Roselle District 12's Guide to Standards-Based Grading and Reporting

This guide is designed to help teachers and parents understand standards-based grading and reporting, ensuring a clear and consistent approach to measuring learner learning. By focusing on the mastery of specific skills rather than just traditional letter grades, this system provides meaningful feedback that supports learner growth.

Our Grading Philosophy

At Roselle District 12, we believe that grading should reflect a learner's progress toward mastering essential skills and concepts. As we transition to standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment, our goal is to ensure grades serve as a clear and accurate representation of what learners know and can do in relation to state and district learning standards.

Our grading philosophy is rooted in the following principles:

1. **Focus on Learning**
   Grading is an extension of the learning process. Rather than being an endpoint, grades provide an opportunity for learners to understand their progress and identify areas for growth. This approach encourages a mindset of continuous improvement and lifelong learning.

2. **Emphasis on Mastery**
   Standards-based grading prioritizes the demonstration of mastery over time. Students are assessed on specific learning targets and given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, ensuring that grades reflect what they have learned, not when they learned it.

3. **Feedback for Growth**
   Grades are accompanied by detailed feedback that helps learners and parents understand strengths and areas for development. This feedback empowers learners to take ownership of their learning and make informed decisions about their next steps.

4. **Separation of Academic Achievement and Behaviors**
   Academic grades focus solely on learners' performance related to learning standards. Behaviors such as participation, effort, and compliance are reported separately, ensuring that grades accurately reflect academic achievement.

5. **Consistency and Transparency**
   Our grading practices are consistent across classrooms and grade levels to ensure fairness and clarity. Teachers use rubrics and proficiency scales aligned with standards to evaluate learner work, and parents are provided with clear explanations of grading criteria.

6. **Accurate and Fair**
   Our grading philosophy is rooted in the principles of accuracy and fairness, ensuring that learner assessments truly reflect their knowledge and skills without being influenced by non-academic factors. By using clear criteria and consistent evaluation methods, we provide equitable opportunities for all learners to demonstrate their learning.

We are committed to fostering a learning environment where learners feel supported and challenged. Through standards-based grading, we aim to promote meaningful learning, encourage growth, and prepare learners for future success.

Grading and Reporting Handbook Table of Contents

I. The Basics

- *What is the purpose of grading and reporting?*
- *What is Standards-Based Grading?*
- *What is the goal of Standards-Based Grading?*
- *Why is District 12 using Standards-Based Grading and Reporting?*

II. Understanding Standards-Based Grading

- *How does Standards-Based Grading work?*
- *How does this differ from traditional letter grades?*
- *When will Standards-Based Grading take effect?*
- *How are the Standards chosen for each grade level and subject?*
- *How will I know how my learner is doing on the soft skills necessary for future success?*
- *Which Future Ready Skills will be reported?*
- *What if my child's program does not match grade level standards (ex. Special Education, Bilingual, and Acceleration)?*
- *What types of assessments are used to determine if a standard is mastered?*
- *What marking system is used on the report grade for Standards?*
- *How is a level of mastery determined?*
- *Will my learner still receive letter grades?*
- *How is the letter grade calculated?*
- *How will this benefit my child?*
- *Will this impact placement at Lake Park High School?*
- *If my child transfers to another district, will they understand my child's progress?*
- *Who has been involved in the Standards-based grading process?*
- *What if my child is struggling to meet a standard?*
- *Will this impact my child's ability to participate in extracurricular activities?*
- *How will this system be evaluated?*
- *What if I have further questions?*
- *How can I help my child succeed in this grading system?*

Q: What is the purpose of grading and reporting?

A: The primary purpose of grading and reporting is to communicate learner achievement.

Q: What is Standards-Based Grading?

A: Standards-based grading is a way of reporting what learners know and how they demonstrate their learning of state content standards.

Q: What is the goal of Standards-Based Grading?

A: The primary goal of Standards-Based Grading is to communicate what each learner knows and can do according to state content standards. The goal is to also separately assess the influence of positive and consistent work habits on learner learning. The purpose of Standards-Based Grading is to align grading with the state content standards as measured by consistent and accurate assessments and common criteria for grading.

Q: Why is District 12 using Standards-Based Grading and Reporting?

A: We use a Standards-Based Grading and Reporting in our Kindergarten through eighth grades to clearly and consistently represent and communicate your child's academic progress. This research-based approach focuses on what learners know and can do based on specific standards, promotes growth by emphasizing progress over time, and separates academic achievement from behaviors like effort or participation. It helps learners, parents, and teachers work together to support mastery of essential skills and concepts.

Q: How does Standards-Based Grading work?

A: Traditional grading averages all of the work and other subjective factors that a learner has done over a period of time. Standards-based grading removes these factors and solely focuses on learner learning. Standards-based grading focuses on what your child knows and can do based on specific learning goals, called standards. Instead of using a single overall score, like a traditional letter grade, Standards-based Grading breaks down learning into key skills or concepts and provides detailed feedback on each one.

Here's how it works:

1. **Prioritize Standards:** Each state standard must be taught, but some standards help to build an understanding of a priority standard. Teachers identify supporting standards and under which reporting standard they fall for standards-based grading. Not all state standards appear on the report card, but each standard has a place under a reporting standard.
2. **Clear Learning Goals**: Each subject is divided into specific skills or concepts that learners need to learn. Teachers have created proficiency scales to determine where each learner is on their way to mastering the standards.

3. **Ongoing Assessment**: Teachers assess learners throughout the year using tests, projects, classroom activities, or observations. These assessments measure how well your child understands each standard.
4. **Levels of Understanding**: Standards-based grading uses levels to show progress. For example:
    - **3 (Secure)**: The learner has mastered the standard.
    - **2 (Approaching)**: The learner is still learning and needs more practice.
    - **1 (Beginning)**: The learner is just starting to understand the concept.
5. **Focus on Growth**: In traditional grading, learner attempts are all averaged together at the end of the marking period to create a grade for all concepts taught during that time. The goal of Standards-Based Grading is to show progress over time. If your child struggles at first but improves, the final level reflects their current understanding—not how they did earlier in the year.
6. **Detailed Feedback**: Teachers provide specific feedback to help learners and parents understand what's going well and what needs improvement. Learners use the proficiency scales to understand where they are in their level of understanding and what specific skills they need to work on to show mastery.

Q: How does this differ from traditional letter grades?

A: Standards-based grading reports tell us what learners have learned and know. It measures learners' knowledge of grade-level content over time by reporting the most recent, consistent level of performance. So, a learner might struggle in the beginning of a course with new content, but then learn and demonstrate proficient performance by the end of the course. For example, in traditional grading, the learner's performance for the whole trimester would be averaged together. Early low quiz scores would be averaged together with high performance scores later in the course, resulting in a lower grade. In Standards-based grading, a learner who masters the standard would have that mastery reported as their current performance level. Learners are not penalized for initial learning. In addition, traditional grading often includes other subjective factors like attendance, effort, and attitude, which might influence the grade positively or negatively. In Standards-based grading, we report proficiency and work habits separately to give a more accurate report of learner progress.

Q: When will Standards-Based Grading take effect?

A: The 2025-2026 reports of progress at Roselle Middle School will include Priority Standards for all subject areas. For further information on Standards-Based Grading, please visit our website at sd12.org. We are currently learning about a new technology-based system for teachers to use when grading and reporting to see if it will meet the needs of our learners, families, and staff to be able to be transparent about grading and reporting.

Q: How are the Standards chosen for each grade level and subject?

A: The Reporting Standards for each grade level and subject are based on state and national guidelines, which outline the essential skills and knowledge learners should master. District 12 works to align these standards with curriculum and assessments to ensure they meet the developmental needs of learners and prepare them for future success. The teachers will continue to use the District 12 curriculum, aligned to state content

standards, to drive instruction. The Reporting Standards have been chosen to give parents more information about their learners' learning.

Q: How will I know how my learner is doing on the soft skills necessary for future success?

A: Since behavior and effort are removed from a learner's academic achievement grade in a Standards-Based Grading system, these are marked separately on a learner's report card. The Future Ready Skills will each receive a proficiency grade, which emphasizes their importance even more than when they are considered a part of the classroom academic grade.

Q: Which Future Ready Skills will be reported?

A: The Future Ready Skills at Roselle Middle School that will be reported on include:

- Digital Competency and Citizenship
    - Handles technology with care
    - Reports technical issues promptly
    - Stays on task when using Chromebook
    - Navigates district online platforms
    - Utilizes digital communication effectively
    - Creates grade-level-appropriate multimedia
    - Maintains academic integrity in all work
- Communication and Collaboration
    - Communicates with proper etiquette across different settings
    - Advocates for self
    - Uses active listening skills
    - Utilizes problem-solving skills
    - Works effectively with diverse groups of peers
    - Takes responsibility for own actions in a classroom setting
    - Understands one's role and self-evaluates participation in a group project
    - Recognizes and respects others' perspectives and opinions
- Executive Functioning
    - Complete assignments on time
    - Comes to class prepared
    - Follows directions and expectations
    - Respects the learning environment
    - Utilizes the reassessment request process when needed
    - Utilizes an appropriate organization system
    - Sets and monitors goal progress
    - Takes responsibility for own actions
    - Recognizes and regulates own emotions
    - Perseveres through challenges

These Future Ready Skills were chosen from many of our non-academic standards and resources (Illinois Social-Emotional Learning Standards, Executive Functioning skills, Digital Citizenship skills, Illinois PaCE:

Postsecondary and Career Expectations, Habits of Mind, Lake Park Lancer Skills, and our District 12 mission statement).

Q: What if my child's program does not match grade level standards (ex. Special Education, Bilingual, and Acceleration)?

A: We are required to provide all learners with an appropriate grade-level report card. A student's report card communicates where a student is in their learning in relation to grade-level expectations defined by the State of Illinois standards. This is the goal of the report card for all students enrolled in grade-level courses, regardless of IEP or English Language Learner (EL) status. Students receiving accommodations and/or modifications per IEP or 504 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.

Q: What types of assessments are used to determine if a standard is mastered?

A: District 12 teachers measure if a learner has mastered a standard with consistent tools: rubrics, tests, and performance-based assessments that have been identified as evidence of mastery. These measures are continually monitored for effectiveness and inform teachers of the needs of their learners.

Q: What marking system is used on the report grade for Standards?

3 - SECURE	2 - APPROACHING	1 - BEGINNING
The learner is consistently and independently secure in their understanding of the standard. Standard is mastered.	The learner is making progress toward independently understanding the standard. Standard is not fully mastered.	The learner is beginning or not yet making progress toward understanding the standard. Standard is not yet mastered.

In exceptional circumstances, teachers may need to communicate learner evidence collected as:

0 - INSUFFICIENT	N/A - Not assessed
The learner has not yet attempted or demonstrated understanding of the standard.	There is not enough evidence at this time to assess the learner's understanding of the standard.

Q: How is a level of mastery determined?

A: Students' learning requires time, and the checkpoints along the way are measured differently from the final assessment of the standard. There are a variety of opportunities for learners to practice skills and concepts. Not all assignments are counted toward a grade, but the assignments build toward the assessments that measure learner progress.

After learning has occurred, a variety of assessments are used to determine if a learner has mastered a standard. Assessments will still be an important part of the learning process, however, the focus will be on how well learners understand the learning objectives, rather than simply earning a grade. Teachers who provide direct instruction are responsible for the assessment of that subject. They may collaborate with specialists or resource personnel in evaluating those assessment outcomes.

Q: Will my learner still receive letter grades?

A: Learners will receive an overall raw score/letter grade equivalent for each subject in grades 6-8. While Standards-Based Grading focuses on detailed feedback about your learner's progress on specific learning standards, the reporting system will be a hybrid. This means your learner will also receive a raw score/letter grade equivalent that reflects their overall performance in each subject. However, the way letter grades are calculated will look a little different. Teachers will grade based on mastery of learning standards rather than focusing solely on the percentage of correct answers on assignments and assessments. This approach ensures that grades more accurately reflect what your learner knows and can do.

Q: How is the letter grade calculated at Roselle Middle School?

A: A decaying average calculation in Otus provides a final grade for a student's mastery in a trimester by combining the average mastery across all standards with a decaying weight that favors recent work, then converting that score using a grade table, and finally allowing for teacher professional judgment.

Decaying Average Calculation

First, Otus determines an average of mastery for all standards assessed during the trimester. This step establishes a base score for the student's overall performance. Next, the system applies a decaying average formula to this score. This formula is a weighted average that gives greater weight to more recent evidence of mastery and less weight to older evidence. The intent is to ensure the final score reflects the student's *current* level of understanding, acknowledging that learning is continuous and students improve over time.

Grade Conversion

Once the decaying average is calculated, it's converted to a raw score/etter grade using this predetermined grade conversion table:

Raw Score Range	Equivalent Traditional Grade
2.50 – 3.00	**A**
2.41 – 2.49	**B**
1.50 – 2.40	**C**
1.00 – 1.49	**D**
0.00 – 0.90	**F**

*****This is ONLY for Roselle Middle School***

Q: How will this benefit my child?

A: There are many benefits to shifting to Standards-Based Grading for our learners:

- **Clearer Understanding:** Students will have a better understanding of what they need to learn and how to improve. Students will have more opportunities to be involved in self-assessment and goal setting.

- **Increased Motivation:** Focus shifts from earning points to mastering skills and concepts. While some learners may initially find it challenging to adjust to a focus on learning rather than grades, many learners thrive in a standards-based system. By focusing on mastery and providing specific, actionable feedback, teachers can help learners develop a deeper understanding of the material and a love of learning. The emphasis on growth and improvement can also boost learner confidence and resilience.
- **Personalized Learning:** Teachers can better tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of each learner.
- **Reduced Stress:** Less emphasis on grades can reduce anxiety and promote a love of learning. Students can learn to celebrate their accomplishments and view challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.
- **Future Academic Success:** A strong understanding of core academic concepts is crucial for success in high school, college, and beyond. Standards-based grading helps ensure that learners develop a deep and lasting understanding of these concepts. This will better prepare them for the challenges of higher education and the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

Q: Will this impact placement at Lake Park High School?

A: Throughout the process, we have communicated with Lake Park, who understands the shift towards standards-based grading and reporting and how it reflects a learner's mastery of key skills and concepts. The current placement process will remain the same, considering multiple factors such as teacher recommendations, assessment data, and learner performance. Standards-based grading provides a clear and detailed view of your child's learning, which helps ensure accurate and fair placement decisions.

Q: If my child transfers to another district, will they understand my child's progress?

A: Yes, school districts nationwide are utilizing standards-based grading and reporting. This type of report card better communicates specifically what a child has or has not learned. Our report card is based on extensive research of high-achieving districts. In DuPage County, many districts have already incorporated standards-based grading and reporting.

Q: Who has been involved in the Standards-Based Grading process?

A: Implementing Standards-based grading at Roselle Middle School has been a process that has been worked on for the past three years. A committee of teachers and administrators focused on research and development of standards-based grading. This committee has led the work with faculty and staff. The goal of the Reporting on Learning Leadership Team was to design and implement effective instructional practices that promote high levels of learning for all. The work of this team was aligned to the Roselle District 12 Board of Education's goal 1.24.B in the strategic plan: Implement a standards-based grading approach at Roselle Middle School.

Q: What if my child is struggling to meet a standard?

A: Teachers will work closely with learners and parents to develop individualized learning plans to support their progress. This may include opportunities for reteaching, providing extra support during class or WIN (What I

Need) time, offering different learning modalities, or adjusting assignments. The school will also continue to provide resources and support for learners who need extra help.

Q: Will this impact my child's ability to participate in extracurricular activities?

A: No, this system will not impact a learner's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. Grades will still be considered for certain activities, but the focus on learning and growth will remain central.

Q: How will this system be evaluated?

A: The school will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the standards-based grading system. This may include surveys of learners, parents, and teachers, as well as data analysis to track learner progress and identify areas for improvement.

Q: What if I have further questions?

A: Please contact your child's teacher if you have specific questions regarding your learner's learning or grading.

Q: How can I help my child succeed in this grading system?

A: We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential for learner success. We encourage you to attend school events, participate in parent-teacher conferences, and communicate regularly with your child's teachers. There are many things you can do at home to support your child:

- **Communicate with Teachers:** Regularly review learner progress reports with teachers and ask questions.
- **Focus on Learning:** Encourage a growth mindset and emphasize effort and learning over grades.
- **Create a Supportive Home Environment:** Provide a quiet space for homework and encourage independent learning.
- **Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to reach out to the school with any questions or concerns.

IV. Resources

Grading From the Inside Out by Tom Schimmer

Standards-Based Learning in Action: Moving From Theory to Practice by Tom Schimmer, Garnet Hillman, and Mandy Stalets

How to Grade for Learning by Ken O'Connor

Fair Isn't Always Easy by Rick Wormeli

Transforming Classroom Grading by Robert Marzano and Jane M. Bailey

Engaging Parents and Families in Grading Reforms by Thomas R. Guskey