

# Lake Villa School District #41 Grading Procedures

## **What is standards-based grading?**

In a standards-based system, teachers report what students know and are able to do relative to the District Learning standards. The system includes:

- The improvement of student achievement in all content areas,
- The mastery of defined learning targets instead of the accumulation of points,
- The reporting of student achievement toward meeting learning targets at a given time by reflecting on mounting evidence based on various forms of assessments

## **How does standards-based grading work?**

Traditional grading averages a student's achievement data from the semester with other characteristics, such as work habits. Standards-based grading removes extraneous factors and focuses solely on a student's academic achievement and continued mounting evidence that indicates a true assessment of the child's present attainment of the learning targets. As a result, student work habits are reported separately.

## **How is standards-based grading different?**

The student's grade more accurately represents the progress toward mastery of standards than traditional grading does. Subject areas are subdivided into big ideas related to standards and their respective learning targets that students need to learn or master. Each target is assessed. Scores from activities that are provided solely for practice will not be included in the final assessment of the learning target. The influence of positive and consistent work habits on student learning is reported separately from the academics.

Examples of descriptors that are used to indicate progress toward mastery of standards:

### **Exceeds**

Consistently demonstrates a thorough understanding of facts, skills, and concepts. (Other examples include: Applies knowledge independently, accurate, beyond, independent, always)

### **Proficient**

Frequently demonstrates an understanding of facts, skills, and/or concepts. (Other examples Include: Beginning to apply knowledge independently, most, often, consistently, primarily, beginning to become independent, minimal support)

### **Basic**

Limited understanding of facts, skills, and/or concepts. (Other examples include: Some review, reinforcement, and support may be needed, sometimes, occasionally, partial, guidance needed, ineffective)

### **Below Basic**

Rarely understands facts, skills, and/or concepts. (Other examples include: Frequent review, reinforcement, and support are needed, never, frequent support is needed, guidance required)

### **Not Assessed**

Grade level standard(s) have not been assessed at this time.

**What are the advantages of standards-based grading?**

- The learning targets are clearly articulated to the students throughout instruction.
- Parents can see which learning targets students have mastered and which ones need reteaching and relearning.

**What is the role of work completed outside of school in SBG?**

The purposes for assigning work, regardless of whether it is completed in school or at home include the following:

- To help students master learning targets
- To prepare students to learn new material
- To provide extension and application of skills taught in the class to new situations
- To integrate and apply many different skills to a larger task
- If the work serves as evidence for a learning target, it will be evaluated and recorded in the grade book. The student's grade will indicate how well he/she has mastered the content, not whether he/she completes assignments or the assignments are handed in late

**Why does SBG use most recent assessments vs. averaging?**

Every student starts a grading period with a certain amount of background knowledge, some accurate and some not, related to a topic/learning target. Through assessments during the grading period, teachers are able to determine students' levels of achievement of the learning targets. Since the goal is to document each student's level of achievement based on learning targets, averaging all scores throughout the marking period dilutes the information, underestimates the students' ending performance, and corrupts the determination of whether or not the student has achieved the targets. As a result, current assessment data more accurately reflects a student's level of learning. The same holds true with extra credit work. Extra credit will not be reflected in determining each student's level of achievement.

**How will "incompletes" or "Zeros" be handled?**

If teachers use standards-based grading to report a student's progress toward the achievement of a standard, it is an on-going process. For management reasons, teachers need to establish deadlines by which that progress needs to be reported. However, if a student is missing assessment data and the teacher does not have enough evidence to establish a grade, an incomplete may be given. If, two weeks after the end of the grading period have passed, and the student hasn't provided evidence of learning, (through reteaching and assignment completion), the grade will be recorded based on the preponderance of the evidence.

**How will group projects be handled?**

Working cooperatively is a valuable instructional strategy although if we use standards-based grading to report a student's individual progress toward the achievement of a standard, group scores will not be factored into a student's grade. Only evidence specific to an individual student will be taken into consideration within a group project.

**Will attendance or academic dishonesty be a factor in a student's grade?**

Within a standards-based grading system students should not be punished for academic dishonesty with reduced grades. Other consequences should be given to the student and then the student should be reassessed to determine his/her actual level of achievement.

The same hold true for student attendance. Students should be provided opportunities to revisit learning that has been missed due to illness and then be reassessed to determine his/her actual level of achievement.

