

STANDARDS BASED PARENT INFORMATION

AUGUST 2019



The Redwood Area School District (RASD) has been transitioning how it reports learning to be more consistent, accurate, meaningful and supportive of each student's learning. We are continuing to move from a traditional grading system--one most parents and grandparents will remember--to a standards based reporting system, which we believe will reflect much more accurately each student's progress--both their academic progress as well as their behavior/life skills progress.

A reasonable question to ask is, "Why would we consider changing?" The answer is simple. Teachers and administrators want to ***more accurately report to students and their parents/guardians what a student actually knows and is able to do.*** Parents and educators are united in wanting students to be armed with academic skills and life skills that will allow them to be happy and productive life-long learners. We want the emphasis for students to be on learning rather than on accumulating points.

Like many schools districts across the nation, RASD has been transitioning to standards based learning. Some changes will occur on the middle school report card next school year. For both the elementary and middle school report cards parents and students will see a score of 4, 3, 2, 1 or NE (No Evidence). The elementary report cards utilized this reporting system during the 2018-2019 school year. For the middle school, these scores will replace the A, B, C, D & F scores on past report cards. A score of a "3" is considered "meeting the standard at the grade level". In addition to an academic score, each student will be scored on life skills. Students will receive scores in collaboration, being respectful and being responsible as life skill scores.

Academic learning and behavior/life skills learning are both important. Our educators think it is important to report, more accurately, how students are progressing and developing in **both of these areas.**

Simply stated, the purpose of grading should be to clearly communicate about student learning, as measured by grade level academic standards, AND to clearly communicate about the students' development of behavior/life skills, as measured by acceptable behavior standards. Our transition to a standards based system will enable us to report student progress in these two areas more precisely than we have in the traditional system. This transition to a more transparent system will enable both parents and educators to better communicate about our students.

What is the purpose of grading students?

The purpose of grades is to provide communication on student learning as measured by grade level academic standards while separately assessing behavioral expectations.

Grading should inform parents and guardians about successes and areas where their children need more guidance and instruction to improve.

Grades are not about what students earn; grades are about what students learn.

What is standards-based grading and reporting?

Standards-based grading measures a student's mastery of the essential standards for a class, or how well a student understands the materials in class. A student demonstrates what they know and are able to do in relation to the standards. The teacher will break down the standards for the unit into learning targets. During the unit, a variety of assessments may be utilized to allow students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. The assessments may include traditional pencil-and-paper tests, projects, discussions, or reports. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating proficiency of the essential standards.

The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, student, and parent as accurate a picture as possible of the student's learning and to encourage a dialogue about how the student can demonstrate proficiency on the standards. In particular, because learning is a process that takes place over time, each assessment will provide feedback for the student and teacher about what to focus on next. Students will be allowed to retake assessments if they did not demonstrate proficiency on some of the standards after taking time to practice the standards. If an assessment the student retook demonstrates a higher level of proficiency, that new score will replace the old one.

How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?

In the traditional 100-point grading system, a student's grades are typically based on the average of all of the work assigned in class, including classwork, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the gradebook based on the type of assignment rather than on the essential standards for the class. The grade may also include points for non-academic factors, such as participation, effort, extra credit or attitude.

Standards-based grading considers homework as practice in which students are able to receive specific feedback. Assessments are used to demonstrate proficiency on standards. A student's scores from their work are tracked by the essential standards, which give the teacher, student, and parent a very detailed picture of which standards a student has mastered. Non-academic factors like behavior, attitude, and attendance are not included in this grade and reported in a different manner. Learning comes first in a standards-based system.

Information shown in the following table contrasts the two systems

Traditional Grading System	Standards-Based Grading System
Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects etc.) One grade/entry is given per assessment.	Based on learning goals and performance standards.
Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.	Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. Criteria and targets are made available to students ahead of time.
Use an uncertain mix of assessment, achievement, effort and behavior to determine the final grade. May use late penalties and extra credit.	Measures achievement only OR separates achievement from effort/behavior. No penalties or extra credit given.
Everything goes in the grade book - regardless of purpose.	Selected assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) are used for grading purposes.
Include every score, regardless of when it was collected. Assessments record the average - not the best - work.	Emphasize the most recent evidence of learning when grading.

Adapted from O'Connor K. (2002). *How to Grade for Learning: Linking grades to standards (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

What will I see on the report card?

In the elementary and middle school you will see a 4-1 or 'NE' for the score in each area. In the high school students will continue to receive points based on the standards assessed and students will continue to receive a letter grade (A-F) in the class.

What academic scale is Redwood Area School District currently using for the elementary and middle school?

4=Exceeds the Standards	3=Meets the Standards	2=Partially Meets the Standards	1=Does Not Meet the Standards	NE=No Evidence of the Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student understands and extends the expectation for grade level content and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student understands and can do what is asked in the grade level content and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student demonstrates some understanding and can do some of what is asked in the grade level content and skills• Student understands and can do what is asked in the grade level content and skills with support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student demonstrates little understanding and can do little of what is asked in the grade level content and skills• Student has some understanding and can do some of what is asked in the grade level content and skills with support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student provides no evidence which can be used to make a decision about the student's understanding of what is asked in the grade level content and skills

In rare cases for certain standards, there may not be a four. A teacher will gray it out if there is not a four for that standard.

How are the life skills/behaviors being scored for my student?

The rubric below is the rubric utilized by grades K-12 to score the life skills important for students.

Redwood Area School District Life Skills Rubric-Grades K-12

	3 = Consistent	2 = Sometimes	1 = Seldom
Collaboration	Consistently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates and works effectively with others/group uses teamwork and leadership skills effectively 	Sometimes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates or cooperates with others/group uses teamwork and leadership skills effectively 	Seldom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates, cooperates and often disrupts others/group uses teamwork and leadership skills effectively
Respect	Consistently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respects the rights, feelings, and property of others demonstrates honesty and integrity 	Sometimes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respects the rights, feelings, and property of others demonstrates honesty and integrity 	Seldom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respects the rights, feelings, and property of others demonstrates honesty and integrity
Responsibility	Consistently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes responsibility for own actions prepared for class with all necessary materials produces quality work perseveres through challenging tasks and situations advocates for self manages time effectively and completes all practice in a timely manner 	Sometimes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes responsibility for own actions prepared for class with all necessary materials produces quality work perseveres through challenging tasks and situations advocates for self manages time effectively and completes all practice in a timely manner 	Seldom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes responsibility for own actions prepared for class with all necessary materials produces quality work perseveres through challenging tasks and situations advocates for self manages time effectively and completes all practice in a timely manner

What percentages will high school teachers use to determine grades?

High School Students will be graded on the standards and all staff will use the common grading scale listed below.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A	93-100%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%
C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D+	67-69.9%
D	63-66.9%
D-	60-62.9%
F	0-59.9%

How will I know if my child is struggling in a class?

If your child is getting a “3” it indicates your child is meeting the expectation for that standard. If your child is getting a “2” it indicates there are part of the standard your child is not understanding at the time the score was given. If your child is getting a “1” it indicates the child still has a lot of learning to do to be proficient on that standard. If your child does have a “2” or “1” you are encouraged to discuss with your child what they are doing to learn the standard and if you still have questions to contact the teacher of that class.

What is the procedure for retakes?

One of the greater benefits of standards-based grading is that students have opportunities to truly display their mastery of content knowledge and skills - even if that doesn't happen during the initial assessment. No child should be denied the opportunity to learn. It is the right of every student to retake assignments, provided students have adequately prepared for retakes, per confirmation of teacher.

In grades K-8 retakes can happen at any time during the school year at the teacher's discretion. In 9th-12th grade, retakes should be completed within two weeks of the initial assessment and can be extended at the teacher's discretion. At the end of the 1st-3rd quarters or end of the first semester, the students will have one week to complete any retakes. At the end of the year, the students' final day is the final day for retakes. The student will be expected to complete the expectations set forth prior to being able to take the re-take. This may include meeting with the teacher during intervention time, meeting with the teacher before or after school, attending CAST (Cardinal Academic Success Time) with the teacher, completing all homework assignments or other appropriate expectation. Advanced Placement (AP) classes and college credit bearing classes in high school will follow the procedures set forth by AP and the college.

Will my child receive extra credit or bonus points?

No. Extra-credit points may mask a student's poor performance in learning the standards at a proficient level. Extra-credit tasks do not necessarily help students learn skills or concepts. Therefore, extra-credit points or work may not be used for evaluation. However, reteaching of concepts and standards and allowing students to redo assignments and projects help students meet standards. Extra-credit does not contribute to earning a "4".

What about special education students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

Accurate information on learning progress is essential for all students. In all academic areas, students should be evaluated according to grade-level expectations.

Students who receive accommodations and complete grade-level work should not receive any penalty in grading and should be entitled to a full range of grades.

Accommodations do not change the difficulty of the work. Accommodations include such practices as extended time, more white space around text or math problems, enlarged print, or changes in testing formatting (i.e., multiple choice rather than matching).

Modifications of the curriculum require changes to content, rigor, and grade-level standards. Examples include completing a standard at a lower grade level, reducing the number of standards, or using alternative curricular materials. Any modifications to standards should be discussed at an IEP team meeting. If the curriculum is to be modified it is necessary to communicate to parents the curriculum is modified and the child's grade on the report card will reflect that it is based on modified standards. There will be no notation on the student's transcript indicating the modified standards.

How does a standards based system teach students responsibility and accountability for the real world?

"In a standards-based system the emphasis is on learning. When a student doesn't do the work, the (natural) consequence is that he or she doesn't learn the content or practice the skills. When we do not allow a student to turn in late work or re-do work, we deny that student the opportunity to grow character traits that are vital to student achievement, such as perseverance and persistence.

If a teacher doesn't accept late work, the teacher sends the message that the assignment had little educational value. It's as if the teacher is saying, "Hey, it's okay if you don't do the work, and it's okay if you don't learn the content or skill." As professional educators working to prepare students to successfully navigate the 21st century world, we can no longer accept these messages.

Granting a reduced grade or zero doesn't teach responsibility to students who are not (self)-motivated. It actually allows the student to avoid the accountability of demonstrating what he or she has learned, and it teaches them to shrug off important responsibilities." Ken O'Connor