

# STANDARDS BASED GRADING

## THINKING ABOUT GRADES

"Teachers must make thoughtful changes to their systems for reporting student learning and progress to parents and others. Just as assessment practices need to be authentic, so do reporting practices." - Bailey & Guskey

"The time has come to de-emphasize traditional grades and to demystify the entire grading process. We need to focus instead on the process of learning and the progress of the individual student." - Kay Burke

"If you wanted to make JUST ONE change that would immediately reduce student failure rates, then the most effective place to start would be challenging prevailing grading practices." – Douglas Reeves

*This resource includes examples from the following schools/districts:*

- *Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, Colorado*
- *Naperville North High School, Naperville, Illinois*
- *Federal Way Public Schools, Washington*
- *Spokane Public Schools, Spokane, Washington*
- *Excelsior Springs High School, Excelsior Springs School District, Excelsior Springs, Missouri*
- *David Crockett High School, Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas*

## PowerPoint: **HOW TO GRADE FOR LEARNING USING 15 FIXES FOR BROKEN GRADES**

Presented by Ken O'Connor

(162 slide presentation – available on line in .pdf format)

<http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/sites/default/files/Ken%20O'Connor%20GFPS%20Aug%2013,%202012.pdf>

*Introduction*

*Why Grade?*

*Perspectives on Grading*

*Grading Practices and Issues*

*Fixes for Broken Grades*

*Summary and Reflections*

*Fixes for ingredients that distort achievement*

1. *Don't include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) in grades; include only achievement.*
2. *Don't reduce marks on 'work' submitted late; provide support for the learner.*
3. *Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points.; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.*
4. *Don't punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades; apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.*
5. *Don't consider attendance in grade determination; report absences separately.*

6. *Don't include group scores in grades; use only individual achievement evidence.*
7. *Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade; organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals.*
8. *Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards; provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations.*
9. *Don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students; compare each student's performance to preset standards.*
10. *Don't rely on evidence gathered from assessments that fail to meet standards of quality; rely only on quality assessments.*
11. *Don't rely on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment.*
12. *Don't include zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient evidence.*
13. *Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades; use only summative evidence.*
14. *Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities; in those instances emphasize more recent achievement.*
15. *Don't leave students out of the grading process. Involve students – they can – and should – play key roles in assessment and grading that promote achievement.*

## **POWERPOINT: HIGH SCHOOL GRADING FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

Tom Schimmer, Okanagan-Skaha, Penticton, BC

<http://www.slideshare.net/guest878956f0/high-school-grading-for-the-21st-century>

*a sampling of slides from the PowerPoint presentation:*

*Grading Misrules*

- *Giving students a second chance is soft.*
  - *Life is full of do-overs.*
- *Academic rigor means setting unreasonable expectations*
  - *Is about accountability*
- *The punishment paradigm produces the epiphany*
  - *...more likely to quit!*
- *Students who are unsuccessful didn't try*
  - *"Can't" do vs. "Won't" do*

*Stop*

1. *Grading Homework*
2. *Reducing Scores for late work.*
3. *Using "0" for work not handed in.*

*NO Grades for Practice (our position)*

*Anytime a student makes a first attempt at practicing new learning it should not be included in the grade book until the teacher provides descriptive feedback on the student's work.*

*NO Late Penalties (our position)*

*Students should be graded on the quality of their work (their ability to meet the desired learning targets) rather than how punctual the assignment is.*

*What's in a Grade?*

*(Ministry of Education in British Columbia)*

*"...letter grades will be used to indicate students' levels of performance in relation to the learning outcomes for each course or subject or grade."*

*NO Zeroes (Our position)*

**VIDEO: Standards-Based Grading Overview** - youtube video (3 minutes and 22 seconds)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7m4762pjH8>

Standards-Based Grading (SBG) helps teachers: focus on learning goals, design effective assessments, and give better feedback to our students.

**Aurora Public Schools, Colorado: Standards-Based Grading**

"As part of the VISTA 2015 vision to "graduate every student with the choice to attend college without remediation," APS has expanded the implementation of a standards-based grading system. APS successfully implemented Standards-Based Grading in all of their high schools in January 2012. (see PowerPoint, FAQs, and resources)

<http://aurorak12.org/parents/sbg/>

**Naperville North High School**

Naperville Community Unit School District 203

Naperville, Illinois

Standards Based Grading

Naperville North High School's website includes information on Standards Based Grading, including a Principal's letter, NNHS Grading Understandings, SBG Implementation Timeline, FAQs, Standards Based Grading Vocabulary, Standards Based Grading Research, NNHS Standards Based Grading Courses, and the School Family Community Partnership (SFCP) of Naperville North High School

See <http://schools.naperville203.org/north/schoolinformation/GradingStandards.asp>

**Federal Way Public Schools, Washington**

*(Includes 37 schools, 35 square miles - Federal Way, Kent, Des Moines, Auburn and several unincorporated areas, Washington)*

**Standards Based Education The right thing to do — for all of our students**

"Federal Way Public Schools' standards-based education system establishes challenging and appropriate learning targets for all students.

We do this in every course, at every grade level, and in every classroom. We use standards-based education across the district to ensure our entire students graduate with the critical knowledge and 21st century skills.

## What is SBE?

- 1 Standards-based learning provides the foundation for 21st century learning opportunities that prepare students for today, tomorrow and the future.
- 2 Provides a fair and objective way to evaluate students based on what they have learned while providing the appropriate level of challenge and rigor.
- 3 Gives teachers a powerful system for teaching.
- 4 Helps parents be knowledgeable participants in their students' education."

(See also a video on Standards-Based Grading)

<http://www.fwps.org/teaching/?/families/9-12.html>

## Spokane Schools

Spokane Public School District

Spokane, Washington

Curriculum Connection

Standards based Grading and Reporting (SBGR)

<http://www.spokaneschools.org/Page/16308>

Includes:

- Standards Based Grading and Reporting Handbook for Secondary (Parents)
- Standards Based Grading and Reporting Handbook for Secondary (Teachers)
- Parent Access to Student Standards Grades (Shaw parents only)
- Grading Principles: A Filter for the Work in Spokane Public Schools
- Implementation Timeline
- Grading Principles: A Filter for the Work in Spokane Public Schools
  - Grades and Reports Should Be Based on Clearly Specified Learning Goals and Performance Standards
  - Evidence Used for Grading Should be Valid
  - Grading Should be based on Established Criteria, Not on Arbitrary Norms
  - Not Everything Should be included in Grades
  - Avoid Grading Based on (Mean) Averages
  - Focus on Achievement, and Report Other Factors Separately
  - The Negative Impact of Zeros

## Excelsior Springs High School

Standards-Based Grading

Frequently Asked Questions

Excelsior Springs School District

Excelsior Springs, Missouri

<http://hs.essd40.com>

## **David Crockett High School**

Austin Independent School District

Austin, Texas

### **Standards Based Grading FAQs**

[http://www.crocketths.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=141157&type=d](http://www.crocketths.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=141157&type=d)

“What is Standards Based Grading? Standards Based Grading is a refined way of reporting what students know and how they demonstrate their learning of state content standards.”

See also Standards Based Grading School Structures, describing the ways in which course-specific PLCs work at David Crockett High School.

[http://www.crocketths.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=141157&type=d&pREC\\_ID=274764](http://www.crocketths.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=141157&type=d&pREC_ID=274764)

### **SOME REFERENCES FOR EFFECTIVE GRADING PRACTICE** (A work in progress)

Brookhart, S. Grading, Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, 2004

Canady, R. and P.R. Hotchkiss, “It’s a Good Score: Just a Bad Grade,” Kappan, September 1989, 68-71

Cooper, D., Talk About Assessment, Thmoson Nelson, 2007

Donen, T. Grades Don’t Matter, Fairview High Schook TN, 2011.

Guskey, T.R. and J. Bailey, Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning, Corwin, 2001.

Kagan, S., “Group Grades Miss the Mark,” Educational Leadership, May 1995, 68-71.

Kohn, A., Grading: The Issue is not How but Why,” Educational Leadership, October 1994, 38-41.

Marzano, Robert (2006), Classroom Assessment and Grading that Work, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Marzano, Robert J., Formative Assessment and Standards Based Grading: Classroom Strategies That Work, Bloomington, Indiana: Marzano Research Library

O’Connor, K., How to Grade for Learning: Linked Grades to Standards, Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA 2009

O’Connor, K., A Repair Kit for Grading: Fifteen Fixes for Broken Grades with DVD, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Assessment Training Institute, inc., 2010

Reeves, Douglas, Elements of Grading: A Guide to Effective Practice, Solution Tree, 2011

Sciffiny, Patricia L., "Seven Reasons for Standards Based Grading," Educational Leadership, ASCD, October 2008, Volume 66, Number 2, pages 70-74.

*"Grades should have Meaning, We Need to Challenge the Status Quo, We Can Control Grading Practices, Standards-Based Grading Reduces Meaningless Paperwork, Helps Teachers Adjust Instruction, Teaches What Quality Looks Like, It's a Launchpad to Other Reforms"*

[http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Seven\\_Reasons\\_for\\_Standards-Based\\_Grading.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Seven_Reasons_for_Standards-Based_Grading.aspx)

Stiggins, R. et al, Classroom Assessment for Student Learning, ETS, Portland, 2004.

Wiggins, G., "Honesty and Fairness: Toward Better Grading and Reporting," in Guskey, T.R. (Editor), Communicating Student Learning: THE ASCD Yearbook, Alexandria, VA, 1996, 141-177.

Wormell, R., Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom, Stenhouse/NMSA, 2006.