

A Guide to Essential Learnings

What is standards-Based Grading?

Standards-based grading focuses on a student's performance in relationship to a defined learning progression. In Clark-Pleasant, those are known as Essential Learnings and every course has identified outcomes based on Indiana State Standards. This grading system looks at how well a student has demonstrated proficiency over time in the grade level and reports out his/her learning progression on each skill.

What exactly are essential learnings (EL)?

ELs are the most significant skills that pertain to each grade and are specific to each subject. Each EL is built upon from the previous grade level and leads up to the next. If a child is in need of remediation, the first EL must be mastered can be found in a previous grade level. If a child has demonstrated proficiency of an EL before the end of the school year, they will work on extending their knowledge of that skill to a higher level. It is beneficial for parents to understand the EL outcomes of the grade above and below their child.

Where can I find the proficiency scales for the ELs that my child will be working on this year?

1. Log onto the Clark-Pleasant website: www.cpsc.k12.in.us.
2. Click on "Menu" tab
3. Scroll over the "Academics" link
4. Select "Proficiency Scales"

From there, you will find a folder labeled with the grade level and content area. Open the folder and there is a proficiency scale for each EL inside.

Why use standards-based grading?

The goal of Clark-Pleasant is to improve student learning by giving students and parents timely feedback that is . . .

Accurate: gives students a clear picture of what they have learned and identifies the next step in their learning.

Consistent: every student has the same expectation and learning outcomes to demonstrate proficiency for the grade level.

Meaningful: the feedback on each skill is specific to that learning outcome. This is a direct correlation to the expectations of the proficiency scales assessed each nine weeks.

Supportive of Learning: focus is given to capture a clear picture of what students are able to do and where they still need support to succeed. Therefore, every child will be receiving instruction based upon their individual needs.

What is a proficiency scale?

Each identified Essential Learning (EL) has a proficiency scale that breaks down the learning progression for that skill. This proficiency scale helps students know what is required at each level and assists teachers in giving more specific and timely feedback to students about the next step in their learning. Our teachers also create kid-friendly proficiency scales with students so they can visually see the learning progression for each skill.

Standard: Number Sense Topic: 2.NS.5 - Place Value 100's, 10's, and 1's Level: Grade 2		
Score 4.0	In addition to Score 3.0, in-depth inferences, applications, and analysis indicate an extension of learning. The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represents a four-digit number as amounts of thousands, hundreds, tens and ones. 	Sample Tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the student to use expanded, standard & base ten models to represent four-digit numbers.
Score 3.0	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represents a three-digit number as amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones. Understands that 100 can be thought of as a bundle of ten tens — called a "hundred." Understands the numbers 100, 200, 300... refer to one, two, or three... hundreds (and 0 tens and 0 ones) 	Sample Tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the student to use expanded, standard & base ten models to represent three-digit numbers. Ask the student to decompose hundreds, tens and ones in a given number. (Ex. 173 = 1 hundred, 7 tens, 3 ones; 200 = 2 hundreds, 0 tens, 0 ones) Ask the student to identify 10 ten's = 1 hundred.
Score 2.0	There are no major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes as the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes or recalls specific terminology, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hundred/hundreds, ones, tens, unit, place value, base ten, expanded form performs basic processes, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies tens and ones in a two-digit number However, the student exhibits major errors or omissions regarding the more complex ideas and processes.	Sample Tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the student to identify tens and ones in a given number (Ex. 43 = 4 tens, 3 ones)
Score 1.0	With help, the student exhibits a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and uses of the most complex ideas and processes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With help, a partial understanding of the 2.0 content, but not the 3.0 content. 	
Score 0.0	With help, the student exhibits no understanding of skill demonstrated.	

Place Value

4	I can represent a four-digit number using expanded form, standard form and base ten models. I can break down a number and understand it's place and value. 1,599 
3	I can represent a three-digit number using expanded form, standard form and base ten models. I can break down a number and understand it's place and value. 599 
2	I can identify Tens and ones in a two-digit number.  = 19
1	With help from the teacher, I can identify Tens and ones in a two-digit number. 

How can students raise their score on a specific or series of Essential Learnings?

The goal of standards-based grading is to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their highest level of understanding for each skill. Sometimes this takes more than one try and additional learning or work to accomplish. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their level of knowledge. This will require the student and teacher to work together to identify appropriate practice opportunities in order to expand his/her level of understanding.

Where should my child's scores be at the end of the school year?

When a student demonstrates the skills for a level 3, they are considered to be proficient at that EL standard. An end of the year score of 3.0 or higher ensures that your child is prepared for the next advancing grade.

How do students track their own data?

An essential component of helping students take ownership of their learning and look for opportunities to move toward proficiency of a skill is having them track their own data. All PCES students will have a data folder or binder where they will track their learning progression on every Essential Learning in all subject areas. Teachers will work with student to record this data in a timely manner. Parents will also have access to this information including the proficiency scale associated with each skill.

What is the scoring system in a standards-based system?

Each learning outcome is laid out in a continuum and student scores can fluctuate based upon their ability to continually display their full knowledge of any EL. Students earn a score between 1 and 4 to assess their level of knowledge on each proficiency scale.

4 = Mastery - student can apply the knowledge to new situations or additional skills.

3 = Proficient - student demonstrates knowledge of the skill at the level required by the standard.

2 = Progressing - student can demonstrate knowledge of basic or simpler concepts connected to the skill.

1 = Beginning - with help, the student can perform basic components of the skill.

Will my child's data binder or folder be sent home throughout the school year?

Yes! At a minimum, your child will bring home his/her data binder or folder at mid-term and end of each nine weeks. Please look through the binder or folder with your child and ask them about their goals! Celebrate their growth and provide them with positive feedback and encouragement for their progress!

Below is an analogy to help parents better understand the learning progression for each proficiency scale.

Level 4: The student takes his/her knowledge about cupcakes and applies it to bake something else.



Level 3: The student has all of the ingredients and understands how to bake cupcakes. The student makes cupcakes.



Level 2: The student has all of the ingredients to bake cupcakes, but is unsure of how to put it all together.



Level 1: The student may have most of the ingredients needed to bake cupcakes but doesn't know what to do with the materials and needs help.

