separately.

Students' achievement should be the only aspect included in their grade. Students' math grades will reflect their math achievement. However, their habits and responsibilities during math will be reported separately.

Section 2 - Academic Levels of Progression

The below categories represent the levels of progression that we will utilize throughout the year for academic achievement:

Level	Criteria
4 - Extending	Student extends course expectations by deeply and independently applying and utilizing concepts and skills.
3 - Meeting	Student demonstrates course expectations for concepts and skills.
2 - Approaching	Student is progressing toward basic understanding of course concepts and skills with assistance.
1 - Beginning	Student shows an emerging awareness of concepts and skills.
N/A - Not Assessed	The specific area was not assessed during a specific grading term or there was not enough evidence collected to assign a performance level.
* - Modified	Students who are working on standards measured on a modified curriculum.

This is an overall description of student performance at each of these levels:

Level 4 (Extending)
Student extends course expectations by deeply and independently applying and utilizing concepts and skills.
A student at a level 4 independently uses and applies knowledge in ways that demonstrate higher level thinking skills. A student who is able to consistently perform at Level 4 is one who independently demonstrates extensions of their knowledge and/or met some accelerated standards. The student is “advanced” in that they are performing at a level above where we would expect them to be at a given point in time. Students may not have the opportunity for a level 4 on every assignment or assessment, but they should have enough opportunities to demonstrate a level 4 on their measured strands each term.

Level 3 (Meeting)
Student demonstrates course expectations for concepts and skills.
A student at a Level 3 demonstrates understanding of course skills and concepts and requires minimal support. A level 3 throughout the school year indicates strong, excellent work at the expected level for that course. The 3 mark is the goal for the grade level and should be celebrated as "right where we would expect them to be," yet students should continue to be pushed to strive for even further learning as appropriate. Level 3 represents those students who are independently able

to meet the standards after instruction.

Level 2 (Approaching)
Student is progressing toward basic understanding of course concepts and skills with assistance.
A student at a Level 2 has not yet met the standards but is progressing toward achieving skills and learning course concepts. Some support from teachers, parents and/or peers is needed. The 2 mark indicates ongoing growth, but not quite where we would expect them to be at that given point in time. The difference between a Level 1 and a Level 2 is the ability to demonstrate some understanding. At Level 2, a student can correctly identify some concepts and/or vocabulary, and/or use some skills. **A level 2 mark means that the student is not meeting course expectations. It requires both communication and action in order to help the student meet the course standards. It is important that we are honest about this marking with students and families.**

Level 1 (Beginning)
Student shows an emerging awareness of concepts and skills.
A student at a Level 1 is currently not meeting the course standards. The student demonstrates an inconsistent understanding and application of knowledge. Intervention is needed from teachers and parents. Students at this level are beginning to identify subject area concepts, vocabulary, and/or use skills. They are unable to make connections among ideas or extend the information.

Section 3 - Habits of Success Levels of Progression

We believe habits of success and social development criteria should be reflected separately from academic performance on the report card and are an important part of communicating to parents and students about student progress. Behaviors and academics are both significant and reporting them separately communicates even more about the learner and how they can continue to grow without distorting a student's actual achievement in learning.

The below categories represent the levels of progression that we will utilize throughout the year for habits of success:

Level	**Criteria**
3 - Meeting	Frequently exhibits (Student demonstrates independence in meeting expectations)
2 - Approaching	Occasionally exhibits (Student requires moderate assistance and redirecting)
1 - Beginning	Rarely exhibits (Student requires considerable assistance and redirecting)

The following strands are used by the district to measure habits of success for our students.

- Interacts and collaborates respectfully
- Follows directions and expectations
- Completes assigned tasks on time and with quality
- Demonstrates organizational skills
- Uses time productively
- Contributes ideas and adds value to discussions

Pre-K through 5th grade students will have one overall habits of success section on their report card. Middle school students will have one habits of success section per content area on the report card.

Section 4 - Determining Grades

Each course will define 4-6 strands to report out academic achievement on our report card. The respective standards for each course will be grouped according to these strands. The report card will also allow for teachers to report out on our habits of success strands.

There are no set number of data points that teachers must use to effectively measure performance on a standard or strand. It is important that students have multiple opportunities over time to demonstrate their growth and achievement. We recognize that students learn in different ways and at different paces and our teachers design their instruction and assessment to account for these differences.

Please keep in mind that we measure learning and grades with a progress or benchmark approach instead of an attainment approach.

What that means is that we mark where a student is at a given point in time in their progress. If a student is on track and right where they should be for a specific marking period that is a 3 not a 2. This is in the same spirit of a traditional grading system where we would not mark a student as a D or F throughout the year until they reached the end of the year and fully attained a standard which may result in an A or B.

A student should be considered "meeting" a particular standard at a particular time based on where the teacher would expect them to be by the end of instruction related to that respective standard. That does mean that a student could be considered "meeting" a standard at one point in the year and not meeting the same standard later in the year if they did not continue to progress toward the year-end standard/target.

We believe the most recent evidence of student learning should not be penalized by earlier attempts in learning. We should focus on the student's level of progression to communicate their current

status. A grading model that calculates decaying weights, which gives greater weight to recent measurements, would be preferred to averaging grades. Ultimately, the teacher's professional judgment is the most important component of grade determination.

We believe that intrinsic motivation outweighs extrinsic motivation and grades should not be a compliance tool. We want students to be motivated by progressing through their standards and not for other ulterior reasons. We believe extra credit should not be allowed because it can mask actual student growth and achievement.

For more guidance on effective grading practices refer to *Appendix A: Ken O-Connor's 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*.

Section 5 - The Role of Homework

We believe homework completion should not be incorporated into the academic grade. It is an important behavior that should be measured as a work habit. We believe learning is a progression and it is not necessary to incorporate every practice, homework, or formative assessment into a grade. Students learn at their own pace and some need more time to meet a standard. Evidence that measures the student's progress towards the learning standards should be included.

Natural benefits and consequences can also serve as a motivator to completing homework as we aspire for students to make the connection between homework completion and their success in meeting standards. We want every homework assignment to carry specific meaning and connection back to the standards the students are working to meet.

Section 6 - Reassessment Practices

Students should be given multiple opportunities to reach a standard. Our focus is on what a student learns rather than the speed in which they learn.

Reassessment should require some specific elements to ensure students are making the most of their additional opportunities. In order to be provided the opportunity to reassess, students should be asked to show evidence they have done something additional and different to prepare. This additional commitment should also serve to motivate students to give their best effort the first time. These opportunities must also be reasonable in regards to the teacher availability to reteach, review, or reassess.

Reassessments can apply to assessments that are both formative (assessment during learning) and summative (assessment after learning). In many cases even summative assessments could be considered formative in the sense that opportunities for reassessment may still exist after additional learning.

There are some limitations to reassessment as teachers are bound by certain timelines and systems

that require “final” grades to be reported at certain times in the year.

Section 7 - Report Cards

Our gradebook will be organized by the 4-6 strands identified for each course. A level of progression will be reported for each strand. This reporting of specific strands will replace the traditional overall letter grade. Not all strands will be reported on each academic term in all subject areas. Academic grades will be reported separately from habits of success grades. Report cards will be compiled and sent home once per trimester. K-5 related studies courses will report out once, at the end of the academic year, in alignment with the frequency in which they see their students over the course of the year.

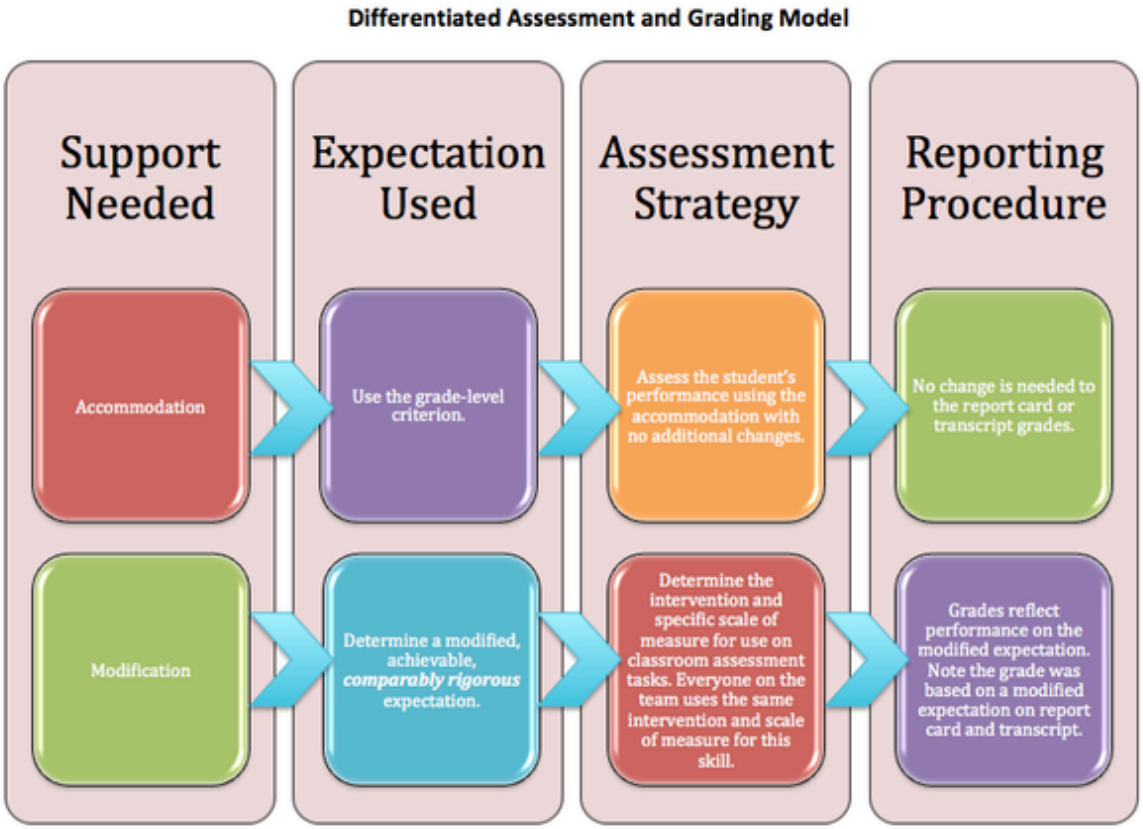
Teacher comments will be included on report cards. The expectation is that the comments are specific and meaningful to each student.

Section 8 - Special Education

It is important that students receiving special education services receive clear and accurate grade reporting. These students should receive grades that reflect their actual performance. Students with IEPs may earn 3s and 4s in their academic strands. The grade earned should reflect the work that the student accomplished independently, with accommodations as stated in the IEP.

Students with IEPs often receive accommodations and modifications and there is a significant difference between the two. Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable instructional and assessment access for students with disabilities. Accommodations reduce or eliminate the effects of a student’s disability and do not reduce learning expectations. Modifications are substantial changes in what the student is expected to demonstrate; includes changes in instructional level, content, and performance criteria, may include changes in test form or format; includes alternate assessments. As the chart (Jung, 2017) below demonstrates, once the standard has been modified, the child needs to be measured on the grade level standards the instruction has been modified to meet. Report cards will have an “*” available to denote when students are being measured on standards from a modified curriculum.

There are a handful of students whose learning standards follow the Essential Elements instead of the grade level standards. Those students’ grades will be addressed separately by the IEP team.



Section 9 - Honor Roll

This section applies to middle school only.

Students are eligible to earn honor roll designations in two areas, academic and habits of success. They will be calculated each trimester. The criteria are as follows:

- Academic Honor Roll: All 3s and 4s on all academic strands in each course
- Habits of Success Honor Roll: All 3s on habits of success strands in each course

Section 10 - Extra-Curricular Eligibility

This section applies to activities that integrate an eligibility requirement.

For activities governed by the Illinois Elementary School Association we need to monitor that each participating student "shall be doing passing work as determined by the local school district in all school subjects" and this work shall be checked weekly. Students must be passing each subject each

week to be eligible. We extend this expectation to all of our extra-curricular opportunities.

We define "passing work" as successfully progressing towards meeting academic standards and demonstrating habits of success. If students are not working towards meeting academic standards and/or habits of success they will be subject to the circumstances detailed in our student-parent handbook.

Section 11 - Additional Resources

Books

- *A Repair Kit for Grading* by Ken O'Connor
- *On Your Mark* by Thomas Guskey
- *Grading Smarter Not Harder* by Myron Dweck
- *Fair Isn't Always Equal* by Rick Wormeli
- *Developing Standards-Based Report Cards* by Thomas Guskey
- *Practical Solutions for Serious Problems in Standards Based Grading* by Thomas Guskey
- *Grading Exceptional and Struggling Learners* by Lee Ann Jung and Thomas Guskey
- *Standards-Based Learning in Action* by Tom Schimmer, Garnet Hillman, and Mandy Stalets
- *How to Grade for Learning* by Ken O'Connor
- *What We Know About Grading* by Thomas Guskey and Susan Brookhart

Articles

- The Case Against Percentage Grades by Thomas Guskey
- It's Time to Stop Averaging Grades by Rick Wormeli
- Grades that Mean Something by Guskey, Swan, and Jung
- Grading and Reporting in a Standards-Based Environment: Implications for Students with Special Needs by Thomas Guskey and Lee Ann Jung
- Differentiated Assessment and Grading Model (DiAGraM) by Lee Ann Jung
- A Response to Parent Concerns about SBG by Rick Wormeli
- Late Work: A Constructive Response by Rick Wormeli
- Grading with a Standards Based Mindset by Tom Schimmer (p.12)
- Can You Be Convinced to Change Your Grading Policy? by Starr Sackstein
- Seven Reasons for Standards Based Grading by Patricia Scriffiny
- "Wow me!" The Importance of Articulating the 4 by Emily Rinkema
- When Grading Harms Student Learning by Andrew Miller
- What's Up with Standards-Based Grading by Tom VanderArk
- Beyond Standards-Based Grading: Why Equity Must be Part of Grading Reform by Joe Feldman
- New England Higher Institutions - Proficiency-Based Does Not Disadvantage Applicants
- Complete List of Scholarly Articles Related to SBGR Practices

Videos

- Grading and assessment video series by Rick Wormeli
- Standards Based Grading Video Collection
- Explaining SBG to Parents by ASCD

Documents

- Research and Literature Regarding Standards-Based Grading Practices
- Grading the Future: ISBE Student Advisory Council presentation on grading and reporting.
- ISBE webpage for SBGR
- Spokane Public Schools Standards Based Grading Handbook
- Renton School District Standards Based Grading Handbook
- Deerfield Public Schools 109 Standards Based Grading Teacher Handbook
- Sheridan County Schools SBL Teacher Handbook

Additional Resources

- #sblchat on Twitter Every other Wednesday at 8:00 CST

Appendix A: *Ken O-Connor's 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*.

15 FIXES FOR BROKEN GRADES

by KEN O'CONNOR

Section 1: Fixes for Practices that Distort Achievement

Fix 1: Don't include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc) in grades; include only achievement.

Fix 2: Don't reduce marks on "work" submitted late; provide support for the learner.

Fix 3: Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement

Fix 4: Don't punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades; apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement

Fix 5: Don't consider attendance in grade determination; report absences separately

Fix 6: Don't include group scores in grades; use only individual achievement evidence

Section 2: Fixes for Low-Quality or Poorly Organized Evidence

Fix 7: Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade; organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals

Fix 8: Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards; provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations

Fix 9: Don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students; compare each student's performance to preset standards

Fix 10: Don't rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality; rely only on quality assessments

Section 3: Fixes for Inappropriate Grade Calculation

Fix 11: Don't rely only on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment

Fix 12: Don't include zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence

Section 4: Fixes to Support Learning

Fix 13: Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades; use only summative evidence.

Fix 14: Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities; in those instances, emphasize more recent achievement

Fix 15: Don't leave students out of the grading process. Involve students; they can and should play key roles in assessment and grading and promote achievement

Source: *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*, Second Edition, Pearson, 2011

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