



FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT 79

Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Learning

March 13, 2019

Dear Fremont School District 79 Families:

As you may know, the District has been piloting standards-based grading and will begin implementing this practice in phases starting with mathematics in the 2019-2020 academic year. Additional subjects will follow in subsequent years as we move to full district implementation.

Why Standards-Based Grading?

While there is no body of research to support traditional grading practices, there is a large mass of [research and literature supporting standards-based grading practices](#). Like many districts across the nation, we felt compelled to change our practices to best meet students' needs. We understand that no grading system is perfect and they all have levels of subjectivity. Our goal is to minimize subjectivity and provide our students and parents with the most objective, clear, and informative grading and reporting system possible.

What is Standards-Based Grading?

When we refer to standards-based grading, we are talking about a system of grading that focuses on measuring the attainment of specific learning targets aligned with an accepted set of standards. This system is meant to provide more precise and meaningful information to students, parents, and educators regarding student growth and achievement in comparison to a traditional letter grade and percentage system.

As you can see in the scales below, students will receive academic grades on a four level scale and habits of success grades (i.e. learning behaviors such as completing assigned tasks, using time productively, following directions, etc.) on a three level scale.

2019-2020 - Academic	
4	Extending
3	Meeting
2	Approaching
1	Beginning
N/A	Not Assessed

2019-2020 - Habits of Success	
3	Meeting
2	Approaching
1	Beginning
N/A	Not Assessed

Can You Share a Relatable Example?

As a point of comparison, let's start with the experience of a child learning how to ride a bike. The child may fall down dozens and dozens of times before finally succeeding. If we were grading this child in a traditional grading system, we would average all of these attempts in learning together and calculate a final grade; the child would likely receive a low or failing grade. In a standards-based system, we instead focus on attainment. We would consider these early attempts in learning as practice and focus on whether or not the child ultimately attained the standard of successfully riding a bike.

Furthermore, we want to be clear in our measurements of student growth and achievement and separate out extraneous factors. If the standard we are focused on is riding a bike, we would not measure the child's ability to draw a bike, to tell a story about a bike, to read about a bike, to ride a horse, or factor in their willingness to ride the bike. We are focused on measuring the specific learning outcomes we intended to have the child learn. We are not penalizing students who needed more time than others to meet the expectation. We are also looking for ways to extend their learning and measure performance beyond the expectation (i.e. popping a wheelie or jumping off a ramp).

How Can I Obtain More Information on This Topic?

Stay tuned! There is more to come for those who want to take a deeper dive into this topic. Additional information will be conveyed to you from the District level, the building level, and the classroom level as we move forward.

Can't wait? Our District's [Standards-Based Grading Guidebook](#) has additional information one can peruse that will be articulated further in our future communications. We also have a Parent Information Night planned for Wednesday, April 24 at 6:30 p.m. in the Intermediate School Gym. One of the themes for this evening will be related to standards-based grading. More information will be shared soon regarding this opportunity.

Questions? Classroom specific questions should be directed to your child's teacher(s). If you have questions that are bigger picture, they should first be directed to your building principal.

Thank you,

Dr. Brian Bullis
Assistant Superintendent of Learning
Fremont School District 79