West Northfield District 31

Standards-Based Grading Family Guide & Handbook

Understanding Your Child's Growth & Progress

Helping students become confident, independent learners

About This Handbook

This guide is designed to help families understand how student learning is communicated in District 31.

Inside you'll learn:

- ✓ **Why we use Standards-Based Grading**
- ✓ **What you'll see in Skyward**
- ✓ **How to understand your child's academic progress**
- ✓ **How learning behaviors are reported**
- ✓ **How you can support learning at home**

Our goal is simple: ***To provide every family with clear, meaningful information about their child's learning.***

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Everything in this guide supports our mission of empowering every student to make a positive impact on tomorrow's communi



A Message to Families

Dear District 31 Families,

As parents, one of the most common questions we ask is:

"How is my child doing in school?"

At District 31, we believe the answer should be about more than a single letter or percentage.
We believe families deserve meaningful information that answers questions like:

- What is my child learning?
- What has my child mastered?
- What skills are they still developing?
- How can I support learning at home?

Standards-Based Grading helps us answer those questions.
Rather than simply reporting a final grade, Standards-Based Grading communicates your child's progress toward specific learning standards. It provides clearer feedback about strengths, identifies areas for continued growth, and helps students understand what they need to do next.

At Winkelman Elementary School students develop the foundation for future success.
As they build essential academic skills, they are also learning to become confident, curious, and independent learners. Our grading and reporting system is designed to support that growth while providing families with meaningful information that strengthens the partnership between home and school.

At Field, we know that Middle school is an important time in a child's development.
Students are becoming more independent, learning to advocate for themselves, and taking greater ownership of their learning. Our grading and reporting system is designed to support those skills while providing families with meaningful information that strengthens the partnership between home and school.
Our goal isn't simply to assign grades.

Our goal is to help every student become a confident, reflective learner.
This handbook is designed to help you better understand your child's learning journey and the many ways we can work together to support their success.

Why Standards-Based Grading?

Standards-Based Grading: Part of District 31's Long-Term Vision for Student Success

Standards-Based Grading is not a stand-alone initiative or a recent change. It is one part of District 31's long-term commitment to improving student learning. When our Board of Education adopted the District's Strategic Plan in 2022, Student Growth & Achievement became Goal 1. As part of that goal, the District committed to creating a standards-based, differentiated curriculum aligned across grade levels to inform curriculum, instruction, assessment, grading, and reporting. Our work in Standards-Based Grading is one step in fulfilling that commitment.

Why This Matters

Standards-Based Grading supports the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan by helping:

🎯 Students understand what they are expected to learn.
📈 Teachers provide clear, meaningful feedback aligned to grade-level standards.
🤝 Families better understand their child's strengths, progress, and next steps.
🌱 Schools create a consistent, aligned system that supports learning from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Our mission is to empower every student to make a positive impact on tomorrow's community. Standards-Based Grading supports that mission by helping students understand their learning, take ownership of their progress, and build the knowledge and skills needed for future success.

Our 5 Core Principles Rooted in Helping Students Learn, Grow, and Succeed

📍 Principle 1: Clearer Feedback
Students and families can see exactly which skills have been mastered and which skills need additional practice.

🎯 Principe 2: Student Ownership
Students understand:
✔ What they're learning
✔ How they're progressing
✔ What they should work on next

📈 Principle 3: Focus on Growth
Learning takes time.
Standards-Based Grading communicates progress throughout the learning process—not simply a final average.

🤝 Principle 4: Stronger Home-School Partnership
Parents receive more meaningful information that helps them support learning at home.

🎓 Principle 5: Preparing Students for the Future
Students develop important habits such as:

- Self-reflection & Goal-setting
- Perseverance
- Applying feedback for growth

These skills prepare students for success in high school, college, careers, and beyond.

WHY STANDARDS-BASED GRADING IS RIGHT FOR D31



Our focus is not better grades—It's better learners.

Because every student's growth matters.

1 PROVIDES CLEARER FEEDBACK ABOUT LEARNING.



Parents and students can see exactly what skills have been mastered and where additional support is needed—not just one overall grade.

You'll know what your child knows and what comes next.

2 HELPS STUDENTS TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LEARNING.



Students understand what they're learning, how they're progressing, and what they need to do next to improve.



3 FOCUSES GRADES ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.



Academic grades reflect what students know and can do, while work habits and learning behaviors are reported separately.

ACADEMIC LEARNING (What my child knows)	LEARNING BEHAVIORS (How my child learns)

Two important pieces of the whole child.

4 SUPPORTS GROWTH DURING AN IMPORTANT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.



Middle school is a time when students are building independence, confidence, and self-advocacy—skills that prepare them for high school and beyond.



Build Confidence



Develop Independence



Prepare for the Future

5 ALIGNS GRADING WITH OUR DISTRICT'S MISSION.



Our goal is to help every student grow as a learner by providing meaningful feedback that supports learning, achievement, and future success.

Empowering every student to make a positive impact on tomorrow's community.

We're committed to helping students understand their learning, celebrate their growth, and know what to do next.

Every Step. Every Student. Every Day.

Five Big Ideas About Standards-Based Grading

Everything we do is centered on helping students learn, grow, and succeed.

🟦 1. Learning Comes First: We grade what students know and can do.

Standards-Based Grading focuses on a student's understanding of important learning standards—not simply the number of points they've earned.

Parents gain a clearer picture of what their child has learned.

🟩 2. Feedback Fuels Growth: Learning improves with meaningful feedback.

Students learn best when they understand:

✔ What they're doing well
✔ What they still need to learn
✔ What their next step is

Specific feedback helps students improve more than a single score ever could.

🟨 3. Growth Takes Time: Learning is a journey—not a single event.

Students aren't expected to master every concept the first time. They learn through:

📚 Practice - Multiple opportunities to demonstrate skills
💬 Feedback - Specific, actionable feedback from the teacher to improve skillsets
🔄 Reflection - Personally identifying what went well and what needs further attention

Students build understanding through practice, meaningful feedback, and reflection.

🟧 4. Academic Learning and Learning Behaviors Both Matter: They simply answer different questions.

Academic learning answers the question, "What does my child know"?

Characteristics of a Successful Learner answers the question, "How does my child approach learning"?

Reporting these separately gives families a clearer picture of their child's progress.

🟪 5. Families Are Essential Partners: Learning is strongest when home and school work together.

The clearer we communicate student learning...

🤝 The easier it is for families to celebrate success,
🎯 Support areas for growth,
💬 Have meaningful conversations,
🌱 Help students become independent learners.

Our goal isn't simply to report grades.
Our goal is to help every student understand their learning and continue growing.

Understanding the Performance Scale

What Makes Standards-Based Grading Different from Traditional Grading?

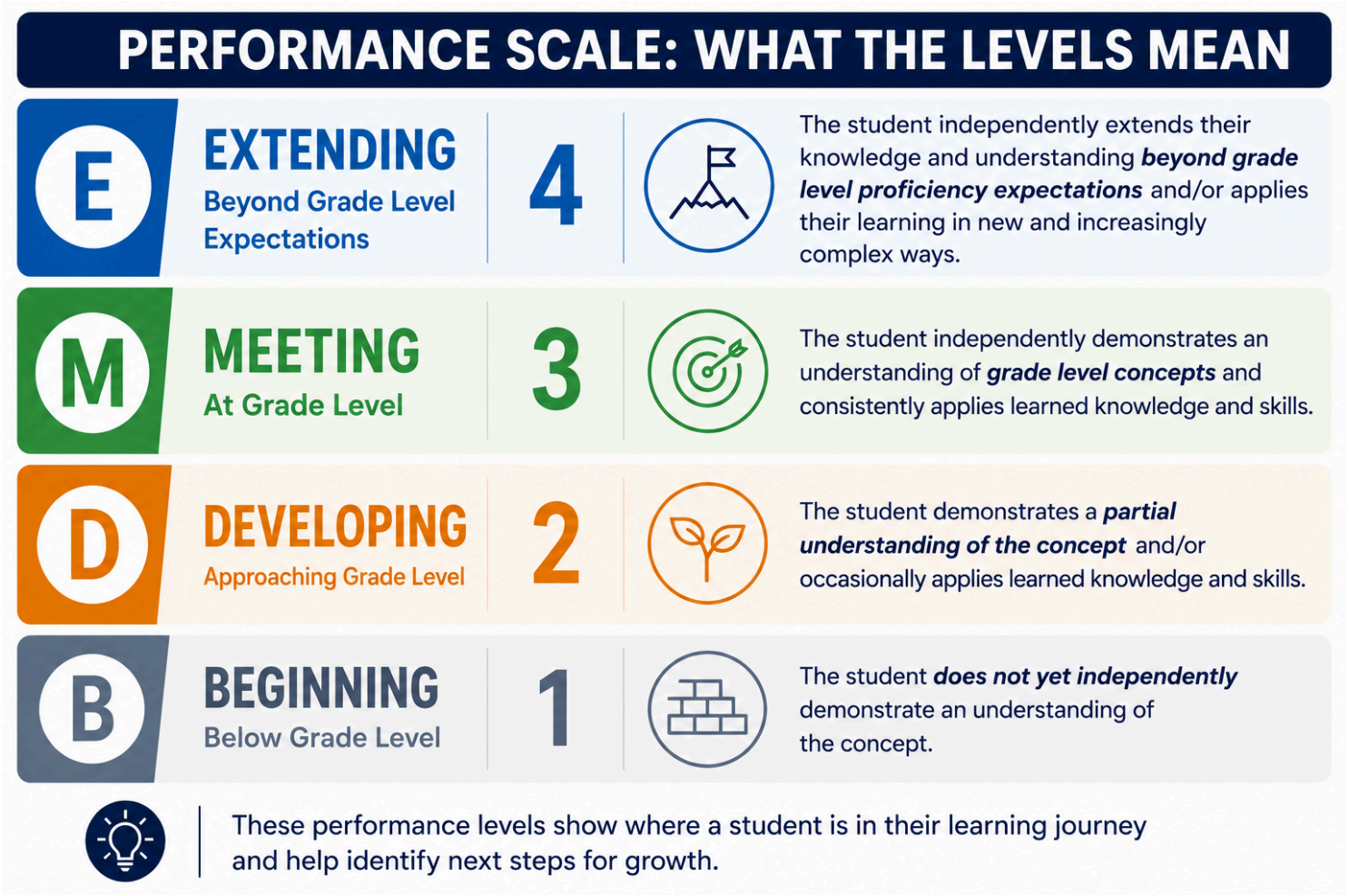


What this example illustrates:

- Learning is a progression. Students build understanding through instruction, practice, feedback, and perseverance.
- Meeting means your child has successfully learned the grade-level expectation.
- Developing means your child is making progress and continues to build independence.
- Extending means your child has mastered the expectation and can apply the skill in more advanced ways.
- The goal is to provide meaningful feedback that helps students understand their progress and their next steps.

D31 Standards-Based Grading Designations

Note: Meeting is the highest possible designation for Winkelman students. Extending is the highest possible designation for Field students)



Key Reminders

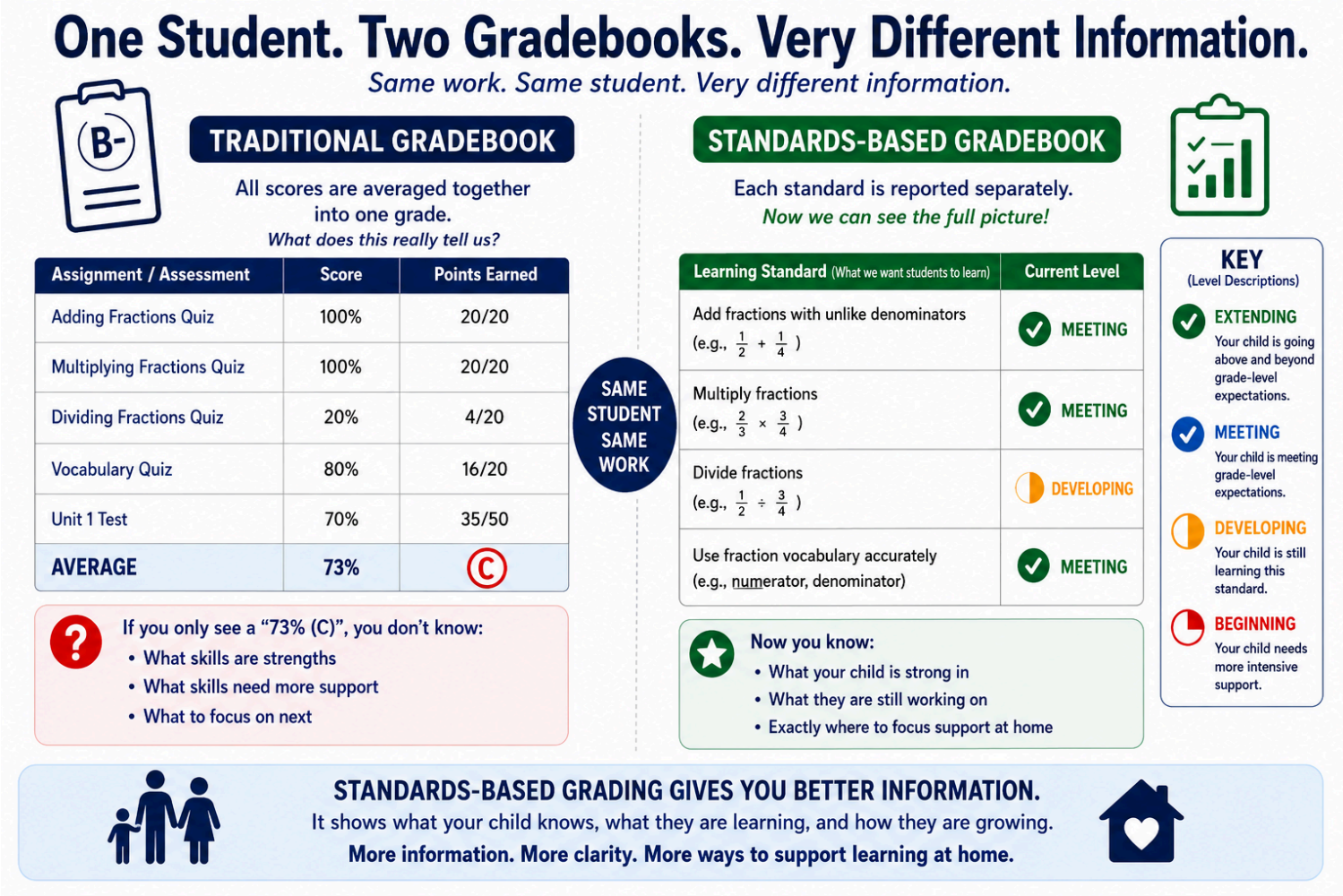
- Meeting (3) is the expected level of proficiency for grade-level learning.
- Students are not expected to begin every new skill at "Meeting." Learning develops over time through instruction, practice, and feedback.
- Students may move between performance levels as they learn new concepts and demonstrate growth.
- The purpose of the performance scale is to communicate where a student is in their learning journey and what their next steps are, not simply assign a grade.

From Performance Levels to Meaningful Feedback

Now that you've seen what each performance level represents, let's look at **how those performance levels provide families with a clearer picture of student learning.**

Two students could earn the same traditional grade, yet have very different strengths and areas for growth. Standards-Based Grading reports learning by **individual standards**, giving families meaningful information about **what students know, what they are still learning, and where support may be needed.**

The example below compares the **same student's work** reported in two different ways.



Clear Learning Targets. Clear Expectations. Clear Feedback.
Before students begin learning, they should know exactly what they're expected to learn.

One of the biggest differences in a standards-based classroom is that teachers clearly communicate **learning targets** before instruction begins. These learning targets help students understand:

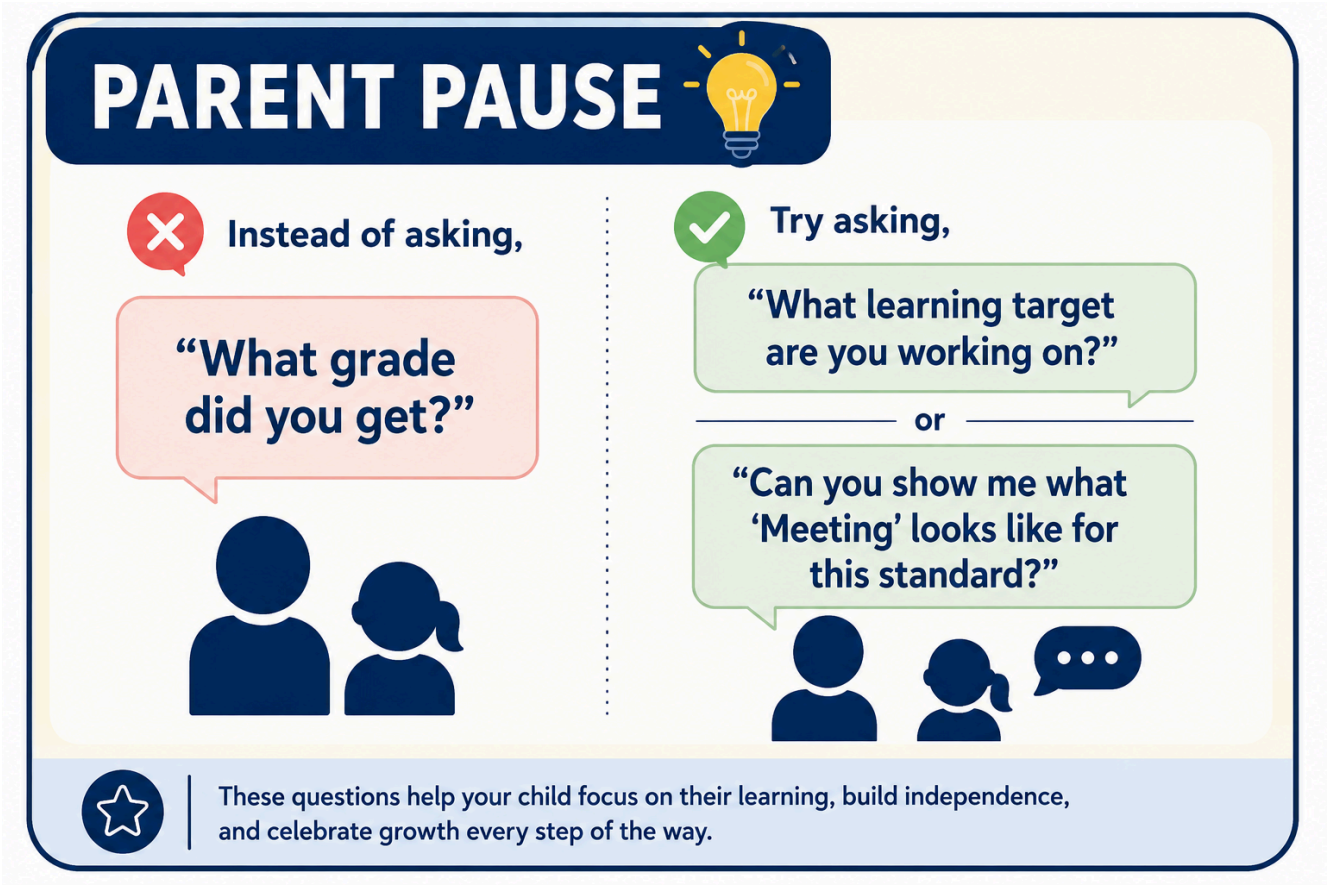
- **What they are expected to learn**
- **What successful learning looks like**
- **How they will demonstrate their understanding**
- **What they can do to continue growing**

The proficiency table below is an example of a tool teachers use to communicate learning expectations and provide meaningful feedback throughout a unit.

Sample Proficiency Table for 6th Grade Math:

6th Grade Math Chapter 2 Proficiency Table

Grade 6 Chapter 2: Operations with Fractions & Decimals					
Standard	**Report Card Language**	**Extending** *Students can…* 	**Meeting** Students can.... 	**Developing** Students can.... 	**Beginning** 
6.NS.1	Interpret and compute quotients of fractions, and solve word problems involving division of fractions by fractions	Solve a multi-step, contextual word problem involving division of fractions by fractions and explain the reasonableness of their answer	• Create a visual fraction model to represent a division of fractions problem • Compute quotients of fractions procedurally • Divide fractions by fractions in contextual situations • Create an equation to model a contextual situation involving division of fractions	• Set up a fraction division problem, but makes mathematical errors when computing solutions • Produces a visual model, but model does not represent division problem • Can solve using fraction models or procedures, but not both • Missing/incomplete work	Student does not yet independently demonstrate an understanding of the concept
6.NS.3	Fluently add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using the standard algorithm for each operation.	Solve a multi-step decimal word problem, that requires interpreting the operation in a real-world context	• Using the standard algorithm: ○ Add decimals ○ Subtract decimals ○ Multiply decimals ○ Divide decimals • Divide decimals accurately using the standard algorithm • Solves real-world, contextual problems accurately	• Applies strategies for computing with decimals, but has computation errors • Decimal points are not lined up correctly when solving, resulting in incorrect solutions • Solves procedural problems accurately, but has errors when solving word problems • Missing/incomplete work & solutions	Student does not yet independently demonstrate an understanding of the concept



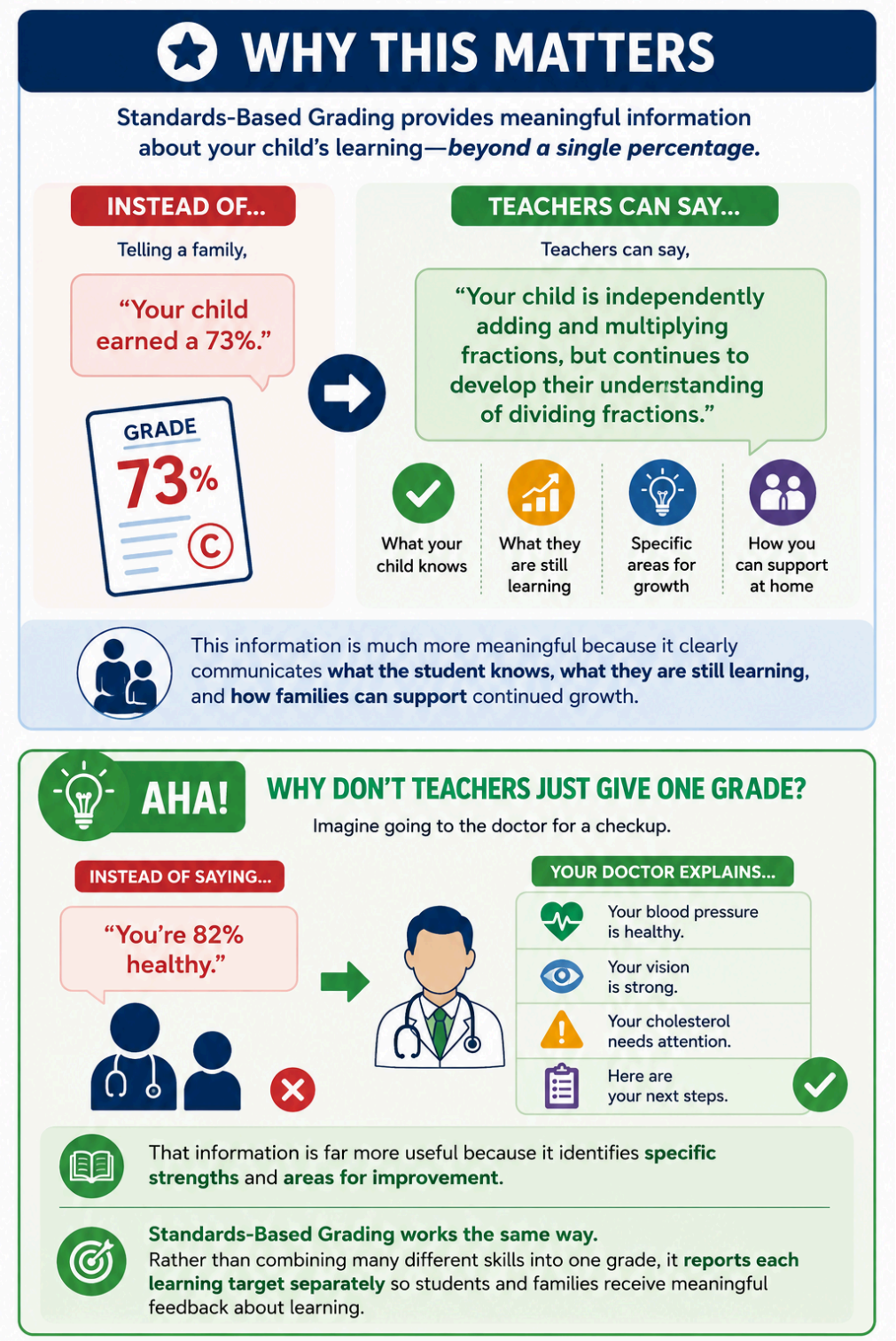
From Learning Targets to Student Work
The assessment below is directly aligned to the proficiency table on the previous page.
Because every question is connected to a specific learning target, teachers can provide meaningful feedback about what students know rather than simply calculating a percentage.
(Insert student assessment with teacher scoring.)

As You Review This Example…
Notice how the teacher can identify:
✔ Which standards the student has mastered
✔ Which skills are still developing
✔ Where additional practice may be helpful
✔ What the student's next learning steps should be

Look closely at the proficiency table and assessment.
Notice:
✓ Every question is connected to a specific learning target.
✓ Students know what they are expected to learn before they are assessed.
✓ Teachers can provide specific feedback about individual skills—not just one overall score.
✓ Families can clearly identify strengths and areas for continued growth.

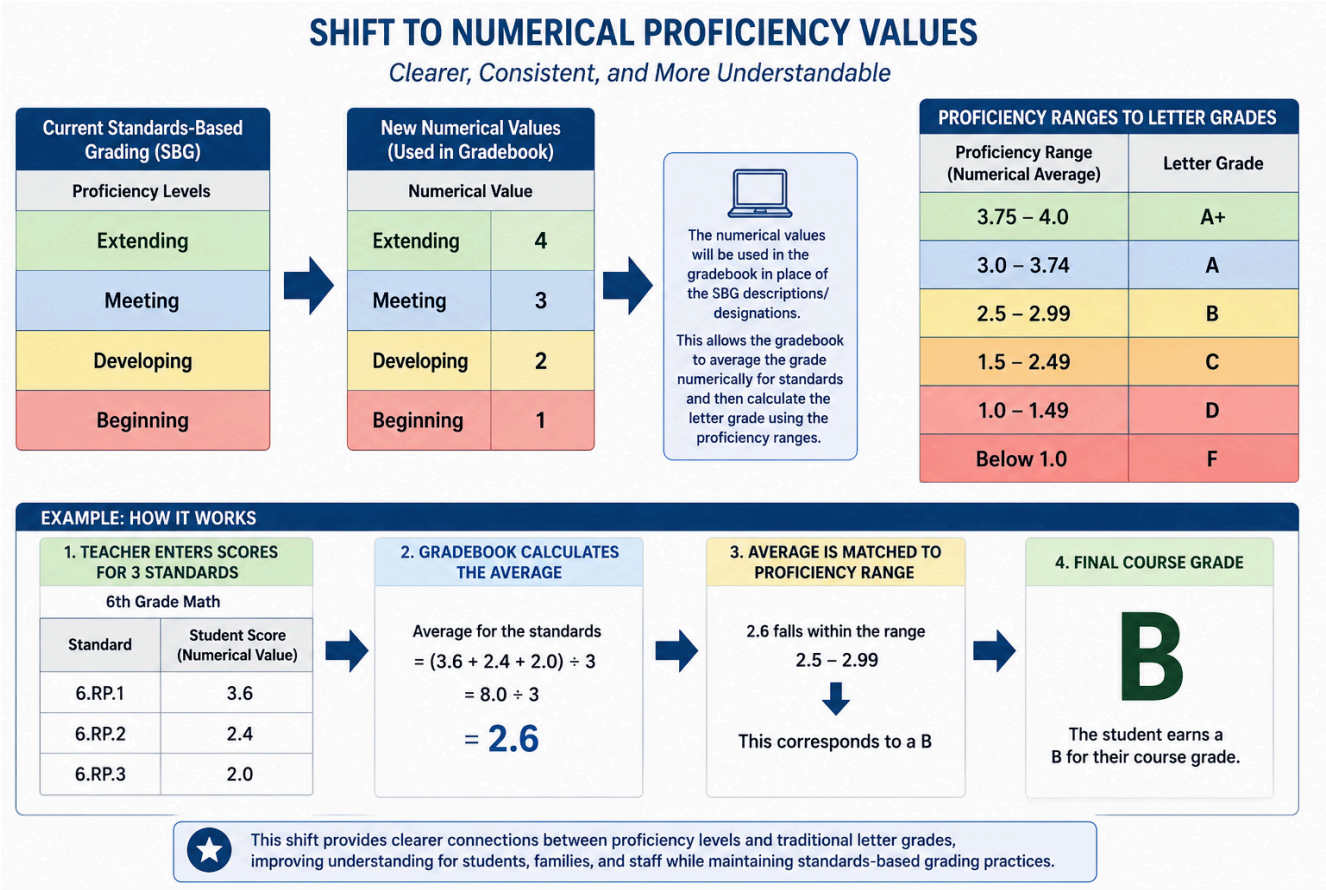
Reflection Question
If this were your child's assessment…
Would you rather know they earned an **82%**

Or know **exactly which skills they have mastered and which skills still need practice?**



Hybrid Grading | Field's Grading Model: How Standards-Based Grading Connects to Letter Grades

Why are numbers used in Field's gradebook?
To make grading more consistent and easier to understand, District 31 uses **numerical proficiency values** in the electronic gradebook. These numbers **do not replace Standards-Based Grading**—they simply provide a way for the gradebook to calculate an overall course grade while still keeping the focus on student learning.



Here's how it works:
Step 1: Teachers continue to evaluate student learning using our four performance levels:
Step 2: The electronic gradebook uses these numerical values to calculate an average across the standards assessed during the grading period.
Step 3: That average is matched to a traditional letter grade for the final course grade.

What This Means for Families
✔ Teachers continue to assess learning using Beginning, Developing, Meeting, and Extending.
✔ Students and families will see numerical proficiency values (1–4) in the online gradebook because they provide a consistent way to calculate a final course grade.
✔ The focus of classroom feedback remains on the performance level and the learning standard—not the number itself.

✔ The final report card will include a traditional letter grade (A–F) for each course while still providing detailed information about student learning throughout the grading period.

A Helpful Way to Think About It
The numbers are simply a translation tool for the gradebook—they are not a new grading system. Teachers continue to evaluate student learning based on grade-level standards and performance levels. The numerical values simply allow the electronic gradebook to calculate a final letter grade in a clear and consistent way.

Characteristics of a Successful Learner
Why are work habits reported separately? Learning isn't just about what students know—it's also about how they learn.

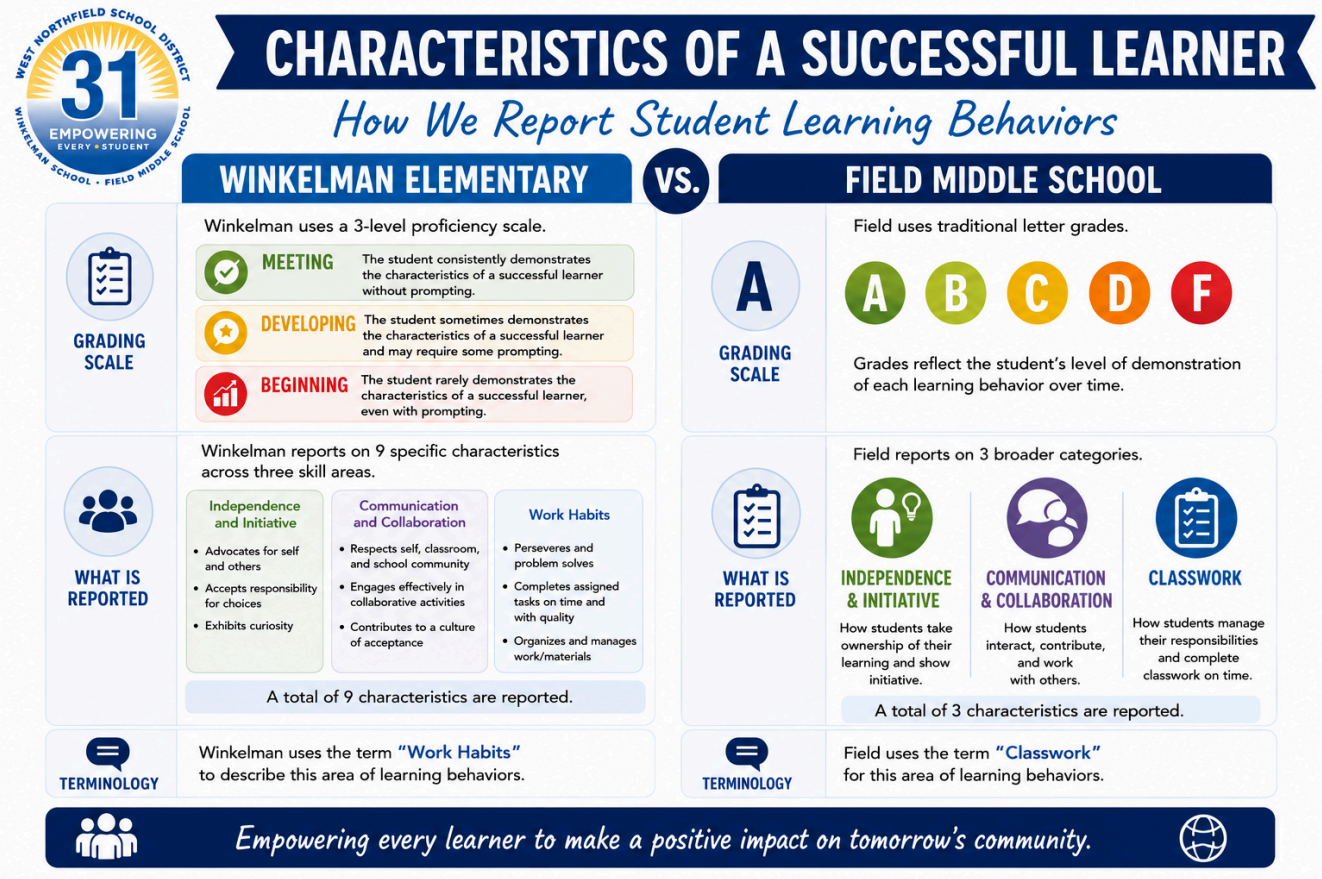
Academic grades communicate your child's progress toward learning standards. The **Characteristics of a Successful Learner** communicate the habits and behaviors that help students succeed in school and beyond. The specific characteristics on the report card are based on our Portrait of a District 31 Graduate. These are the values and characteristics we wish to see demonstrated by our students when our vision is fully achieved.

D31 Portrait of a Graduate Characteristics:

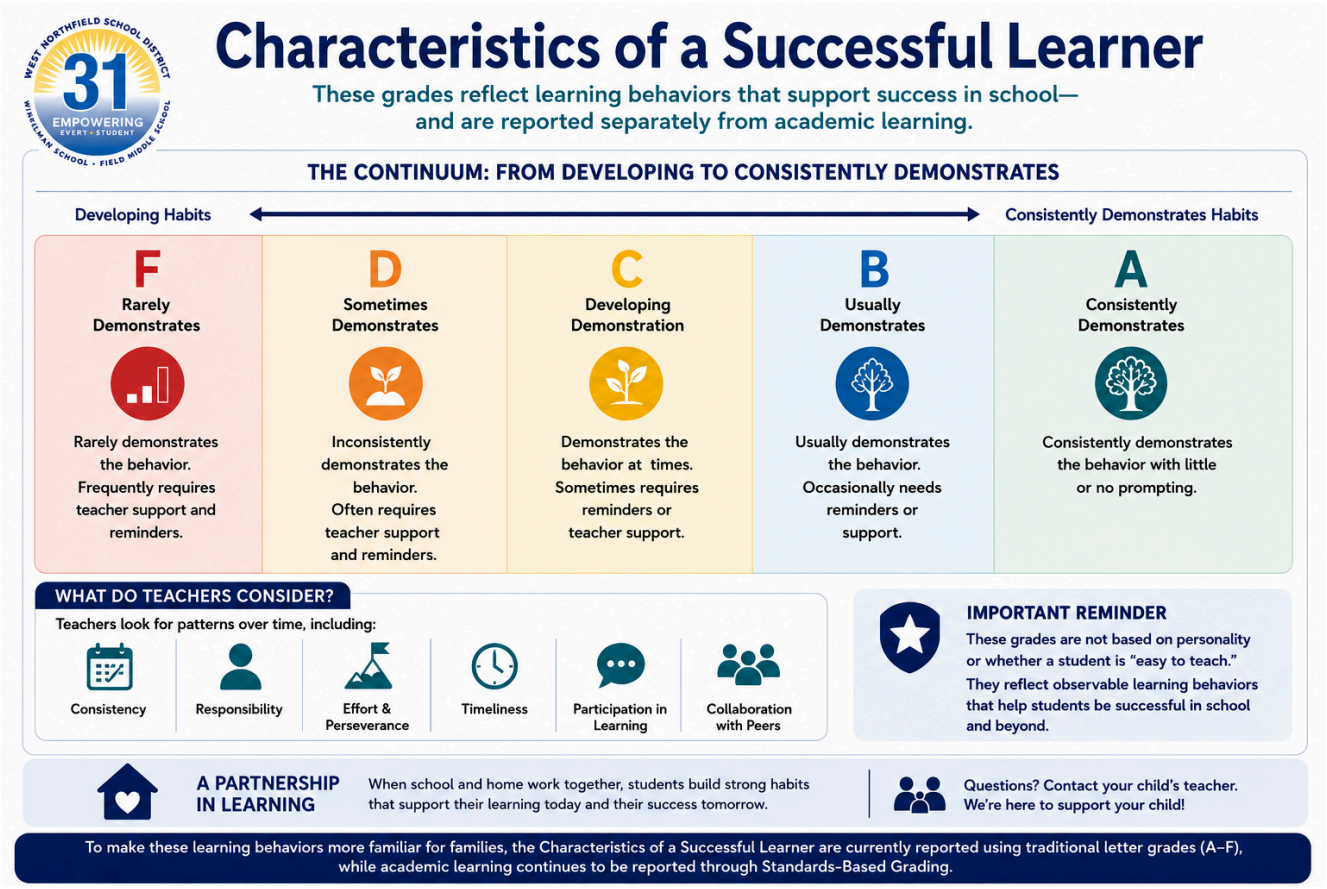


These characteristics are reported **separately** because they answer a different question
We based our Characteristics of a Successful Learner on our Portrait of a District 31 Graduate. These are the values and characteristics we wish to see demonstrated by our students when our vision is fully achieved.

How Does Each School Report Student Learning Behaviors?



How Are Letter Grades Determined for Characteristics of a Successful Learner at Field Middle School?



Field's Characteristics of a Successful Learner | Deeper Dive

📚 Classwork

Reflects a student's responsibility for completing and submitting classwork on time.
Teachers consider whether students:

- Complete assigned classwork
- Submit work on time
- Make productive use of class time

🌱 Independence & Initiative

Reflects how students take ownership of their learning.
Teachers look for behaviors such as:

- Beginning work independently
- Demonstrating perseverance when learning is challenging
- Taking responsibility for learning
- Seeking help appropriately
- Showing initiative and self-direction

🤝 Communication & Collaboration

Reflects how students work and communicate with others.

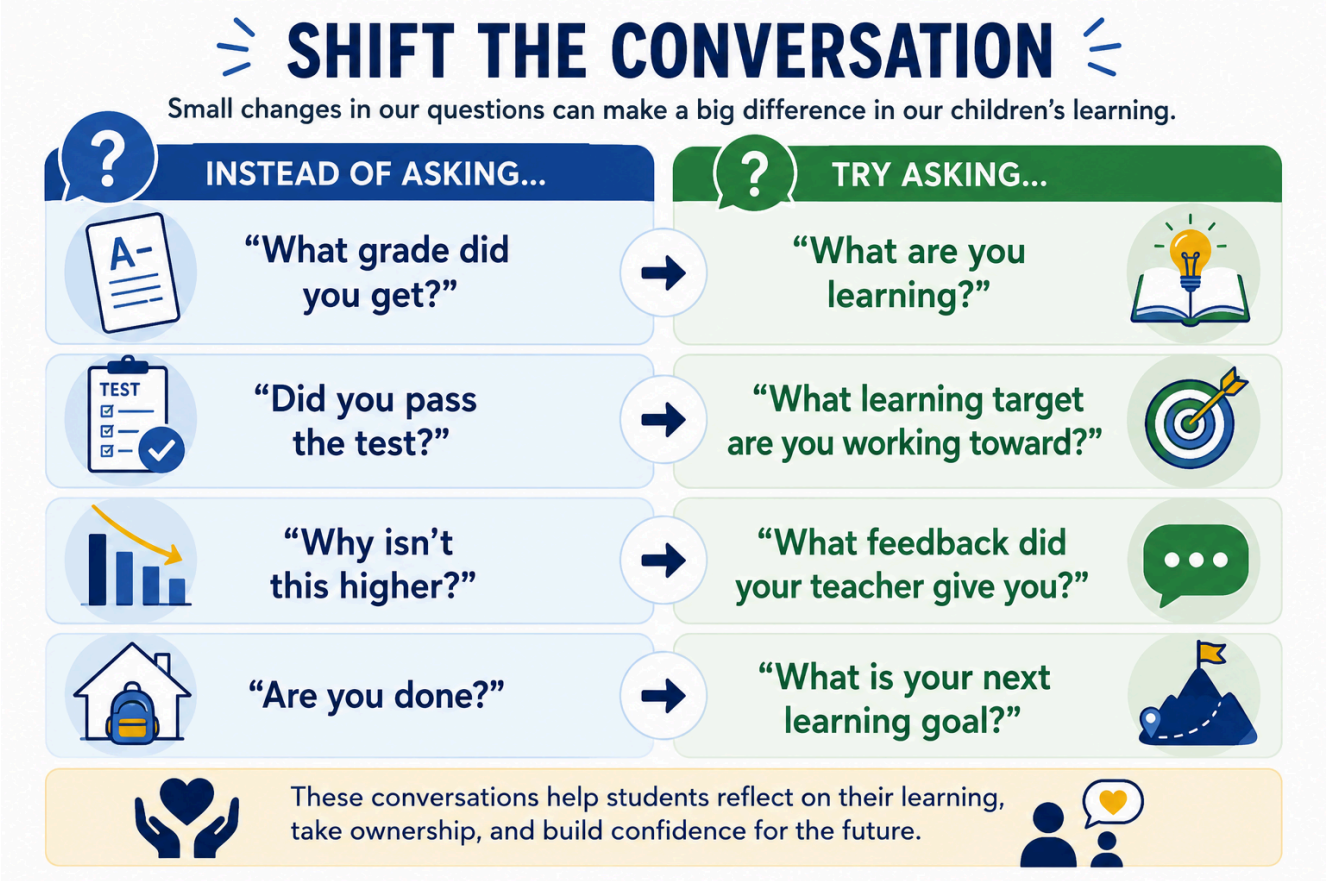
Teachers consider whether students:

- Listen respectfully
- Participate appropriately in discussions
- Work cooperatively with peers
- Contribute positively to group learning
- Communicate respectfully with others

Supporting Learning at Home
Families play an important role in helping students develop confidence, ownership, and a growth mindset.

One of the greatest benefits of Standards-Based Grading is that it gives families meaningful information about what students know, what they are learning, and where they may need additional support. By focusing conversations on learning—not simply grades—families can help students become more reflective, resilient, and engaged learners.

What You'll See in Skyward
When reviewing your child's grades online, you'll be able to see:
✔ Individual assignments and assessments
✔ The learning standards or learning targets being assessed
✔ Your child's current performance level for each standard
✔ Grades for the Characteristics of a Successful Learner
This information provides a much clearer picture of your child's learning than a single percentage or letter grade.



Supporting Different Performance Levels

If your child is Meeting or Extending

Celebrate their success while encouraging continued growth.

Ask questions like:

- What helped you be successful?
- Can you teach me how you solved that problem?
- Which learning target are you most proud of?
- What are you learning next?

If your child is Developing or Beginning

Remember that these performance levels mean your child is still learning—not failing.

Ask questions like:

- What are you learning right now?
- What part is making sense?
- What part is still challenging?
- What feedback did your teacher give you?
- How can I help you practice before the next assessment?

Supporting the Characteristics of a Successful Learner

In addition to academic learning, you'll also receive information about three important learning behaviors:

📚 **Classwork**

Encourage your child to complete assignments on time and ask for help when needed.

🌱 Independence & Initiative
Talk about perseverance, responsibility, organization, and setting personal goals.

🤝 Communication & Collaboration
Ask your child how they worked with classmates, shared ideas, and listened respectfully to others.

Family Resource - Keep the Family Guide Nearby
We've created a one-page Family Guide: Supporting Your Child in a Standards-Based Grading System to serve as a quick reference throughout the school year.
The guide includes:
✓ Questions to ask during homework and after assessments
✓ Ways to support students at each performance level
✓ Conversation starters focused on learning rather than grades
✓ Tips for understanding the Characteristics of a Successful Learner
✓ Quick reminders for interpreting information in Skyward
Whether you're checking grades online, preparing for conferences, or talking about learning at home, the Family Guide is designed to help make those conversations easier and more meaningful.



Remember…

Learning takes time, practice, feedback, and perseverance. Standards-Based Grading helps students—and families—focus on growth every step of the way.

Every conversation about learning is an opportunity to help your child build confidence, ownership, and a lifelong love of learning.

Accessing Student Grades on Skyward

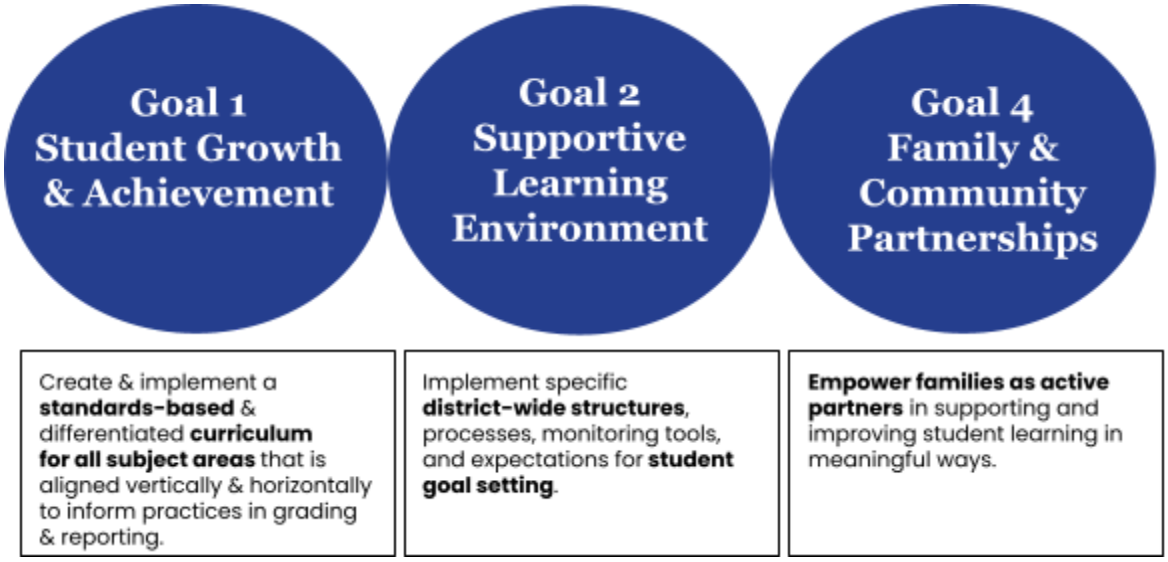
Resources for Families

ORIGINAL SBG HANDBOOK

Introduction and Timeline

In the spring of 2021, District 31 began the strategic planning process. The foundation for planning for the future requires continuous improvement and rests upon the pillars of mission, vision, values, goals and strategies. Each of these pillars asks different questions of educators within the system. The District 31 2022 - 2027 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Education on August 26, 2021.

A shift to standards-based learning and assessment fulfills multiple Strategic Plan Goal Areas:



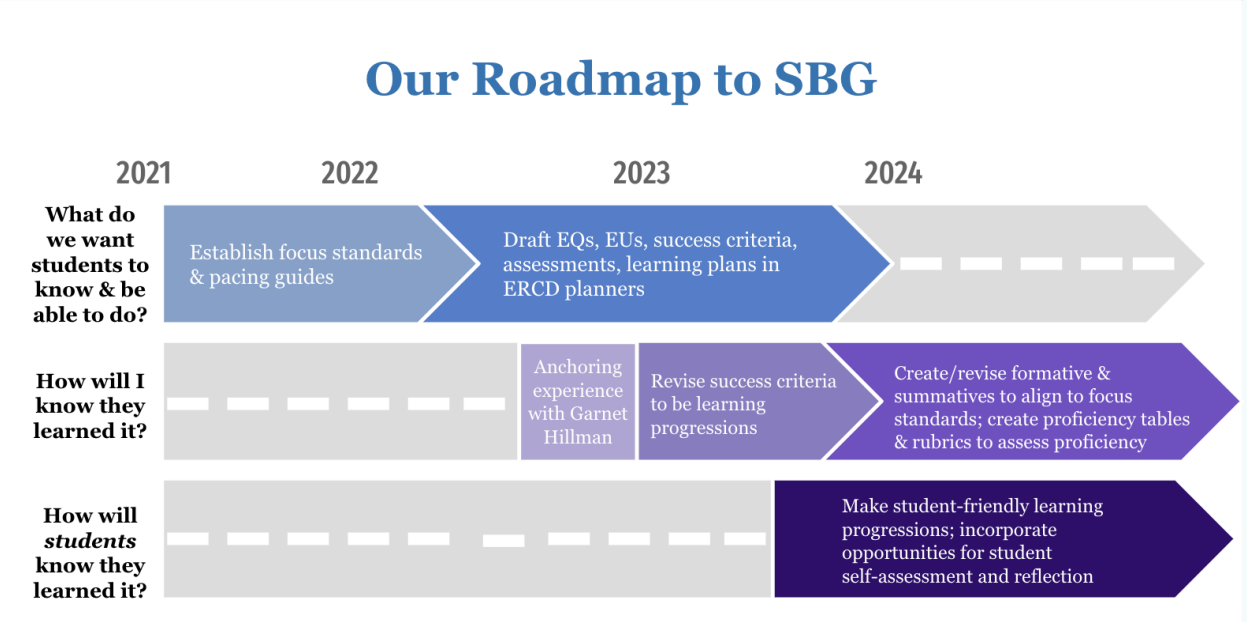
While standards-based learning and assessment is a practice that is somewhat new to District 31, it is not altogether new in education. The goal of standards-based learning and assessment is to increase transparency in the learning journey and to empower students to have more control over their learning. This is a shift that is about accelerating learning and deepening partnerships among students, families and educators as we work together to support learning and growth in both academic and behavioral areas.

We will be following the created timeline below in order to make the shift to a standards-based grading and reporting system:

2023 - 2024 School Year	➢ Standards-based grading (SBG) pilot in grades K & 4 to improve alignment to State Standards and update learning habits to align with D31 Portrait of a Graduate ➢ Educate families and students in grK & 4 on new standards-based report card and Characteristics of a Successful Learner
2024 - 2025 School Year	➢ SBG report card grades K, 1, 4, 5; publish corresponding student learning targets and grade-level proficiency expectations on public facing website ➢ Educate all district families on the SBG philosophy, timeline, and terminology
2025 - 2026 School Year	➢ SBG report card grades K - 6; publish corresponding student learning targets and grade-level proficiency expectations on public facing website
2026 - 2027 School Year	➢ SBG report card cards K - 7; Publish to the community corresponding student learning targets and grade-level proficiency

	expectations
2027 - 2028 School Year	➢ SBG report card cards K - 8; Publish to the community corresponding student learning targets and grade-level proficiency expectations

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction has supported professional learning for all District 31 educators around the following components necessary to put a strong, sustainable Standards-Based System into place:



Subsequent professional development will be ongoing with specific grade level teams and content areas as we further refine our standards-aligned assessments and articulate the specific levels of proficiency expected for each grade-level and content-area focus standard.

Section 1: D31 Vision and Purpose of Grading and Reporting

In West Northfield District 31, we envision a dynamic PreK-8 learning environment where our grading and reporting system fosters a culture of continuous growth focused on student learning. Our mission is to empower every student on their learning journey by recognizing their strengths and providing regular feedback and personalized support.

In our vision, the grading and reporting system is a transparent, meaningful, and actionable tool that reflects a holistic understanding of each student's academic and behavioral development. We strive to cultivate a growth mindset through ongoing feedback. By encouraging resilience and curiosity, learners will see challenges as opportunities for learning and improvement.

We aspire to build strong partnerships with parents and the community, fostering open communication and collaboration. The District 31 grading and reporting system will serve as a bridge to connect educators, students, and their families by creating a shared understanding of progress related to grade-level proficiency expectations so that meaningful conversations can be had about each child's learning and growth.



Section 2: What is Standards-Based Grading?

Standards-based grading is a system of assessing students to communicate where the child's learning is related to end-of-year proficiency in grade-level Illinois Learning Standards. This means of communication allows students, as well as parents and guardians, to better understand which learning targets have already been mastered.

Standards-based assessment practices more accurately communicate how our students are progressing toward year-end expectations related to grade-level content standards. Behaviors, which we are calling "Characteristics of a Successful Learner," will also be reported on separately from academic learning standards. Report cards will reflect communication related to growth and learning along a continuum toward meeting **end-of-year proficiency expectations** on focus standards. Clear communication with parents and students about learning, including strengths and areas for continued growth, provides a road map for where they are on their learning journey.

Standards-based grading is the end product of a standards-based learning system.

> **"The simple idea of standards-based learning is to ensure transparency in all elements of the teaching and learning process: curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting".** (Guskey, Ed Week, 10/14/2016).

In a standards-based learning system, the curriculum begins with understanding the Illinois Learning Standards and determining what the focus standards are, or in other words, what is most important for students to learn and be able to do in each grade level and content area. Educators then take their knowledge of students and their craft and engage with the curriculum and the instructional materials to plan standards-aligned learning for students, including standards-aligned assessments to monitor student growth and progress toward proficiency.

Another important difference in a standards-aligned learning system is that teachers and students have a clear understanding of the learning targets (what students must know and be able to do). These learning targets are given to students as learning progressions at the beginning of a unit and serve as a roadmap to delineate the pathway to proficiency expectations for each grade-level and content focus standard. Educators and students work together to measure progress, provide feedback, set goals, and demonstrate learning. This clarity supports the partnership we desire between students, families, and District 31 educators.

In a standards-based learning system

- Curriculum clearly identifies what needs to be learned based on academic focus standards and specific behaviors from our District 31 Portrait of a Graduate.

- Learning targets are clear and are shared with students at the beginning of learning so they can monitor their progress on their learning journey.
- Formative assessments are used to monitor student understanding and growth toward learning targets and provide an opportunity for teachers to give timely and specific feedback to students.
- Students have opportunities to work on areas of need as indicated by the formative assessments and make continual progress toward proficiency expectations.
- Students are assessed using summative assessments that are aligned with standards after learning has occurred.
- The process of learning (behaviors called “Characteristics of a Successful Learner”) and the products of learning (academic focus standards) are reported on ***separately*** to provide a clear picture of learning and growth to students and families.

Section 3: Why Standards-Based Grading?

Based on research, a standards-based report card offers several benefits in the context of education. Here are some of the key advantages we hope to manifest in District 31:

1. Clarity and Transparency
   - Clear Communication: Standards-based report cards provide a clear and detailed picture of a student's performance in relation to specific learning standards. This helps parents and students understand exactly what is expected.
   - Transparency: By aligning assessments with specific standards, the grading process becomes more transparent. Parents and students can see the areas of strength in their learning and the areas that may need improvement.

2. Focus on Learning Outcomes
   - Learning-Centered Approach: Standards-based grading emphasizes the mastery of specific skills and knowledge rather than just assigning a grade based on overall performance. This focus on learning outcomes encourages a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
   - Identification of Strengths and Areas for Growth: Teachers can identify specific strengths and areas for further growth in a student's understanding of the material, allowing for targeted differentiation.

3. Individualized Learning
   - Personalized Feedback: Teachers can provide more personalized feedback to students based on their performance on specific standards. This helps students understand not only what they need to improve but also how to improve.
   - Tailored Instruction: With a clear understanding of individual student strengths and weaknesses, educators can tailor their instruction to better meet the needs of each student.

4. Alignment with Curriculum Standards
   - Curriculum Consistency: Standards-based report cards align with curriculum standards, ensuring that assessments and evaluations are consistent with the educational goals and objectives set by the curriculum.
   - Accountability: Schools and educators can be held accountable for ensuring that students are meeting established learning standards.

5. Parental Involvement
   - Informed Parental Engagement: Parents are better equipped to support their child's learning when they have a detailed understanding of their child's strengths and areas for improvement. This can foster a collaborative partnership between parents and teachers.

6. Consistency Across Classrooms and Schools:

- Consistent Evaluation: Standards-based grading promotes consistency in evaluation criteria across different classrooms and schools. This consistency can be especially valuable when students transition between grade levels or schools.

While standards-based report cards offer these benefits, it is essential to recognize that our successful implementation requires ongoing training for educators, effective communication with parents/guardians, and ongoing evaluation and adjustment to ensure effectiveness in our evidence-based learning and assessment system. Parents/guardians are welcome to give feedback at any time related to our Standards-Based Grading and Reporting System by filling out this form.

What can we expect to remain the same?

- The purpose of report cards is still the same: to communicate information about academic achievement and learner characteristics to parents and students.
- Report cards will still be distributed three times per year at Winkelman and quarterly at Field.
- We have always been teaching the state and national academic standards. This is not a shift in what or how we are teaching. Rather it is a shift in how we are communicating student learning and growth over time.
- We have always been using assessment data to provide feedback to students, support student learning, and differentiate instruction.

Section 4: Academic Levels of Proficiency

The Academic Levels of Proficiency are used to clearly communicate a student's current level of mastery related to **year-end learning expectations** for each academic content area's focus standards.

There is no accumulation of points; rather rubrics are used to assess current proficiency. The report card serves as a snapshot of where the student is on their learning journey to proficiency by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance rather than an average over time. This means that at the beginning of the year, you may see your child at a "beginning" or "developing" level, knowing that the goal is to "meet" proficiency expectations by the end of the year.

These academic standards are reported on separately from behavior expectations using the following levels of proficiency:

- Meeting = The student independently demonstrates an understanding of grade-level concepts and consistently applies knowledge and skills learned.
- Developing = The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concept and/or occasionally applies knowledge and skills learned.
- Beginning = The student does not yet independently demonstrate an understanding of the concept.
- Not Assessed (NA) = The specific area was not assessed during a specific grading term or there was not enough evidence collected to assign a performance level.

A limited number of focus standards are assessed each trimester or quarter based on the priority learning for that specific trimester. All grade-level and content-area focus standards will be assessed for proficiency by the end of the school year.

OLD Winkelman Report Card: Academic Grading Indicators
4 - Exceeds: The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of facts, concepts, or principles. The student completes tasks and applies skills independently.
3 - Meets: The student meets expectations with minimal support from teacher.
2 - Developing: The student is developing an understanding of facts, concepts, and/or principles. The student often depends on teacher assistance.
1 - Does Not Meet: The student needs more time to acquire the skill.

Standards-Based Grading Pilot: Academic Levels of Proficiency (at the Point of Most Recent Assessment)
Meeting = The student independently demonstrates an understanding of grade-level concepts and consistently applies knowledge and skills learned.
Developing = The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concept and/or occasionally applies knowledge and skills learned.
Beginning = The student does not yet independently demonstrate an understanding of the concept.

Section 5: Characteristics of a Successful Learner Levels of Proficiency

Behaviors and work habits are an important part of communicating to parents and students about student progress. However, they are reported separately from academic proficiency in a standards-based grading and reporting system to ensure clarity and transparency around a student's actual achievement in academic learning.

We based our Characteristics of a Successful Learner on our Portrait of a District 31 Graduate. These are the values and characteristics we wish to see demonstrated by our students when our vision is fully achieved.

The Characteristics of a Successful Learner are reported on separately from academic learning using the following levels of proficiency:

- Meets = The student **consistently** demonstrates the characteristics of a successful learner without prompting.
- Developing = The student **sometimes** demonstrates the characteristics of a successful learner and may need some prompting.
- Beginning = The student **rarely** demonstrates the characteristics of a successful learner, even with prompting.

Characteristics of a Successful Learner
Independence and Initiative
Advocates for self and others
Accepts responsibility for choices
Exhibits curiosity
Communication and Collaboration
Respects classroom and school community
Engages effectively in collaborative activities
Contributes to a culture of acceptance
Work Habits
Perseveres and problem solves
Completes assigned tasks on time and with quality
Organizes and manages work/materials

Section 6: Grading and Reporting for Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans

A student's report card communicates where a student is in their learning in relation to grade-level expectations defined by the Illinois Learning Standards. This is the goal of the report card for all students who are enrolled in grade-level courses regardless of an IEP, 504 plan, or Multilingual Learner (ML) status.

Students receiving accommodations and/or modifications per an IEP or 504 plan will receive a report card based on a student's current achievement on grade-level expectations reflecting the standards for the grade level in which students are placed.

Meeting - Student meets proficiency expectation for grade-level standard, given appropriate accommodations per the child's IEP

Developing - Student is making progress towards achieving proficiency expectation for grade-level standard, given appropriate accommodations per the child's IEP

Beginning - Student is exposed to grade-level standards but is not yet making progress toward grade-level standard, even with appropriate accommodations per the child's IEP

NA - Not enough evidence to assess

Accommodations - Students can complete the tasks like their peers with some variations such as extra time, different format, and/or setting.

Modifications - Students' learning expectations are changed based on their individual goals as set by their IEP or 504 Plan (i.e. alternate assignments, different assessment expectations).

Students with an IEP will also receive a progress report during the report card window reporting on the students progress toward individualized goals.

Section 7: Grading Multilingual Learners

A student's report card communicates where a student is in their learning in relation to grade-level expectations defined by the Illinois Learning Standards. This is the goal of the report card for all students who are enrolled in grade-level courses regardless of multilingual learner status.

Who are Multilingual Learners?

District 31 meets the needs of our K-8 student population with limited English proficiency through two specific programs:

- Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE): Designed for students whose primary language is Spanish, Mongolian, Russian, or Korean (if 20+ students).
- Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI): Designed for all English Learners whose native language is other than Spanish, Mongolian, Russian, or Korean and who, in terms of numbers, are less than 20 speaking the same foreign language.

Grading and Reporting for Multilingual Students

Students who are multilingual learners are graded according to grade-level standards in line with their peers on the grade-level report card.

Students will also receive a progress report that shares progress on a student's language goals. They report on growth in the four domain areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The multilingual service provider completes these reports on ELLevation. A copy of the progress report will be sent home to families with report cards for students in the district's multilingual and bilingual programs. Students who are enrolled in the district's bilingual programs will have a native language copy of the progress report sent home as well. Additionally, parents who request translated report cards will be provided with a translated progress report.

Language development is monitored and measured using the following scale, aligned with WIDA Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency Level	Description of English Language Proficiency Levels
1 – Entering	Knows and uses minimal social English and minimal academic English with visual support. Multilingual learners may be able to match pictures to single words and understand a few one-word utterances.
2 – Emerging	Knows and uses some social English and general academic English with visual support. Multilingual learners begin to ask simple questions, restate facts, sort out basic information using visual cues, and create lists and short sentences.
3 – Developing	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic English with visual support. Multilingual learners can follow multi-step directions, form basic paragraphs (spoken or written), identify main ideas, describe storylines and situations, and use context cues to learn new worlds.

4 – Expanding	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic English. Multilingual learners can give simple oral reports and speeches, use language more abstractly, identify and use idioms and figures of speech, summarize information, and create original ideas using English.
5 – Bridging	Knows and uses social and academic English working with grade-level material. Multilingual learners perform much more like native speakers, albeit not at the native level in all aspects (such as pronunciation). Multilingual learners can draw original conclusions, debate with others, conduct research using multiple sources, and apply information to new contexts and multiple genres.
6 – Reaching	Knows and uses social and academic English at a level comparable to that of English proficient peers performing at the “proficient” level on state-wide assessments. The Multilingual student has been monitored for 2 consecutive years and has been exited from Multilingual Learner program services.

Section 8: Additional Resources

Books:

A Repair Kit for Grading by Ken O'Connor
Standards-Based Learning in Action by Tom Schimmer, Garnet Hillman, and Mandy Stalets
Get Set Go by Thomas Guskey
On Your Mark by Thomas Guskey
Fair Isn't Always Equal by Rick Wormeli
Grading Exceptional and Struggling Learners by Lee Ann Jung and Thomas Guskey How to Grade for Learning by Ken O'Connor
What We Know About Grading by Thomas Guskey and Susan Brookhart
Grading from the Inside Out by Tom Schimmer
Grading for Impact by Tom Hierck and Garth L. Larson
The Grade Cleanse by Danny Hill and Garnet Hillman
The Standards-Based Classroom by Emily Rinkema and Stan Williams
Grading for Equity by Joe Feldman

Articles:

3 Big Shifts for Standards-Based Grading by Matt Townsley, Megan Knight
A Repair Kit for Grading by Ken O'Connor
Getting Started for Standards-Based Grading by Cathleen Beachboard, Erika Kersey
Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading by Patricia L. Scriffiny
Undoing the Traditions of Grading and Reporting by Thomas Guskey
Fair and Equitable Grading for ALL Students in Inclusive Settings by Kearns, Reyes, Thurlow, and Wakeman
Standards-Based Learning: Why Do Educators Make it So Complex? by Thomas Guskey

Video:

What is Standards-Based Grading? By TeacherEase
Rick Wormelli on Standards-Based Grading

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Academic Levels of Proficiency	The description of proficiency for academic learning related to each focus standard ● Meeting = The student independently demonstrates an understanding of grade-level concepts and consistently applies knowledge and skills learned. ● Developing = The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concept and/or occasionally applies knowledge and skills learned. ● Beginning = The student does not yet independently demonstrate an understanding of the concept.
Accommodation	Adaptations that provide access for any student to the general curriculum but do not fundamentally alter the grade-level standard or proficiency level
Characteristics of a Successful Learner	Behavioral characteristics that are aligned with our District 31 Portrait of a Graduate that articulate the behaviors necessary to become a self-sufficient, life-long learner: ● Independence and Initiative ○ Advocates for self and others ○ Accepts responsibility for choices ○ Exhibits curiosity ● Communication and Collaboration ○ Respects self, classroom, and school community ○ Engages effectively in collaborative activities ○ Contributes to a culture of acceptance ● Work Habits ○ Takes risks, perseveres, and problem solves ○ Uses class time effectively ○ Organizes and manages work/materials

Content Standard	The learning expectations from which more specific grade-level curriculum is developed. Content standards describe what students should know and be able to do in a specific grade level and content area by the end of the school year. Illinois Learning Standards
Focus Standards	Also called Priority Standards; "a carefully selected subset of the total list of the grade-specific and course-specific standards within each content area that students must know and be able to do by the end of each school year in order to be prepared for the standards at the next grade level or course" (Ainsworth, 2013, p. xv) These are the standards you will see listed on the standards-based report card for each grade level and content area.
Formative Assessment	Assessment *for* learning; the assessments are used daily/weekly by educators to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback to students and determine the next steps for instructional planning
IEP	An Individualized Education Plan is also known as an IEP. This is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child with an identified disability who is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.
Learning Target	"I can…" statements, which help students and educators identify what important concepts students will learn and what essential actions they will be able to do.
Modification	Adaptations to the curriculum that fundamentally alter the grade-level expectation but do not fundamentally alter the content standard. Modifications are provided *only* to students who qualify for special education services or highly capable students. Modifications typically include reducing the cognitive load, altering the

	methodology or delivery of instructions, and/or modifying the performance criteria.
Standards-Based System	A system where the curriculum, instruction, and assessments are clearly aligned to the learning standards and designed to help students attain these standards.
Summative Assessment	Assessment *of* learning; a summative assessment is any standards-aligned task with grade-level rigor that is completed *after* the student has had access to teaching, practice, and feedback; these are done with independence, unless the standard calls for collaboration
504 Plan	A 504 Plan is a plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.