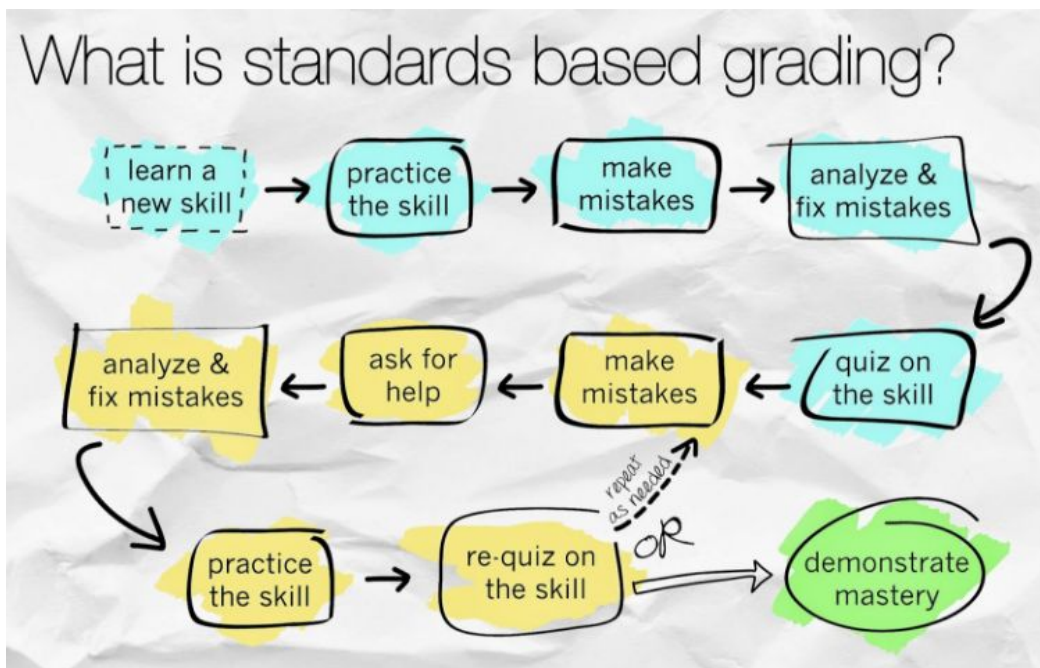


Osceola Middle School: A Parent's Guide To Standards Based Grading

At OMS, we envision a student/parent-friendly report card with clearly defined learning targets aligned to high quality, balanced assessments that will bridge our elementary and high school grading formats. Our standards-based report card seeks to provide meaningful feedback so students and parents can track academic progress toward the mastery of essential learning targets, reflect upon strengths and areas in need of improvement.

What is standards-based grading?

Standards-based grading (SBG), also known as Grading for Learning, communicates how students are performing on essential learning targets that are created from the Wisconsin Academic Standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to pre-established learning targets, as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of a grading period, which can mask what a student has learned, or not learned, in a specific course.



Why have we moved to Standards-Based Grading?

It is important to remember that this really is a change in how we communicate student understanding, not necessarily what is happening in the classroom. SBG shows parents their child's progress within the district's curriculum. With this system, parents will know how their child is progressing toward mastering standards in each subject area. Additionally, parents will know whether their child is "on target" with district and state standards. It is a much better way to communicate progress. Many educational researchers consider standards-based grading much more fair to students and best educational practice.

How long have standards been around?

The state of Wisconsin adopted academic standards over 20 years ago. Since then we have had "standards based instruction" and assessments (big and small) tied to communicate progress toward

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achievement. Teachers have been required to teach to the standards for decades.

What are the advantages of standards-based grading?

Learning targets are clearly communicated to students throughout instruction. Parents and students are able to clearly see which learning targets have been mastered and which ones still need practice. With SBG, conversations between teachers and students become focused on what learning still needs to happen versus how to get an A. [Link to sample report card.](#)

How will Standards-Based Grading benefit students?

SBG will assure that students within a grade level receive similar instruction and are assessed on the same expectations. SBG will also allow teachers to better communicate individual student progress. A standards-based report shares much more information about the skills and knowledge a student has acquired with more detail than a single number.

How does standards-based grading differ from traditional grading?

Unlike traditional grading systems, a standards-based grading system measures a student's mastery of grade-level learning targets by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. Thus a student who may have struggled at the beginning of a course, when first encountering new material, may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content/concepts by the end of a grading period. A student who is at grade level at the start of the course can then work to apply the knowledge and background they already have to push themselves further.

In a traditional grading system, a student's performance for an entire quarter is averaged together. Early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates.

Standards-based report cards **separate** academic performance from work habits and behavior in order to provide parents a more accurate view of a student's progress in both academic and behavioral areas. Variables such as effort, participation, timeliness, cooperation and attitude are reported separately, not as an indicator of a student's academic performance.

How are my child's marks determined?


A student's performance on a series of assessments (both formative and summative -- see below) will be used to determine a student's overall grade in a course. Practice assignments (i.e. homework) are just that, practice, and thus serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Scores on practice assignments will not be used as a major component of a student's report card score. However, teachers may require students to complete all of their practice work prior to allowing them to take, or retake, an assessment.

<u>Formative and Summative Defined</u>	
Formative Assessment- The general goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning <i>while it's happening.</i>	Summative Assessment- The goal of summative assessment is to <i>evaluate student learning</i> at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against grade level targets.
Formative assessments are <i>for</i> learning, while summative assessments are <i>of</i> learning.	

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What will each of the numbers in the 3.5 point scale represent?


English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and Math

Scoring	Short Descriptor		
1	Basic	Significantly below grade-level learning target	Basic means that a student demonstrates limited understanding of the grade-level learning target.
1.5	Basic plus	Making progress toward developing	
2	Developing	Below grade-level learning target	Developing means that a student requires teacher assistance and support in order to demonstrate grade-level understanding of the learning target.
2.5	Developing plus	Making progress toward proficiency	
3 	Proficient	Meets grade-level learning target (goal for all students)	Proficient means that a student consistently and independently demonstrates grade-level understanding of the learning target.
3.5	Proficient plus	Exceeds the grade-level learning target	Proficient plus means a student demonstrates and applies learning above grade level proficiency on a consistent and independent basis. Student can apply learning skills to new and more complicated tasks.

Academic Performance Levels for Encore Courses

Art, Agriculture, Band, Careers, Choir, Digital Citizenship, Finance, French, Health, Physical Education, Research, Spanish, STEM

Scoring	Short Descriptor		
1	Basic	Significantly below grade-level learning target	Basic means that a student demonstrates limited understanding of the grade-level learning target.
2	Developing	Below grade-level learning target	Developing means that a student requires teacher assistance and support in order to demonstrate grade-level understanding of the learning target.

3 	Proficient	Meeting grade-level learning target (Goal for all Students)	Proficient means that a student consistently and independently demonstrates grade-level understanding of the learning target.
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What is considered to be an A in a standards-based grading system?

You cannot really compare a traditional grading system to standards-based grading. It is like comparing “apples to oranges,” SBG identifies a standard and indicates whether or not a student is meeting the standard at a given point in the school year. A score of (3) is defined as meeting grade level standards and indicates that a student has demonstrated mastery of the skills that were expected to be learned by that point in the grading period. Our goal is that, all students achieve at least a 3 in all learning at OMS.

How will I know if my child needs help?

Receiving a 1, 1.5, 2 or 2.5 on a grade report/report card can be a sign that a student is in need of academic support in that specific area. This is one benefit of a standards-based report card; specific areas in need of support are clearly identified. Intervention classes are in place at Osceola Middle School to support learners who are behind in math and reading. If a student receives 1’s or 2’s, it means his/her work is not yet meeting grade level standards. A number of academic interventions will be offered to those students who are struggling to meet the established learning targets. Students may be pulled in during WYN time for re-teach or a specific intervention. These supports are not a punishment; they are the way that we support the learning process. Grade level retention is not a practice that is generally supported by educational research.

How can my child earn a 3.5?

A score of (3.5) indicates performance that is consistently above what is expected for mastery at that point in the school year. Level 3.5 work would indicate a much deeper understanding of a standard, the ability to apply that knowledge, make connections, and extend learning beyond the targeted goal.

If a student is being accelerated in any grade level/subject area with above grade level standards or materials, does that mean they will get 3.5’s automatically?

No. Students who are accelerated must demonstrate and apply learning above grade level proficiency on a consistent and independent basis on the learning target in order to receive a 3.5.

How will Honor Roll be determined?

The traditional concept of an Honor Roll does not easily match up with standards-based grading. It is our intention to recognize and acknowledge the academic accomplishments of OMS students, as well as those who consistently display good citizenship/work habits.

How does Standards-Based report card improve teaching and learning?

Knowing where the students are in their progress toward meeting standards-based learning targets is crucial for planning and carrying out classroom instruction. Teachers teach to the needs of their students. Standards-based grading is designed to give teachers more information about the student’s progress in meeting the level of proficiency required by each standard. In addition, teachers share the standards with students and parents, helping them to better understand the learning that needs to take place and how we can help our students succeed.

Isn't basing grades on standards and rubrics really subjective?

All grading has an element of subjectivity. Reporting progress on standards is less so because there is clear criteria, divided into distinct levels. A student's work is measured against this criteria. This criteria is the backbone of the rubrics used to determine the level of proficiency. With specific criteria it is much easier to control other factors that may impact a grade. These other factors are still reported (an example would be neatness on an essay) but don't impact that specific grade on a standard.

What is a Personal Accountability grade?

A personal accountability (PA) grade indicates a student's ability to meet pre-established behavioral guidelines in the areas of respect, responsibility and work habits. All students will receive personal accountability grades in core classes. The Personal Accountability rubric is below.

Personal Accountability Levels

English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and Math

	Personal Accountability	3	2	1	
Social Contract Connection		Proficient	Developing	Basic	Evidence (Examples)
Be Responsible Persevere	Meets Deadlines	Turns in the majority of assignments on time	Turns in more than three assignments late	Turns in more than five assignments late	*Number of late assignments *Is able to meet deadlines on big projects/labs.
Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Persevere	Follows classroom expectations and uses class time wisely	Engages in required tasks without reminders and is able to work independently when time is provided.	Needs occasional reminders to start working and remain on task.	Needs consistent reminders to begin work and stay on task.	*Works on classroom assignments/projects during work time. *Stays on task when working *Pays attention when classmates/teacher are talking.
Be Respectful, safe and healthy	Treats others with respect	Supports others in the learning process in a	Occasionally demonstrates actions or	Consistently demonstrates inappropriate	*Does not need to be reminded to

		respectful and kind way.	comments that are not supportive of others' learning.	actions or comments toward others.	be kind to others or self. *Is a productive team/group member. *Positively engages in the learning process. *Does not make negative comments about self, others or the learning.
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How will athletic eligibility be determined using SBG?

Below is the language directly from our athletic code.

- A. All student athletes are expected to work hard in classes and complete all of their work.
- B. Any students receiving a 1 in the areas of *meeting deadlines, following classroom expectations and using class time wisely or treats other with respect* will be ineligible for 10% of contests. The ineligibility will continue past the 10% if the the score is not a minimum of 2 after the 10% of time has been completed.
- C. Incompletes: A student who receives an incomplete is ineligible until he/she provides a note from the instructor that says he or she has completed missing work.
- D. Students will not practice or travel while academically ineligible. Baseball players will sit out one game for each 1 in the areas of meeting deadlines, following classroom expectations and using class time wisely or treats other with respect on their final term report card. Baseball players may practice.
- E. Academic Eligibility is reviewed every six weeks based on report cards. If is a student is ineligible the Athletic Director will contact the coaches, parent(s) and the athlete.

Where else in the area is standards-based grading being implemented?

It is important to note that our elementary/intermediate schools have been utilizing standards-based grading system for several years, so it will not be new to the majority of our families. It is also under study, or already implemented, in a number of school districts in the area, including elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in Wisconsin.

How will Standards-Based Grading prepare student for the high school where letter grades are still in place?

Middle school students and families will have a clear understanding of the areas in which the students' learning is at, above or below grade-level proficiency. This allows students to enter high school with realistic goals and expectations of academic performance.

How will Standards-based Grading benefit the district?

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Standards-based grading gives the district a much better understanding of the effectiveness of our curriculum and instruction. It allows us to analyze our practices making sure all our students leave college and career ready.

What students say about our grading practices:

- “I really like that my math teacher has questions that are 3.5 level on the tests so I can see if I can do them” ~7th grader 2016
- “I really like that I can see what I know and don’t know and my teacher can help me with what I don’t know during WYN.”~8th grader 2016
- “It is so much more about the learning rather than getting an A”~ 2016 8th grader

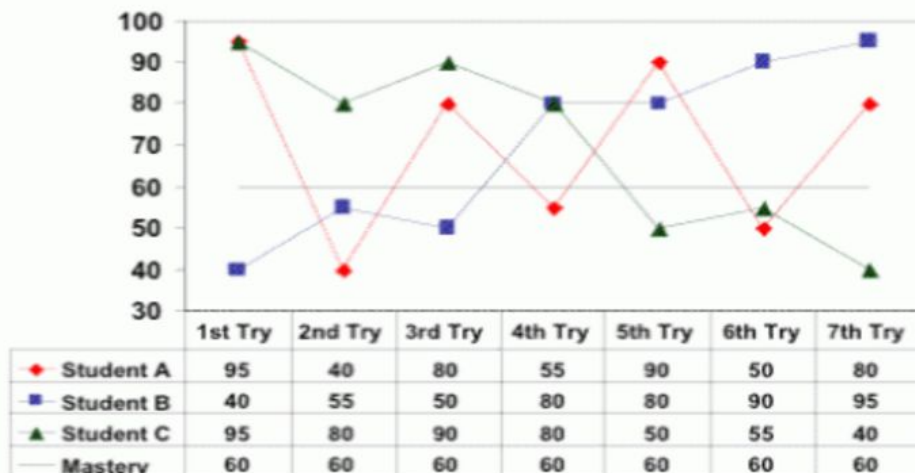
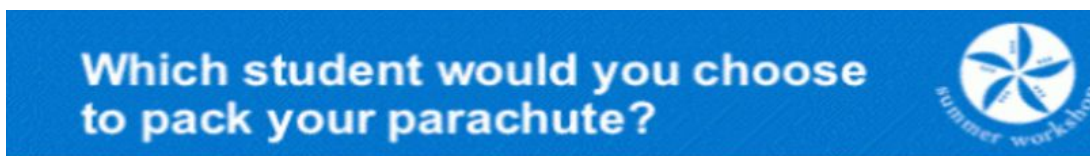
What teachers say about our grading practices:

- “I have never in my teaching career had a better understanding of my students strength and weaknesses.” 8th grade ELA teacher
- “Having my student ask to be re-taught a specific learning target is absolutely amazing. The students know what they need to know.” 7th grade math teacher
- “I love that students at all levels are willing to try 3.5 level questions because they don’t get punished for trying.” 8th grade math teacher

What parents say about our grading practices:

- “I love that I get to see the detail of what my child knows and what he still needs to learn”.
- “It (SBG) really helped my child because the learning is broken into chunks so she really knows what she needs to know”.
- “Having personal accountability grades is a great move as it shows us (parents) if our kids are good people along with if they are learning. In the traditional system I can’t see how my child treats others or uses class time”.

Interesting consideration: All students in the chart below have a score of 490. Do all of them end the course with the same level of competence? Who would you want packing your child’s parachute?



Adapted from How to Grade for Learning (O'Connor, 2002)