

Introduction

The purpose of standards-based grading is to improve learning by focusing on instruction and the alignment of the curriculum with the essential outcomes identified through our curriculum process. Standards-based grading and reporting will provide better communication to learners, parents, teachers, and administrators on what each learner knows and is able to do according to the identified outcomes, and separately assess the influence of positive and consistent work habits on learning (Behavior).

Standards-based grading focuses on measuring a learner's proficiency on a specific set of outcomes. These outcomes are shared with students at the outset of the course, along with a learning scale, or rubric, that explains the essential outcome in detail and the requirements for proficiency. A learner's progress toward proficiency is tracked by performance on learning tasks that align with the outcome, which encourages learner ownership of the learning and allows the teacher to provide accurate feedback to the learner. The goal of a standards-based approach is to clearly communicate to learners and parents what is expected of the learners and how to help them be successful in their educational journey.

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to West Central Middle School's assessment practices and standards-based grading.

Guideline 1: Relate proficiency levels to course/grade-level standards. Use agreed on performance standards as the reference points when determining proficiency.

A=Mastery, B=Approaching Mastery, C=Developing, D=Beginning, I=Insufficient Evidence, M=Missing/No Attempt at Mastery

- Course/grade-level standards will provide the basis for determining proficiency for each course and grade level.
- The meaning of proficiency, whether letters or numbers, will be derived from clear descriptions of performance standards.
- A learner's proficiency is a summary of performance.

Guideline 2: Separate proficiency level from all other dispositions and behaviors.

- Proficiency will be based solely on the achievement of course/grade-level standards. Learner attendance, effort, ability, participation, improvement, attitude, and other behaviors will be reported separately as star qualities.
- Proficiency will be based on individual, not group, achievement.

Guideline 3: Student performance. Everything will not be scored and all scores may not be factored in proficiency levels.

- Proficiency will be determined primarily on a combination of assessments (both unit and course/grade level) and performance tasks.
- The use of rubrics, assessment checklists, and other types of scoring guides will provide formative feedback on various types of performance tasks (e.g., products, projects, and other performances).

- An alternative assessment or task may be needed to provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
- The appropriate role of homework or daily practice is to develop knowledge and skills effectively and efficiently through repetition and feedback that is accurate, helpful, and timely; it is not to provide grading opportunities.
- It is also critical that teachers communicate to learners the important relationship between practice—both guided and independent practice—and performing well on assessments and performance tasks.

Guideline 4: Assessment Opportunities

- Learners may be provided with multiple assessment opportunities to show what they know, understand, and how they can use knowledge.
- Learners may have multiple opportunities to complete all major assessments and performance tasks. Learners need to be given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in different ways and at different speeds. Teachers should vary assessment opportunities including the type of assessments, the number of assessment opportunities, time available, and the assessment methods used.
- The practice of providing additional opportunities is not automatically given. Learners must provide evidence that they have completed all work and some type of corrective reassessment criteria (e.g., personal study or practice, peer tutoring, study guides, or review) before they are allowed another opportunity. Any re-teaching, review, or reassessment should be done at the teacher's convenience.
- When additional opportunities are made available, they should be made available to all learners who have met the reassessment criteria. Teachers will communicate with parents when a student has not demonstrated appropriate mastery. A learner's score on a reassessment will not be averaged with the original score.

Guideline 5: Teachers use both hard documented data as well as professional judgment to determine the overall proficiency of student progress.

- Use the most consistent level of achievement, with emphasis on the more recent performance when applicable.
- When determining scores, give serious consideration to using the median (or mode), rather than the mean.
- Learners are responsible for completing all assigned work on time to the best of their abilities. Individual teachers have responsibility for keeping their learners before, during, and/or after school to get all types of work completed.
- The proficiency level assigned for the grading period must be based on both the body of evidence (the scores) and professional judgment. Teachers need to understand their options and authority for infusing judgment when assigning proficiency levels.
- At the conclusion of the grading period, professional judgment involves consideration of the most appropriate central tendency (mean, median, or mode) and how best to address more recent scores. Professional judgment requires asking the question, "Which grade makes the most

sense?” A teacher’s professional judgment is defensible when based on the district’s established grading practices and principles.

- Based on evidence and professional judgment, teachers are expected to assign the most appropriate proficiency level.
- Grade books should be set up to clearly delineate between formative assessments and summative assessments.
- M (Missing) will be entered in the grade book for any missing work. I (Insufficient Evidence) will be used to report that the student has failed to meet/show basic competency on the standard.

Guideline 6: Student assessment needs to have a rigorous and clear purpose to support proof of student achievement and progress.

- Use assessments that meet rigorous design criteria(e.g., clear targets, clear purpose, appropriate match of target and method, appropriate sampling, and lack of bias and distortion).
- Use appropriate tools(e.g., portfolios, checklists) to record and maintain evidence of achievement as well as evidence of work habits/life skills.

Guideline 7: Involve learners in the assessment and grading processes throughout the learning cycle.

- Ensure that learners understand in advance how their proficiency level will be determined(age-appropriate). Rubrics will be used to communicate proficiency expectations on projects and activities. Students are expected to score 90% on summative assessments to meet mastery.
- Involve learners in the assessment process, record keeping, and communicating their achievement and progress. Learners will submit evidence to demonstrate their learning. Evidence may be collected electronically or hard copy.

Guideline 8: Determine eligibility based upon students meeting deadlines, completing work and meeting behavior expectations. Students must meet expectations for all criteria listed below.

- Ensure that learners are meeting deadlines established by the teacher.
- Ensure learners complete all work necessary to determine proficiency. Missing work will be identified by an ‘M’ in the grade book in Infinite Campus. Missing assignment reports will be sent automatically by Infinite Campus.
- Ensure that learners have no in-progress or quarter grade of ‘I’.
- Learners are responsible for meeting behavior guidelines. Students will not have more than two recorded negative behaviors in a week. Negative behaviors will be recorded in Infinite Campus.