

Valley Preparatory School

Standards-Based Grading

Handbook



Standards-Based Grading - Key Concepts:

Standards-based grading and reporting provides students, parents, and teachers with more detailed information about student learning than the traditional system of grading. Scores directly reflect student growth and proficiency according to academic standards (content and/or skills) and separate non-academic factors such as effort, participation, punctuality, preparation, and work completion, which are still assessed, but through more appropriate methods.

Two types of assessments	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: This is assessment of learning <i>after</i> instruction and is aligned to specific content standards. Essentially, this grade represents what a student knows (knowledge) and what a student can do (skills). These assessments most often take the form of tests, some quizzes, and large-scale projects. They account for a significant percentage of a student’s final course grade (which appears on the Report Card).
	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS: Consistent feedback given to students throughout the learning process to drive both student learning and teacher instruction. They account for a smaller percentage of the student’s final course grade than summative assessments, but are still crucial to student learning and help track growth. Such assessments might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes • Classwork • Homework (not included in the calculation of final course grades for PS-6th) • Small-scale Projects • Labs • Online work
Student Learning	Student learning is the focus. In standards-based grading, there is an allowance for extra time/opportunities to prove content mastery based on individual student needs. Students may need more time and more than one opportunity to show what they know; our teachers are prepared to allow for multiple opportunities to prove mastery, within reasonably established guidelines.
Academic Behavior	While not the primary factors in determining final course grades, students will be held to high standards in these areas: Effort, Participation, Preparation, Punctuality, and Work Completion. Extracurricular involvement will be determined by these behavioral expectations.
Content Standards	Valley Prep continues to develop content standards to clearly define grade appropriate knowledge/skills. Various “source documents” are used in developing (and amending) these standards, including the Common Core Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards .
Grading Scale	Student growth will be reported and assessed using a learning scale (1 to 4) rather than a traditional “letter-grade” method.
Grade Reporting	A goal of standards-based grading is a clearer communication of student strengths and challenges to directly guide instruction and influence growth and learning. It is essential that we create an environment where students are aware of their own thinking and take responsibility for their own learning. To that end, students will receive feedback in four main areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their level of proficiency with respect to the content standards 2. Their consistency in completing homework and classwork assignments. 3. The degree to which they are demonstrating effort & participation 4. The degree to which they are demonstrating the various elements of the IB Learner Profile & Approaches to Learning (skills)
Proficiency	The teachers’ goal is to have every student performing at a “proficient” (3) level by the end of the school year.

“Depth” of Learning	The grade-scale reflects the fact that students learn in a variety of ways; at different rates; and at varying “depths.” In other words, some students are “deep learners,” able to demonstrate proficiency at understanding a <u>topic</u> ; relating it to a larger <u>concept</u> ; AND then <u>applying</u> what they’ve learned to solve a problem. But some students struggle with concepts and applications. Accordingly, one of the goals of the IB and STEAM programs is to provide more opportunities for “deeper” learning.
Intervention & Enrichment	Formative assessments allow for clearer identification of students’ strengths and challenges. Interventions may be implemented for students who need further focus on specific content standards, while enrichment may be implemented for students who exhibit advanced proficiency in certain content standards, concepts, and applications.
Learning Goals	A learning goal identifies what students will learn or be able to do as a result of instruction, and are clearly expressed to students at the start of each lesson or activity.
Extra Credit	Extra credit is rarely offered. Instead, students may do “retakes” and “redos.” Students will have an opportunity to replace poor summative assessment scores by retaking tests.
Re-takes	As noted above, student learning is always the focus. In standards-based grading, there is an allowance for extra time/opportunities to prove content mastery based on individual student needs. Additionally (and following guidelines which are outlined below), students may re-take certain summative assessments to demonstrate their proficiency.

Rationale for Standards Based Grading SBG @ Valley Prep:

What is Standards-Based Grading?

The goal of standards-based grading is to provide the most accurate picture of student learning. Constant assessment (both formative and summative) will track student **growth**, provide immediate and clear **feedback**, and identify any needs for either **intervention** or **enrichment**. Learning is a process that takes place over time and requires active participation by all those associated with that process – teacher (providing feedback), student (opportunities to practice and present knowledge/skills), and parent (supporting the process). Standards-based grading creates a scenario in which all parties are able to engage in pointed and meaningful conversations about that learning process. As learning is reflected, instruction adapts to support continued growth.

How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?

In the traditional letter-grading system (A,B,C, etc) grades are typically generated from a series of scores from all work assigned in the class, including: classwork, homework, quizzes, tests, and projects, and sometimes even includes non-academic factors, such as: behavior, participation, effort, and attitude.

Standards-based grading, however, focuses primarily on progress toward “proficiency” of the essential standards. For example, in the traditional grading approach, a student who (1) doesn’t consistently complete his/her homework/classwork; (2) is too shy to participate in class discussions; and (3) scores poorly on one chapter-test would likely receive a low-score on their Report Card. In the standards-based grading approach, this student could still demonstrate “proficiency” by being allowed to re-take their test (after completing additional practice). Their participation in class-discussions is noted separately on the Report Card, and their reluctance to submit assignments on-time would not be the primary factor in determining the final grade on their Report Card. Again, the main goal of standards-based grading is to accurately reflect a student’s level of understanding of a topic, concept, or application.

Learning Scale:

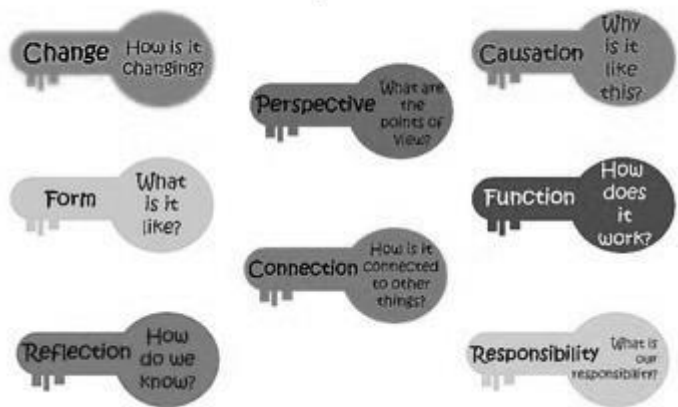
4	Accomplished	I can take my learning to a higher level I CAN confidently take the <u>topics</u> , content standards, and <u>concepts</u> (big ideas) being taught and <u>apply</u> them to other situations.
3	Proficient	I can do it on my own I CAN consistently demonstrate my broad understanding of the <u>topics</u> , content standards, and <u>concepts</u> (big ideas) being taught, but often struggle to discuss and <u>apply</u> my knowledge beyond the required assignment.
2	Developing	I need some support to be successful I CAN demonstrate my basic understanding of the <u>topics</u> and content standards being taught when the tasks are familiar, but need help to <u>apply</u> my knowledge beyond the required assignment, and to consistently demonstrate my understanding of the <u>concepts</u> (big ideas) being presented.
1	Emerging	I need a lot of support to be successful I CAN begin a task on my own, but require help in completing the task and understanding the <u>topics</u> and content standards being taught; <u>applying</u> my knowledge beyond the required assignment; and demonstrating my understanding of the <u>concepts</u> (big ideas) being presented.
X	Not Assessed this trimester	

Concepts vs. Topics?

One of the main goals of the IB-PYP and STEAM program is to provide opportunities for “deeper” learning in which students can use over-arching **concepts** (big ideas) to make connections across the curriculum. In the IB-PYP, **key-concepts** are used to create these connections, and include: Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, Responsibility and Reflection.

- Example of a TOPIC (standard): types of dinosaurs
- Example of a CONCEPT: How a change in the environment caused the extinction of the dinosaurs

IB PYP Key Concepts



As noted above ... some students are able to demonstrate proficiency at understanding a topic; relating it to a larger concept; and then applying what they’ve learned to solve a problem. But some students struggle with concepts and applications.

What are Domains?

Each subject can have dozens of topics (standards) associated with it. To help parents (and teachers) better organize this content, the standards are divided into categories, or “domains.” These domains will appear on the student’s Report Cards. For example, all of the individual standards in math are organized under three domains: Operations; Measurement & Data; and Geometry.

Homework

Homework is considered a formative assessment (see above) and represents what students do to better-learn the content and practice the skills, but it is NOT a final decree of proficiency for any objective or assessment. Course Grades (on the Report Card), on the other hand, reflect a summative declaration of what students know and are able to do regarding a standard. **Accordingly, in most instances, homework in PS-8th is NOT included in the students' final course grades.** It is noted on the Report Card separately as “effort.”

How Course Grades are Calculated (summative vs. formative assessments)

In a “traditional” grading system, all student-work is averaged together to come-up with the course grade that appears on the Report Card. In a standards-based grading system, it’s a bit different. Let’s use math as an example ...

Math is divided into three categories of study, called **domains**. Adding & subtracting, for example, falls into the domain called “Operations.” During a Trimester, students will be assessed on a variety of topics (called “standards”) which comprise the domain. During a typical trimester, students will probably be assessed on four or five topics/standards (i.e. four or five separate assessments, one for each topic/standard).

Each assessment (called a **summative-assessment**) includes higher-level questions that determine the “depth” of the student’s learning (i.e. a “deep learner” is able to apply what they have learned to solve problems). If a student scores poorly on one such assessment, they will likely be able to **retake** that assessment (see “Re-take Policy” below). Typically, the highest score is then used in determining the student’s level of “proficiency” for that particular topic/standard. Accordingly, at the end of the trimester, students will likely have four or five summative assessments which comprise the majority of the course-grade that appears on the Report Card next to the appropriate domain (such as “operations”).

In addition to the summative assessments, there are a variety of **formative-assessments** (i.e. classwork, labs, etc) that contribute to the final course-grade in different ways (depending upon the grade level). But summative-assessments are the main factor in determining the final course grades.

K-5 Retake Policy:

One of the greater benefits of standards-based grading is that students have opportunities to truly display their mastery of content knowledge and skills - even if that doesn’t happen during the initial assessment. It is the right of every student to retake summative assessments, provided students have adequately prepared for retakes, per confirmation of the teacher. Therefore, the following policy outlines the process for students to participate in summative assessment re-takes:

- **WHY:** The teacher will encourage a student to re-take a summative assessment if ...
 1. the student scored below the “proficiency” level on that summative assessment
 2. and, the student’s formative assessments (i.e. homework and classwork) have been submitted in a timely-manner.
NOTE: Beginning in 5th grade, the re-take should be initiated by the student.
- **WHEN:** The student re-takes the summative assessment at a time indicated by the teacher (usually afterschool) within two weeks of the original assessment **AFTER** completing the following:
 1. The student corrects the original assessment
 2. The student completes any additional practice that is assigned by the teacher
 3. The teacher completes the required form (or emails the parent)
- **HOW MANY TIMES:** A summative assessment can be re-taken once
- **HOW MUCH CREDIT:** The higher of the two scores (original assessment and the re-take) will be used in determining the student’s course-grade
- **RE-TAKES WHEN ABSENT:** Only those students who have an “excused” absence on the day of the original assessment will be allowed to re-take that same assessment.

Middle School Retake Policy

A Middle School student can request to retake a Summative Assessment if:

1. The student scored an 85% or below.
1. ALL practice exercises were completed prior to the assessment
2. The student has completed a "Request to Retest" form COMPLETELY, submitted it to the appropriate teacher, and scheduled a conference to review the form.

Retakes must be completed before or after school *within 10 calendar days* of the initial assessment **OR** by the first Wednesday after a major vacation or the end of the trimester.

Late Work Policy

Homework: Keeping-in-mind that homework assignments are not typically used in calculating a student's final course grade, they should still be completed and submitted to the teacher in order to receive useful feedback.

Classwork: Classwork is sometimes considered a formative assessment which comprises a part of a student's final course grade (which appears on the Report Card). Students must submit these assignments on-time or risk being down-graded. Students who are absent (for an "excused" reason) may be required to make-up these assignments. For students with "unexcused" absences, the school is not obligated to allow the student to make-up missed assignments or assessments, nor is the school obligated to provide assignments ahead-of-time.

Major assignments: These are assignments such as large projects or research papers, and can be considered as formative OR summative assessments. Accordingly, they can comprise a significant percentage of a student's final course grade. Students must submit these assignments on-time or risk being down-graded. Students who are absent (for an "excused" reason) will be given additional time to complete the assignment. For students with "unexcused" absences, the school is not obligated to allow the student to make-up missed assignments or assessments, nor is the school obligated to provide assignments ahead-of-time.

	4 Always (A)	3 Generally/Usually (G)	2 Sometimes (S)	1 Rarely (R)
Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE STUDENT ALWAYS stays focused on the task • THE STUDENT ALWAYS shares information or ideas when participating • THE STUDENT ALWAYS works well independently and/or in a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE STUDENT GENERALLY stays focused on the task • THE STUDENT GENERALLY shares information or ideas when participating • THE STUDENT GENERALLY works well independently and/or in a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE STUDENT SOMETIMES stays focused on the task, but often needs to be reminded. • THE STUDENT SOMETIMES shares information or ideas when participating, but often needs prompting • THE STUDENT SOMETIMES works well independently and/or in a group, but often struggles to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE STUDENT RARELY stays focused on the task and almost always needs to be reminded. • THE STUDENT RARELY shares information or ideas when participating and almost always needs prompting • THE STUDENT RARELY works well independently and/or in a group and almost always needs the guidance.