

Q: What is Standards-Based Grading?

A: Standards-Based Grading is a system of reporting grades focused on what students know and are able to do.

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

A: There are three main components to the teaching and learning process – curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Schools now teach to standards (Common Core Standards) as a matter of practice. The instruction in the classroom is grounded in standards. The purpose of Standards-Based Grading is to align the assessment of student learning with standards-based instruction and curricula.

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

A: The goal of Standards-Based Grading is to utilize a grading system that accurately reflects a student's level of proficiency around a particular content area. Learner quality areas such as effort and participation are reported out separately in order to not skew the true measure of what the students knows and is able to do. In addition, grading differences between teachers are minimized.

Q: How does Standards-Based Grading work?

A: Standards-Based Grading assesses a student's body of work for a particular marking period. Looking at all evidence (homework, quizzes, projects, and tests...), a performance level is determined (ABCF...4321) which best represents that students demonstration of learning guided by standards, rubrics, and exemplars. Teachers use their professional judgment to interpret the data - mean (average), the median (middle value in list of numbers), and student growth over time are all valid as a process to arrive at the final grade. The question to be answered is... What evidence is most representative of the level of student mastery?

Q: What do colleges think? How will their GPA be factored?

A: A GPA will still be calculated with Standards-Based Grading. Colleges will still have GPA information as part of the application process. With regard to grades, colleges do report that grading scales vary wildly from school district to school district, so a "B" in one school is often not equal to a "B" in another school. The strength of the overall program, how the student has challenged his/herself in that program, and how the school describes its program in the school profile are very important.

Q: How does this differ from traditional letter grades?

A: Standards-Based Grading reports the degree to which a student has mastered a particular content. All measures of student learning are sources of evidence – from homework to final classroom assessments. Traditional grading, i.e. (100-0) scale, reports a score that has content knowledge and other factors mixed into the grade. This in effect skews the real measure of what a student knows about the content. Subjective factors like attendance, effort and behavior are often included in a grade under many current grading systems. These areas are important, but in Standards-Based Grading, they are reported out in a separate Learner Quality

section of the report card. Hence a student is held accountable for both academic proficiency as well as learner qualities.

Q: What is next in the process?

A:

- The new K-5 Standards-Based Report cards will be implemented in the fall of 2012. Along with the report card, the newly developed common writing rubrics for K-5 and accompanying student exemplar papers will be published for students, teachers, and parents.
- Middle School Standards-Based Report cards will be implemented in the fall of 2012.
- At the High School Level, the 2012-2013 school year will see a transition toward Standards-Based Grading with a scale of A,B,C ,F. Year-long work at the HS will move in the direction of going to a 4-3-2-1- system for 2013-2014.
- Teacher professional development on the new report cards and writing rubrics will be put in place.
- Parent information sessions on Standards-Based Grading will be held throughout the 2012-2013 school year
- The District will conduct an ongoing analysis of the move toward Standards-Based Grading