

Blevins Middle School Standards Based Grading Guidelines

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this communication is to further explain details related to Standards-Based Grading and how it impacts your student and the reporting of grades. This information is in addition to the information teachers have shared and the presentations that were given on “Back-to-School Night.” This year at Blevins, all students will receive two separate grades in each class. (Content Knowledge and Work Habits) This system aligns with Blevins’s commitment to provide rigorous curriculum for all students that meet state and national standards-based requirements. While Blevins is one of the first four middle schools in Poudre School District to implement this grading system, it is neither new nor experimental. All PSD middle schools will make this transition over the next year. Many districts around Colorado have utilized this system for several years, and schools throughout the country have been using similar systems for over a decade. This document explains how Content Knowledge Grades and Work Habits Grades will be determined and reported. This system of grading and reporting will communicate more effectively student’s mastery of district/state, and the development of student work habits.

The advantage of this system over the previous traditional grading system can be demonstrated through the following example:

Charlene is a kindergarten student. The essential learning standard to be achieved is the ability to count to 10. On the first assessment Charlene was only able to count to 2 or 20%. On the next assessment, she was able to count to 3 or (30%). On the following assessment, she was able to count to 5 or (50%). On the final assessment, Charlene met the standard by counting to 10 fluently with no mistakes. On this final assessment she received 10 out of 10 or 100%.

In the traditional grading system her assessments would be averaged and her grade therefore would be a 50% or F. With standards-based grading, Charlene would receive a “4” which would communicate her proficiency of the standard at an advanced level. Using the new grading system will more clearly reflect what a student has accomplished regarding his/her learning and what he/she is able to achieve. It will help students, teachers and parents understand who needs additional help to learn the material, and who needs acceleration or enrichment.

How are Content Grades determined?

1. Content Grades are based on student demonstration of academic achievement on district standards where assessments will be weighted as 90% and practice/homework will be weighted 10% of the final grade. Grades will be determined through the use of multiple assessments over time as well as the opportunity for retakes, when necessary. Retake opportunities/multiple opportunities for demonstration of learning are an integral part of standards-based grading system and one of the attributes that separate it from a traditional grading system.

How are Work Habits grades determined?

1. Work Habits Grades are based on student demonstration of behaviors related to work completion, preparedness for learning, participation, and following classroom expectations. These behaviors contribute to academic success, as well as the ability to be life-long learners and positive contributors to society. Specifically, work habits grades are based on tasks that are assigned for practice or preparation, including homework completion and homework quality and by other factors such as class participation, work ethic, neatness, effort, attendance, punctuality of assignments, class behavior and attitude, student notebooks and journals.

2. What does 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0 mean?

This system does translate easily to traditional grades as follows:

- Numeral “4” = A = 90 – 100% = “Advanced” = Exceeds standards/checkpoints for this grading period.
- Numeral “3” = B = 80– 89% = “Proficient” = Meets standards/checkpoints for this grading period.
- Numeral “2” = C = 70 – 79% = “Partially Proficient/Developing” = is progressing toward standards/checkpoints for the grading period.
- Numeral “1” = D = 60 – 69% = “In-Progress” or “Emerging” = Does not meet standards/checkpoints for this grading period. Interventions are necessary for standards/checkpoints in this grading period.
- Numeral “0” = F = 59 = “I” or “Insufficient Evidence.” Interventions are necessary for standards/checkpoints in this grading period. (The Gradebook software will not allow Blevins to record an “I” at this time, so “I” will be represented by a “0”).

So, why shift from letters to numbers if they mean the same thing? The difference comes in what they reflect and how they are weighted in the final analysis. Assessments (commonly known as tests) are 90% of a student’s grade. The reason for this is that they are the best reflection of what the student can really do independently. Homework/practice is also given a grade, but it ultimately counts for only 10% of the grade. This is important work to be sure but may involve help from peers and adults (parents, teachers). It is the work that leads to the point where a student can demonstrate on a test that they have reached the learning standard.

Report Cards

Report Cards will reflect both an academic grade and work habits grade (in the comment section.)

Academic Grades -For the 2009-10 school-year, Report Cards will reflect an A, B, C, D, and F “letter grade” reported to parents and students only because this is what our current Gradebook/PIV technology will allow. In reality, these letter grades correlate to a 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 scale of proficiency. Assessment and assignment grades in Gradebook will be represented by the 0-4 scale and then be converted to a letter grade. Gradebook will also “weight” the two grading categories: 10% for practice/homework and 90% for assessments. If the technology was available in our grading software, letter grades would be discontinued for this year. So when a letter grade is reported, translate it to a number based on the following scale. Poudre School District’s grading software will be updated for the 2010-11 school year and only Mastery Scores and Mastery Levels will be reported.

Report Card Scale Points

<i>Mastery Score</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Mastery Levels</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>3.6 and above</i>	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>2.6 – 3.55</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>1.6 – 2.55</i>	<i>Partially Proficient</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>.6 – 1.55</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>0</i>	<i>0 - .55</i>	<i>Insufficient Evidence</i>	<i>F</i>

If you have questions or need further information, please contact your student’s teacher, Blevins counselor, Mr. Davis, Candace Martin O’Connor or myself (Mr. Linehan).