

**The School District of Waukesha:  
Best Practices in Grading and Reporting**

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## Chapter 1: Getting Started with *Standards Based Grading*

### 1.1 Definition

Standards Based Grading is a Standards-Based, Criterion-Referenced system. Clear Standards (Learning Targets) and Criteria (Rubrics) drive teaching and learning. Standards Based Grading requires *Standards* (Learning Targets) and *Criteria* (Rubrics), therefore the creation and review of both must be the first priority when implementing Standards Based Grading practices.

### 1.2 Purpose

Standards Based Grading is designed to provide students with clear learning targets, and multiple opportunities to practice, receive feedback and to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. The ultimate goal of Standards Based Grading is to increase student learning and achievement. Combining Standards Based Grading principles and practices with purposeful and engaging instruction ensures that these goals are achieved. Principals will facilitate an ongoing discussion with the faculty regarding the best practices for putting these guidelines, and their intent, into action to promote an equitable experience for each and every student.

### 1.3 Standards Based Grading Philosophy

Students learn best through a system of clear learning targets, quality formative and summative assessments, purposeful and engaging instruction, developmental feedback and the opportunity to respond to that feedback. Because Standards Based Grading is based on these guiding principles, it is important for teachers to operate within the guidelines of these principles and practices rather than attempting to follow a set of grading rules or policies. This concept is referred to as the “**Realm**” of **Standards Based Grading** and teacher practice needs to fit within these guidelines.

### 1.4 Key Concepts

The team that researched grading and assessment practices and implemented Standards Based Grading in the School District of Waukesha has drawn on multiple literature sources and has consulted with nationally recognized authorities on grading and assessment. In particular, credit must be given to the work of Thomas R. Guskey, Ken O’Connor, Robert J. Marzano, Carol Ann Tomlinson, Grant Wiggins, Rick DuFour, and Doug Reeves.

#### **The Grading Scale**

The Grading Scale equalizes the interval between proficiency levels and ensures grading is done to criteria.

#### **Professional Judgement**

Standards Based Grading requires teachers to make professional judgments regarding what students know and are able to do. For example, teachers can’t make these judgments without criteria linked directly to the course learning targets, and without using well-designed assessments that assess the criteria explicitly. The need exists for teachers to be confident making judgments around student achievement and grading, and in the student’s best interest. In turn, professional judgment, free from bias, must result in accurately reporting student achievement in relation to the learning targets.

### **Reasonable Time and Deadlines**

Students are responsible for being active participants in their learning, and for progressing toward their goals. Deadlines exist in the real world, and need to exist in school as well. Teachers must establish deadlines that provide a reasonable time period to complete the task or demonstration of learning. Deadlines don't represent an end to the learning process, but provide a framework to help our learning communities and classrooms function at an optimal level.

Teachers **can** set an absolute deadline for an assignment or an assessment retake provided students have had a reasonable time to complete the task, and to receive and potentially act upon feedback.

### **Insufficient Evidence**

Teachers cannot make judgments about student learning without something to judge. In an equal-interval grading scale, using insufficient evidence is acceptable in order to indicate the following:

- A student has not completed a task
- A student has attempted the task and has not demonstrated any level of proficiency yet.

Teachers must use the tools of 'reasonable time' and 'professional judgment' when determining whether to assign insufficient evidence to a student's learning task.

### **Declaring Grades**

This principle clearly places the responsibility of determining grades on the teacher and not on the electronic grade book, because students must have multiple practices and assessment opportunities to demonstrate what they know and are able to do, so teachers can make accurate judgments. Therefore, teachers must review student progress towards the learning targets and declare a student's grade within the electronic gradebook. It is vital for teachers to consider the body of evidence presented by each student. The final grade is declared by the teacher in lieu of the electronic gradebook average (which may not be an accurate representation of the student's overall knowledge or skill development).

## **1.5 Understanding by Design Instructional Planning Model**

Learning Targets, Rubrics, Assessments and Instruction must align in order to maximize the effectiveness of Standards Based Grading. When planning instruction, the Understanding by Design Model (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998) has been adopted by SDW to ensure this alignment and coherence exists. To summarize:

Begin by selecting the Learning Targets to be instructed and assessed. Then, develop criteria by which to judge student performance. Then, collaboratively develop summative assessment(s) that align with the criteria and effectively assess both the criteria and the target. Finally, build lessons, practice and formative assessments that are engaging, culturally and linguistically relevant, purposeful and aligned with the targets, criteria and the summative assessment(s).

### 2.1 Purpose

Assessments drive instructional decisions and help both the teacher and the students set learning goals and measure progress toward proficiency and mastery. Assessment is a critical part of any instructional planning framework.

The following is excerpted from Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (2011) and describes best practice when considering the use of assessment in instruction:

*“Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment. Students appear to be aware of, and there is some evidence that they have contributed to the assessment criteria. Questions and assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students. A variety of forms of feedback, from both teacher and peers, is accurate and specific and advances learning. Students self-assess and monitor their own progress...”*

- *The indicators of proficiency in Domain 1F, Designing Student Assessments, read*
- *All the learning outcomes have a method for assessment.*
- *Assessment types match learning expectations*
- *Plans indicate modified assessments when they are necessary for some students*
- *Assessment criteria are clearly written*
- *Plans include formative assessments to use during instruction*
- *Lesson plans indicate possible adjustments based on formative assessment data.*

### 2.2 Standards and Criteria

Standards Based Grading requires *Standards* (Learning Targets) and *Criteria* (Rubrics), therefore the creation and review of both must be the first priority when implementing Standards Based Grading practices. Learning targets must be common and weighted equally across course-alikes within a content area. In addition, each level of proficiency must be clearly defined and provided in a rubric to students prior to assessment and instruction.

### 2.3 Formative/Pre-assessment

Instruction begins with pre-assessment. Teachers determine what the students know and are able to do and plan instruction according to what they don't know or can't do yet. Formative assessment takes place frequently along the learning path toward the summative assessment. It enables both the teacher and the student to know what has been learned, and what needs to be reviewed and relearned.

Forms of Formative Assessment may include but are not limited to:

- pre-assessments
- quizzes
- multiple choice questions
- surveys (such as Google forms)
- observational notes
- conferring notes
- assignments taken through the Analyzing Student Work process
- exit slips - “Solve one problem... Write a 1 paragraph summary... List 3 words that...”

Students benefit from risk-free practice opportunities, which may include coursework and formative assessments. Research indicates that these activities should not be ‘counted’ towards students’ course grades. However, if teachers record formative assessments or risk-free practice, those formative assessments may count for a small portion of a student’s grade (suggested amount is no more than 10%; however, absolutely no more than 20%). Homework should always serve a valid learning purpose; it should never be used as a punitive measure.

Deadlines should be set for practice and formative work completion to allow teachers to provide timely feedback to students. If a pre-assessment has been given to the students and it is clear that a student needs to complete practice in order to achieve proficiency, then there needs to be a deadline on the work. The deadline should be a reasonable amount of time prior to the summative assessment on the same skill in order to allow the instructor time to give valuable feedback and coaching to the student so the skill can be effectively measured on the summative assessment.

## **2.4 Summative Assessment**

Summative Assessments align with National and State Standards-based instruction. Summative assessments should be common across course alike in a content area. They are administered so students can demonstrate proficiency in the learning targets. Summative Assessments may evaluate a student’s performance skills, a product, or a process learned. Summative Assessments should combine to comprise the majority of a student’s final grade for the grading period (suggested amount is no less than 80%).

Students clearly understand the purpose of the Summative Assessment, according to the Learning Targets posted in the classroom, on the assessment, and in the accompanying rubric. The assessment activities/questions are directly linked to the Learning Targets. Summative Assessments also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate advanced skills whenever concepts assessed are not mastery skills.

## **2.5 Multiple Opportunities to Demonstrate Proficiency**

Students must receive multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in what they know and are able to do. “Multiple opportunities to show proficiency” refers to the opportunities a student may be given in order to show proficiency of the material in a subject. This is done with a combination of both formative and summative assessments.

Some clarification and examples regarding this concept:

- A. The language of “retakes” should be replaced with “multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.”
- B. Teachers may decide that a summative assessment is the final opportunity, provided that multiple formative opportunities along with timely developmental feedback have been provided. A teacher will communicate when an assessment is a final opportunity to demonstrate proficiency.
- C. Multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency does not mean giving unlimited “opportunities,” but rather ensures that a student has had the chance to demonstrate proficiency in a way that meets his/her needs.

- D. A student may be given an alternative means to demonstrate proficiency, with accommodations as appropriate, that will measure the same level of proficiency for the Learning Target. If a student does not meet proficiency on an assessment, and it is determined that the student knows the content but the form of assessment prevented the student from showing proficiency, it is appropriate to provide an alternative form of assessment for that student. Although the form of assessment is different, the student should be scored using the same rubric as the original assessment.
- E. At teacher discretion, a student may receive “multiple opportunities” to complete one or more parts of an assessment. Some examples may include:
- Student takes a pre-assessment, deficiencies are noted
  - Student attempts formative work that practices the deficient skills
  - Student takes a summative assessment, demonstrates that there are still deficient skill areas
  - Teacher allows more practice on the deficient skill areas if the formative work was completed
  - A student is assessed only on the parts of the summative assessment with the areas of deficiency
  - The new grade earned replaces the former declared grade in the electronic gradebook.

## **2.6 Goal setting**

Students can set goals based on the results of his/her formative and summative assessments. These goals should be recorded and progress toward goals is monitored by the student and the teacher.

## **2.7 Results**

Results of assessments are communicated in a timely manner and used to plan instruction. It allows the teacher time to give valuable feedback and coach the student. It allows the student time to learn or relearn material that has not been mastered and retake an assessment, as appropriate. Timely posting (minimum of once every two weeks) of results in the electronic gradebook allows the student and parents to monitor progress toward proficiency goals.

## **2.8 Self-assessment activities**

Through varied self-assessment activities, students are able to articulate their progress as well as areas for growth.. It increases the student’s responsibility for learning. This fosters the student’s self-awareness and self-advocacy.

## **2.9 Professional Learning Community (PLC) Implications**

Formative and Summative assessments can provide valuable instructional information when the teacher takes time to analyze the results through the Professional Learning Community and determine which targets need to be taught to the whole class, which should be taught to small, flexible groups of students, and which targets need to be addressed on an individual student basis. Teachers use both formative and summative assessment information and a process to analyze student work (such as the formal Analyzing Student Work (ASW) template) during their PLC time to review student learning and plan next instructional steps. This ongoing identification of student need should always drive instructional decisions.

### 3.1 Key 1: Clear Purpose

Rubrics help teachers with both assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning. The purpose of the rubric is to define quality with clear criteria, not just to provide a scoring mechanism or justification for giving a grade. “Rather than be a passive recipient of the grade, rubrics equip students to self-assess and peer assess, empowering them to know exactly what to improve” (*Grading for Equity*, Feldman).

### 3.2 Key 2: Clear Targets

High quality rubrics contain critical Learning Targets as defined by the National and State Standards. Only the important skill and content of the subject matter the students are expected to learn should be included. Components unrelated to the standards, skill, or content on which the assessment is not focused, must be left out of the rubric.

### 3.3 Key 3: Sound Design

**Content:** High quality rubrics must:

- Use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge/Bloom’s/Costa’s language, corresponding to proficiency Levels.
- Be flexible enough to be used in multiple content areas and for assignments when appropriate, yet specific enough to target the skill being assessed.
- Focus on the main skill and content of the subject matter the students are expected to learn. This includes critical Learning Targets.
- Focus on skill development rather than being a checklist of compliance. Legibility/conventions targets may be included in rubrics, provided they don’t outweigh nor outnumber the skill or content targets.
- Focus on the skills/targets to be demonstrated, not what is lacking.
- Rubrics should measure both formative and summative learning opportunities
- Use a rubric score of “4/Advanced Proficient/A” to indicate work at a higher thinking level than “3/Proficient/B.” It does NOT indicate simply more work completed. “4 is not more.”

### High School Rubric Example:

The main skill being assessed is the understanding of the vocabulary words - not the conventions of capital letters, correct spelling, or punctuation. The rubric focuses on what the student CAN do, not what is lacking.

This is an example of a high school rubric; therefore, the high school descriptors are being used (see Chapter 4 for more information on the descriptors for each level).

<b>4 Advanced Proficient A</b>	<b>3 Proficient B</b>	<b>2 Approaching C</b>	<b>1 Beginning D</b>	<b>IE Insufficient Evidence</b>
Student's writing is original, creative, and coherent, demonstrating a high level of understanding of the vocabulary words.	Student's writing contains sentences and coherent paragraphs in which the vocabulary words are used correctly in context.	Student's writing contains sentences that correctly use the vocabulary words in context.	Student's writing uses the vocabulary words.	No evidence is shown that the student can correctly use the vocabulary words in context.

The column describing the highest proficiency level of a rubric should NOT contain descriptors such as, "Student's writing contains 4 or 5 paragraphs..." or "Student's writing contains 2 sentences with each vocabulary word used correctly..." or other quantitative languages.

### Common Rubrics:

School District of Waukesha lead teams will continue to create common rubrics for course-alike and grade-level teams for assessing learning targets. These should be used to ensure consistency in assessing and instruction around these learning targets, while maintaining a level of teacher autonomy around assessment development. Teachers could agree on a particular 'common' scoring guide, then develop different assessments that align with this rubric, and still engage in collegial conversation and the Analyzing Student Work process because the criteria (in the rubric) is the same.



**Clarity:**

High quality rubrics must:

- use student-friendly language so as to be able to be understood by all students
- adequately describe quality for all students, free from racial, cultural, and gender biases
- follows the common format with the highest level of proficiency on the left and moving to “insufficient evidence” on the right side.
- use a parallel structure of language moving from the left to the right side of each row of the rubric
- use qualitative language, not quantitative

**Rubric Example: Qualitative Language and Parallel structure of language present** \*This is a middle school rubric example.

<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Approaching</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>IE - Insufficient Evidence</b>
I can compare and contrast events in history in order to analyze how it affects people living today. I can provide an insightful synthesis of ideas.	I can compare and contrast events in history in order to analyze how it affects people living today.	I can compare and contrast events in history.	I can describe events in history.	No evidence of understanding of the events in history

(Note the absence of quantitative language, such as “Give 3 reasons...” or “I can describe 2 events in history...”)

## Elementary Rubric Example: Student friendly language for primary students

Webb's DOK/Bloom's/Costa's THINKING used.

4	3	2	1	IE - Insufficient Evidence
I can show which tools would be best to use to show the solution, and why that would be the best way.	I can show the correct solution in a variety of ways using tools.	I can show the correct solution using tools.	I can show the correct solution.	No evidence of understanding

Note that the higher level thinking required for 3/Proficient/B and 4/Advanced Proficient/A is not shown in the verbs used in this rubric, since it is written in student-friendly language for primary students. Rather, what the student is asked to do requires the higher level thinking skills of synthesis, judgment, and justification.

### Practicality:

High quality rubrics must:

- be easy to use by students for self-assessment and goal setting
- be easy to use by teachers, contain information useful for planning for instruction.

### 3.4 Key 4: Effective Communication

Rubrics are shared with and easily accessed by students prior to tasks and assessment to ensure that they know what they need to do to meet or exceed the learner outcomes. The descriptors on the rubric must be understood by the students. It is also important to consider how the rubric is being utilized in the classroom as a part of feedback.

As rubrics are developed and used effectively, teacher teams should work together to calibrate expectations. This can be done in a number of ways, for example, cross-scoring of student work (2 or more teachers score student work together), using the Analyzing Student Work (ASW) tool, coming together for detailed conversation when there is a question about student performance.

### 3.5 Key 5: Student Involvement

Rubrics help students clearly understand and articulate the learning targets and expectations for meeting them. The following should be considered to assist in student ownership of their learning:

- Rubrics are written in student-friendly language.
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Annotating and highlighting to understand the expectations within the rubric
- Provide examples that meet the indicators of proficiency

## Chapter 4: Reporting

The purpose of reporting is to communicate meaningful information to students, parents, teachers, potential employers, colleges and other institutions concerning the achievement status of students as related to the course learning targets.

### 4.1 Electronic Grade Book Expectations

Report cards and electronic grade books are developed so that progress is communicated according to progress/proficiency on the learning targets.

### 4.2 Assigning Standards to Assessments and Assignments

It is important to create a consistent naming system to accurately reflect progress toward the different standards within a continuum. This will require teachers to provide multiple opportunities to engage in the feedback process.

Grading is done at the 'target' level, which means that assessments and assignments will be recorded under each learning target for a course /content. It is important for a teacher to create a consistent naming system to distinguish between different skills within one learning target (ex: writing). This requires teachers to enter multiple data points for one assessment that was vetted in the feedback cycle through the use of rubrics.

**Standards Language:** Standards language is used by teachers, students, and families as defined by continuums, learning goals, and student performance.

### 4.3 Elementary Reporting

Standards-based grading is an effective way to give feedback and evaluate students' performance using clearly defined criteria for meeting course learning standards. This clear communication gives students concrete guidance and useful feedback that they can use to improve their performance in specific areas. Thomas Guskey, author of numerous grading books and research studies, explains that "standards-based education (grading) is centered on the idea that there are specific elements of knowledge and skill that all students should know and be able to do as a result of learning. These essential elements of knowledge and skill are typically articulated in standards statements." In Waukesha, these standards statements are called learning targets. Student progress is measured by their proficiency in their course or grade level learning targets across the continuum. The principles and practices ensure that students' grades are valid, fair, and consistent and accurately reflect what students know and are able to do.

Communication of a student's performance level at the elementary level is through the Report Card in Infinite Campus and the SDW Continuums. Feedback provided on the Report Card in Infinite Campus represents the student's current progress; where the student is at this moment in time of reporting (end of each trimester). Feedback the student receives on the SDW Continuums are in relation to the proficiency level of the learner as measured by the end of the year standards.

SDW Elementary Continuums can be located [here](#).

### Infinite Campus trimester reporting guidelines:

Topic	Information and Explanation
<p><b>Use of "0.5's" in IC</b></p>	<p>While "0.5's" are available in Infinite Campus, elementary staff should grade using "whole numbers" only. <b>You do not need to change any grades entered on existing assignments to whole number grades.</b> Whole numbers must be used when posting final grades using professional judgment and course criteria.</p>
<p><b>Insufficient Evidence</b></p>	<p>You are not able to post IE (insufficient evidence) as a grade. Therefore, if you do not have enough evidence to declare a grade at this time use NA (Not Assessed) which communicates: The learning target-standard has not been assessed at this time.</p>
<p><b>Report Card "Legends"</b></p>	<p>A legend will appear at the top of the report to describe the ES rubric.</p> <p>A legend will appear at the end of the report card to explain the criteria for the "life-long learning skills" marks.</p>
<p><b>Narrative Comments</b></p>	<p>Narrative comments are the key to communicating specific information about student progress.</p> <p>Please report a student's reading level in narrative comments.</p>
<p><b>Grading - Point in Time</b></p>	<p>Learning is communicated in the report card around current progress - where the student is at this moment in time of reporting (end of each trimester)</p>

## Elementary Report Card Rubric:

### School District of Waukesha Elementary Report Card Rubric

Infinite Campus Symbol Entered by Teachers	Level: Rubric Descriptors	Reference Guide and Middle School Comparable Descriptors
4	Advanced	Demonstrates evidence that significantly exceeds proficiency in learning target/standard; applies evidence of high-level thinking of concepts/skills.
3	Proficient	Demonstrates full comprehension of learning target/standard; shows evidence of proficiency of concepts/skills.
2	Developing	Developing comprehension in learning targets with limited understanding; inconsistent demonstration of concepts/skills; is dependent upon support.
1	Beginning/Incomplete Evidence	Beginning to demonstrate comprehension in learning target or not enough evidence that the learning target/standard has been met.
NA	Not Assessed	The learning target-standard has not been assessed at this time.

**Within the narrative:** Within literacy and mathematics teachers should be communicating the language used within the literacy and mathematics continuum that can be found in BlackBoard Nine (Bb9). Additionally these resources are in the process of being made available to the community through the School District of Waukesha's website.

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#### 4.4 Middle School Reporting

At the middle school level, students are provided feedback using rubrics to represent their current levels of performance on assignments, formative assessments, and summative assessments ('tests'). Performance indicators are used to represent the proficiency-level demonstrated based in relation to the proficiency level of the learner at the end of the year standards. At the middle school level letter grades are not used in reporting student performance. The table below shows what an equivalent letter grade would be at the high school level for each indicator.

Coursework is divided into Learning Targets that allow specificity regarding the skills needed to be acquired in order to move toward mastery in any given subject area. For example, an English Language Arts course may include learning targets such as; Writing, Communication, Reading, and Speaking. In this example, a student would receive feedback from his/her teacher in each of those target areas. Depending on the grade level, each Learning Target may have its own line item in the electronic gradebook or on the report card. It is important that each target hold relatively equal weight in determining the overall proficiency level in a particular content area. Learning Targets are accurately designed to represent what is necessary to be deemed as proficient in any given subject area.

#### SDW Middle School Performance Indicators and Grading Scale:

Infinite Campus Symbol entered by teachers	Level: Rubric Descriptors	Reference guide and HS comparable
ADV	<b>Advanced:</b> Demonstrates evidence that significantly exceeds proficiency in learning target/standard; Applies evidence of high-level thinking of concepts/skills.	A
PRO/ADV	<b>Elements of Proficient and Advanced</b>	A/B
PRO	<b>Proficient:</b> Demonstrates full comprehension of learning target/standard; Shows evidence of proficiency of concepts/skills.	B
APP/PRO	<b>Elements of Approaching and Proficient</b>	B/C
APP	<b>Approaching:</b> Approaching proficiency in learning targets/standards; Developing understanding of concepts/skills; Working toward independence.	C
BEG/APP	<b>Elements of Beginning and Approaching</b>	C/D
BEG	<b>Beginning:</b> Beginning to demonstrate comprehension in learning targets with limited understanding; Inconsistent demonstration of concepts/skills; Highly dependent upon support.	D
INC EVD	<b>Incomplete Evidence:</b> There is little or not enough evidence that the learning target/standard has been met.	IE
FAIL	<b>Failing</b> Attempts were unsuccessful to complete progress and demonstrate learning.	F

## 4.5 High School Reporting

At the high school level, student feedback is provided on assignments, and both formative and summative assessments using rubrics to indicate current levels of performance aligned to end of year standards. Course-level curriculum and instructional opportunities are developed based on the desired learning outcomes, which are referred to as the course *learning targets*. Learning targets are the main concepts or skills that students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of each course. Subsequently, graded assignments and assessments are aligned with one or more learning target to ensure that student grades in each learning target accurately represent their achievement level. In addition, each learning target appears in the electronic gradebook throughout the course, and student assignments and assessments are recorded as they align with one or more learning target. At the end of each predetermined reporting period, learning target grades are declared using each student's body of evidence of their academic achievement. Teachers will then combine the accumulated evidence of each learning target to make a fair and accurate judgment of each student's overall academic achievement using the scale below. It is important that each target holds equal weight in determining the overall proficiency level as represented by overall course grades:

**SDW High School Performance Indicators and Grading Scale**

End of Semester Letter Grade	Level: Rubric Descriptors	GPA Points Assigned	Advanced Placement Weighted Points
A	<b>Advanced:</b> Demonstrates evidence that significantly exceeds proficiency in learning target/standard; Applies evidence of high-level thinking of concepts/skills.	4.00	5.00
A/B	<b>Elements of Proficient and Advanced</b>	3.5	4.5
B	<b>Proficient:</b> Demonstrates full comprehension of learning target/standard; Shows evidence of proficiency of concepts/skills.	3.00	4.00
B/C	<b>Elements of Approaching and Proficient</b>	2.5	3.5
C	<b>Approaching:</b> Approaching proficiency in learning targets/standards; Developing understanding of concepts/skills; Working toward independence.	2.00	3.00
C/D	<b>Elements of Beginning and Approaching</b>	1.5	2.5
D	<b>Beginning:</b> Beginning to demonstrate comprehension in learning targets with limited understanding; Inconsistent demonstration of concepts/skills; Highly dependent upon support.	1.0	1.0
IE	<b>Incomplete Evidence:</b> There is little or not enough evidence that the learning target/standard has been met.	0	0
F	<b>Failing</b> Attempts were unsuccessful to complete progress and demonstrate learning.	0	0

Student course grades are then used to calculate the GPA for a grading period and over multiple grading periods. Please refer to the board policy 5430 regarding class rank and 5421 for more details about weighted grades in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

## 4.6 Student-led Conferences and Portfolios

A student-led conference is attended by the student, parent, and the teacher, during which the student can clearly articulate his/her learning strengths and needs. Usually, a portfolio of the student's work is shared by the student, including an electronic portfolio where appropriate. The portfolio contains work samples carefully selected by the student, with teacher input, in order to demonstrate the learning that has occurred during the grading period. The teacher is a guide who adds necessary comments to give a clear picture of student achievement.

## Chapter 5: Feedback

### 5.1 Feedback

Feedback is provided to students in order to help them know where they are successful, and where improvement is needed. Teachers implement best practices including providing timely, developmental and effective feedback for student growth toward standards or learning targets.

*Effective feedback is:*

- Specific
- Descriptive/Developmental
- Timely
- Provides students an opportunity to respond to the feedback

Feedback should focus on one or more of the following:

- On the work itself.
- On the process the student used to do the work.
- On the students self-regulation.
- On individual student's level of achievement.

### 5.2 Student Advocacy

When students are given self-assessment activities, the goal is for students to be able to articulate their progress toward meeting the learning target and understand where growth is needed. Additionally, they should be able to articulate what is being assessed, how it will be assessed, and why it is important. Through multiple forms of specific and timely feedback, students are able to reflect on their learning and respond to the feedback in order to advance their understanding of content and skill development.



## Chapter 6: Instructional Design

### 6.1 Instruction/activities

Instruction and class activities are directly linked to Learning Targets. The Learning Targets are posted in the classroom and included on assignments, assessments, project-based learning experiences, and rubrics. Students can articulate the Learning Targets and how they relate to the class activity.

### 6.2 Individualized Learning

Within the guidelines of National and State Standards, students are becoming increasingly more involved in designing their own learning plans and setting individual goals of rigor and challenge. Students can articulate these goals, reflect on their progress toward goal, and plan their next steps in learning. The level of teacher guidance in this process varies, of course, with age/grade level, and student ability to set individual goals.

### 6.3 Data/Assessment Driven - Differentiation

Efficient and effective instruction is based on student needs as related to the Learning Targets. Assessment and data are used for determining student need and planning instruction accordingly. Assessments range from nationally normed measures (such as MAP, ASPIRE, Running Records) to classroom formative assessments. Multiple measures provide valuable instructional information to the teachers as they analyze the results and determine which targets need to be taught to the whole class, which should be taught to small, flexible groups of students, and which targets need to be addressed on an individual student basis. This ongoing identification of student need drives instructional decisions throughout the year. Differentiated Instruction provides similar objectives for groups of students at their readiness level.

## Chapter 7: Rubrics - Homework

The ‘homework principle’ of Standards Based Grading is that students have a right to practice, prepare, and extend their learning opportunities with timely feedback. Please consider how the assigned practice tasks align with the targeted skill(s) for development.

Challenges will always exist to help students find value in completing homework. Please remember that it is not acceptable to make student homework “summative” to ensure compliance and completion, as this does not fall into the ‘realm’ of Standards Based Grading and may place teachers at odds over how students must prioritize their learning.

### 7.1 Purposes

When giving homework, the purpose should be clear and the expected time for completion should be stated. It should be directly related to movement toward mastery of a Learning Target and communicated on all assignments. This helps the student recall and understand the purpose.

#### A. There are 4 different purposes and/or types of homework:

1. Homework for practice
2. Homework for preparation for learning
3. Homework as an extension of learning
4. Homework as formative assessment.

#### B. Frequency and Time

1. **Elementary School Homework:** includes assigned reading time, practice time, study time, and completion of assignments. There is no expectation for teachers to assign homework every night. Rarely should a night's homework load exceed twenty (20) minutes in grades 1-2 and forty (40) minutes in grades 3-5. However, students may need to complete additional homework if they did not use class time to full advantage. Although required homework for kindergarten students is rarely assigned, kindergarten teachers are encouraged to send information and/or materials home for parents to guide practice in skill development.
2. **Middle School Homework:** includes time to complete that evening's assignments and to study, read, and review class notes. Actual homework time will also vary depending on the nature of a student's schedule, but a typical nightly total homework load could be ninety (90) minutes. There is no expectation for teachers to assign homework every night. However, students may need to complete additional homework if they did not use class time to full advantage.
3. **High School Homework:** includes time to complete that evening's assignments and to study, read, and review class notes. Actual homework time will also vary depending on the nature of a student's schedule, but a typical nightly total homework load could be one-hundred twenty (120) minutes. There is no expectation for teachers to assign homework every night. However, students may need to complete additional homework if they did not use class time to full advantage.

### **C. Parent/Guardian Role**

1. Parent/Guardians will rarely be asked to play a formal instructional role in homework. Instead, they are asked to create a home environment that facilitates student independent study.
2. Parent/Guardians will be made aware of the purpose of homework assignments in their student's classes.

### **D. Factors to Consider**

1. Do all students have reasonable access to the resources required to complete this assignment (e.g., Internet, computer, encyclopedia, newspaper, etc.)?
2. If an assignment must be completed during a weekend, holiday, or scheduled school vacation, there must be very clear justification for giving it. In addition, it must be reasonable in length. Assignments which do not meet such criteria should not be given.
3. Teachers may assign homework for the upcoming school year during the summer when pre-approved by the principal. This homework is in preparation for the school year and cannot be graded. Parents of the affected students must be notified in writing of such homework and its purpose when it is assigned.
4. Homework should always serve a valid learning purpose; it should never be used as a punitive measure.
5. Homework is to practice, prep for learning, extend the learning, and reinforce learning done at school. A student should not be disciplined for not completing homework (i.e., Loss of recess for not completing homework).

## **7.2 Homework for Practice**

Practice homework must be directly related to a Learning Target and based on student need for practice in that area. Rarely should the same homework be assigned to the whole class. Some students need practice activities that differ from that of their peers.

## **7.3 Homework for Preparation for Learning**

Homework may be assigned which will provide a student with purposeful practice and background for an upcoming lesson. The “Flipped Classroom” is a form of homework as preparation for learning, where a student accesses an online lesson at home for the actual lesson, and then completes a practice activity in school where the teacher can provide individual assistance as necessary.

## 7.4 Homework as Extension of Learning

Homework may be assigned that extends learning beyond the lesson of the day and allows the student to explore the next level of learning in a topic, or a topic related to the Learning Target.

## 7.5 Homework as Formative Assessment

Homework may be used by the teacher as a formative assessment of Learning Targets, leading to planning for instruction where it is needed for individuals or groups of students.

All types of homework eventually lead to the summative assessment of the skills that are practiced during homework. According to the Understanding by Design (*UbD*) template and Best Practices, the summative assessment is known before the instruction begins. All homework assignments must be directly linked to the progression toward learning targets.

## 7.6 Differentiation

Homework should be purposefully differentiated according to students' needs. Differentiated activities are assigned that stretch students to advanced thinking and learning. Homework may also be differentiated to accommodate special learning needs of students.

## 7.7 Feedback and Scoring

### A. Feedback

1. How will I assess homework?
2. Have I explained the criteria I will use to give feedback?
3. Timely feedback should be given from the teacher that includes specific suggestions aimed at increasing student understanding.

### B. Scoring

1. Homework should always serve a valid learning purpose; it should never be used as a punitive measure

Additional considerations:

- Depending on the type of homework, it may, or may not be recorded in the gradebook.  Not all homework needs a rubric; however, feedback is expected.
- A teacher may prefer to use the "turned in" option to record homework.
- If homework is late or incomplete, the grade cannot be lowered.
- If teachers record formative assessments or risk-free practice, those formative assessments may count for a small portion of a student's grade (suggested amount is no more than 10%; however, absolutely no more than 20%). *See Chapter 3 - Assessment Section 2.3 Formative/Pre-assessment*

## 7.8 Homework Resources

[Dr Cathy Vatterrot's Website](#)

[National Education Association's Website](#)

## Chapter 8: Special Populations

### SDW Guidelines for Aligning Instruction, Assessment and Grading Special Populations (Oct. 2020)

*ALL students have access to universal instruction.  
The purpose of report cards is to communicate to parents the student's  
progress in relation to grade level standards.*

CREATED: 3/2020	INSTRUCTION	CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT	GRADING
<p><b>Student (no IEP) who demonstrates skills within grade level content standard range</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal instruction aligned to grade level content standards, with <b>differentiation</b> as needed</li> <li>• Some individual students who demonstrate skills on the lower end of grade level proficiency may require <b>accommodations</b> and <b>scaffolds</b> to allow them to make progress toward grade level content standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in grade level formative and summative classroom assessments with or without <b>accommodations</b> as needed</li> <li>• If <b>accommodations</b> are used for classroom assessments, those should be documented (in PST notes, teacher notes, and/or comments on report card) so that they can be applied to the district and state assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's grades will reflect progress toward <b>grade level targets/standards</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Student (no IEP) who demonstrates skills well below grade level standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal instruction aligned to grade level content standards with <b>accommodations</b> and <b>scaffolds</b> to allow them to make progress toward grade level content standards</li> <li>• Provide any needed <b>interventions</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in grade level formative and summative classroom assessments with or without <b>accommodations</b> as needed</li> <li>• If <b>accommodations</b> are used for classroom assessments, those should be documented (in PST notes, teacher notes, and/or comments on report card) so that they can be applied to the district and state assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Students will participate in grade level formative and summative classroom assessments with required accommodations for current level of proficiency in English Language Development per (ILP)</u></li> <li>• <u>Access this link for more guidance</u></li> </ul>
<p><b>Student who is English Learning (EL)</b> <i>(English Language Development Services or Dual Language Program)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in grade level content standards and instruction with <b>accommodations</b> and scaffolds that support language development, and accessibility as needed</li> <li>• Universal instruction aligned to grade level content standards with <b>accommodations</b> and <b>scaffolds</b> to allow them to make progress toward grade level content standards as well as English language development standards</li> <li>• Provide supports consistent with the Individualized Language Plan specific to speaking and writing, reading and listening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Students will participate in grade level formative and summative classroom assessments with required accommodations ensuring accessibility using current English Language Development Proficiency per (ILP)</u></li> <li>• <u>Assessment Accommodations are documented in the Individualized Language Plan.</u></li> <li>• <u>Access link in cell for more guidance</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Student's grades will reflect progress toward grade level targets/standards</u> in all courses including ESL grades 6-12</li> <li>• Equitable grading includes the provision of both scaffolded instruction and assessment per Individualized Language Plan.</li> <li>• <u>K-5 students do not receive a grade for ESL services.</u></li> <li>• Access <u>link</u> in cell for more guidance</li> </ul>

<p><b>Student (with IEP) who has qualified for special education services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal instruction aligned to grade level content standards with <b>accommodations</b> as needed</li> <li>• Provide any needed <b>interventions</b> aligned to IEP goals through <b>specially designed instruction</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in grade level formative and summative classroom assessments with <b>accommodations</b> and/or <b>modifications</b> as defined in their IEP</li> <li>• When <b>accommodations</b> and/or <b>modifications</b> are used for classroom assessments, those should be documented in the IEP, so that they are applied to the district and state assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's grades will be reported out aligned with <b>grade level targets/standards</b></li> <li>• Grades shall not be given for intervention provided through <b>specially designed instruction</b>. This feedback will be reported out through the trimester or quarterly IEP Progress Reports</li> <li>• Exception at the High School Level - A student may be issued a grade for <b>intervention</b> provided through <b>specially designed instruction</b> in grades 9-12 where credit toward graduation is accrued. The IEP team shall decide the grading rubric.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a very small number (less than 1%) of students who receive special education services; they must be among the most significant with cognitive delays. Alternate standards may apply. These alternate standards are the Common Core Essential Elements, or CCEE. The IEP team determines if the student will follow alternate, modified standards, based on their disability needs, and this is outlined in the student's IEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who follow the CCEE will have <b>modified</b> assessments aligned with their alternate standards, as defined in the student's IEP")</li> </ul>	

## WI DPI and SDW Definition of Differentiation, Accommodations and Modifications

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Scaffolds</b> refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. Teachers provide successive levels of temporary support that help students reach higher *levels of comprehension and skill acquisition that they would not be able to achieve without assistance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Differentiation</b> is the process by which a student engages in a grade level standard with a differentiated process, or to produce a different product or outcome. The learning is exemplified and measurable based upon the success criteria of the standard.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Accommodations</b> are practices and procedures that provide equitable access to grade-level content intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student’s disability or level of language acquisition. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations or change the content or the required skill level of a lesson, activity or test. Examples of accommodations: providing large-print text, the use of a scribe to record student answers, additional time, change of environment, break the work into small amounts, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will participate in grade level formative and summative classroom assessments with <b>accommodations</b> and/or <b>modifications</b> as defined in their IEP</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When <b>accommodations</b> and/or <b>modifications</b> are used for classroom assessments, those should be documented in the IEP, so that they are applied to the district and state assessments</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Interventions</b> are research-based instructional practices and programs used systematically to increase the performance in the universal curriculum of students not meeting academic or behavioral benchmarks.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Grade Level Targets/Standards</b> clearly demonstrate what students are expected to know and learn at each grade level.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Specially Designed Instruction</b> is IEP driven instruction that is aligned with IEP goals, designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability which is provided at no cost to the student or the student’s parent by appropriately licensed staff.</li> </ul>