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STANDARDS-BASED GRADING HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

Standards-based grading provides better communication to students, parents, teachers, and administrators on what each student knows and is able to do according to identified outcomes. Positive and consistent work habits in regards to student learning will be assessed and reported separately.

Why is the district using standards-based grading?

The goal of Fremont County School District #1 is to improve student learning by reporting grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning. Standards-based grading is aligned with these goals and will provide the best grading system to achieve these goals.

Accurate: By basing a student's grade solely on academic factors, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors, such as effort and attitude, are still essential but are reported separately from the student's academic grade.

Consistent: For each unit of study, the teacher provides a proficiency scale that describes exactly what the student needs to know and do. Proficiency scales establish clear expectations for learning at the beginning of a unit and are used throughout the unit.

Meaningful: A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a standards-based classroom, scores are recorded by standard.

Supportive of Learning: A standards-based approach supports learning by focusing on outcomes and components that have or have not been learned rather than the accumulation of points. Reassessment supports student growth by allowing multiple opportunities for students to show improvement on a learning target.

Grading Philosophy

- Grading practices are fair, manageable, and support effective teaching and learning.
- Grading practices yield grades that are understandable, meaningful, and accurately reflect student learning.
- Multiple opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate proficiency and exceed the standard.
- Growth over time is a consideration for grading. Recent evidence is more heavily weighted than earlier evidence.
- Teachers exercise professional judgment in their grading practices, using a preponderance of evidence.
- All students are consistently held to high academic expectations, which include development of work ethic and social skills.
- Procedures for grading are supported, monitored, and supervised by the school district.

Standards-Based vs. Standards-Referenced

The distinction between standard-based and standards-referenced is often a source of confusion among educators and the public—in part because the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but also because the distinction between the two is both subtle and nuanced. In brief, standards-referenced means that what gets taught or tested is “referenced” to or derived from learning standards (i.e., standards are the source of the content and skills taught to students—the original “reference” for the lesson), while standards-based refers to the practice of making sure students learn what they were taught and actually achieve the expected standards (i.e., that students meet a defined standard for “proficiency”). In a standards-referenced system, teaching and testing are guided by standards; in a standards-based system, teachers work to ensure that students actually learn the expected material as they progress in their education.

What is standards-based grading?

Traditional Grading System (Standards-Referenced)	Standards-Based Grading System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects, etc.) ● one grade/entry is given per assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● based on learning goals/targets directly related to standards ● there are multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency of a standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assessments are based on a percentage system ● criteria for success may be unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● standards are criterion or proficiency-based ● criteria and targets are available to students ahead of time in “student friendly” language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses an uncertain mix of assessment, achievement, effort, and behavior to determine the final grade ● late penalties and extra credit may be calculated in overall grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● students must demonstrate the knowledge and skills in the standards ● separates achievement from effort/behavior on the report card ● no extra credit given for work or behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● everything goes in the grade book – regardless of purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● selected evidence (tests, quizzes, projects, conversation, observation, etc.) is used for grading purposes ● evidence is aligned to priority standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● includes every score, regardless of when it was collected ● assessments record the average – not the best – work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● emphasis on the most recent evidence of learning within each standard is used when grading ● represents growth in learning

What is a proficiency scale?

Proficiency scales are the heart of a standards-based grading system because they guide instruction and learning.

- Proficiency scales display a progression of learning aligned to performance descriptors and grade level outcomes.
- Proficiency scale scores are associated with a level of performance.
- Students may use the proficiency scale to track their learning.
- Teachers use the proficiency scale to guide their instruction and provide feedback to students.
- Parents may reference the proficiency scale to understand the progression of student growth on a standard and open a dialogue about learning with their student.

Third Grade Language Arts Proficiency Scale Example

Topic: Reading Informational Texts

Standards: RI 3.2 Determine the main idea of a text: recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

I can identify the main idea and supporting details of a text.

Score 4.0	In addition to score 3.0 performance, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications. ★ I can identify the main idea <u>and</u> key details that support the central idea of a <u>complex text</u> .
3.5	<i>In addition to score 3.0 performance, partial success at score 4.0 content</i>
Score 3.0	The student will: Determine the main idea of a text: recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea. ★ I can identify the main idea of a grade-appropriate text. ★ I can identify the supporting details of the main idea of a grade-appropriate text.
2.5	<i>No major errors or omissions regarding score 2.0 content, and partial success at score 3.0 content</i>
Score 2.0	The student will recognize or recall specific vocabulary, such as: informational text, determine, main idea, text, passage, article, supporting details, evidence, context clues The student will perform basic processes, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the main idea <u>or</u> key details that support the central idea of a grade-appropriate text.
1.5	<i>Partial success at score 2.0 content, and major errors or omissions regarding score 3.0 content</i>
Score 1.0	With help, partial success at score 2.0 content and score 3.0 content
.5	<i>With help, partial success at score 2.0 content but not at score 3.0 content</i>
Score 0.0	Even with help, no success

What do grades look like in a standards-based system?

FCSD#1 believes that ALL students can learn at high levels, and our standards-based grading practices, including scoring and feedback, reflect this truth.

Grades K - 12 Reporting - Common assessments and other evidence will be used to determine a student's level of mastery on a standard. Recents scores are more heavily weighted than older scores. Scores for each standard within a subject are calculated to produce an overall score for that subject.

Scores used to indicate student performance for an outcome align to the proficiency scale for each outcome and are reported in the following way-

- 4** - Student demonstrates an in-depth understanding by completing advanced applications
- 3** - Student demonstrates proficiency on the complex, targeted knowledge and skills
- 2** - Student demonstrates foundational knowledge and is still working to apply concepts and skills
- 1** - With help, student demonstrates basic knowledge and skills
- 0** - Even with the help, student demonstrates no understanding or skill

The intermediate scores of 0.5, 1.5, 2.5, and 3.5 are used to show that a student has shown partial mastery of the next level of learning.

High School Reporting (GPA Calculations) - The scores are converted to a corresponding A, B, C, D or F grade in the grade book. Standards-based grading will not change how a student's GPA is calculated. At the high school level, the 4.0 scale is converted to a letter grade which is used to determine GPA. The table below shows the conversion from a 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 score into an A, B, C, D, F score.

Incomplete

Students with missing assignments or those who are below proficient on standards will receive an Incomplete (I) until the work is completed at a proficient level. Students will have opportunities during designated intervention time to make up missing assignments and become proficient. Students failing to complete missing work or unable to achieve proficiency on a standard by the end of the school year will be recommended to attend summer programming to complete work and recover standards. If the work is not completed, the grade will reflect the incomplete work.

High School Grade Conversion

FCSD#1 High School Transcript and GPA Grade Conversion			
Proficiency Level	Score on the Standard	Score on the Transcript	Passing - Credit Earned
Exceeding	4.0	A	X
Exceeding	3.5	A	X
Meeting	3.0	B	X
Meeting	2.5	C	X
Approaching	2.0	D	(Incomplete)
Approaching	1.5	D	(Incomplete)
Beginning	1.0	F	(Incomplete)
Beginning	.5	F	(Incomplete)

No evidence	0	F	(Incomplete)
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District Practices

Teaching, Learning , and Assessment Practices

- Students receive a proficiency scale at the beginning of each unit of instruction.
- Students receive clear descriptions of achievement expectations at the beginning of each unit of instruction.
- Proficiency scales and learning targets are posted in classrooms.
- Feedback on student work is given to students in a meaningful and timely manner.
- Learning is based on complex tasks that involve critical thinking and problem solving.
- Students have access to rigorous instruction and opportunities to demonstrate their learning at high levels.
- Students have an opportunity to be taught and assessed on the higher order thinking tasks.
- Teachers involve students in tracking their own progress.
- Students struggling to demonstrate proficiency may be required to participate in remediation opportunities.
- Each school implements a Positive Behavior Support (PBIS) program based on three established District goals for student success- Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe.
 - Students are taught the social skills identified in the PBIS building rubric.
 - Expectations are reinforced throughout the school year.
 - Specific behavior that is not safe or respectful will be dealt with using the discipline referral system.
 - Behavior that is not responsible will be recorded by the teacher and reported to the parents via Parent Portal.
 - A responsibility score and appropriate comments will be posted on the student report card at the end of each grading period.
 - 4 - Consistently Demonstrates
 - 3 - Usually Demonstrates
 - 2 - Sometimes Demonstrates
 - 1 - Never Demonstrates

Pre-assessment

- Pre-assessments are administered before students begin the lesson, unit, or course.
- Students are not expected to know the material on the pre-assessment.
- Pre-assessment information is used to establish a baseline to measure growth.
- Pre-assessment information is used to determine what students already know.
- Teachers use this information to plan instruction based on the needs of individual students.
- Pre-assessments are not recorded as evidence in the gradebook.

Multiple Learning Opportunities

- Additional instruction and reassessment is required for those students not demonstrating proficiency.
- Buildings have created systems of support for students who have not demonstrated proficiency on a standard. These supports are offered during the school day.
- Opportunities are also available for proficient students wanting to improve their score; however, these students must take responsibility and make arrangements for the additional instruction and reassessment.
- Grade level and content area teams agree on consistent expectations for reassessment.
- Non-proficient students are recommended to attend summer school in order to develop the skills necessary to gain proficiency.

Checking for Understanding

- Teachers use a variety of methods to measure individual progress and help students track their learning during a unit of instruction.
- Checking for understanding may include-but is not limited to-teacher observation, paper and pencil written tasks, performance on digital exercises, quizzes, performance of tasks, individual conversations, and or homework.
- Additional checks for understanding are used to provide evidence of learning that will help the teacher arrive at a final grade.

Student work - Student work is designed to provide practice and application of new concepts and skills essential to developing proficiency on unit outcomes. Student work can include-but is not limited to-written and oral work, digital exercises, hands-on activities, direct instruction, group work, and homework.

- The purpose of scoring student work is to provide feedback to students and parents about student progress.
- Student performance on formative assessments may be considered as evidence of proficiency for determining a final grade.
- Students are given multiple opportunities to learn the essential skills and to demonstrate proficiency.

Homework - Homework is a formative exercise that should focus on feedback and improvement rather than the accumulation of points. Teachers should consider the following guidelines when determining if homework should be given.

- **Is it learning centered?** Does it cover essential learning or standards? It should not be busy work.
- **Is it necessary?** Is it more important than home/family time?
- **Is it reasonable?** Can students reasonably complete the work in the available time, and is it appropriate for the age of the student?
- **Is it high quality?** Do not ask students to complete tasks like word searches or crossword puzzles in lieu of family time.
- **Are students ready?** Students need to be ready to work independently in order for homework to be a productive experience and to prevent frustration and discouragement. Differentiate homework based on students' needs.
- **Are students involved?** Homework is more productive when students have input on the purpose, what it entails, and how much is necessary. When possible give students choice.

What grade levels and courses use standards-based grading?

All grade levels and content areas K-8 began using standards-based grading beginning in the 2018-19 school year. At the high school level, the courses using standards-based grading are listed below. Additional courses will transition to standards-based grading as departments finish proficiency scales and common assessments.

Current standards-based courses 9-12

LANGUAGE ARTS: LA9, LA10, LA 11, LA 12, AP Language & Composition, AP Literature & Composition

MATHEMATICS: Math 1, Math 2, Math 3, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus, Trigonometry

SCIENCE: Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry 1

SOCIAL STUDIES: World History/Geography Eastern Civilization, World History/Geography Western Civilization, American History, American Government, Economics, AP Psychology, AP American History

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS: Choral, Concert Choir, Valley Singers, Select Choir, Marching Band, Varsity Concert Band, Percussion, Jazz Band, Digital Art, Drawing 1, Pottery 1, Pottery 2, Printmaking 1, Printmaking 2, Drawing 2, Pottery 3

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Spanish 3

CAREER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: Agriculture 1, Agriculture 2, Agriculture 3, Nutrition & Wellness, Creative Foods, Advanced Culinary A-B, Child & Family, Early Childhood Professions 1, Early Childhood Professions 2, Woodworking 1, Woodworking 2, Woodworking 3, Intro to Finance, Entrepreneurship, Auto 1, Auto 2, Auto 3, Auto 4, Sports & Entertainment Marketing

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH: Physical Education, Lifetime Sports & Activities, Weight Training & Conditioning, Personal Health

Future standards-based courses 9-12

MATHEMATICS: Statistics

SCIENCE: Science Inquiry Survey, AP Biology, Chemistry 2, Physics, AP Physics, Anatomy & Physiology, AP Environmental Science

SOCIAL STUDIES: World Affairs

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS: Pottery 4, Painting 1, Painting 2, Sculpture 1, Sculpture 2, Stained Glass 1, Stained Glass 2, Advanced Two-Dimensional Art, Portfolio Preparation, Multimedia Art

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: Spanish 4

CAREER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: Agriculture 4, Intro to Accounting, Intermediate Accounting, Advanced Accounting 1 and 2, Business Technology, Advanced Business Technology, Computer Applications, Advanced Computer Applications, Computer Assisted Drafting, Woodworking 4

GENERAL ELECTIVE COURSES: Adaptive Physical Education, Community Experience, Essentials of Living, Life Skills, Military Science, Student Publications, Study Skills, Videography 1, 2, 3, 4, Emerging Technologies, Sports Medicine/Athletic Training, AP Computer Science

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