

Cass School District 63

Standards-Based Grading Frequently Asked Questions

What is Standards-Based Grading?

Systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding of a set of predetermined standard(s) based on content and subject area expectations.

Why Standards-Based Grading?

Compared to traditional grading, standards based grading more accurately represents learning progress towards the proficiency of standards. Assessing progress towards each standard allows feedback that is specific. We also separate the work habits from content standards.

Additionally, standards-based grades allow for teachers to change their instruction based on individual results on both formative and summative assessments. Progress measured to standards allows for students to be measured against themselves rather than others.

Why not stay with the old grade scale?

The traditional scale is based on traditional percentage 0-100. However, the majority of the reporting exists in the upper 50%. Fifty-nine percent of the traditional scale is describing a failing student.

Additionally, the traditional scale is based on an average of overall work. It does not describe progress at a particular moment in time or on a particular skill. Teachers have different ways of describing the requirements for a B+ on an ELA paper. Standards-based grading pinpoints specific strengths and deficiencies in student work.

What does the new grade scale look like*?

EM - Exceeds Mastery (Student has exceeded mastery on the standard)

M - Mastery (Student has mastered the standard)

P - Progressing (Student is progressing toward mastery on the standard)

NI - Needs Improvement (Student needs to improve in order to progress toward the standard)

INC - Incomplete

*Kindergarten will maintain the current scale:

S - Satisfactory

N - Needs More Time

NA - Not Assessed

Where is the percentage?

There will be no percentage reported. A student will be given an EM, M, P, or NI for each standard being reported.

I'm thinking that a "EM" is like an "A"... is that correct?

No. It might seem to make sense to convert the levels of proficiency to the traditional grading system but we avoid doing this because we are no longer averaging learning. In Standards Based Reporting, we report what a student has learned and to what level.

Needs Improvement indicates that a student still needs help.

Progressing indicates that the student is moving closer to mastery but is still working on it.

Mastery indicates a student not only has met the standard but is able to take the skills and concepts and transfer them to new learning.

Exceeds Mastery indicates that the student has exceeded expectations by outperforming the standard.

What is the difference between "formative" and a "summative" assessments?

Formative assessments will count for 20% of the student's overall grade for a particular standard and are composed of all assignments, activities, and graded information that help students to form their practice of a particular standard. This may take the form of homework, in class work, quizzes, writing prompts, drafts, etc.

Summative assessments will count for 80% of a student's overall grade for a particular standard and may take the form of end of unit tests, projects, final writing prompts, etc.

In what grades will this be implemented?

Kindergarten through Grade Eight.

When will this start?

This will begin for all classes in August 2017. This has been piloted in a variety of ways across the school district for three years. For instance, Art, PreAlgebra, Work Habits, Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 are already fully standards-based.

What are Work Habits at Concord Elementary School?

- Reports to class on time
- Practices Self-Control Outside the Classroom
- Practices Self-Control in the Classroom
- Obeys Rules
- Cares for School Property
- Demonstrates Respect (respects the rights of others, respects authority)
- Listens to and Follows Directions
- Works without Disturbing Others
- Works Independently
- Works Cooperatively
- Uses Time Appropriately
- Completes Classroom Assignments
- Completes Homework Assignments
- Demonstrates Organization
- Has a caring/positive attitude

What are Work Habits at Cass Junior High School?

The following categories are the expected work habits at Cass Junior High School. Students can receive an M, P, or NI in the following areas:

Assignments - Assignments are the evidence of the student's commitment to learning. Assignments are required practice by which a student not only deepens understanding but also indicates progression toward an objective.

Behavior - Behavior is the code of conduct by which the student establishes and maintains positive relationships in school.

Preparation and Organization - Preparation and organization are essential traits necessary for the student's daily success.

Accountability - Accountability for learning reflects the student's decision making skills and responsible behaviors.

Work habits are used to determine athletic eligibility.

Where can I find the standards on which my student will be assessed?

Standards will be posted on our district curriculum site. This is being constructed and will be available in the Fall of 2017. Additionally, you can follow along with your student's progress on standards on the PowerSchool Parent Portal - just click on the "Standards" Tab.

How will I know if my student is on track throughout the year?

Just the same as it has always been, the classroom teacher will use assignments, assessments and observations to determine how your student is doing academically. In the past, you may have asked, “how is my student doing in math?” This question still applies, however, your student’s teacher will now be able to provide detail about the standards that are included within math which will provide you more specific information.

What will the report card look like?

The report card will be two to three pages front to back and will reflect the progress of a student towards all of the standards they are accountable for during a given term. Remember, you can always check current progress of a student online anytime at the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Please remember to click the ‘Standards’ Tab.

How will this affect GPA, Honor Roll, and Principal’s List?

The terms Honor Roll and Principal’s List will be replaced by other names for academic recognition. The District will no longer calculate GPA as a means to figure academic recognition. The new system for recognition will be coming home in the Fall. The Administration and Staff at Cass Junior High School recognize the importance of all types of recognition for student achievement and see this as an opportunity for improvement. Be assured that students at Cass Junior High School will continue to be recognized for outstanding academic, athletic, fine arts, and service achievements throughout and at the end of the year.

How will this affect my Eighth Grade Student because I know this doesn’t happen at the high school?

Our local high schools do continue to use a traditional scale for grading. We believe strongly that we are preparing them by focusing on the standards and skills rather than just the grading system. The high school uses standardized test scores and teacher recommendation for placement. The high school does not use our grades or GPA for any type of placement.

We believe that this more focused and detailed look at the student’s strengths and weaknesses will serve them better in their future education.

How do retakes work at Cass Junior High School?

Retakes are a second chance to demonstrate mastery. All retakes take place before school, after school, or during lunch time (depending on a teacher’s retake schedule).

Requirements:

- Retakes are for summative assessments only.

- A summative assessment eligible for retake has earned P or NI.
- A student must independently obtain and complete a retake obligation form, which includes a student and parent signature, dates for retake, and statement of retake corrective plan.
- The Retake Obligation Form must be returned prior to the retake appointment.
- Retake Obligation Forms are available in all classrooms, shared as a google document and online in the Google Classroom.

Great resources to learn more...

Books:

Rick Wormeli - *Fair Isn't Always Equal*

Thomas Guskey - *On Your Mark*

Ken O'Connor - *How to Grade for Learning*

Robert Marzano - *Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading*

Videos:

TEDx - Standards-based Grading ([HERE](#))

Rick Wormeli - Standards-based Grading ([HERE](#))

Robert Marzano - Standards-based Grading ([HERE](#))

Articles:

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/

[Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading.aspx](#)

<https://www.amle.org/BrowsebyTopic/WhatsNew/WNDet/TabId/270/ArtMID/888/>

[ArticleID/21/Its-Time-to-Stop-Averaging-Grades.aspx](#)