

PARENT'S GUIDE TO STANDARDS-REFERENCED GRADING



"WHEN WE KNOW BETTER, WE DO BETTER."

- Maya Angelou

BE KIND, BE RESPECTFUL, BE
BETTER EVERY DAY

What is Standards-Referenced Grading? Standards-referenced grading is the practice of measuring student progress by level of proficiency on academic standards in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and electives, as the outcome reporting of aligning classroom instruction to these standards.

Why is it important to adapt our grading practices? It's about providing accurate, timely and specific information to all partners in student learning: students, parents, educators and the community, based on our state standards.

Why does this matter? In Nebraska, public schools are held accountable to providing instruction on our state's learning standards.

How is this different in South Sioux City Schools as compared to other schools in the area? In the South Sioux City Community Schools, we engage in continuous professional discussion of student learning and needs, around standards, and have created detailed descriptions of the progression of learning for every priority standard, from "Beginning", to "Emerging", to "Proficient", to "Advanced".

How has this changed teaching and learning in our schools? We have developed structures and processes across our district to ensure that every student's learning progress is measured consistently and purposefully, according to shared understanding of proficiency on standards, which allows us to also consistently and purposefully intervene to meet each student's learning needs.

How do priority standards work in the classroom? Priority standards represent the most critical learning outcomes students need for success at the next level. They guide instruction in every classroom, and with the collaboration and dedication of all our staff, ensure that every student in every classroom has consistent learning opportunities and outcomes.

Report cards will contain much more specific information regarding student learning than ever before. Stakeholders will be able to see a final course letter grade, a proficiency level on each standard taught during the course, and a final grade for "Behaviors That Support Learning" in each course. The report card will also contain important information regarding student progress toward graduation and attendance data for the student. It is important to note that Level 3, or "Proficient", is considered as mastery - this is our target score for all students.

EXAMPLE

Course	Behaviors That Support Learning	Grade
Course Title: Algebra 1 Teacher: Mrs. Jones	3	A
Number Operations: MA 11.2.a: Compute with subsets of the complex number system, including imaginary, rational, irrational, integers, whole, and natural numbers.		EMG
Numer Operations: MA 11.2.1.a: Define a function and use function notation.		PRO
Algebraic Process: MA 11.2.c: Simplify algebraic expressions involving integer and fractional exponents.		PRO
Algebraic Process: MA 11.2.j: Factor polynomials to include factoring out monomial terms and factoring quadratic expressions.		ADV
Algebraic Relationships: MA 11.2.1.c: Classify a function given graphs, tables, or algebraic notation, as linear, quadratic, or neither		EMG
Data Probability: MA 11.4.3.b: Use appropriate counting techniques to determine the probability of an event.		PRO
Comment: Your student does an outstanding job of being prepared and on time for class. She displays great leadership skills and works well with her classmates.		

STANDARDS-REFERENCED GRADING KEY	
Advanced (Level 4)	ADV
Proficient (Level 3)	PRO
Emerging (Level 2)	EMG
Basic (Level 1)	BAS

GRADE CALCULATION

Individual assessments such as tests, quizzes, homework, and projects will be assessed using proficiency scales and a 0-4 point scale. Final grades will be recorded with the traditional A+ through F scale. All classes in the high school will use the conversion scale listed below.

There is logic to the system that is quite consistent with the design of the proficiency scale. Namely, the grade of "A" begins at 3.0 because a score of 3.0 indicates that a student has demonstrated understanding of all content in a target learning goal with no major errors or omissions. The student's average score indicates that he or she knows everything that was taught for the target learning goals, he or she should receive an A.

GRADE CONVERSION

Students will still receive letter grades. Letter grades will be calculated using the conversions listed below.

Proficiency Level	Converted Score on Report Card	Proficiency Descriptor	Grade Point (Weighted)
4	A+	ADV	4 (5)
3.5	A	ADV	4 (5)
3.0	A	PRO	4 (5)
2.5	B	EMG	3 (4)
2	C	EMG	2 (3)
1.5	D	BAS	1 (2)
1	F	BAS	0
.5	F	BAS	0

PROFICIENCY LEVELS

- 4** - Exceeds level of expectation of the standard
- 3** - Meets the level of expectations of the standard
- 2** - The student has gained an understanding of the vocabulary and prerequisite knowledge of the standard
- 1** - With help, partial success at level 2 expectations

PROFICIENCY SCALES

A proficiency scale is a table used by teachers and students to determine the student's current level of progress toward meeting the standard. Proficiency scales indicate student achievement as it relates to a given standard and use a four-point system where a score of 3.0 indicates proficiency within a standard.

Score	Performance Level
4	Student goes beyond mastery of standard
3.5	In addition to score 3, partial success at score 4 content
3	Target performance expectation
2.5	No major errors at score 2 content, partial success at score 3 content
2	Student demonstrates success with prerequisite skills and content
1.5	Partial success at score 2 content
1	With help, partial success at score 2 content and score 3 content
.5	With help, partial success at score 2 content but not score 3 content

BODY OF EVIDENCE

Artifacts in a Body of Evidence may include obtrusive, unobtrusive or student-generated assessments. Student progress on all Priority Learning Goals should be determined based on a balanced array of all types of assessment. How many artifacts are needed for a "body of evidence" is determined by teachers, depending on how many pieces of evidence the teacher feels are needed in order to make a confident inference about student learning on that Priority Learning Goal.



BEHAVIORS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING

At South Sioux City High School, we believe that a grade should represent student knowledge and progress toward Nebraska state standards which isn't diluted by other factors that are in traditional grades, such as behaviors, motivation, attendance, etc. However, we also recognize the importance of these "soft skills" and believe it is necessary to provide students and parents with this feedback as well. Along with receiving a letter grade and an indication of how your student is performing on each priority standard, parents will also be provided with a score for "Behaviors That Support Learning." These grades will be given based on a 4 point scale.

Behaviors That Support Learning

Levels	Expectations:
Exceeds expectations	4 - Turns in assignments complete and on time - Arrives to class on time and brings needed materials
Consistently meets expectations	3 - Demonstrates leadership skills and works well with others
Inconsistently meets expectations	2 - Shares information and ideas with classmates in a collegial manner
Rarely meets expectations	1 - Exhibits appropriate digital citizenship skills



"THERE ARE TWO EDUCATIONS. ONE SHOULD TEACH US HOW TO MAKE A LIVING AND THE OTHER HOW TO LIVE."

-JOHN ADAMS