

Independence Community School District Standards-Based Learning Handbook



Mission: Educating people to be life long learners and respectful, responsible citizens.

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Summary

Effective grading practices is a prominent topic in education and is also one of the most controversial. In the fall of 2018, the Independence Community School District began exploring effective grading practices. This work began with our School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) and continued through the spring of 2021. In the spring of 2021, a grading coalition was formed and members were board approved. The purpose of this group was to look at current grading practices and make recommendations to improve those practices. Additionally, this team wanted to actively work to implement change, effectively communicate those changes, learn more about effective grading practices (specifically standards-referenced grading), define the purpose of grading, create guiding principles for grading, and align instructional practices with grading and Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) structures.

Original Grading Coalition Members

Team Member	Position	Committee Years	Grade Levels
Erin Rosburg	IC/Special Ed Teacher	2020-2022	7-12
Amy Gustafson	Math	2020-2022	7, 9-12
Amber Whitney	Science	2020-2022	9-12
McKinley Meyer	Social Studies	2020-2022	7-12
Sara Quist	ELA	2020-2022	8
Joel Dinger	IC/Social Studies	2020-2022	7-12
Bridget Kremppges	Special Education	2020-2022	7-8
Sara Thome	Elementary Teacher	2020-2022	6
Dewey Hupke	Building Administration	2020-2022	7-12
John Howard	Building Administration	2020-2022	7-12
Erin Burmeister	Central Office Administration	2020-2022	PK-12
Joe Kremer	CR AEA School Improvement	2020-2022	PK-12
Stepahnie Newman	Special Education	2020-2021	7-8
Michael Doyle	Math	2020-2021	7-12
Jacqueline Lahey	CR AEA Special Education	2020-2021	7-12

Purpose of Standards-Based Learning

The purpose of standards-based learning is to improve student achievement by focusing instruction and the alignment of curriculum with our priority standards. Standards-based learning and reporting will provide better communication to students, parents, teachers and administrators. Work habits are captured in Living the Mustang Way and include respect, responsibility, kindness, and living gratefully. These are reported separately.

Standards-Based Learning

Standards-based learning measures the mastery of the standards, or how well students understand the standards being taught in a course. It is based on a specific set of standards that students need to meet for each grade/content level. Performance is not a comparison of one student to another, but rather a way to measure how well students are doing on grade-level/course level standards. A standards-based approach allows teachers, parents, and students to understand more clearly what is expected of students and how to help them be successful.

Purpose of Grading

The purpose of grading is to measure (gather evidence of) learning with regards to the identified academic standards and skills. Grades must be an accurate reflection of a student's current learning. In addition, grades should provide feedback to students, teachers, and parents and serve as a communication tool for these stakeholders.

Grading Practices

1. A consistent 4-point grading scale is used
2. Letter grades, derived from the 4 point scale, are based solely on achievement of course/grade level standards.
3. Student behavior is reported separately.
4. Scores are based on a "body of evidence".
5. Achievement is organized by standard/priority standard and reported that way.
6. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.

Traditional vs. Standards-Referenced Grading

Traditional Grading System	Standards Referenced Grading System
Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, daily work). One grade per subject.	Based on standards with a proficiency mark for each standard.
Grades may include non-academic factors such as attendance, behavior and effort.	Grades are a reflection of academic achievement; non-academic factors such as attendance, behavior, and effort are reported separately.
Individual classroom teachers develop their own measures and basis for evaluating student progress.	Based on learning goals and grade level/content area standards.
Based on a percentage system; often norm-referenced; learning criteria not clear.	Criterion-referenced and proficiency-based using a limited number of levels of learning; standards being measured are known to all.
Can include extra credit or zeros and group scores.	Only measures achievement - no extra credit or zeros
Include every score regardless of when it was collected.	Emphasize the more recent evidence of learning.

Proficiency Scales

A proficiency scale is a tool that shows teachers, students, and others what proficiency looks like, what knowledge and skills must be obtained for a student to meet the standard, and how students might go beyond what the standard requires.

4.0 Exceeding the Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand beyond the standard. I can show my understanding of complex content beyond what the standard requires. The student demonstrates understanding beyond the standard without any assistance and without errors.
3.5	In addition to score 3.0 performance, partial success at 4.0 content
3.0 Meeting the Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand and have met the standard. The target content, the level of learning required for all students. The student demonstrates the standard with little or no assistance and with minimal errors.

2.5	No major errors or omissions regarding score 2.0 content, and partial success at score 3.0 content
2.0 Progressing Toward the Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand much of the course standard. • I have basic knowledge or skills necessary for mastering the target content. • The student demonstrates some basic knowledge or skills necessary for meeting the target content.
1.5	Partial success at score 2.0, and major errors or omissions regarding score 3.0 content
1.0 Beginning to Develop the Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand some of the standard. • With help, I have partial success with score 2 content and score 3 content. • The student needs help or assistance to have partial success with score 2 content and target content.
IE	Insufficient Evidence of Student Learning

Standards Referenced Grade Calculations

At Independence Community School District our teachers use a standards-referenced gradebook to collect a body of evidence for course standards. The gradebook is available to students, parents, and teachers through PowerSchool. A body of evidence is collected for each priority or reported standard. A mark of 1, 2, 3, 4, is determined for the standard using an average calculation of the most recent pieces of evidence, this gives you the **Final Standard Score**. The **Final Standard Scores** in a course are then averaged and reported as traditional letter grades using the following conversions. Additional, more specific, information can be found on the website or by following this link, [Parent's/Student's Guide to SRG in PowerSchool](#).

Standards Score	Traditional Letter Grade
4	A
3.5 to 3.99	A
3.0 to 3.49	A-
2.5 to 2.99	B
2.0 to 2.49	C
1.5 to 1.99	D

1.0 to 1.49	D-
IE	F

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Below is a link to a document that attempts to answer some of the most basic questions about standards referenced grading. Independence Community School District currently uses standards referenced grading for students in Kindergarten-8th grade.

[Standards Referenced Grading: FAQs](#)