

Standards-Based Learning
Frequently Asked Questions



Constantine Public School District
Constantine, MI

1. What is standards-based learning?

- 1.1. In education, the term standards-based refers to systems of **instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting** that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. Learning standards, or targets, determine the goals of a lesson and overall course. Teachers then determine how and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations described in the standards.
- 1.2. Here at Constantine, we use Michigan-approved **state standards** as a guide to determine our learning targets. We have identified “**priority standards**” in every course taught at CPS in every grade level. These priority standards are the essential standards in which students must be proficient in order to be successful in the course to be set up for success at the next grade level or to be prepared for the next course.
- 1.3. In other words, the majority of our instruction, assessment, grading, and reporting is based on the standards identified for the grade level/course for the student.
- 1.4. The major component of standards-based learning (SBL) is how we communicate student learning and achievement. The goal of SBL is to focus more on student learning and mastery of learning targets with less emphasis on student behavior in the academic grade. More on this below.

2. How is standards-based learning different from traditional learning?

- 2.1. The biggest difference between traditional teaching and learning and standards-based comes down to how we assess, grade, and report student learning. **Traditional grades include many factors in the overall determination of a final grade**, or mark, for a given course. For instance, a traditional grade may be influenced by factors such as the student’s attendance, promptness to turn work in on time, extra credit, participation in class, attitude, and others. While these are important qualities of student success, they are not a pure reflection of a student's proficiency on learning targets. We believe the academic grade for a student should reflect the student’s ability to master the learning goals of the course without being “watered down” by the other factors listed above which make it difficult to determine the student’s ability in the subject matter.
- 2.2. **Standards-based learning provides a grade that is based on the assessment of the identified learning targets**, or standards, for the given course. Student learning and proficiency is prioritized in the grade book and on report cards. The additional factors will still be given weight in the student’s performance in the course, however, it will be reported separately and have minimal impact on the overall grade.
- 2.3. The purpose of this approach is to give students, teachers, and parents the ability to track progress on the student’s learning and give a very detailed picture of which standards the student has mastered and which standards need some improvement.

3. Why is the district changing to standards-based learning?

- 3.1. The goal of Constantine Public Schools is to report grades that are **accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning**. Here is how standards-based learning achieves each one of these goals:
- **Accurate:** By basing a student's grade on academic factors, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors, such as effort and attitude, are still essential but are not part of the student's academic grade and are communicated separately.
 - **Consistent:** For each unit, the teacher will provide learning targets that describe exactly what the student needs to master. Using these targets establishes clear expectations for mastery up front and applies them consistently throughout the unit and semester.
 - **Meaningful:** A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a standards-based classroom, scores are recorded by the reported standards rather than by type (tests, homework etc.) making it easier to identify areas of strength and to address areas of concern for each student.
 - **Supportive of learning:** Standards-based learning supports learning by focusing on the material that has or has not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The redo/retake policy we have adopted also supports student learning by allowing new levels of learning to replace old levels when a student shows improvement on an assessment.

4. How will the grade book be different?

- 4.1. **Students in grades PreK - 5 will not see many changes** in the grade book because they have been using the standards-based approach for quite a few years now. The only major difference you will see is a newly formatted report card to provide more detail on the learning targets.
- 4.2. **Grades 6-12 will have a new approach to the grade book.** The gradebook will be broken into two different portions on an **80/20 system**:
- **80%** of a student's semester grade will be based on the student's performance on **assessments** of the standards covered in the course. High School Exams count
 - **20%** of the student's semester grade will be determined by the student's performance on "**academic practices**" which include many of the "other" factors discussed earlier in the document such as daily work, homework, formative assessment like quizzes in some cases, and any other items the teacher may assign to that category that doesn't fit as assessment of a standard.
 - While in a pure standards-based system, 100% of a student's grade is based on assessment on standards, however, our faculty and administration see value in the academic practices that prepare students to be successful on their mastery of such standards. Thus, we reserved a portion of the student's grade to reflect their effort in this category with 20% of the overall semester grade being dedicated to academic practices.

5. How will the report card look different?

- 5.1. Student report cards will now display a **brief description of each standard** that was assessed in the course and the overall proficiency mark the student received for each standard in the course.
- 5.2. There will be an **overall grade for each course** that will be displayed as well.
- 5.3. Parents will be given access to the **Parent Portal in PowerSchool** where grades are stored and communicated for all students. You will be able to check your student's progress throughout the semester through the phone app.

6. When will progress reports and report cards be sent home?

- 6.1. Progress reports will be available and/or sent home with students at our traditional marking period timelines (9 week mark).
- 6.2. Official report cards will be mailed home shortly after the completion of the semesters. Semester 1 in early January and Semester 2 in early June.

7. How will SBL affect my student's GPA and transcript?

- 7.1. Standards-based grading reports an overall letter grade for each course, so it does not have any impact on your student's grade point average or transcript.

8. Why do some courses have more standards than others?

- 8.1. Constantine faculty have been hard at work over the past four years working on curriculum alignment, identifying priority standards, creating standards-based assessment and proficiency scales, and designing curriculum maps. Every subject is different and the same goes for each course. Some courses may have many smaller standards to cover over a semester while others have fewer, yet broader, standards to cover over the same amount of time.

9. How do I find out about new academic policies for my student?

- 9.1. Throughout this transition, our administrators and instructional staff have engaged in a great deal of research, discussion, and thought to create a system that is both supportive and fair for all students. What might be appropriate for a middle school student might not be best for a high school student so each building has worked to update their handbook accordingly on very specific academic policies to align with our new approach. Policies have been created/updated in the areas of:

- Extra credit
- Late work
- Redo/retakes of assessments
- Academic Dishonesty
- Zeros/no credit in the gradebook
- Attendance

- 9.2. Click the links below to see each buildings policy on the above topics

- [High School Grading Policies Changes](#)

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including cheating, collusion, lying, and plagiarism, will receive a consequence up to and including in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension depending on the case. The student(s) involved will be required to either re-submit the assignment/assessment or perform an alternative assignment that measures the desired standards/skills as determined by the teacher. All cases of academic dishonesty must be reported in a student's powerschool log entry page. Any student found cheating in an online or course or any course that is offered by any educational organization outside of Constantine High School's offerings shall fall under the rules of that outside organization. However, Constantine High School does reserve the right to take additional disciplinary action.

Extra Credit

Extra credit will not be accepted. The academic grade must be a true reflection of a student's proficiency on the reported standards. However, extra opportunities to show proficiency may be given as long as it is in the form of an alternative assignment, activity, assessment, or project that shows progress toward proficiency of a required standard. It should be used to provide evidence in addition to what has been done in class to support the rationale for a certain proficiency level.

Late Work

Late work, missing work and work completion policy - Late work deductions in credit will only be marked in the academic practices category. Teachers are expected to inform students of cut off dates for missing work, i.e. when they will no longer accept the assessment or assignment for credit. This deadline should correspond with a point where genuine learning of that standard has passed. This is to be determined by the teacher but consideration should be given to the timing of the final assessment for each respective standard(s). Any assignments turned in late will be deducted up to 50% up until the time late work is no longer accepted. Depending on the situation, this may or may not apply for students with documented extended time accommodations.

Zeros/No Credit

Assessments:

Students that are missing assessments will have their missing assessment marked as "Incomplete". When listed as "Incomplete" the default score for that assessment becomes a zero. Once the assessment has been completed and scored the "Incomplete" will be replaced with the student's actual score and the zero will be removed along with the "Incomplete."

Assignments:

Missing assignments may be given a zero if the assignment is not completed. Grades for non assessment style assignments will count in the academic practices category.

Redos/Retakes (Assessments)

Students may redo/retake any formative or summative assessment one time after the initial attempt. This must be done within a two week time period after receiving feedback from the initial assessment. In order to be eligible for a retake, students must complete all necessary intervention tasks assigned by the teacher. How the retake is

scored/averaged when compared to the initial assessment will be determined by academic department teams.

- [Middle School Grading Policy Changes](#)

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be accepted. The academic grade must be a true reflection of a student's proficiency on the reported standards. However, extra opportunities to show proficiency may be given as long as it is in the form of an alternative assignment, activity, assessment, or project that shows progress toward proficiency of a required standard. It should be used to provide evidence in addition to what has been done in class to support the rationale for a certain proficiency level.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, including cheating, collusion, lying, and plagiarism, will receive a consequence up to and including in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension depending on the case. The student(s) involved will be required to either re-submit the assignment/assessment or perform an alternative assignment that measures the desired standards/skills. All cases of academic dishonesty must be reported in a student's powerschool log entry page. Any student found cheating in an online or course or any course that is offered by any educational organization outside of Constantine Middle School's offerings shall fall under the rules of that outside organization. However, Constantine Middle School does reserve the right to take additional disciplinary action.

Late Work: Late work, missing work and work completion Policy - Late work deductions in credit will only be marked in the 20% category of the student's semester grade. Teachers are expected to publish cut off dates for missing work when they will no longer accept the assignment for credit. This deadline should correspond with a point where genuine learning of that standard has passed. This is to be determined by the teacher but consideration should be given to the timing of the final assessment for each respective standard(s). Any assignments turned in late may be deducted up to 50% up until the time late work is no longer accepted. This may or may not apply for students with documented extended time accommodations.

Redos/Retakes: Students may redo/retake any formative or summative assessment one time after the initial attempt. This must be done within a two week time period after receiving feedback from the initial assessment. In order to be eligible for a retake, students must complete all necessary intervention tasks assigned by the teacher.

Zero Policy:

Assessments: Students that are missing assessments will have their missing assessment marked as "Incomplete". When listed as "Incomplete" the default score for that assessment becomes a zero. Once the assessment has been completed and scored the "Incomplete" will be replaced with the student's actual score and the zero will be removed along with the "Incomplete".

Assignments: Missing assignments may be given a zero if the assignment is not completed. Grades for non assessment style assignments count for 20% of a

student's semester grade. Teachers are expected to publish cut off dates for missing work when they will no longer accept the assignment for credit. This deadline should correspond with a point where genuine learning of that standard has passed.

10. What can a student do to raise his/her grade in a standards-based class?

- 10.1. The goal in a standards-based class is ensuring that students master the priority standards for the class, so any efforts to raise your student's grade will have the same goal. Your student should meet with the teacher to determine which standards need improvement and arrange a reassessment agreement to create a plan on how to relearn the material and when to be reassessed. If your student demonstrates a higher level of mastery on the assessment, then the grade for that standard will be increased and your student's grade will increase. Again, the focus is on improving your student's mastery of the material, so extra credit points are not used in standards-based classes. Please remember, an assessment may have a deadline for retakes so the student must retake the assessment prior to the deadline.