



Standards-Based Instruction, Feedback, Grading and Reporting

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Standards-Based Grading?

Standards Based Grading (SBG) is a philosophy that provides middle schools in Poudre School District a way to align grading, reporting and feedback to grade level standards. This feedback will be measured against the Colorado Academic Standards or the International Baccalaureate (IB) Criteria. It provides a more accurate measure of a student's strengths and areas for growth. Poudre School District is committed to the intentional use of this type of feedback.

Why have PSD middle schools moved to standards-based grading and reporting?

Middle Schools in Poudre School District have been making this transition over the past 8 years. The process began with research about best practices during the district's shift from junior high schools to middle schools. Middle schools across the district began to look at ways that we could give students and educators a better and more robust look at performance. The goal is to provide feedback that can monitor and communicate growth over time. Recent research tells us that one of the best ways we can help students succeed is for students to understand where they are with their learning and set goals with this knowledge. During this transition, our schools have been able to better understand student progress and provide opportunities for students to meet the targets and go above and beyond grade level expectations.

What is consistent or varied across the middle schools?

All middle schools in Poudre School District will continue using the Standards-Based Grading model in the 2016-2017 school year. All schools will be using the district's tool to track and communicate student progress through StudentVUE and ParentVUE. Our three IB middle schools will communicate student progress towards the IB Criteria and the remaining six middle schools will communicate progress towards the Colorado Academic Standards. Some procedures and decisions for tracking student progress may vary among schools – educators and families are encouraged to discuss these with the administration at the individual school.

How is student progress tracked and communicated?

Student performance is tracked at a more granular level in Standards-Based Grading. The information will be reported in a more visible representation of student learning through our StudentVUE and ParentVUE system with numerical values and bar graphs specific to each standard within a subject area.

Standards Summary for Quarter 4 (ending on 07/29/2016)				
Standards Details Pre AP US History 8 (0830PA) / Period: 4 / (3.6)				
Subject	Standard	Mark	Note	Performance Indicator
Social Studies <small>[expand all]</small>	▶ Use geographic tools to analyze patterns in human and physical systems	4		 4.00 / 4.00
	▶ Economics	3		 3.00 / 4.00
	▶ The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes from the origins of the American Revolution through Reconstruction and their relationships with one another	4		 4.00 / 4.00
Work Habits <small>[expand all]</small>	▶ I Am Productive	4		 4.00 / 4.00
	▶ I Am Prepared	3		 3.00 / 4.00

Typically, as a parent, you would see one letter grade for a student for a specific course. In a standards based grading system, a student is given feedback against specific standards (learning outcomes). This type of reporting allows parents and students to see strengths and areas for growth. This reporting provides educators with more actionable information and allows us to monitor and enhance learning of individuals and groups of students.

How is this different than traditional grade reporting with A-F?

In a traditional system (based on 100 point scale), students do work that includes classwork, homework, projects, tests and quizzes. The points earned are added up and divided by the total possible points to give students one final letter grade to represent all skills and content from an entire class. The scores are usually based on what type of assignment they are rather than toward a specific outcome. Non-academic factors may also come into play that could include attitude, effort or participation. This type of information about student learning and/or progress is hard to monitor.

In a Standards Based Grading system, students are given information about how well they have mastered a specific outcome. The work over time allows students to see specific movement against these outcomes. Scores and work are tracked over time to give the teachers, students and families a detailed picture of their progression in learning. This provides more specific information regarding learning, strengths and areas of growth.

What process led to the model being used in 2016-2017?

The decision to shift from a letter grade to a numerical grade was made by all 9 middle schools in the fall of 2014. A representative team from each middle school met in the fall of 2014 several times to work on how to enhance our work with standards-based reporting and ultimately provide better feedback to students and families. During this process, feedback was gathered from staff and families. The recommendation and decision were made to move forward with this model during the 2015-2016 school year. In the 2015-2016 school year, all middle schools continued using the standards-based model but the reporting remained with traditional letter grades as the technology tool was enhanced.

How do staff and families find out more information, ask questions, or provide feedback?

The administration and teaching staff at each middle school can answer specific questions regarding Standards Based Teaching, Learning and Reporting. You can also provide feedback directly to the administration at your middle school.