

Standards Based Grading

This is the first of many posts that we will be giving to parents to help you understand standard-based grading and how HighMark will be implementing this in 2021-22 school year. We are working as a faculty to determine how we want this to look. It is a decision that a district implements, and HighMark is a district, as well as a school.

- ✓ We are visiting schools and watching teachers who are using standard-based grading.
- ✓ We are looking at research from national educators.
- ✓ We are having professional development every Friday for the rest of this school year to prepare and learn from each other and others who are doing this.
- ✓ We are meeting and talking with DSD, Quest Academy, Early Light Academy, etc. and understanding how they implemented it and how it is working. Some of these schools have been using this for 5-15 years, and they love it.
- ✓ We have teacher committees in place to decide how to separate citizenship from the standard that is being taught, others are investing time into writing rubrics that we value as a school, others are working on how to help the junior high area that will need an actual letter grade for high school and graduation.
- ✓ We have a lot of work ahead, but as a faculty we are committed that this is the right thing for the right reason!

The State Office of Education, districts and charter schools around us have been shifting to standard-based grading for several years. The USBE has been offering grants to help schools make this shift to a new method of assessing. We will be applying for that grant next year to help us with supplies, training, etc. We feel that this is the right way to grade and assess students.

Our summative testing (RISE, Acadience, Aspire) have all shifted to this method of proficiency (with a score of 1-4) to evaluate student learning. Under Standard-based grading a student can show proficiency in four levels (see the rubric below).

What is Standards-Based Grading and Reporting?

Standards-based grading is a method used to assess student proficiency based on their knowledge of a standard. Teachers evaluate student performance and give feedback as students work toward clearly defined learning targets. Students who are not initially proficient are encouraged to retake assessments until they can demonstrate proficiency. A student's grade is then based on their level of understanding on the identified standard. At HighMark Charter, we will have standards for each content area. The primary focus for students and educators is proficiency.

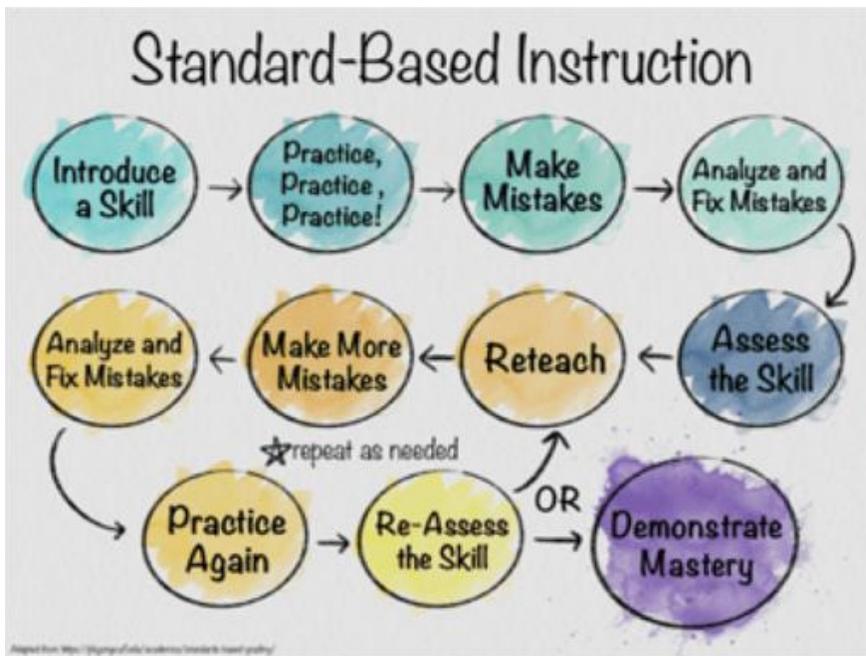
Why Standards-Based Grading?

Students today experience stress and anxiety at higher rates than ever before. Much of this stress comes from uncertainty about how to successfully meet all of the expectations from their teachers. Standards-based grading unifies and simplifies the grading process from teacher to teacher providing a clear direction for students about learning expectations. Students who have participated in classrooms using standards-based grading agree that they prefer this method to traditional grading practices. Furthermore, teachers believe that standards-based grading allows them to better meet individual student needs in the classroom. As teachers transition to standards-based grading, students will begin to recognize their academic growth, build confidence in themselves as a student, and feel empowered to work with teachers to ensure their learning success.

FAQs

- What will this look like in the classroom?

Standards-based grading classrooms embrace a growth mindset model that allows students to learn from their mistakes and demonstrate learning over time. The model below is taken from developmental research at the University of Florida. Teachers follow this basic model in all content areas. This model allows students to understand concepts in a positive environment that turns mistakes into a learning experience. It also maintains the expectation that with practice *every* student can find success.



- How will this affect grades?

Students receive a variety of assessments for each standard in each of their classes. Each assessment will have a clearly defined rubric modeled after the school-wide rubric. The rubric allows the student to understand the expectation and how to achieve proficiency on the assessment. A student's performance on a series of assessments (both formative and summative) will be used to determine the student's overall grade in the course.

Practice assignments are just that, practice, and thus serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Parents should use practice scores as a reference of how to help their student at home. Teachers may require students to complete all practice work prior to allowing them to retake an assessment.

- How can students improve their grade?

Students can improve their grade through practice and reassessment. If a student's grade is lower than desired, it is because they do not understand a priority standard in that content area. Parents and students should review the student's scores and the practice assignments associated with that standard. Students should review or redo practice assignments until they have reached proficiency or mastery. We will build in time during the school day to redo assignments and assessments. If students are interested in improving their grade, they should speak with the teacher to schedule a time to retake an assessment. Deadlines for retaking assessments will be established by the school's grading calendar (midterm and end of term). We encourage all students to take advantage of retakes in order to improve their grades. ***To ensure student learning on priority standards, extra-credit is not offered.***

- How will this affect student's IEP?

Students who currently receive Special Education services will continue to work on IEP goals just as they have in the past. Teachers, special education or general education, will continue to support student learning with the use of accommodations determined by the IEP team.

Watch this video from Granite School District to capture what this standard-based learning is. GSD has been doing proficiency based learning for many years.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDcdajplsao&feature=emb_logo – SBG – Granite

This is our school rubric which will be followed by each teacher as they set up their rubrics for each of their standards. Students will have the opportunity to move from each area to show and demonstrate proficiency of their learning.

HighMark School Rubric

4	Advanced Proficiency I have mastered the standard and am able to apply it in a variety of ways
3	Proficient I have met the expectations described in the standard and can apply it independently
2	Approaching Proficiency I am getting close to meeting expectations and can do parts of the standard independently
1	Beginning Proficiency I still need help and support from my teacher to do parts of the standard
0	Not Attempted I have not attempted to meet the standard in allotted time
-	Not Introduced Standard not yet introduced