



Standards-Based Grading for Parents

What is Standards-Based Grading Education?

Standards-Based Grading (SBG) is a philosophy and practice that focuses on a student's proficiency as they progress towards mastery of a clearly defined standard. The Bermuda Public School System defines these standards as *priority standards*. These defined outcomes of learning will be developed for each content area over the next few years. This grading system looks at how well a student has demonstrated proficiency over time in each grade level and reports out how they are progressing on each skill.

What exactly are priority standards?

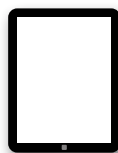
Priority standards are the most significant skills and understandings that pertain to each grade and are specific to each subject. These standards are taken directly from the Cambridge International Education (CIE) and Ministry of Education curricula. Each standard builds upon the previous grade level and progresses to the next. It is beneficial for parents to understand the standard outcomes of the year level above and below their child's current level. Even though priority standards have been defined, it is expected that the curriculum in its entirety be taught.



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What is the difference between a traditional grading system and a Standards-Based Grading system?

With Standards-Based Grading, a student's grade reflects their academic achievement only. In a traditional grading system other elements such as attendance, effort, behavior, homework, or group work may attribute to the final numerical grade. While these habits are important to student success, in a Standards-Based Grading system those things are recorded separately from a student's academic performance. With traditional grading, students are primarily measured by the percentage of work successfully completed. The assumption is made that if a student receives a high percentage the student is progressing towards mastery of the curriculum standard. However, a percentage grade does not actually communicate to parents how a student is progressing towards achieving mastery around certain content and skills.

What changes will parents see?

Proficiency scale scores (0 – 4) will replace letter grades or percentages. The proficiency scale scores are linked to descriptions of what students are learning. Specifically, the descriptions show a progression of simpler content to more complex content of what students should know and be able to do.

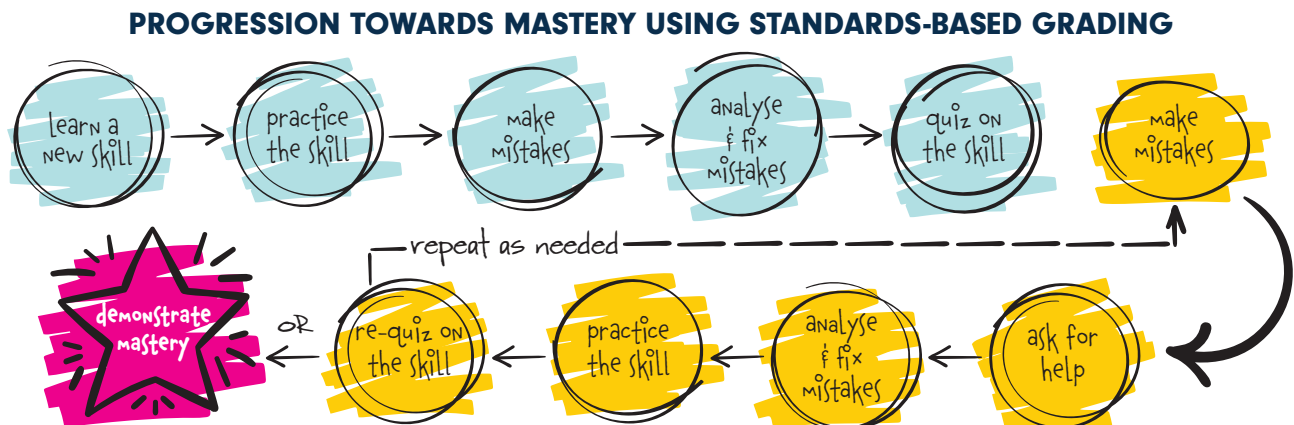


Figure 1: Progression Towards Mastery Using Standards-Based Grading

What is a proficiency scale?

A proficiency scale shows a progression of learning of a skill. Think of it as, “I can do this, now I can do that, now I can do the other.” These scales help students and teachers clearly identify what knowledge must be taught and demonstrated at each level of progress. These scales assist teachers in giving more specific and timely feedback to students about the next step in their learning. The scales are scored from 0 – 4. A level 3 on each proficiency scale is considered ‘the standard’ or mastery. Level 2 contains important vocabulary and less difficult content that a student must know in order to successfully engage in Level 3 content. A score of 4 indicates a student has reached proficiency and demonstrated knowledge above the grade-level standard.

Each learning outcome is laid out in a continuum and student scores can fluctuate based upon their ability to continually display their full knowledge of any standard. Students earn a score between 0 – 4 to assess their level of knowledge on each proficiency scale.






Proficiency Scale for Standards-Based Grading			
4	ADVANCED		The student has demonstrated proficiency and can apply knowledge above and beyond the standard.
3	PROFICIENT *TARGET AREA*		Student has mastered the standard.
2	PROGRESSING		Student is able to demonstrate some understanding of the concept required by the standard, but lacks proficiency in key areas.
1	BEGINNING		Student has difficulty demonstrating understanding and needs help to complete key tasks.
0	NO EVIDENCE		Even with help, the student has demonstrated no understanding or skill required by the standard.

Figure 2: Proficiency Scale for Standards-Based Grading

Sample P2 Math Proficiency Scale

Figure 3: Sample P2 Math Proficiency Scale

	Strand: Measure
	Topic: Time
	Grade: Primary 2
Score 4.0	In addition to Score 3.0, in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught.
Score 3.0	<p>The student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the time to the half hour on digital and analog clocks Know and order the days of the week and the months of the year <p>The student exhibits no major errors or omissions</p>
Score 2.0	<p>There are no major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes as the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the time to the hour on digital and analog clocks Know the units of time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years) Recognizes or recalls specific terminology, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seconds, minutes, hours hour hand, minute hand digital and analog Performs basic processes, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the minute, hour on an analog clock knows the function of the minute and hour hand read time to the hour on a digital or analog clock <p>However, the student exhibits major errors or omissions regarding the more complex ideas and processes</p>
Score 1.0	With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes
Score 0.0	Even with help, no understanding or skill demonstrated

What are the benefits of Standards-Based Grading?

- ✓ Grades are more accurate because they are based on clearly defined standards and well-defined success criteria.
- ✓ Students have multiple opportunities and different assessment types to demonstrate what they know. (see figure 1, page 2)
- ✓ Expectations for learning are calibrated across schools.
- ✓ Learning outcomes are communicated in student/parent-friendly language.
- ✓ Meaningful grading practices focus on academic performance and student behavior separately.
- ✓ Teachers can quickly adjust instruction to meet each student's particular need.
- ✓ A growth mindset and motivation is fostered as students understand that learning is a continuum and they are on a journey towards proficiency that is based on them as an individual and their own learning pace.
- ✓ Grades are now used to communicate the extent to which a child has demonstrated understanding.
- ✓ Students are able to monitor, reflect on and determine their own progress as they focus on achieving a clearly defined learning outcome.
- ✓ Report card grades are less mysterious and have more meaning.
- ✓ Parents are aware of exactly what their child knows, is able to do, and next steps for progress.
- ✓ Parents know in what areas their child needs more support.
- ✓ Parents are empowered to increase their child's confidence and help their students set goals.



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Why use Standards-Based Grading?

Our goal is to improve student learning by giving students and parents timely feedback that is:

ACCURATE: Feedback should give students a clear picture of what they have learned and should identify the next step in their learning.

CONSISTENT: Every student has the same expectation and learning outcomes to demonstrate proficiency for the grade level.

MEANINGFUL: The feedback on each skill is specific to that learning outcome. This is a direct correlation to the expectations of the proficiency scales assessed.

SUPPORTIVE OF LEARNING: Focus is given to capture a clear picture of what students are able to do and where they still need support to succeed. Therefore, every child will be receiving instruction based upon their individual needs.

Video Resources

[Standards-Based Grading Overview \(3:21\)](#)

[Rick Wormeli on Standards-Based Grading \(4:41\)](#)

[Rick Wormeli on Why Zeros Hurt \(8:43\)](#)

[Sal Khan – Let's Teach for Mastery \(10:49\)](#)

These links work!

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Questions?

Send them to sbg@moed.bm

