



WillardPublicSchools

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Standards Based Grading
& Reporting Handbook
for
Elementary Teachers

2013 - 2014

CONTENTS

Introduction.....3

Standards Based Instruction.....3

Standards Based Assessment.....3

Standards Based Grading.....3

Guiding Principles of SBG.....4

SBG and Special Populations.....4

SBG and Retention of Students.....4

SBG and Student Motivation.....4

Standards Based Reporting.....5

Frequently Asked Questions.....6

Grading and Reporting Handbook

INTRODUCTION

Willard Public Schools grading and reporting is based on the district's curriculum standards. This system of grading and reporting:

- ◇ Aligns with the Missouri Learning Standards.
- ◇ Provides teachers with resources to communicate in a more exact and consistent manner.
- ◇ Provides parents with comprehensive information about how their child is learning.
- ◇ Incorporates research-based best practices in student grading and reporting.
- ◇ Is delivered through MasteryConnect.

STANDARDS BASED INSTRUCTION

Students concentrate on true mastery of a topic or skill. Teachers concentrate on teaching essential standards that every student must learn. Each lesson taught is connected to a standard, and learning targets mark progress toward meeting a standard. Learning goals are clear and opportunities to meet them are varied.

STANDARDS BASED ASSESSMENT

Students know in advance what they will need to learn, and they will have more than one opportunity to show they have met the standard. Teachers will use both informal and formal assessments, in addition to district common formative and summative assessments, to measure progress. Assessments may include a variety of quizzes, tests, projects, checklists, observations, or other to support multiple assessment opportunities for students. The district has set the level of Mastery at 80%.

Pre-Formative Assessment = An assessment given prior to instruction to check for knowledge and/or understanding of standards.

Post-Formative Assessment = An assessment given after the main body of instruction to check for understanding of standards and plan for re-teaching or remediation, if needed.

Summative Assessment = An assessment given after re-teaching and/or remediation has been completed.

Note: All assessments may not be necessary for each student depending on mastery level.

STANDARDS BASED GRADING

Students are graded on the development of skills and knowledge, what they need to know and can do. This approach measures a student's progress according to how he or she is performing expected standards. It provides more detailed information for the student about individual learning progression rather than comparing student progress to other students. An additional purpose of this type of achievement reporting is to strengthen the home-school partnership and to inform parents concerning student progress. A goal is to provide more grading consistency both within schools and between schools.



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Grading and Reporting Handbook

STANDARDS BASED GRADING

Guiding Principles:

- ◆ Standards Based Grading and Reporting should be clear and meaningful to all stakeholders.
- ◆ Grades should reflect academic standards demonstrating what students know and are able to do.
- ◆ Non-academic indicators are essential in understanding the whole child and may be reported on separately from the academic progress.
- ◆ The teaching of shared standards and providing multiple opportunities/methods to determine proficiency are necessary.
- ◆ Quality instructional activities and assessments are key to the process.

STANDARDS BASED GRADING AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS

All services and accommodations will continue for students with IEPs, 504 Plans, or limited English proficiency. This may mean that students are evaluated according to the goals of individual plans and may also have “custom trackers” in MasteryConnect to reflect current level of performance. The Special Education or ELL teachers will monitor the needs of individual students.

STANDARDS BASED GRADING AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Students receiving additional support to meet standards will be monitored closely throughout the year. Decisions on retaining students will be made using numerous data collection pieces and evidence of student learning. When retention is being considered, a conference between the school and parents will be held.

STANDARDS BASED GRADING AND STUDENT MOTIVATION

How do we motivate students in a standards based system? Student involvement is the key.

- ◆ Identify for students the standards they are expected to learn.
- ◆ Build relevance and help students make connections to new learning.
- ◆ Include students in the assessment process and provide meaningful feedback in terms the student can understand.
- ◆ Have students set their own reasonable goals for improvement.
- ◆ Have students keep individual records of their own achievement.
- ◆ Have students communicate their achievement through self reflection and student-led conferences.

The benefits of student involvement:

- ◆ An enhanced understanding of the learning to take place.
- ◆ A shared vocabulary with the student regarding progress and achievement.
- ◆ Students stay in touch with their own progress and growth, and are more motivated to learn to reach goals.



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Grading and Reporting Handbook

STANDARDS BASED REPORTING

Grade reports and progress reports reflect that a student is at Mastery, Nearing Mastery, or Remediation.

Mastery = A student has independently achieved the standard

Near Mastery = A student is developing an understanding of the standard, but may need additional instruction and support

Remediation = A student has minimal understanding of the standard and requires specific instructional intervention/support

How does the Standards Based Grading & Reporting compare to traditional grading and reporting?

Standards Based	Traditional
Students receive academic mastery levels: Mastery, Nearing Mastery, and Remediation.	Students receive grades represented by a letter or number.
Students' mastery levels are representative of the student's progress at the time of a reporting term.	Students grades are cumulative.
Daily work is practice for students and may receive feedback by means of notes to the student and/or parents. Homework will not receive a grade	Daily work is graded and a student may be penalized for the learning process or practice.

Standards Based Grading and Reporting is communicated through MasteryConnect. Two main reporting structures will be utilized with parents to report progress:

- ◆ Link to live student data for real-time progress monitoring;
- ◆ Report Card for end-of-term reporting of mastery of standards.



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Grading and Reporting Handbook

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the district changing to Standards Based Grading?

In Willard, we believe that grades are about what students learn, not what they earn. Standards Based Grading reports what students should know and be able to do within each content area at each grade level. The real-time monitoring of student performance reflects a more accurate picture of student achievement. Other reasons for SBG include:

- ◆ Current methods of grading do not accurately reflect what a student knows and is able to do. Grades may be clouded by individual teacher subjectivity and/or requirements.
- ◆ Students will be able to explain what they learned or did not learn rather than recite a letter grade or percentage.
- ◆ It will benefit all learners, including those who struggle and those who are accelerated.
- ◆ It provides accurate and meaningful feedback to parents.

Are the older grades moving to SBG?

Yes, with a transition timeline over the next three-four years. We do not know at this time exactly how this will look at the secondary level.

How will I receive feedback about my student's performance?

Parents will utilize a confidential and unique email link to access student performance data. Features included in this format enable parents to see the assessments the student took, level of performance with correct/incorrect responses, and reports which show overall achievement of the class on the same assessment/standards.

Parents will receive end-of-term report cards which reflect a “snapshot” of current student performance. These reports can be accessed via the email link.

Teachers will continue to communicate with parents through notes home, phone call, and parent conferences.

What do grades communicate in a standards based approach?

On the MasteryConnect report card, parents will be able to see current progress toward mastery of standards based on the standards assessed during that term. To help parents better understand the report card, focus on the following:

- ◆ The percentage reflected in the circle is not a traditional grade/percentage. It reflects the current percentage of standards mastered based on what was taught that term. Only a small percentage of standards have been taught at the beginning of the year, which will increase and the year progresses. Draw attention to the Nearing Mastery area as well—students may be quite close to mastery and colors other than “green” do not indicate failure.
- ◆ Convey to parents that many standards are ongoing and mastery is expected at the end of the year. Parents can see this progress in the “term” bar or the “year to date” bar.
- ◆ Draw parents back to the information found in the email link. They will be able to see specific standards and performance there.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How am I going to know if my student is doing okay in relationship to his/her peers?

One goal of SBG is to report individual progress and growth toward mastery, and not to compare students to each other. Teachers will communicate with parents regarding any concerns noted about progress or lack of progress of students.

What does “mastery” mean?

The district level for mastery is 80%. This means that students can perform independently to achieve a standard 80% of the time/with 80% accuracy.

What happens if we move to another district not using SBG?

Report cards can be issued at any time on students. The interpretation of report cards is completed by the receiving school district. Willard Schools is exploring a “translation” document for the receiving district.

If homework is not part of the grade, how will we motivate students to complete it?

When teachers return homework to students with a grade, many students glance briefly at the letter grade or percentage and never look at it again. Teachers use homework, or practice, for timely feedback to students. This conveys the message that homework is important.

When looking my student’s progress, how can I help him/her?

- ◆ Start with what students are doing well—mastery. Discuss what they know and are able to do.
- ◆ Review the standards that need additional support—nearing mastery or remediation. What do they still need to learn?
- ◆ Practice skills at home. If needed, teachers will be able to provide resources that parents can use with their students.

