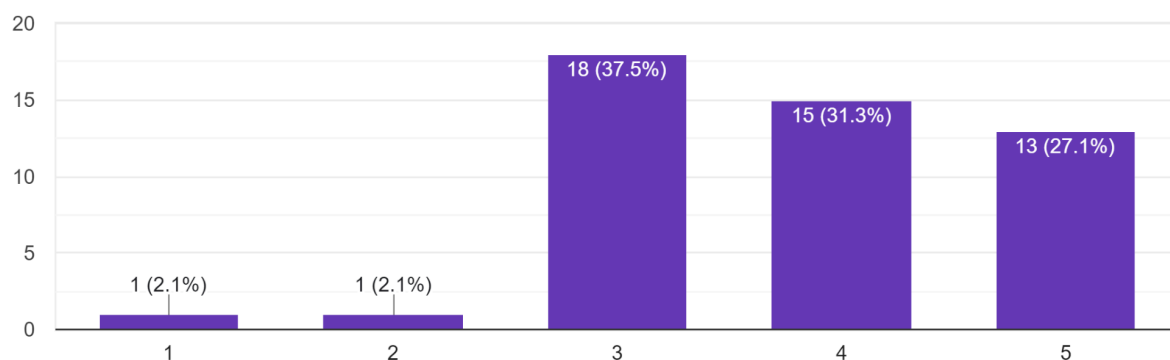


*These charts show the responses to the grading-focused survey questions from the PD day on 4/10.*

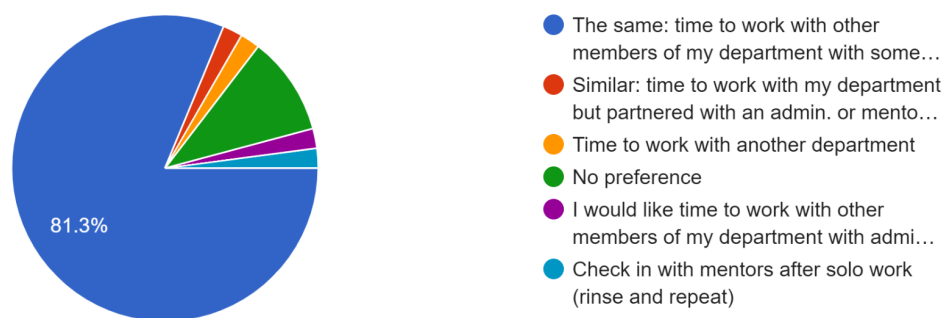
2. How would you describe the grading sessions?

48 responses



3. The focus of the grading sessions was to give teachers time to collaborate and prepare for next year by rethinking rubrics. For the next PD session on grading, which structure would you prefer?

48 responses



*The following questions and comments in bold are from educators after our 4/10 PD day. The responses in standard text are Assessment Specialist John Scopelleti's replies to those questions and thoughts.*

- \* We need more time!**
- \* I feel we need a lot more time.**
- \* I feel like we need more time to move to this method of grading.**
- \* I feel that there are a lot of positives in exploring standard based grading, but I don't feel that rushing the roll-out to this September will set our school up for success. I feel that this whole process is rushed and the staff feel overwhelmed. Why can't we take more time to work through rubrics and plan for a new grading system?**
- \* The department time was very useful. We got a decent amount accomplished, but it still feels as though we have a ton to do. I think a lot of people are feeling overwhelmed.**
- \* I am concerned with the time frame of this and the roll out of this practice for next year.**

There is no doubt that there is time needed to get ready for this. It's important to remember, though, that the school started these conversations over a decade ago when we split Work Habits from Achievement. More recently, in the 2021-2022 school year, departments were asked to identify power standards and use them to tag assignments as a way to get ready for a system of standards-based grading. For the past seven months, we've had conversations about standards-based grading and other equity-focused grading practices.

None of that changes that there is a lot of work to do, especially for those departments that are doing more than simply adjusting their rubrics. Keep in mind, though, that there is a lot of time left this year that can be dedicated to this work: PD, PLCs, and the time available to teachers of seniors when seniors are gone. Additionally, the administrative team is working on securing funding for teachers who are able and willing to work on this during the summer. Finally, keep in mind that there is no expectation for every rubric to be redesigned by the beginning of next school year. There will be PD and PLC time to do this work throughout next year as well.

One other important part of the time conversation is that the Assessment Specialist position ends at the end of next school year. If we wait even another year, there won't be anyone dedicated to supporting and/or troubleshooting the new practices.

- \* I appreciate the time for grading.**
- \* Time with dept. members was needed!**
- \* Appreciated time to review grading with others**
- \* I really enjoyed time working with my department. It was helpful to bounce ideas and wording back and forth.**
- \* Was great to have time to work within the department to work on new rubrics for next year.**

Great!

**IT department, how does this look in Power School?**

There should be only two, minor differences for teachers in Power School next year: putting in letters instead of numbers (*P* for *Proficient*, for example) and putting the grades in the standard column instead of the assignment column. I'll be demonstrating this to departments in a future PLC, but if you're eager to see it before then, let me know, and I'll be happy to connect with you individually.

**Don't agree with *Emerging*. Like *Not Proficient* or *Not Meets*. Also, don't agree with the two upper levels.**

The lowest/failing grade will now be *Unsatisfactory*. As for the two upper levels, this is to provide a fair GPA and is based off of my conversations with college admissions personnel.

**Thought as a department we worked well today, discussing and trying to clarify goals of the department. Still have concerns that we as a school are not fully ready to implement this new system, as many staff members are still unclear of how this will work for the benefits of our students.**

The new grading practices we're implementing next year—according to researchers and SST teachers that have piloted them—are more fair, more accurate, and more helpful. Students have reported this to me as well during our student focus groups. I'd encourage any staff members who have questions about that to reach out to me and/or to read *Grading for Equity* by Joe Feldman.

**\* Lots of work to do.**

**\* Still a lot of people (talking) about not having enough time**

Yup, and totally understandable. See above for the time that is available!

**I'm taking the neutral road on this one and will defer to those who have boots on the ground!**

Understood.

**Generally a good PD**

Great!

**I am still confused on what this looks like for our highest need Special Education students and what this looks like for those with significant modifications to content. I feel like I have a good understanding of what grading and assessment will look like for the average student (and even many special education students), but I still feel woefully unprepared for students with significant content modifications.**

I've worked with Director of Special Education Katie Berry to ensure that we have a plan for

this. The focus for preparing for next year to this point has been to redesign rubrics. Moving forward, Special Education teachers will have time to modify the standards in a way that is appropriate and supportive of students who receive modified content. That has been on our radar since Day One of this initiative.

**History and English should share rubrics, Math and Science maybe. Shop rubrics should be shared for common rubrics to model.**

There's been a lot of sharing on the shop side already, and there's a great deal of consistency there. It's a great thought for ELA and Social Studies to connect, but it's important to realize there are some important differences between the two disciplines. Math and Science gets tricky, because Science should really be thought of as "Sciences": Biology is not the same as Chemistry, which is not the same as Physics, which is not the same as Engineering. Ultimately, though, all grading guides and rubrics will be available when they're finalized, there will be opportunities for collaboration before the year is out, and I'm happy to share anything at any time. Just let me know!

**Just curious on what you guys thought about our approach to the new grading as it is very different from other departments.**

The feedback form is anonymous! Please reach out to me, so I can respond.

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*The following questions and comments in bold are from educators after their most recent union meeting. The responses in standard text are Assessment Specialist John Scopelleti's replies to those questions and thoughts.*

**We were told this is a two-year plan. Now it's being sped up in April to be in place by August. Why?**

- This is still a two-year plan. Year One has been all about designing and preparing. Year Two will be about implementation, calibration, reflection, and overall support.
- The grant that funds the Assessment Specialist position is only good for two years. If we took another year to prepare, there wouldn't be a designated person to provide support when this goes live.

**What about training?**

- I'm guessing this question is about Power School. At a future PLC, I'll demonstrate what has to be done. The quick version is there are only two changes to inputting grades:
  - Enter a letter instead of numbers.
  - Enter the letter into the standard column instead of the assignment column.
- There's also going to be a full PD-day for staff at the beginning of next school year to give folks time to set up their Power School and get any help they need on the technical side.
- If this question is about something other than Power School, let me know!

**Are there more examples? A toolkit for all teachers to use to share from other schools?**

- I have books and books of sample rubrics as well as links to websites and contacts from various schools. Let me know what you're looking for, and I'll be happy to get it to you!

**Will this be in the evaluation process? I don't think this should be on Teach Point at all.**

- The standards for educator evaluations have not changed, so I'm not sure how a grading system would be involved in the evaluation process, unless a teacher decides to use it as a Professional Practice Goal. And if that's something a teacher wants to do, I'd respectfully submit that she/he/they should be able to do that.

**When will we have more time?**

- PLCs: Most departments have three more grading-focused PLCs that can be dedicated to rubric and/or assessment redesign. This is in addition to about three other PLCs that could be used for developing rubrics.
- PD: 2 hours on the 5/3 delayed start
- There will be funding for summer stipends for teachers who are able and willing to work on this over the summer.
- Importantly, there will also be PD and PLC time next year! There is no need to have every rubric or assessment ready to go by the start of next school year.

**I have concerns about this being equitable for students with disabilities.**

- Approximately 5% of our student population receive a modified curriculum as part of their IEP, and they would be assessed using a rubric with a modified standard. Students who receive accommodations would be assessed using the same rubric as students without IEPs. This shouldn't be any different than our current grading system.
- Several staff members and parents/caregivers of students with disabilities have told me they are excited about the new grading system, because they feel it is actually more equitable than our current system.
- Here's more from Director of Special Education Katie Berry:

"Standards tell us what to teach, not how to teach. Teachers will continue to use inclusive classroom practices. So, keep doing what you're doing for our SWD students!

"Providing accommodations to students is not specially designed instruction. Accommodations are not the same as modifications. Changing or reducing learning is a modification. Modifications should be noted in student IEPs.

"IEP goals can be developed at Team meetings to address weaknesses. Typically, SST's academic goals are in the areas of math, reading, writing, comprehension, and work habits/self-advocacy. An IEP goal starts with the student's area of weakness, can be linked to a standard, and should be written with the intent the student will show growth/mastery. There will be an opportunity for collaboration of SST staff to write effective IEP goals."

**I'm concerned this will reward those students who test well on assessments and lower the scores of those students who rely mostly on Work Habits.**

- Grades shouldn't be "rewards." They should be straight-forward communication about what a student knows and can do.
- I'd also pose this question, a flip to this concern: Have grades been inflated for some students if they rely mostly on Work Habits? In an academic setting, there are no standards for Work Habits, but there are standards for content skills and knowledge. If we are saying a kid is *Proficient* in a class but that's only because she tries hard and is a nice kid, are we being fair, accurate, or helpful?

**How is this data going to be compared when only 4 other schools in MA are doing it?**

- I'm not sure which data you're referencing, but the question that will guide our evaluation of this new system is guided by the question above: is this more fair, more accurate, and more helpful for students? I already have a schedule of data reports that I'll be running next year to answer this question.
- There are only four other schools in MA who received the same grant SST received. Here they are:
  - [Revere High School](#) (Revere, MA)
  - [Melrose High School](#) (Melrose, MA)
  - [Monument Mountain Regional High School](#) (Great Barrington, MA)
  - [Springfield International Charter School](#) (Springfield, MA)
- Here are the other schools I've personally contacted who are at various stages of designing and/or implementing similar grading systems:
  - [McCann Technical School](#) (North Adams, MA)
  - [Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School](#) (South Hadley, MA)
  - [West Chicago Community High School](#) (West Chicago, IL)
  - [Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School](#) (Franklin, MA)
  - [Hudson Public Schools](#) (Hudson, MA)
  - [Gates Middle School](#) (Scituate, MA)
  - [Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center](#) (Providence, RI)
  - [East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School](#) (East Bridgewater, MA)
  - [Abington High School](#) (Abington, MA)
  - [Champlain Valley Union High School](#) (Hinesburg, VT)
- Here are some other schools that I have not yet personally contacted but are also involved in this work:
  - [Boston Day and Evening Academy](#) (Boston, MA)
  - [The Parker School](#) (Devens, MA)
  - [Casco Bay High School](#) (Portland, ME)
  - [Souhegan High School](#) (Amherst, NH)
  - [Burlington High School](#) (Burlington, VT)
  - [Noble High School](#) (North Berwick, ME)
- Also, the NCAA recently ran [this webinar](#) to explain how they work with schools that use standards-based grading to determine eligibility for first-year college student athletes.

The fact that an organization as big as the NCAA did this shows that this new system of grading is not another passing fad in education. (There are plenty of them, to be sure—but this isn't one of them!)

If you have any other questions or want to follow up individually, please feel free to reach out to me, friends! I can talk philosophy, pedagogy, and/or research; and I can do menial copying and pasting to save you some time. I am here to help!