

WHAT IS STANDARDS BASED GRADING?

In the traditional classroom, student work over the course of a nine-week term is graded and averaged together, resulting in one letter grade that is reported out at the end of the term for each course. Assignments that are given at the beginning of the learning process carry just as much weight as in the end, when students have been given an opportunity to truly learn the material and demonstrate knowledge. A traditional grading system also overemphasizes a 0 in the gradebook when determining a final grade. Under a grading scale where a 94% is an A, a student must earn 9 straight 100%'s in order to overcome a single 0 and move their grade to a B. Even though they have demonstrated perfection nine times in a row, according to the gradebook, that student has only achieved the second highest level of achievement.

A standards based grading system eliminates averaging work over the course of time to determine the final mark on a student's report card. Student progress will be reported out as a 1 (beginning skill attainment), 2 (approaching skill attainment), 3 (skill attainment), or a 4 (advanced skill demonstration). When a student has the numbers 1-4 displayed on a progress report or a report card, it indicates where the student currently is within his learning progress. The student will be given multiple opportunities once a skill is introduced to demonstrate that he has attained the skill through classroom activities, assignments, and assessments. Each class has a set of skills that the teachers have identified as essential for their students to master in order to show appropriate growth within their subjects.