

## Standards-Based Grading FAQs for Families

### Q: What is Standards-Based Grading (SBG)? Why are we implementing standards-based grading?

**A:** We are implementing standards-based grading to communicate the most accurate student achievement data to students and families. SBG is a way to communicate student progress using specific learning standards. It separates assignments that help students practice their learning from tasks that assess a student's level of mastery. The focus of SBG is based solely on mastery of the content. Additionally, it will smooth the transition from middle to high school as many HS teachers are using SBG practices.

Consider three different students, all of whom earned a 75% in their traditionally graded science class.

Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Homework & Classwork: 100% Tests & Labs: 50%	Homework & Classwork: 50% Tests & Labs: 100%	Homework & Classwork: 75% Tests & Labs: 75%
<b>Overall Avg. Grade: 75%</b>	<b>Overall Avg. Grade: 75%</b>	<b>Overall Avg. Grade: 75%</b>

While these three students all have identical grades, their understanding of science are likely quite different. The goal of SBG is to do all we can to make sure that a grade is the best representation of what a student actually knows in a given content area.

### Q: What if my student has always gotten A's? How will this affect them?

**A:** Our purpose for implementing SBG is to communicate the most accurate student achievement data to students and families. In the past, traditional grades may have included extra credit, practice work, participation and student behavior in the final grade. With SBG, a student's grade reflects **only** academic achievement.

Your student will benefit by having more ownership over his or her grades than ever before. This ownership can be seen in three ways:

1. Your student can focus on growth in the essential skills and content instead of how many points he or she has earned over the course of a marking period.
2. Your student will have a clear list of standards and performance indicators detailing exactly what he or she needs to master in the course.
3. Your student can now retake assessments to show growth.

### Q: Does practice count as part of the grade?

**A:** Most practice will not count towards the mastery of standards; however, in order to master the content and skills being assessed students must practice the concepts and skills taught in class. We understand that students master content/skills at different rates, therefore, multiple attempts to demonstrate mastery will be given provided that students complete the practice given in class/home for that standard. Students will not be able to retake assessments unless they have completed **all** coursework. Completion and timeliness will be reported in the "Work Habits" section of your student's report card. The distinction is best understood as one between practice assignments and performance assignments.

**Q: What are the major differences to expect with this new grading system?**

**A:** See chart below

	<b>From Traditional...</b>	<b>Towards Standards-Based Grading</b>
<b>Reporting</b>	<p><b>This system has 40 points of passing and 60 points of failure.</b></p> <p>A = 90–100%                      B = 80–89%                      C = 70–79%                      D = 60–69%                      F = Below 60%</p>	<p><b>This system has 5 Levels of Proficiency to communicate how well a student demonstrates mastery of a standard. This is not based on completion of a task; it's based on understanding and mastery of a skill or concept.</b></p> <p>A= 80 - 100%    4 - Standard(s) exceeded                      B= 60 - 79%    3 - Standard(s) met                      C= 40 - 59%    2 - Standard(s) nearly met                      D= 20 - 39%    1 - Standard(s) not met                      F= 0 - 19%    0 - Made no attempt/Attempt not relevant</p> <p>*Students are not always expected to immediately exceed or meet the standard when a new concept or skill is being introduced.</p>
<b>Instructional Practices</b>	1. A letter grade after an assessment or test.	1. Proficiency levels for each skill that has been assessed.
	2. Criteria for success may be unclear.	2. Criteria and targets are made available to students ahead of time.
	3. Use a mix of assessment, achievement, effort, and behavior to determine the final grade. May use late penalties and extra credit.	3. Separates achievement from effort/behavior. No academic penalties or extra credit will be given. Late work will be reflected in the work habits feedback, but this does not influence the overall course grade calculation.
	4. Everything goes in the grade book – regardless of purpose.	4. Majority of gradebook will show the progression of students' mastery of the standards.
	5. Assessments record the average – not the best – work.	5. Emphasize the evidence of learning growth when grading.
	6. Students have one chance to demonstrate their learning on assessments.	6. Students have the opportunity to show growth through reteaching and reassessment.

Adapted from O'Connor K (2002). *How to Grade for Learning: Linking grades to standards (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.