

# BEST PRACTICES FOR EQUITY IN GRADING

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In the following report, Hanover Research analyzes secondary research to explore how school districts systematize grading and assessment standards and practices within and across schools.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

Following traditional approaches to grading, students receive one letter grade per course, which represents the cumulative points they have earned according to their performance on a multitude of assignments and tasks, each of which is weighted differently. A student's academic achievement in a particular course subject is then inferred from his or her grade on a scale.<sup>1</sup> Despite the pervasive use of this points-based system for grading in primary and secondary schools, this quantification of student achievement can:

- Hinder students' interest in learning;<sup>2</sup>
- Make it difficult to decipher what knowledge and skills students actually possess;<sup>3</sup> and
- Contribute to teacher bias in expectations and grading.<sup>4</sup>

In the following report, Hanover Research (Hanover) analyzes research from secondary sources to presents district-wide strategies for grading reform and implementation. To this end, Hanover reviews the steps education scholars recommend for revising and moderating grading criteria and how districts have managed assessment procedures and expectations across and within schools. This information is organized into two sections as follows:

- **Section I: Modifications to Traditional, Points-Based Grading Systems** discusses the steps districts can take to better align grading practices using a points-based system, the different regulations that help to create uniformity in grading and assessment, and how school district administrators can organize and communicate reform.
- **Section II: Standards-Based Assessment and Grading** examines an alternative approach to grading as a means to systematize assessment and reporting student grades within and across schools. This section discusses the standards-based framework, steps for the creation of achievement standards and criteria, district management of assessment tools and grade reporting, and the challenges and benefits to this approach. This section also provides feature spotlights of districts that have reformed to a standards-based approach.

Key findings from this research are presented on the following page.

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<sup>1</sup> Marzano, R. and T. Heflebower. "Grades That Show What Students Know." Educational Leadership, 2011. p. 34.  
<https://www.ocps.net/lc/southwest/mso/parents/Documents/Grades%20That%20Show%20What%20Students%20Know.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Long, C. "Are Letter Grades Failing Our Students?" NEA Today, August 19, 2015.  
<http://neatoday.org/2015/08/19/are-letter-grades-failing-our-students/>

<sup>3</sup> Marzano and Heflebower, Op. cit., pp. 34–35.

<sup>4</sup> Kamenetz, A. "If Your Teacher Likes You, You Might Get A Better Grade." NPR.org.  
<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/02/22/387481854/if-your-teacher-likes-you-you-might-get-a-better-grade>

## KEY FINDINGS

- **There are two main approaches to systematizing grading across a school district: modifying an existing points-based model, or implementing an alternative, standards-based grading model.** When *modifying an existing, traditional grading system*, district administrators formulate grading rules and regulations that target grading objectivity, meaningfulness, consistency, and assessment equity. *Standards-based assessment and grading* focuses on the connections between stated instructional goals or standards with the content and skills students are expected to demonstrate. Districts must create instructional standards with corresponding performance criteria, encourage teachers' continual use of formative assessments during the academic year, and develop new formats for reporting grades.
- **Standards-based grading advocates note that it improves student achievement by establishing clear learning targets, accommodating different learning styles, and providing students feedback during the course of instruction.** The use of formative assessments in particular allows instructors to communicate to students areas of growth and room for improvement. On the whole, standards-based assessment and grading helps to systematize evaluative practices across teachers and keep students informed of their academic performance.
- **For either approach, district administrators should collaborate with educators and school personnel in the creation and adoption of new grading policies.** When modifying a traditional grading system, a district may meet with faculty to formulate new rules and regulations. In addition, district administrators should consider the use of professional development, faculty working groups, and piloting programs before going to scale to develop and test new grading procedures and report cards.
- **In general, administrators should take steps to separate scoring procedures for academic performance from students' effort or progress.** This might include: defining the purpose of grading; outlining separate standards for product, process, and progress; eliminating grading on a curve; and creating meaningful standards that adhere to students' individualized education plans, should a district opt to implement a standards-based approach to assessment and grading. This ensures more uniformity across teachers' grading practices
- **For districts choosing a standards-based approach, district administrators must then formulate how to communicate student proficiency.** Districts typically assign performance standards that correspond with *unsatisfactory*, *progressing*, *proficient*, and *advanced* ratings. Districts must create a reporting system that clearly indicates students' performance according to these assessment ratings, and share it with teachers, parents, and students. Districts choosing a standards-based grading system often face greater opposition because it challenges long-held beliefs about the meaning of grades. Teacher training of the new grading system is important for teacher buy-in, and holding open forums for parents to voice their concerns is essential to notifying parents of the changes to the grading system.

## SECTION I: MODIFICATIONS TO TRADITIONAL, POINTS-BASED GRADING SYSTEMS

A review of secondary research uncovers two main approaches to grading reform in an effort to create a more systematic and uniform grading process across teachers and schools within a district. The first approach is more moderate in the scale of its change and entails a reevaluation and modification of the traditional, points-based grading system already in place. Under this approach, district administrators assume control over grading rules and decisions traditionally left to individual teachers. By doing so, district administrators can ensure that teachers within and across schools abide by the same regulations for evaluating student achievement. The second approach encompasses a more severe change to standards-based assessment and grading. Following standards-based grading, students' formative understanding of curricular content becomes the primary focus of achievement evaluation. In this section, Hanover reviews the former approach focusing only on how school districts can take steps to moderate existing, point-based grading systems.

### TRADITIONAL, POINT-BASED GRADING FRAMEWORK

Under a traditional, points-based grading system, students are assigned weighted points to various assignments, activities, and behaviors performed in class. After the weighted points are summarized into an average score, a corresponding letter grade is used to mark a student's mastery of course material for the entire course. Essentially, a culmination of different assessment tools, weighted assignments, and student scores are used to produce one summative grade for each student (see Figure 1.1 for a summary of traditional grading features).<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, as Ken O'Connor, a leading scholar of grading systems, has noted, most teachers have received little training on grading practices and fair assessment.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, many district superintendents, principals, and teachers are unaware of their roles and responsibilities when designing, implementing, and reporting policies related to grading. Yet, without the collaboration of these individuals in the design and implementation of grading policy, points-based systems become idiosyncratic and ineffective.<sup>7</sup> It becomes difficult to decipher how much of a student's grade is indicative of effort compared to ability and whether or not students would earn the same grade in a course if it were taught by a different teacher. In order to create a more uniform and systematic points-based grading system, administrators and faculty must take steps to ensure that grades are accurate, meaningful, consistent, and equitable.

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<sup>5</sup> Marzano and Heflebower, *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> O'Connor, K. "Making the Grades." ASCD. <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol5/503-newvoices.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 1.1: Five Features of Traditional, Points-Based Grading**

<b>Five Features</b>	Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects, etc.). One grade/entry is given per assessment.
	Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.
	Use an uncertain mix of assessment, achievement, effort, and behavior to determine the final grade. May use late penalties and extra credit.
	Everything goes in the grade book – regardless of purpose.
	Include every score, regardless of when it was collected. Assessments record the average – not the best – work.

Source: Townsley, “What is the Difference between Standards-Based Grading (or Reporting) and Competency-Based Education?”<sup>8</sup>

## CREATING UNIFORM REGULATIONS

### *MAKING GRADES MORE OBJECTIVE*

While the structure of a points-based system allows teachers to account for student behaviors and effort, this feature makes it difficult to determine what criteria teachers use to evaluate behaviors and how behaviors are weighted in comparison to the skills and knowledge that students have actually gained in class. To make grades more objective and accurate under a traditional system, reported evaluations of student behaviors and attitudes can be separated from achievement and learning goals. At the district-level, administrators can engage in practices that include:<sup>9</sup>

- Eliminating the use of penalties for behaviors such as submitting required assessment evidence after due dates, absence, and academic dishonesty;
- Eliminating the use of extra credit for activities that have nothing to do with demonstration of achievement of standards;
- Ensuring that grades are based on individual achievement, which means that group scores have no place in the determination of grades;
- Ensuring that every assessment meets standards for quality assessment—clear targets, clear purpose, and sound design; and

<sup>8</sup> Townsley, M. “What Is the Difference between Standards-Based Grading (or Reporting) and Competency-Based Education?” *Competency Works*, November 11, 2014. <http://www.competencyworks.org/analysis/what-is-the-difference-between-standards-based-grading/>

<sup>9</sup> List of bulleted information taken verbatim from: O’Connor, Op. cit.

- Calculating appropriately, which involves using the median and mode as well as the mean, and finding alternatives to the use of zeros, especially where a percentage grading scale is used.

In all, making grades more accurate of students’ skills requires the creation of rules and regulations that every teacher must follow that determine how different assignments, extra credit opportunities, and student effort factor into a summative grade. The clearer the rules and regulations that district administrators develop to mediate what and how teachers account for students’ achievement on assignments and tasks, the more likely it is for grading practices within and across schools to become uniform and systematic.

**MAKING GRADES MORE MEANINGFUL**

Grades should communicate the skills and knowledge students possess. In order to make grades more meaningful under a points-based system, districts can require teachers to report student assessment scores according to proficiency scales on different course topics in addition to the course grade.<sup>10</sup> While the course grade signals the students’ cumulative (or summative) effort, attitudes, behaviors, achievement, and skill acquisition, providing scores on measurement topics demonstrates the strength of students’ skills in various content areas. Adding these proficiency scores also allows teachers to show student gains, which intrinsically motivates and encourages students to continue to demonstrate progress. An example of a proficiency scale reproduced from a report on grade system improvement is illustrated in Figure 1.2. As can be inferred from the proficiency scale, the student in this example has consistently improved in the six content areas over the course of the grading period. In all, as districts make the proficiency scales a part of the grade reporting process, “parents and students can see how much the student has learned about each measurement topic and ascertain the student’s strengths and most pressing needs.”<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 1.2: Standards-Based Grading Proficiency Scale for a Middle School Math Student**

MEASUREMENT TOPICS	SCORE	SCALE							
		0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0
Number systems	2.5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Estimation and mental computation	1.5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ratio, proportion, and percent	2.0	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Patterns	3.5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Equations	2.5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Data analysis	1.0	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Source: Marzano and Heflebower; “Grades That Show What Students Know”<sup>12</sup>

Note: The dark section of each bar represents a student’s status at the beginning of the grading period; the lighter section represents the student’s knowledge gain at the end of the grading period.

<sup>10</sup> Marzano and Heflebower, Op. cit., pp. 35–36.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from: Ibid., p.36.



### MAKING GRADING PRACTICES CONSISTENT

One of the largest challenges to grading reform is designing and managing course-alike grading policies to address consistency in how teachers make decisions about student grades. For example, a case study of one school district implemented a reform effort that targeted course-alike grading policies as a means to create more uniformity in how teachers evaluated students' work revealed several promising practices.<sup>13</sup> Important to note, the district did not mandate these changes; rather, they were adopted as preliminary regulations under proposed reform. Together, the proposed grading regulations addressed **the degree to which testing and effort were weighted to produce a final course grade, how student scores on state-level examinations would factor into course grades, how teachers would use scores on makeup examinations in a final grade, a lowest score threshold on all exams, and how late assignments would factor into students' grades.**<sup>14</sup> The district also outlined how much time could be devoted to "test development, revision, and collaborative analysis of results."<sup>15</sup> The following are the four proposed reform course-alike practices that Algebra I teachers found to help create consistency in grading:<sup>16</sup>

- A final course grade is weighted according to the following criteria: 70 percent test scores and 30 percent teacher discretion. Tests include common assessments and the final exam. A student who earns an A on the final exam automatically receives an A for the course. A rating of "Advanced" or "Proficient" on the California Algebra 1 Standards test results in raising student grades to a B or an A.
- Students may retake any test, with the highest score being recorded.
- The lowest score that a student can earn on any test is a 50 percent.
- Late work is accepted without penalty.

While the reform practices only modified regulations of the existing, point-based system for grading, the study's focus group with teachers that had implemented these new course-alike standards found that students were receiving more consistent grades across classrooms.<sup>17</sup> For example, using a direct quote from this case study, a teacher implementing the course-alike grading policies stated:

...Before we had common assessments . . . students would complain that if they got teacher A, they could get an A, but if they had teacher B, they'd only get a C . . . Teachers weren't weighting things the same; it wasn't fair for the students. [Now] they're pretty much going to end up getting a similar grade...<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cox, K.B. "Putting Classroom Grading on the Table: A Reform in Progress." *American Secondary Education*, 40:1, Fall 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>16</sup> List of bulleted information adapted from: Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



### *MAKING GRADES AND ASSESSMENT EQUITABLE*

As district and school administrators collaborate on grading policies to ensure accuracy, meaningfulness, and consistency, the district must also take steps to ensure assessment equity. Each student, regardless of background, should have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of course content and skills and be held to fair educational expectations. Because assessment and grading are interrelated, a school district must take steps to ensure that teachers are using assessment tools that are fair to ensure student grades accurately reflect their achievement. This is particularly important in a school district where many students come from different social backgrounds. According to Janet E. Helms, author of a book chapter on fair testing in primary and secondary grades:

...Fair and valid use of educational testing is most problematic when the student being evaluated differs from the test developer's validation (i.e., norm) group on critical dimensions (e.g., ethnicity, social class, racial socialization, physical abilities) that might affect the student's responses and reactions to the testing situation or the test user's interpretations of the student's test results...When students' irrelevant background information (e.g., social class) influences their test scores, this unintended outcome of the testing process is a source of systematic variance that is irrelevant to assessment of the intended construct...<sup>19</sup>

The following list of practices are those school district administrators can take to monitor the fairness of assessment tools in the classroom to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to showcase their abilities:<sup>20</sup>

- **Monitoring assessment validity.** District administrators should provide educators with an appropriate amount of time to determine if inferences made based on assessment scores correspond with students' abilities. Teachers should be able to respond to the following questions:
  - Do the test results make psychological sense?
  - Are the test results related to things that they ought to be related to?
  - Do the results on the test change according to what we know about developmental changes?
  - Do older students do better on the test than younger students; for example, on an arithmetic test, do sixth graders score higher than third graders do?
  - Does the test pick up the kinds of changes known to occur as people develop?
- **Monitoring equitable treatment.** Students should not be subjected to taking tests or other assessments in the *same* conditions, but *equitable* conditions. "A fair

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<sup>19</sup> Wall, J. and G. Walz editors. *Measuring Up: Assessment Issues for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators*. Greensboro, NC: ERIC Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse, 2003. pp. 81–83. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED480379.pdf#page=538>

<sup>20</sup> List of bullets are developed using information from: Wall and Walz, Op. cit.

testing structure includes appropriate testing conditions and equal opportunities for test takers to familiarize themselves with the test format, practice materials, and related material properties of the testing situation that might be expected to interfere unfairly with a student's test performance.”<sup>21</sup> For example, if an assessment is not evaluating students’ use of the English language, then students should be assessed using their primary language. District administrators should articulate how *equity* differs from *equality* and make themselves available to school faculty and personnel to help set equitable assessment policies.

- **Monitoring equitable assessment opportunities.** Students should be exposed to various assessment tools so that all students have opportunities to demonstrate skills. District administrators must discourage the use of a singular performance indicator and encourage teachers to use differentiated and scaffolding techniques to evaluate student learning and mastery.

## COMMUNICATING AND IMPLEMENTING GRADING REFORM

Reforming grading policies and adopting strategies to monitor assessment has implications for how teachers, school administrators, and district-level personnel interact and make authoritative decisions about student grades. Reform can prove particularly challenging to faculty members as they readjust to new procedures for assessment and grading. District leaders should incorporate teachers’ feedback when designing reform to alleviate their concerns.

### *STARTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT REFORM*

The first step to grading reform is to collect input from teachers and school personnel about grading and any other personal beliefs instructors have about the assessment process. This step is crucial as it allows district administrators to brainstorm ideas about a district-wide approach to grading reform. It also helps to ensure teacher and staff “buy-in.” Figure 1.3 outlines practices administrators may implement to start a dialogue on grading reform.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

**Figure 1.3: Starting a Dialogue on Grading Reform**

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION
Vote, Compare, and Discuss	<p>In small groups at a faculty meeting, have each colleague indicate his or her own agreement (a check) or disagreement (an X) with each of the four discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grades should reflect achievement of intended learning outcomes—whether the school is using a conventional, subject-based report card or a report card that represents these intended learning outcomes as standards.</li> <li>▪ The primary audiences for the message conveyed in grades are students and their parents; grading policies should aim to give them useful, timely, actionable information. Teachers, administrators, and other educators are secondary audiences.</li> <li>▪ Grades should reflect a particular student’s individual achievement. Group and cooperative skills are important, but they should be reflected elsewhere, not in an individual’s academic grade.</li> <li>▪ Grading policies should be set up to support motivation to learn. A student should never reach a place where there is no point doing any more work because failure is inevitable.</li> </ul> <p>Poll the group to see where there is agreement (all checks); disagreement (all Xs); and mixed opinions (some of each). Begin the discussion with the areas of agreement. Ask whether the disagreement could be reframed as "I'm not there yet." Require all statements of opinion to be supported ("Why do you believe that?"). Strive to understand what your colleagues are saying, even when you don't agree.</p>
Debate	<p>Randomly assign teachers the pro or con position for the first discussion point, four or five on each side. Whether they agree with their assigned position or not, have them prepare for a debate in which they assert that position and support it with logic and evidence, including evidence that they find in resource material. The team's presentation should include anticipating the arguments of the opposing side and preparing a defense for these, also using logic and evidence. After the formal debate, the whole faculty can reflect on what was learned.</p>
Form a Local Panel of Experts	<p>If a few teachers in your school or district (or a neighboring one) have experimented with [reform and] learning-focused grading practices, invite them to participate in a panel discussion. Each can briefly describe his or her strategies and the results. Listeners can ask their own questions or some of the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What do you think are the most important reasons educators should be interested in [grading reform]?</li> <li>▪ How did you talk with students about changing your grading practices? What responses did you receive?</li> <li>▪ Have you talked with any parents about changing your grading practices? What responses have you received?</li> <li>▪ Did your school have a [grading reform] committee? If so, how did it form, how often did it meet, and what did committee members talk about?</li> </ul>
Fishbowl	<p>Give a small group of teachers the discussion points...and ask them to share their thoughts about these statements (give them advance notice so they can prepare and be satisfied that they are sharing what they really feel). Have the rest of the group observe until these colleagues are finished discussing the statements among themselves. Then, have individuals in the larger group share what they have learned.</p>

Source: Brookhart; "Starting the Conversation About Grading"<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Brookhart, S. "Starting the Conversation About Grading." *Educational Leadership*, 69:3, 2011.  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov11/vol69/num03/Starting-the-Conversation-About-Grading.aspx>

To initiate conversation about grading reform, the school district should hold a meeting among faculty from different schools and different disciplines. Administrators mediating the meeting should ask faculty to formulate groups and discuss their input on the information grades should communicate, how grades' audience informs the construction of their format, which dimensions of students' achievement should be included in grades, and in what ways grades can be used to motivate student learning.<sup>23</sup> When discussing different faculty viewpoints, district administrators should be careful to note differences in how faculty construct and interpret the meaning of grades and what evidence they use to support these perspectives. After holding small group discussions, faculty may engage in a larger debate about the pros and cons of different grading practices and meanings.<sup>24</sup> Afterwards, district mediators may then work towards the formation of a uniform set of criteria that define grading and assessment policies. Faculty consensus regarding these practices is necessary so that they are implemented systematically throughout the district as a whole.

In an effort to lead discussion on grading reform, the district may invite a panel of volunteer teachers or outside experts that comprise exemplars in grading. For example, in an article on district-wide reform by Matt Townsley, a current administrator and former mathematics teacher in Solon, Iowa, Townsley describes how he and several other school teachers formed a study group on grading reform to discuss new practices for systematic policies. As this group became more familiar with reform, "a group of administrators, teachers, and students shared their experiences with a community advisory committee,"<sup>25</sup> about their experiences and challenges with new grading practices and reporting.

### *FORMULATE AN AGENDA AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

Once the school district has collected input from teachers about grading reform and decided on a new approach, administrators should work towards the development of an agenda that outlines when new grading practices should be implemented and strategies to deal with on-going challenges. The reform agenda must be made clear to all teachers and staff:

...the agenda should be no secret. However, that doesn't mean that the conversation should be about how to make people agree to go along with the agenda. All opinions need to be heard, and people's right to hold them should be affirmed. Educators will be much more receptive to new ideas—even those that challenge their own opinions—that come from colleagues who understand where they stand and why...<sup>26</sup>

As in the case with Townsley's school district, administrators first surveyed teachers on their agreement and readiness to use new grading regulations and practices. Results of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Townsley, M. "Redesigning Grading—Districtwide." *Educational Leadership*, 71:4, 2013. p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> Brookhart, Op. cit.

survey revealed that 82 percent of teachers had started implementing five new grading regulations or were interested in making changes with more support and time.<sup>27</sup> Following the survey, administrators proposed a two-year implementation timeline that consisted of professional development and reform benchmarks. The timeline was discussed in meetings with and approved by the board of education.

Planning for professional development during grading reform should be a key part of the agenda: “grading reform requires some professional development about how to implement technical aspects of a new policy. But what districts find when they grapple seriously with grading is that they have questions about learning.”<sup>28</sup> As such, professional development should focus on:

- Strategies for formulating clearer assessments.
- Coaching for formulating grading plans.
- The development of differentiated instruction and assessment techniques.

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<sup>27</sup> Townsley, “Redesigning Grading—Districtwide,” Op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>28</sup> Brookhart, Op. cit.

## SECTION II: STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

In this section, Hanover discusses standards-based assessment and grading as it relates to grading reform. While the reasons districts may create and implement a standards-based grading system are multifaceted, the practices associated with this approach can help create a more uniform method of student evaluation and allow districts to better monitor teacher expectations and student performance within and across schools. Overall, advocates note that standards-based grading improves student achievement by establishing clear learning targets, accommodating different learning styles, and giving students feedback during the course of instruction.<sup>29</sup>

### THE STANDARDS-BASED FRAMEWORK

Standards-based assessment and grading represents an *alternative* approach to traditional, points-based grading and focuses explicitly on the connection between key instructional goals or standards with the content and skills students are expected to master.<sup>30</sup> As one article stated, creating more uniform grading practices and addressing the issues of traditional grading practices “can’t be solved by just tweaking the details.”<sup>31</sup> When students receive a grade using a points-based grading system, only their summative progress is recorded. In a standards-based model, students do not simply receive an overall grade or summative evaluation that averages their work performance over time. Instead, students are scored based on several criteria according to the proficiency they demonstrate in multiple content areas. Their academic performance is also monitored over time through the use of different assessment tools. Figure 2.1 is adapted from a paper by Nancy McMunn and coauthors and demonstrates the main differences between a traditional grading system and a standards-based assessment and grading system.

The core concept of a standards-based system is that student grades should accurately reflect achievement levels using specified criteria that correspond with performance standards and content mastery. Students’ formative assessments are separated from summative assessments in which student effort, responsibility, timeliness, progress, and engagement are documented separately from course grades. In what follows, Hanover reviews the process for developing evaluative and measurement criteria to ensure that all students are held to the same standards within and across schools. A discussion of assessment tools, grade reporting, and the challenges to standards-based reform conclude this section.

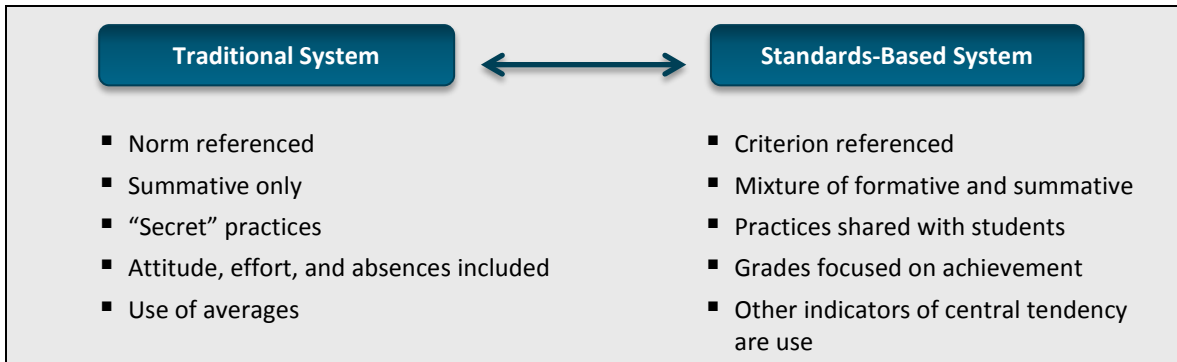
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<sup>29</sup> Iamarino, D. “The Benefits of Standards-Based Grading: A Critical Evaluation of Modern Grading Practices.” *Current Issues in Education*, 17:2, May 21, 2014. p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> McMunn, N., P. Schenck, and W. McColskey. “Standards-Based Assessment, Grading, and Reporting in Classrooms: Can District Training and Support Change Teacher Practice?” 2003. p. 3.  
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED475763.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Long, Op. cit.

**Figure 2.1: Key Differences Between Traditional Versus Standards-Based Systems**



Source: McMunn et al.; “Standards-Based Assessment, Grading, and Reporting in Classrooms: Can District Training and Support Change Teacher Practice?”<sup>32</sup>

## EVALUATION AND STANDARDS MEASUREMENT CRITERIA

Building grading reform to maximize equity and uniformity first requires a reassessment of evaluative criteria that define the skills students should master in each core subject. According to information outlined in a report by the Southern Regional Education Board, when developing standards criteria, educators should keep in mind what students are expected to know, how students can demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and skills, which standards are important to measure, and which outcomes the current grading system is not adequately assessing.<sup>33</sup> District supervisors can follow four steps to develop of these criteria:

- Delineate the purpose of grading.
- Outline separate standards for product, process, and progress.
- Eliminate the use of grading on a curve.
- Create meaningful standards that adhere to students’ individualized education plans.

### *DELINEATE THE PURPOSE OF GRADING*

District and school administrators should work collaboratively to delineate the purpose of the grading system prior to developing a set of performance standards for different course subjects. Administrators should consider the ways in which grades function as communication tools, identify the groups that are the primary audience of the information represented by grades, and the purpose grades should achieve as outcomes of a process. Determining the purpose of grading is difficult, however, as administrators often disagree about grading’s central aims and target audience: “educators seldom agree on the primary purpose [of grades]. This lack of consensus leads to attempts to develop a reporting device

<sup>32</sup> McMunn, Schenck, and McColskey, Op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> “Effective Grading Practices: 12 Fixes for Broken Grades.” Southern Regional Education Board., April 2014. <http://www.slideshare.net/jschiele/b-moore-12-fixes-for-broken-grades>



that addresses multiple purposes but ends up addressing no purpose very well.”<sup>34</sup> In order to avoid this, it is imperative that administrators agree upon a clear purpose for grading and the use of performance standards to determine grades. Once administrators have reached a consensus on the purpose of a grading system, a purpose statement should be articulated on students’ report cards.

### *OUTLINE SEPARATE STANDARDS FOR PRODUCT, PROCESS, AND PROGRESS*

When developing a unified grading system under standards-based reform, each grade per course subject should be disaggregated into separate performance criteria that demonstrate students’ achievement in various skills and acquired knowledge. Traditionally, students receive one grade in each class that combines dimensions of student learning such as students’ performance on tests, quizzes, homework, projects, presentations, and class participation. Most of these are weighted differently. Combining student performance grades across these dimensions into one course grade can convolute teachers’ ability to communicate students’ strengths and weaknesses clearly in the form of grades. A key practice to developing systematic and equitable standards for assessment is to outline achievement criteria and grades that correspond with product, process, and progress.

*...A key practice to developing systematic and equitable standards for assessment is to outline achievement criteria and grades that correspond with product, process, and progress...*

**Product criteria** are based on an instructor’s assessment of what students have learned from course content.<sup>35</sup> In this regard, product criteria relate to students’ mastery of course material at a specific time point. Product criteria assessments typically relay information of students’ proficiency on exams, reports, exhibits, or overall assessments. **Process criteria** set standards for the strategies students use to learn the information.<sup>36</sup> These strategies may relate to the amount of effort, responsibility, and initiative students take to learn course material. This may involve the assessment of students’ performance on class quizzes or assignments, homework, punctuality, contributions to class lessons or discussion, or attendance. Lastly, **progress criteria** include an instructor’s assessment of students’ educational growth over time.<sup>37</sup> Assessment standards under progress criteria should outline ways to measure improvement over a specified period. Such criteria are determined by the individual skills each student possesses at the start of the period and takes into consideration barriers to achievement. Once standards are outlined for each category, teachers may then assign grades to students on the basis of their product, process, and progress.

<sup>34</sup> Guskey, T. and L.A. Jung. “Four Steps in Grading Reform.” *Principal Leadership*, 13:4, 2012. p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

**SPOTLIGHT: Excelsior Springs School District 40**



**About:** According to information provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Excelsior Springs School District 40 (ESSD) is located in Clay County, MO and serves approximately 2,904 students across seven schools spanning pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. With approximately 219.73 full time equivalent teachers, ESSD has a student-teacher ratio of approximately 13.22 to one. As a small town district, few students require individualized education plans or require specialized instruction. Since 2006, ESSD has developed, implemented, and monitored a standards-based grading reform and published a document in 2011 thoroughly outlining the goals, steps, and new practices under the standards-based grading policy.

**Communicating a reform agenda:** ESSD made an *Assessment and Grading Handbook* publically available that clearly articulates a plan of action for grading reform. Not only does this document define standards-based grading, but it also provides the following explanation for reform: “The purpose of standards-based grading is to improve student achievement by focusing instruction and the alignment of curriculum with the essential standards. Standards-based grading and reporting will provide better communication to students, parents, teachers and administrators on what each student knows and is able to do according to the identified standards and separately assess the influence of positive and consistent work habits on student learning.”

In addition to this explanation, the *Assessment and Grading Handbook* outlines the following agenda to ensure that all teachers, school personnel, parents, and students are aware of how grading reform has developed and will continue to be monitored:

2006 and Prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work began with all buildings identifying GLEs or Topics for standards-based grading and assessment. Pinnacle Grading Software was purchased to be used to report student’s progress and success on standards.</li> <li>▪ Elementary began standards based reporting using GLEs with Pinnacle software.</li> <li>▪ Middle School/High School investigated but initiative of utilizing standards-based reporting failed. Reported problems with Pinnacle.</li> </ul>
2007-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District will utilize grade book and grade card software which promotes standards based assessment and instruction. This allows all stakeholders to view the specific skills or concepts a student has mastered or need improvement. Instruction can then be focused to meet individual student needs.</li> <li>▪ District will identify essential content and ensure the essential content is covered by all teachers. Instructional time will be protected to cover the essential content.</li> <li>▪ Curriculum maps for each subject/grade level will be devised and/or reviewed annually.</li> <li>▪ Implement scientifically-based research strategies.</li> </ul>
2009-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changed to Power School as the district grade book for grades 6-12 with the understanding that when the upgrade occurred we would be moving to a standards based reporting system as originally planned in the 2007-2010 DAP. Power School would then be used K-12.</li> </ul>
Summer 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Power School upgrade included standards-based reporting capabilities.</li> <li>▪ Began the development of Assessment and Grading Cohort.</li> <li>▪ Administrative team discussion on the progress of Essential Standards identified.</li> </ul>

2010-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Began Assessment and Grading Cohort.</li> <li>▪ Developed draft vision for the District on Assessment and Grading.</li> <li>▪ Essential Standards and curriculum mapping revisited, developed or re-evaluated.</li> <li>▪ Created disequilibrium with staff on current grading practices and each building developed an action plan for standards-based grading and assessment as outlined in the District Achievement Plan.</li> <li>▪ Members of cohort pilot standards-based grading.</li> <li>▪ Cohort members will develop reporting scales (rubrics) to grade standards.</li> </ul>
2011-2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and implement scoring rubrics.</li> <li>▪ Continually review, revise, and refine essential standards and curriculum maps to further align written, taught, and tested curriculum.</li> <li>▪ Develop and/or revise quality assessments.</li> <li>▪ Standards-based classroom instruction and reporting through professional learning, coaching, monitoring, and evaluation to communicate student learning.</li> <li>▪ Students will track their own progress on identified standards.</li> <li>▪ Grades will be consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning.</li> </ul>

Source: Excelsior Springs School District 40; *Assessment and Grading Handbook*<sup>38</sup>

### *ELIMINATE GRADING ON A CURVE*

Following standards-based reform, district and school administrators should eliminate practices related to grading on a curve.<sup>39</sup> Essentially, no instructor should determine students’ grades relative to how other students performed in the class as this diminishes the central aim of grades to convey acquired skills and knowledge. Should a school district allow curved grading, for instance, students with high grades at one school are less likely to exhibit the same skills and knowledge as students with the same grades at a different school. Relatedly, administrators should consider eliminating class rank as it too rewards students based on how they compare to their peers.<sup>40</sup> In all, grading on a curve and ranking students according to their grade point averages (GPAs) limits equitable practices for student assessment and evaluation. In place of competitive ranking, more school districts are developing clearer standards for recognized excellence and honors categories without enrollment limits.

### *CREATING MEANINGFUL STANDARDS ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS*

School districts, especially those with diverse student populations, must create inclusive grading systems that entail meaningful and equitable standards of assessment that account for students’ individualized education plans or instructional intervention. Should a student require a particular instructional intervention to meet a specific learning need, a grading system must account for that students’ improvement or achievement according to his or

<sup>38</sup> “Assessment and Grading Handbook.” Excelsior Springs School District 40, October 2011.  
<http://www.essd40.com/userfiles/3/Assessment-Grading%20Handbook%2010%2019%2011%20Final.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Guskey and Jung, Op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

her educational plan. If a grading system were to exclude these meaningful grading procedures, a student with a learning disability, for example, would receive a failing grade even if he or she were to demonstrate progress as outlined in his or her plan. Therefore, administrators should devise a set of modified evaluative assessments according to different learning disabilities which are implemented across the entire school district. Report cards must communicate that the curricular standards have been modified for that individual student. According to education scholars Thomas R. Guskey and Lee Ann Jung:

...By being transparent about where students are, schools make themselves accountable to employ evidence-based interventions and demonstrate progress toward grade-level standards...offering the level of transparency needed to address this issue will require courage on the part of key leadership...<sup>41</sup>

### **SPOTLIGHT: Adams 12 Five Star Schools District**



**About:** Adams 12 Five Star Schools District (A12FSSD) is a large, suburban school district located in Adams County, CO, and serves about 42,230 total students in 55 schools with grades ranging from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 as reported by the NCES. With nearly 2,092.69 full time equivalent teachers, A12FSSD has a student-teacher ratio of 20.18 to one. While most students do not require specialized services, nearly 14 percent of the student body in A12FSSD consists of English language learners.

**Meeting the needs of students with specialized services and education plans:** Unlike many districts that have reformed to standards-based grading reviewed in this report, A12FSSD clearly articulates how standards-based grading can meet the needs students with individualized learning plans or English language learning barriers. To describe how standards-based grading can accommodate these student subpopulations, information relayed on A12FSSD’s webpage outlines the following grading processes:

“Standards-based grading principles and tenets are equally as applicable and appropriate for students with disabilities as they are for their typical peers. IEP teams, inclusive of general educators, should determine what, if any, adaptations are needed for students to master grade-level expectations. Some students on an IEP have accommodations that support them with making progress to grade-level standards. These students will be instructed with these accommodations and then graded on the GRCs as written in the GRC rubrics. Other students may have modified grade-level expectations (standards) written into their IEP. If a student has a modified grade-level expectation as part of his or her IEP, the GRC that represents the modified standard should be noted on any report card or progress report and parents should be aware that their student is working toward a modified standard.

Standards-based grading principles and tenets are equally as applicable and appropriate for students who are learning English as they are for their native English speaking peers. English Language Learners may have modified grade-level expectations for any oral language and/or communication standard within various content areas. This includes all Reading, Writing and Communicating Standards, as well as any communication standards within other content areas. The modification within these standards should be adjusted based on the student’s current placement along the language acquisition continuum. The GRC that represents the modified oral language or communication standard should be noted on any report card or progress report and parents should be aware that their student is working toward a modified communication standard, including knowledge about their student’s current language development on the continuum.”

Source: Adams 12 Five Star Schools; “Standards-Based Grading: Frequently Asked Questions”<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–28.

<sup>42</sup> “Standards-Based Grading: Frequently Asked Questions.” Adams 12 Five Star Schools. [https://www.adams12.org/student\\_learning/standards\\_based\\_grading/sbgfaq](https://www.adams12.org/student_learning/standards_based_grading/sbgfaq)

## FORMULATING ASSESSMENT AND DISTRICT REPORTING

Once criteria for achievement standards have been developed, district administrators must formulate how students are rated on their proficiency according to these criteria. That is, student assessment ratings must be clear about the extent to which students have met standards for learned course material and skills. However, there is no uniform set of criteria outlined at the national level; thus, district administrators tasked with grading reform must determine their own measures of assessment.<sup>43</sup> A *Current Issues in Education* article that describes this challenge uses achievement criteria outlined by Spokane Public Schools (SPS) as a model for student assessment.<sup>44</sup> Figure 2.2 is adapted from information provided by SPS. Here, students are rated on the basis of four levels of assessment and the extent to which they meet standards criteria: beginning, approaching, meeting, and above standard. For example, students with a level 1 rating might be able to identify concepts but are unable to expand on concept ideas or information. Students with a level 4 rating, however, can independently demonstrate conceptual knowledge and skills and connect concepts with other ideas.

**Figure 2.2: Spokane Public Schools’ Overview of Content Achievement Criteria for Grading**

LEVEL	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Level 1	Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students at this level are beginning to identify concepts, vocabulary, and/or use skills. They are unable to make connections among ideas or extend the information.</li> <li>▪ While it might be expected that all students are performing at this level when learning begins, subsequent practice should lead to increased levels of performance.</li> </ul>
Level 2	Approaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The difference between a Level 1 and a Level 2 student is the ability to demonstrate some understanding.</li> <li>▪ At Level 2, a student can correctly identify some concepts and/or vocabulary, and/or use some skills.</li> <li>▪ Students at Level 2 do not make connections among ideas nor are they able to demonstrate their learning without support.</li> </ul>
Level 3	Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level 3 represents those students who are independently able to meet the standards.</li> <li>▪ Students who are performing at Level 3 understand and use concepts and/or vocabulary and/or skills independently.</li> <li>▪ These students understand not just the “what,” but can correctly explain and/or demonstrate the “how” and “why.”</li> </ul>
Level 4	Above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A student who is able to consistently perform at Level 4 is one who independently demonstrates extensions of his/her knowledge.</li> <li>▪ S/He should be able to create analogies and/or final connections, integrating areas of study.</li> </ul>

Source: Spokane Public Schools<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Iamarino, Op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> “Report Card Handbook: A Teacher’s Guide to Standards-Based Grading and Reporting.” Spokane Public Schools, April 2009.

### *SPOTLIGHT: Summit School District*



**About:** Summit School District (SSD) located in Summit County, CO, consists of nine schools and serves approximately 3,287 students spanning pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. There are only 191.16 full time equivalent teachers in SSD, yet the student-teacher ratio is somewhat larger than other districts at 17.20 to one based on information collected by the NCES. SSD has no reported students with individualized education plans but does contain a small student subpopulation of English language learners.

**Matching reform and assessment with program offerings:** SSD developed the following set of ten guiding practices and expectations to be implemented across all schools:

- Teachers will adhere to the Colorado Academic Standards for the instruction of classroom curriculum.
- Teachers will utilize quality assessments and the district standards based grading Rubric for student grading.
- Grades will reflect what students know and are able to do.
- Teachers will assess and grade students on the standards taught in the course or at the grade level during the grading period (quarter or semester).
- Teachers will utilize a student’s most consistent and recent demonstration or performance of the grade level/course standards to determine the level of proficiency toward the standards.
- Teachers will modify standards and curriculum for those students who meet the criteria to receive a modified instructional program.
- Teachers will provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency and use multiple data points to provide evidence of the final grade for the quarter/semester. Re-takes and revisions will be allowed at the teacher’s discretion.
- The use of formative and summative assessments should be an on-going process, and not a “one shot at success” event.
- Homework, in the traditional sense, is not to be included as part of the final grade. Homework is an opportunity for the student to independently practice a skill or develop his/her understanding of a concept. The purpose of homework is to provide feedback to the student regarding his/her growth toward the course or grade level standards taught during the grading period.
- Attendance and tardiness are not to be included in the final grade.

In an effort to ensure that these reform practices could coincide with the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and alleviate parents’ concerns about how grading practices would be implemented for students enrolled in the IB program, SSD made the following statement: “Standards based grading mirrors the IB philosophy of assessments. Assessment in the Primary Years Program, for example, ‘...identifies what students know, understand, can do and value at different stages in the teaching and learning process.’ The direct integration between assessment and the instructional process is a necessary and meaningful approach to student learning. Assessing the result of inquiry, as well as the process of inquiry, are important objectives of all three levels of the IB program – Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma. The district continues to use IB rubrics alongside the Standards based grading Rubric according to IB interim objectives and specific task requirements. In addition, all assessments are linked to one or more of the Colorado Academic Standards and scored using the same rubrics.” By matching SSD’s newly formed grading standards with IB standards of assessment and achievement and then communicating this on the SSD webpage, students and parents can be more informed about how new standards translate to program offerings.

Source: Summit School District; “Standards Based Grading”<sup>46</sup>

<http://swcontent.spokaneschools.org/cms/lib/WA01000970/Centricity/Domain/3172/pdf/Elementary%20SBGR%20Handbook.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> “Standards Based Grading.” Summit School District. <http://www.summit.k12.co.us/Page/4280>

Some districts opt to use more detailed standardized assessment ratings that disaggregate achievement levels even further. This is demonstrated in Figure 2.3. According to this rubric, achievement levels, such as ‘proficient’ or ‘progressing,’ are broken down even further according to achievement criteria. These categories provide even more nuance to students’ demonstrated understanding of course content and whether or not their critical thinking skills enable them to comprehend more complex and integrative content.

**Figure 2.3: Summit School District Grading Scale (English)**

POINTS	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
4.0	Advanced	Student consistently exceeds grade level expectations/standards and is able to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. The student demonstrates originality and insight and regularly produces work of high quality.
3.5	Advanced	Student consistently meets and exceeds grade level expectations/standards and is able to apply learned information and skills to new and unfamiliar situations with original insights beyond what is covered in the classroom.
3.0	Proficient	Independently, student consistently meets and sometimes exceeds grade level expectations/standards and is able to apply learned information and skills to complex ideas and processes in familiar situations. (This is the level being “taught”)
2.5	Proficient	With minimal adult support, student consistently meets grade level expectations/standards and is able to apply learned information and skills to complex ideas and processes in familiar situations. (The student is showing proficient level of work but not as consistently)
2.0	Progressing	The student meets or exceeds proficiency of foundational details and processes or prerequisite skills, but is still working toward proficiency of the complex ideas and processes of the grade level.
1.5	Partially Proficient	With assistance, the student displays knowledge of foundational details and processes or prerequisite skills.
1.0	Unsatisfactory	The student is rarely able to display knowledge of foundational details and process, even with help.
.5	Unsatisfactory	The student is unable to display knowledge of foundational details and process, even with help.
NG	No Grade	The student has not provided enough evidence to determine a score.

Source: Summit School District; “Summit School District Grading Scale”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> “Summit School District Grading Scale.” Summit School District, 2014.  
<http://www.summit.k12.co.us/cms/lib04/CO01001195/Centricity/Domain/27/2014SBGGGradingScaleRubrichando utENGLISH.pdf>



Just as district administrators develop proficiency ratings to communicate how students meet criteria for achievement standards, the district must consider tools for student assessment that are both equitable and systematic. According to the standards-based approach to grading reform, educators should take steps to formulate fair formative and summative assessments. Overall, assessment tools should:<sup>48</sup>

- Use summative assessments to frame performance goals as desirable outcomes;
- Show students criteria in advance to help them understand these standards;
- Assess students before beginning the instruction period;
- Offer students appropriate assessment choices;
- Provide students with specific, clear feedback as early and often as possible;
- Encourage self-assessment and goal-setting among students; and
- Allow new evidence to replace old evidence in student assessments.

### *FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS*

Formative assessments track students' progress throughout the course and are used to promote student learning rather than judge student success.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, routine formative assessments have shown to **help guide teacher instruction to make it more efficient, manage teachers' expectations of students, inform differentiated instruction to meet students' different learning needs, and can be implemented regularly.**<sup>50</sup> As districts encourage the use of formative assessments across schools, both teachers and administrators will have a better understanding of how student skills and knowledge meet achievement criteria and how students are scholastically progressing over time. Formative assessments also allow students to better understand their own strengths and where they can improve. Below, Figures 2.4 and 2.5 display features of formative assessments and three recommended assessment types respectively. Figure 2.6 provides an example of how a standards-based grade book using formative assessments compares to a traditional grade book.

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<sup>48</sup> List of bulleted information adapted from: "Effective Grading Practices: 12 Fixes for Broken Grades," Op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Doublet, K. "Formative Assessment Jump-Starts a Middle Grades Differentiation Initiative." *Middle School Journal*, 2010. p. 32. <http://www.gcisd-k12.org/cms/lib4/TX01000829/Centricity/Domain/75/formative%20assessment%20and%20diff.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

**Figure 2.4: Variations of Formative Assessment Features**

CHARACTERISTIC	LOW-LEVEL FORMATIVE	HIGH-LEVEL FORMATIVE
Nature of evidence	Mostly objective, standardized	Varied assessment including objective, constructed response, and anecdotal
Structure	Mostly formal, planned, anticipated	Informal, spontaneous, “at the moment”
Participants	Teachers	Teachers and students
Feedback	Mostly delayed and general	Mostly immediate and specific for low achieving students, delayed for high achieving students
When conducted	Mostly after instruction and assessment	Mostly during instruction
Instructional adjustments	Mostly prescriptive, planned	Mostly flexible, unplanned
Choice of instructional tasks	Mostly teacher determined	Teacher and student determined
Nature of teacher-student interaction	Most interactions based primarily on formal roles	Extensive, informal, trusting, and honest interactions
Role of student self-evaluation	Little or none	Integral
Type of motivation	Mostly extrinsic	Mostly intrinsic
Attributions for success	External factors	Internal, unstable factors

Source: Cauley and McMillan; “Formative Assessment Techniques to Support Student Motivation and Achievement.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Adapted from: Cauley, K. and J. McMillan. “Formative Assessment Techniques to Support Student Motivation and Achievement.” Heldref Publications, 2010. p. 2. <http://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/FormativeAssessmentTechniques%2BMotivation.pdf>

**Figure 2.5: Recommendations for Formative Assessments**

ASSESSMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Probing Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A teacher meets with a student and questions him or her about the measurement topic, making sure to ask questions that involve 2.0 level content, 3.0 level content, and 4.0 level content.</li> <li>The teacher has the flexibility to continue asking questions until he or she is confident about a student’s level of proficiency.</li> <li>At the end of the discussion, the teacher determines the student’s level of performance using the proficiency scale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the teacher decides that the student has demonstrated adequate understanding of the 2.0 content and partial understanding of the level 3.0 content, the student receives a score of 2.5.</li> <li>If the teacher determines that the students does not respond accurately to level 2.0 and 3.0 content but demonstrates partial understanding of this information, the students receives a score of 1.0.</li> </ul>
Unobtrusive Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A teacher develops a performance scale and observes students—who may not know they are being assessed—and evaluates them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A physical education teacher has developed a four-point proficiency scale for the overhand throw.</li> <li>Level 2.0 content involves the simpler aspects of this skill, level 3.0 content is the target performance level, and level 4.0 is an advanced level of performance.</li> </ul>
Student-Generated Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student approaches the teacher and proposes what he or she will do to exhibit a specific level of performance on the proficiency scale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student who is currently at a level 3.0 in a science course proposes creating a graphic organizer comparing plants and animals on specific traits and explains it to the class.</li> </ul>

Source: Marzano and Heflebower; “Grades That Show What Students Know”<sup>52</sup>

**Figure 2.6: Comparing Traditional and Standards-Based Grade Books**

STUDENT	ASSESSMENT 1	ASSESSMENT 2	ASSESSMENT 3
<b>Traditional Grade Book:</b>	<b>Homework Average</b>	<b>Quiz 1</b>	<b>Chapter 1 Test</b>
John	90	65	70
Bill	50	75	78
Susan	110	50	62
Felicia	10	90	85
Amanda	95	100	90
<b>Standards-Based Grade Book:</b>	<b>Objective 1: Write an alternate ending for a story</b>	<b>Objective 2: Identify the elements of a story</b>	<b>Objective 3: Compare and contrast two stories</b>
John	Partially proficient	Proficient	Partially proficient
Bill	Proficient	Proficient	Partially proficient
Susan	Partially proficient	Partially proficient	Partially proficient
Felicia	Advanced	Proficient	Proficient
Amanda	Partially proficient	Advanced	Proficient

Source: Scriffiny; “Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Adapted from: Marzano and Heflebower, Op. cit., pp. 37–39.

Ultimately, teachers and other school-level personnel control the extent to which formative assessments are implemented in a class to evaluate student learning. However, district administrators can help promote the implementation of formative assessments in the classroom by providing professional development that builds knowledge about formative assessment features, the benefits to these assessments, and the ways in which they differ from standard evaluative tools used in a traditional grading system.<sup>54</sup>

### SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Summative assessments measure the content students have learned at one particular point in time.<sup>55</sup> Unlike traditional, points-based grading systems, summative assessments under standards-based grading do not integrate behavioral components to learning, student effort on class assignments, or group work. For example, educators in one district that had reformed grading to a standards-based system stated that “[o]ne change we had to make in creating summative assessments was eliminating extraneous items that weren't standards-based, such as giving value for participation, neatness, and even extra credit.”<sup>56</sup> Using the standards-based approach, summative assessments at this district were comprised of students’ class test and standardized unit test scores. Figure 2.7 is reproduced from this report and demonstrates how students’ summative grades contrast using traditional and standards-based grading models. As indicated by educators in this district, summative grades using the standards-based approach more accurately reflected students’ skills and knowledge of course content.

**Figure 2.7: Comparison of Traditional and Standards-Based Summative Grades**

GRADES BY CATEGORY				TRADITIONAL GRADING	STANDARDS-BASED GRADING
Student	Classwork	Tests	Standardized Unit Test (SUT)	Classwork: 50% Tests: 25% SUT: 25%	Classwork: 0% Tests: 50% SUT: 50%
1	100% = A	75% = C	85% = B	90% = A-	80% = B-
2	40% = E	85% = B	95% = A	65% = D	90% = A-
3	98% = A	79% = C+	91% =A-	92% = A-	83% = B

Source: Deddeh et al.; “Eight Steps to Meaningful Grading.”<sup>57</sup>

### DISTRICT REPORTING AND CREATING EFFECTIVE REPORT CARDS

Systematic change in grading practices to a standards-based model requires districts to alter how student achievement is articulated and formatted in student report cards. For instance, in an excerpt from a report on district-led initiatives to grading reform, the authors state that:

<sup>53</sup> Scriffiny, P. “Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading.” *Educational Leadership*, 66:2, 2008. [http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Seven\\_Reasons\\_for\\_Standards-Based\\_Grading.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Seven_Reasons_for_Standards-Based_Grading.aspx)

<sup>54</sup> McMunn, Schenck, and McColskey, Op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Turner, S.L. “Creating an Assessment-Centered Classroom: Five Essential Assessment Strategies to Support Middle Grades Student Learning and Achievement.” *Middle School Journal*, 45:5, May 2014. p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Deddeh, H., E. Main, and S.R. Fulkerson. “Eight Steps to Meaningful Grading.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91:7, April 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

...although teachers generally have control over the classroom assessments or grading practices they use, they may not have control over the way this information is reported to stakeholders. These reporting procedures are generally controlled at the **district level**. Therefore, it is vital that reform efforts not only address changes to classroom grading practices but also involve changes to district reporting procedures. Thus, getting teachers to think about what is best for student learning is key. Quality classroom assessments and good grading practices can lead to better reporting, especially if all are aligned to the standards that students are supposed to know and be able to do...<sup>58</sup>

Many state education agencies have already requested that districts align instruction, assessment, and grade reporting with state-mandated standards for student achievement.<sup>59</sup> Modifying grade reporting systems, however, can still be challenging even when state departments have developed achievement standards criteria and assessment tools. Most district leaders lack the time and resources to fully develop a report card that adequately and effectively aligns with standards-based assessment and grading practices, particularly for students with individualized education plans.<sup>60</sup> To help district administrators formulate effective reporting techniques, leading educators of grading reform Lee Ann Jung and Thomas R. Guskey developed the following model illustrated in Figure 2.8, which poses a series of questions to sort which achievement standards and ratings are reported for students with special services and learning plans.

Using this model, for example, 36 educators recruited in a state-led initiative launched by Kentucky to create efficient standards-based report cards participated in an extended summer workshop with experts to learn more about recommended practices for standards-based grading and reporting.<sup>61</sup> Participating teachers collaborated on the development of two standards-based reporting forms, one for the elementary grades and another for the secondary grades, to coherently report standards-based achievement for students with disabilities and English language learners. After the workshop, participating teachers encouraged others to pilot the new report cards in the following school year and distributed these report cards to parents every nine weeks.<sup>62</sup> Teachers and parents were surveyed after one full marking period asking about how they would rate the new report cards and their ability to convey information about students' progress and achievement.<sup>63</sup> A sample of the report card and the follow up survey sent to teachers can be found in the Appendix.

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<sup>58</sup> McMunn, Schenck, and McColskey, Op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

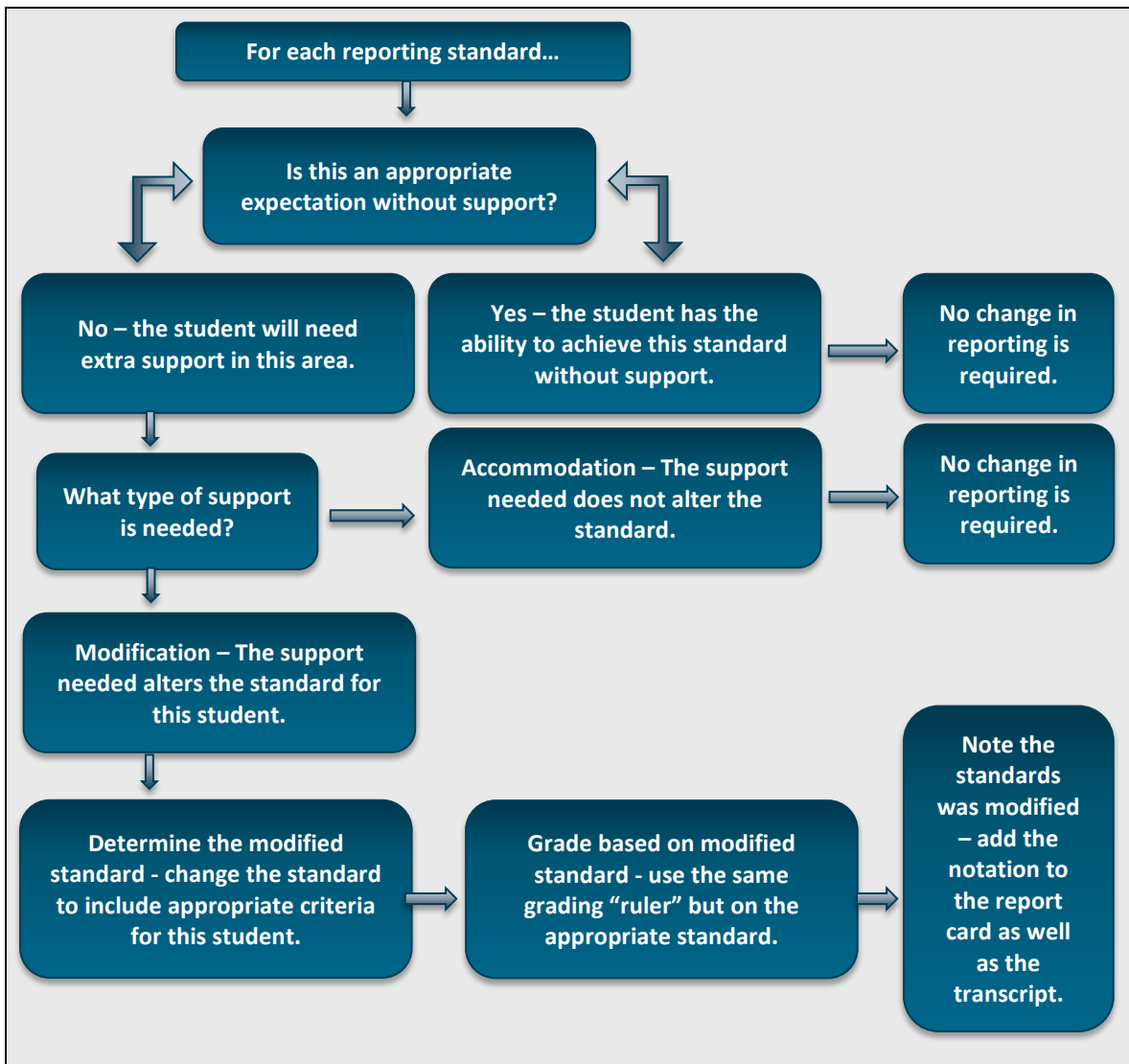
<sup>60</sup> Guskey, T.R., G.M. Swan, and L.A. Jung. "Developing a Statewide, Standards-Based Student Report Card: A Review of the Kentucky Initiative." May 2010. p. 5. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509404.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 2.8: Model for Determining Reported Standards for Students with Specialized Plans**



Source: Guskey, et al.; “Developing a Statewide, Standards-Based Student Report Card: A Review of the Kentucky Initiative”<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

Based on Kentucky's initiative to create standards-based report cards and the procedures that were implemented afterward to follow up on new reporting procedures, district administrators might consider the following steps to monitor the development of grade reporting:<sup>65</sup>

- Formulate a team of teachers to engage in professional development centered on standards-based policy.
- Mediate professional development workshops where teachers collaborate on the creation of assessment standards and ratings based on state-level performance standards.
- Determine how the learning of students with individualized education plans will be assessed and reported in the new report card.
- Monitor teachers' use of new report cards as they are disseminated regularly over the academic term.
- Administer a survey to parents and teachers about the usefulness of the new report cards and any changes they recommend to make reported information easier to understand.
- Analyze survey results to determine if changes are needed and make appropriate adjustments to the report card.
- Present any revisions to teacher leadership teams meanwhile administering standards-based seminars to faculty that have yet to use the standards-based report cards.
- Determine an implementation timeline to ensure that all faculty members use uniform standards for grade reporting according to a specified date.

## CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS TO STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

### *CHALLENGING CONVENTIONAL BELIEFS ABOUT GRADES*

According to Guskey, five traditions block standards-based grading reform from effectively being implemented. These long-held beliefs are listed and discussed below. Each challenge can be used to inform how a district develops, communicates, and implements a standards-based approach to grading reform:<sup>66</sup>

- **Grades should provide the basis for differentiating students.** Standards-based grading reform does not encourage the use of grades to compare students' skills and abilities (i.e. comparing low-performing versus high-performing students). Assessment criteria are only designed to convey the achievements of each individual

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<sup>65</sup> Listed of bulleted points using information reported in: Guskey, Swan, and Jung, Op. cit.

<sup>66</sup> List of bulleted information adapted from: Guskey, T. "Five Obstacles to Grading Reform." *Educational Leadership*, 69:3, 2011. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov11/vol69/num03/Five-Obstacles-to-Grading-Reform.aspx>



student as they correspond with outlined criteria. However, grades (and grade point averages) have traditionally been used to rank and reward students. When district administrators develop a standards-based approach, they must clearly articulate to school personnel and parents alike that formative and summative assessments are only used to gauge the progress students are making and their present levels of content knowledge.

- **Grade distributions should resemble a normal bell-shaped curve.** Traditional grading practices tend to link intelligence with achievement, and where students' intelligence falls along a bell-shaped curve, educators expect that achievement, measured as grades, must also assume a normal distribution. However, this assumption overlooks how teaching instruction mediates this relationship in which learning and achievement depend largely on instructional quality. A standards-based approach to grading, rather, only focuses on how instruction is linked to content mastery with the central aim of improving all students' achievement.
- **Grades should be based on students' standing among classmates.** Traditional grading practices often rely on norm-based grading; for example, a letter grade of a 'C' marks an average assessment of skills. However, standards-based grading is framed as such that a student's assessment rating is informative of the actual skills that a student has demonstrated proficiency in. In this manner, a standards-based approach eliminates competition among students within a class and directs attention to each student's strengths, weaknesses, and room for improvement.
- **Poor grades prompt students to try harder.** When transitioning to a standards-based system, teachers may express concern about how to motivate students if students do not view low or failing grades. Teachers may also become discouraged by the fact that student effort is not included in the summative grading process. Yet, contrary to popular belief, research does not suggest low grades motivate students to put forth more effort into their education under a traditional, points-based system. Thus, district administrators must inform educators that by transitioning to a standards-based approach, they are not losing their ability to motivate low-performing students. In fact, formative assessments can be used to encourage student learning as students have a better understanding of the improvements they can make.
- **Students should receive one grade for each subject or course.** The largest assumption following a traditional grading system is the use of a summative assessment only to determine a student's achievement. Standards-based grading asserts that merging all performances related to learning actually distorts the meaning of a single grade. "The key to success in reporting multiple grades, however, rests in the clear specification of indicators related to product, process, and progress criteria. Teachers must be able to describe how they plan to evaluate students' achievement, attitude, effort, behavior, and progress. Then they must clearly communicate these criteria to students, parents, and others."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

### ADDRESSING TEACHER AND PARENT CONCERNS

The transition to standards-based grading can be difficult for more established teachers who are comfortable using traditional, points-based grading to either motivate or punish students. Training that supports teachers and school administrators in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the new grading model is an essential component of the transition to standards-based grading. In the case of Omaha Public Schools (OPS), administrators found early success in professional development as initial training focused on the conceptual understanding of standards-based grading, the reasons for grading reform, research that supported standards-based assessment strategies, and specific grading practices.<sup>68</sup> In another example, state leaders of education in Kentucky found that, when switching to a standards-based grading model, teachers:<sup>69</sup>

- Need to know the domains or strands, clusters, or organizing elements, and standards;
- Need to base grades on explicit criteria derived from the clearly established learning standards that appear in the national standards; and
- Need to clearly distinguish among product, process, and progress criteria in assigning grades.

To ease the concerns of parents—especially as those concerns relate to the five long-held beliefs about grading described above—scholars suggest that administrators openly share and explain reform through open forums, parent-teacher meetings, and handouts. For instance, when OPS first planned to move from a traditional to a standards-based grading system, district-level administrators developed presentations on the new grading system at the end of the school year prior to implementation. During the first year of implementation, standards-based grading procedures were discussed at back-to-school sessions, a parent-teacher association meeting, and an open house. A document that explained new grading procedures was also made available on the district’s webpage and was distributed in school newsletters. Finally, OPS relied on focus groups with teacher, parent, and student members to determine methods that could better communicate new grading policies and how to interpret the meaning of the assessment ratings.

In another article, educator Jeanetta Jones Miller writes about her experiences communicating grading reform to parents. When Miller received inquiries from parents about the new grading policy, she responded by thanking them for their interest, listened to their concerns, and provided additional details about the grading reform. She also sent a handout home to parents explaining the grading reform. This handout is illustrated in Figure 2.9.

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<sup>68</sup> Proulx, C., K. Spencer-May, and T. Westerberg. “Moving to Standards-Based Grading: Lessons from Omaha.” *Principal Leadership*, December 2012. p.31.

<https://meeting.nasbonline.org/public/Meeting/Attachments/DisplayAttachment.aspx?AttachmentID=99242>

<sup>69</sup> Munoz, M. and T.R. Guskey. “Standards-Based Grading and Reporting Will Improve Education.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2015. <http://www.kappancommoncore.org/standards-based-grading-and-reporting-will-improve-education/>

### *SPOTLIGHT: Bay District Schools*



**About:** Bay District Schools (BDS) is located in Bay County, FL and serves approximately 27,053 students across 51 schools spanning pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 according to data collected and reported by the NCES. With approximately 1,794 full time equivalent teachers, BDS has a student-teacher ratio of roughly 15.08 to one. A little more than 16 percent of students have individualized education plans. For over a decade, BDS administrators have paid close attention to setting standards for assessment and grading using a standards-based approach. The district has also worked towards equitable use of classroom assessment and reporting procedures. According to a report published in 2003, BDS “researched, developed, and field-tested a set of Classroom Assessment Guidelines (CAG) that define[d] standards-based classroom practices.” These guidelines are listed as:

- The primary purpose of assessment is to improve learning for all students.
- Assessment is aligned to standards.
- Assessment is a process that is reflective of quality.
- Grading is fair, consistent, and meaningful.
- Communication among stakeholders is timely, appropriate to audience, and aligned to standards.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, communicated, and understood by all stakeholders.

**Collaboration and monitoring:** Using the six guidelines listed above, BDS worked with outside consultants to develop a multi-day professional development training opportunity for a team of teachers to collaborate on the development of formative and summative assessments, rubric development, large-scale assessments, and consistent grading practices. To track the progress of these agenda items, the team of teachers participating in the professional development agreed to:

- Form a school leadership team to work with the district team over time.
- Complete and share pre/post data on grading and reporting.
- Share evidence of classroom changes around grading and reporting practices and keep a school journal on changes noted.
- Participate in all four days of the Examining Grading and Reporting Practices Training.
- Field test the assessment guidelines in their classrooms.
- Make some school-wide or classroom- level change (during the first year and sustain this over time) in grading practices based on the training session information and/or other research.
- Accept classroom visits from the District Grading and Reporting Study Group.
- Attend all Evaluation Sessions for up to three years to share, provide evidence, and receive feedback and support on changes made in grading practices.
- Provide feedback to the district regarding the content of the Classroom Assessment Guidelines, the professional development workshop, and district reporting formats.

In all, the design of BDS’s grading reform and the professional development opportunities that were offered helped to monitor the progress of new grading practices and procedures.

Source: McMunn et al.; “Standards-Based Assessment, Grading, and Reporting in Classrooms: Can District Training and Support Change Teacher Practice?”<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> McMunn, Schenck, and McColskey, Op. cit.

**Figure 2.9: Example of Explanation of Grading System for Parents**

EXPLANATION OF GRADING SYSTEM	
<p>Students earn points for engagement in the process of learning and for progress toward mastery of standards as demonstrated by the student’s written and spoken performance and as documented by the student’s log and portfolio. In addition, each marking period, there will be one or two reading exams that combine an essay prompt with objective questions about texts, literary terms, and conventions of print. Each marking period will conclude with a student-teacher conference based on log, portfolio, exam, and a reflective essay called State of the Student. Students are expected to be active participants in the evaluation process. Students earn points for progress toward mastery of each standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 points = Documented mastery</li> <li>▪ 9 points = Major documented progress</li> <li>▪ 8 points = Documented progress</li> <li>▪ 7 points = Documented attempt</li> </ul> <p>Each student’s progress toward mastery of standards is then converted into a conventional grade percentage derived from the number of points earned out of the total possible:</p>	
Performance Standards	150 possible points (10 each for 15 standards)
Collaboration Standards	80 possible points (10 each for 8 standards)
Reading Exams	50 to 100 possible points
State of the Student	50 possible points
<b>Total</b>	<b>330 to 380 possible points</b>

Source: Miller; “A Better Grading System: Standards-Based, Student-Centered Assessment”<sup>71</sup>

**BENEFITS TO STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

When implemented successfully, and when administrators adequately address teacher and parent concerns, a standards-based approach has shown to have benefits for equity in grading, student learning, and other outcomes. In reference to the specific interests of CPS, standards-based grading offers clearer, more objective measures of student achievement as more subjective elements to learning, such as student effort or participation, are documented separately from students’ academic achievement ratings.<sup>72</sup> This enables teachers to practice more uniformity in how they assess and grade students: “Standards-based grading is an effective way to give feedback and evaluate students’ performances using clearly defined criteria for specific learning standards.”<sup>73</sup>

Aside from this benefit, standards-based grading is understood to improve student student-teacher relationships and learning as students work towards enhancing their skills and knowledge. That is, standards-based grading lessens students’ focus on simply earning grades, but it provides students with a better understanding of the importance of learning and mastering course material. Prior research also shows that students consider the broader implications to their learning using standards-based grading. For example, Danielle L. Iamarino, a researcher of alternative and holistic approaches to education, states that:

<sup>71</sup> Miller, J. “A Better Grading System: Standards-Based, Student-Centered Assessment.” *English Journal*, 103:1, 2013. p. 113.

<sup>72</sup> Iamarino, Op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> Heflebower, T., J. Hoegh, and P. Warrick. “A School Leaders Guide to Standards-Based Grading.” Marzano Research Laboratory. p. 10. [http://pages.solution-tree.com/rs/solutiontree/images/46mee\\_SLGSBG\\_look-inside.pdf](http://pages.solution-tree.com/rs/solutiontree/images/46mee_SLGSBG_look-inside.pdf)

...Standards-based grading may help close [the] gap between course curriculum and overarching education and career goals; its formative assessment component engenders a learning environment prime for clarifying the broader implications of coursework, in that it requires instructors to interact more often and more closely with students and their work—to engage students in establishing goals, and then help students apply their work to those goals...<sup>74</sup>

Finally, Iamarino, among other scholars, suggests that standards-based grading prepares students better for how they will be evaluated in postsecondary education and in the labor force.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, this grading structure is similar to workplace evaluations, where managers and employees discuss specific skills and areas of strength and weakness. Together, the benefits of standards-based grading can help inform both teaching practices and student learning.

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<sup>74</sup> Iamarino, Op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix A.1: Sample Report Card

Reporting Period: Academic Year:	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Academic Legend</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Proficient</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">C</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Progressing</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">D or U</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Unsatisfactory</td> </tr> </table>	Academic Legend		A	Exemplary	B	Proficient	C	Progressing	D or U	Unsatisfactory	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Skill/Behavior Legend</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Consistently</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Usually</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Occasionally</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Rarely</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">NA</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Not Assessed</td> </tr> </table>	Skill/Behavior Legend		4	Consistently	3	Usually	2	Occasionally	1	Rarely	NA	Not Assessed
Academic Legend																								
A	Exemplary																							
B	Proficient																							
C	Progressing																							
D or U	Unsatisfactory																							
Skill/Behavior Legend																								
4	Consistently																							
3	Usually																							
2	Occasionally																							
1	Rarely																							
NA	Not Assessed																							
* Denotes a modified standard. See the Progress Report for additional Information																								
Course: [Insert Course Title], Instructor: [Insert Instructor Name]																								
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;">B</td> <td>Academic Achievement</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td>Uses maps effectively</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td>Demonstrates knowledge of geography and its effects on society</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td>Demonstrates knowledge of basic civic responsibilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">NA</td> <td>Demonstrates knowledge of the function of economic systems</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td>Demonstrates knowledge of how different cultures influence our culture</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td>Applies knowledge of historical perspective in relation to current events</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td>Comes prepared to class with homework done</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td>                     Comments: [Insert student's name] is a very hard worker, and I can always count on him to try his best. He sometimes struggles with the content but will keep working in small group until he understands.                 </td> </tr> </table>			B	Academic Achievement	3	Uses maps effectively	3	Demonstrates knowledge of geography and its effects on society	2	Demonstrates knowledge of basic civic responsibilities	NA	Demonstrates knowledge of the function of economic systems	3	Demonstrates knowledge of how different cultures influence our culture	2	Applies knowledge of historical perspective in relation to current events	4	Comes prepared to class with homework done		Comments: [Insert student's name] is a very hard worker, and I can always count on him to try his best. He sometimes struggles with the content but will keep working in small group until he understands.				
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Source: Guskey, et al.; "Developing a Statewide, Standards-Based Student Report Card: A Review of the Kentucky Initiative"<sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Adapted from: Guskey, Swan, and Jung, Op. cit., p. 15.

**Appendix A.2: Sample Survey to Teachers on Standards-Based Report Card**

We would like to know your opinion of the new report card. Compared to the traditional method of reporting, how would you rate the new report card in terms of:	
1	The amount of information offered: Much less                  Less                  More                  Much more
2	The quality of information provided: Much less                  Less                  More                  Much more
3	The clarity of the information included: Much less                  Less                  More                  Much more
4	The ease of understanding the information presented: Much less                  Less                  More                  Much more
5	The time it takes to complete the reporting process: Much less                  Less                  More                  Much more
6	What evidence do you use to determine a student academic grade (e.g. 3 tests 1 project, 1 paper) and how much did you compile the various scores to determine a grade (e.g. weighted averages)?
7	What do you see as the biggest hurdles/questions/reservations colleagues might have joining this effort?
8	Do you have any comments about the online tool and are there any aspects you would like to see incorporated into Infinite Campus?
9	Grade Level:

Source: Guskey, et al.; "Developing a Statewide, Standards-Based Student Report Card: A Review of the Kentucky Initiative"<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Adapted from: Ibid., p. 11.

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