

Why have we transitioned to standards-based grading for students in grades 3-5?

We believe that the scoring system used in standards-based grading (SBG) is a more effective communication tool than traditional letter grades. It provides more detailed feedback to the student, teacher and parents about a child's academic progress allowing them to learn more effectively. SBG was already in place for our JK-grade 2 students, so this allows for consistency across the lower school.

How is standards-based grading different than letter grades?

Standards-based grading more accurately represents the progress toward proficiency of standards than traditional grading does. Subject areas are subdivided into big ideas related to standards and outcomes that students need to learn or master.

Traditional grading averages a student's achievement data (a number grade) with other criteria, such as work habits. SBG focuses solely on a student's academic achievement and continued evidence that indicates a true assessment of their present attainment of learning. Work habits are reported separately from the academics.

Why aren't grades just averaged?

Because the purpose of SBG is to report what students actually know and are able to do, averaging does not represent an accurate picture of where a student is in his/her learning. A student who struggles in a class at the beginning of a grading period and receives poor grades, but who keeps working and by the end of the grading period can clearly demonstrate competence in the subject, should receive a grade that reflects that competence. The average is a fixture in most grading systems, but the average does not always represent the data accurately. Consider two students, Stewart and Maria. Stewart earns the following scores: 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85 and 85. The average is not difficult to calculate, and Stewart's grade is posted as a B. Maria struggles in math and turns in this performance: 50, 60, 65, 70, 80, 85, 90, 90, and 90. Her mean score of a little over 75 would result in a C on her report card, but it is obvious that Maria now understands the math even though she struggled in the beginning.

How will student progress be measured?


Teachers collect evidence of student understanding through class work, projects, and test data then evaluate overall performance using the following scale: **4 – 3 – 2 – 1**.

If the score of **0** is ever recorded in Canvas, it means that your child has not yet turned in that assessment.


So is a 4 like an A, a 3 like a B and so on?

No. While it may feel as though SBG performance scale scores are easy to translate to the traditional A, B, C, D, F, it is actually quite difficult, and should be avoided. Think of the two grading methods as totally different languages. Below is a brief explanation of each score along with an analogy to help make the scoring system more clear.


A 1 is a very narrow range which communicates that the student has made little or no progress toward the standard and cannot accomplish work without assistance from the teacher.

	1	Not Meeting The Standard You are riding a bike, but using training wheels
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A 2 includes student performance that ranges from just a little closer to the standard than a 1, to just a little short of meeting the standard of a 3. Students in this range show moments of mastery, but cannot complete the skill independently and consistently.

	2	Progressing Toward the Standard You are pedaling well and staying upright as long as someone is holding on and giving you a little push.
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A 3 indicates that the student can independently and consistently meet the standard and is right where we expect them to be.

	3	Meeting the Standard Congratulations! You are successfully riding a bike by yourself.
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A 4 is quite narrow because it indicates that not only has the student met the standard, but has also taken the skills and concepts and transferred them with greater complexity and depth.

	4	Exceeding the Standard Wow! You not only ride a bike on your own, but you can pop a wheelie, jump ramps, and perform other bike stunts.
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Does homework influence my child's final score?

Homework is practice. As with any learned skill (soccer, piano, driving) practice is extremely important and valuable as it prepares you to perform. Our desire is for practice to be a safe place to fail and grow without unnecessary pressure. It is an opportunity for the student to learn what they know and what they don't know and bring their questions into class. Therefore, homework scores will not influence the final score a student receives in a class. That being said, the school is still building the habit of responsibility and accountability by recording late or missing homeworks. A score will be assigned for homework completion on the report card each semester.