RUSD **Standards Based** Grading System

RACINE UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

June 2021

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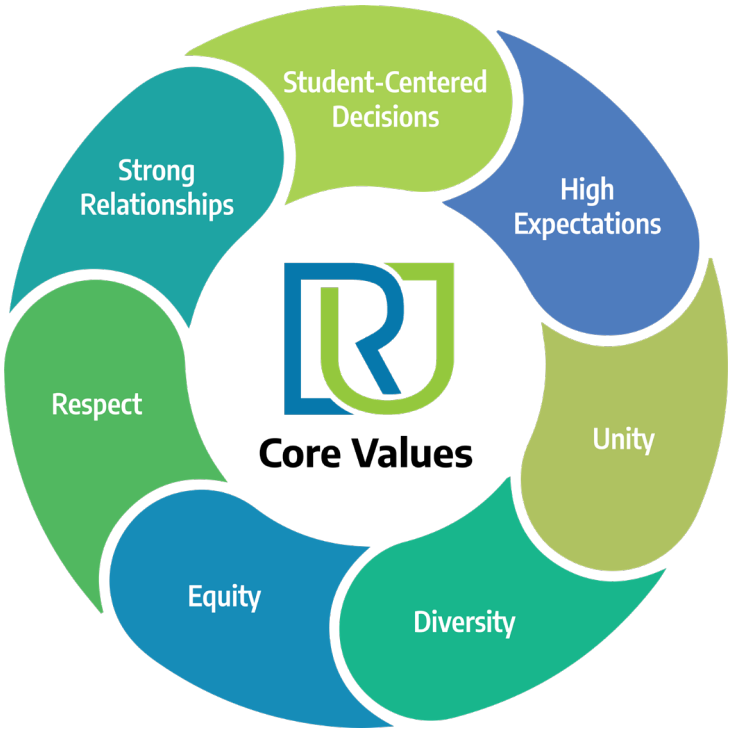
Vision - *All students graduate career and/or college ready*

Our North Star Vision that all students graduate career and/or college ready guides our highly qualified educators in providing rigorous and engaging learning experiences for our students.

In RUSD, our Vision, along with our Core Values, form the basis of the work we do each day to ensure every student exceeds expectations. Our Core Values were collaboratively developed by teacher and District leaders in a process that gathered input from all employees and RUSD families. Our Core Values reflect the priorities of the District and establish the essential foundations for decision-making and collaborative work. Our Core Values ensure that the organization moves forward in ways that reflect the values and beliefs of everyone. The first Core Value places students at the center of all actions and decisions at the classroom, school, District and Board of Education levels.



Student Centered Decisions

We are best when students are first. All decisions are centered on the needs of the whole child.

High Expectations

We hold high expectations for our students and ourselves.

Strong Relationships

Success requires strong, respectful partnerships with our colleagues, families and community.

Unity

We thrive when we support one another and work collaboratively.

Diversity

Our diversity is our strength and an asset.

Equity

Everyone deserves a respectful, safe and positive school environment.

Respect

Everyone deserves a respectful, safe and positive school environment.

Board of Education Results Policy

All graduates will successfully demonstrate: Academic Achievement, Workplace Skills, Global Citizenship, and Life Skills.

RUSD Guiding Principles

The purpose of standards is to guide expectations for student attainment of prioritized knowledge and skills in a discipline. The purpose of grades is to accurately reflect individual student achievement as related to academic standards and College and Career readiness.

Grading and Feedback: Students learn best through a system of clear learning targets, quality formative assessment, developmental feedback, and the opportunity to respond to that feedback in order to guide their effort toward higher levels of understanding.

A process of formative assessment, developmental feedback, summative assessment, and standards based grading has the following purposes:

- To support student learning by helping students understand the relationship between their current performance and the desired/next level of performance.
- To support student effort by helping students understand the relationship between the effectiveness of their effort and their growth over time.
- To develop each student's ability to think critically about his or her own work.
- To encourage students to take risks that result in the development of new skills and deeper learning.
- To inform teachers about student progress toward learning targets so teachers can provide responsive instruction.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment that enhances student learning in a standards based system typically includes:

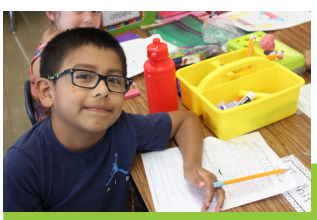
- Frequent use of standards-aligned formative assessments to guide teaching and learning.
- Frequent use of timely, quality feedback, and standards-aligned rubrics that are communicated to, and understood by, the learner.
- Involvement of students in self-assessment of their progress toward standards and revision of their work throughout the teaching/learning process.

Grading and Reporting: The School District recognizes that formal grade reporting is necessary to provide summative information about student performance, and that information is used by various stakeholders.

The process of summative assessment and grade reporting has the following purposes:

- To apprise the student, parents, teaching staff and administration of how well the student meets prioritized standards in a grade level or course.
- To provide an official record of student performance to advise stakeholders about next steps in the student's educational sequence (promotion, prerequisites, college admission, employers, etc.).

To ensure grading and grades support and accurately measure student progress toward standards, grading practices throughout the district must be accurate, meaningful, and consistent.



RUSD Guiding Principles

Accuracy ensures each student's grades reflect achievement in relation to prioritized standards. The following principles can be used to ensure the accuracy of grading in a standards based system:

- Giving priority to evidence related to the most important skills and knowledge as reflected in prioritized standards.
- Eliminate non-academic components from academic grading; separate feedback on effort, behavior, and attendance.
- Ensure grades are a reflection of individual, independent understanding. Prioritize recent evidence of student learning.
- Ensure assessment items are aligned to prioritized standards, rubric descriptors, and proficiency level.
- Refrain from evaluating students in comparison of one another.
- Minimize the incorporation of outlier scores that distort the accuracy of a student's attainment of standards.

Meaningful grading practices ensure grades clearly communicate student progress toward prioritized standards to students, parents, and other stakeholders. The following principles can be used to ensure meaningfulness when grading in a standards-based system:

- Organize gradebooks and report cards using a standards based format.
- Include specific feedback in gradebooks and report cards as related to standards.
- Provide timely feedback to students and parents to clarify and inform student progress.
- Ensure students have the opportunity to learn prioritized standards through the articulation of aligned learning targets, learning activities, and success criteria.

Consistent grading practices ensure consistent expectations and clear communication across classrooms, grade-levels, and schools. The following principles can be used to ensure consistency when grading in a standards based system:

- Align grading practices to a common set of purposes and principles.
- Align rubric scores to proficiency levels.
- Clearly define and communicate expectations in relation to standards.
- Establish common grade, or course, grading practices and utilize those practices uniformly.
- Collaborate to calibrate scoring tools to ensure reliable interpretation of student work as related to the standards.
- Utilize descriptive scales that consistently communicate student progress toward standards.

Grades shall reflect student progress through a variety of valid, reliable assessments of student progress toward standards including, but not limited to, such things as: in-class assignments and activities, homework assignments, portfolios or work samples, research projects, authentic performance assessments, quizzes, tests and examinations.

Initial practice with new skills or concepts should be supported with timely, developmental feedback but should not be graded. Homework assignments shall be in accordance with established procedures.

RUSD Standards Based Scale

K-8

	No Evidence (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)
RUSD Generic Rubric Success Criteria Scale	*Student did not submit any evidence of learning.*	*Major errors or omissions on basic and more complex grade-level content/skills.*	*Independently uses basic grade-level content/skills with no major errors or omissions. However, major errors or omissions on more complex content/skills.*	*Independently uses complex grade-level content/skills with no major errors or omissions.*	*Independently makes accurate, in-depth inferences and applies content/skills to complex, open-ended problems and tasks.*
RUSD Report Card Descriptors ***Parent friendly language**	*Does not demonstrate understanding of core concepts or us unable to apply knowledge or skills*	*Demonstrates some understanding of core concepts.*	*Developing a basic understanding of core skills and concepts.*	*Consistently demonstrates understanding of core skills and concepts.*	*Consistently demonstrates understanding of complex skills and concepts.*

High School

NE	F	C/D	C	B/C	B	A/B	A
No Evidence (0)	Beginning (1)	1.5	Developing (2)	2.5	Proficient (3)	3.5	Advanced (4)
Student did not submit any evidence of learning.	*Major errors or omissions on basic and more complex grade-level content/skills.*	*Elements of both 1 and 2*	*Independently uses basic grade-level content/skills with no major errors or omissions. However, major errors or omissions on more complex content/skills.*	*Elements of both 2 & 3*	*Independently uses complex grade-level content/skills with no major errors or omissions.*	*Elements of both 3 & 4*	*Independently makes accurate, in-depth inferences and applies content/skills to complex, open-ended problems and tasks.*

Standards Based Definitions

Accommodation: Adaptations that provide access to the general curriculum but do not fundamentally alter the learning goal or grade level standard. These supports "level the playing field". *(Freedman, 2005, p. 47). Found at https://www.studentgrowth.org/2017/05/22/is-it-an-accommodation-or-a-modification/; Accessed on August 13, 2017.*

Achievement: Measures the amount of academic content a student learns in a determined amount of time. *Found at http://study.com/academy/lesson/student-achievement-definition-factors-research.html; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Advanced Proficiency Level: Consistently demonstrates understanding of complex skills and concepts. Student exceeds performance expectations by demonstrating in-depth understanding of complex concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards in extended or new contexts; proficiency descriptor agreed upon by Standards Based Learning leadership committee and instructional coaches in Spring 2017.

Analytic Rubric: Resembles a grid with the criteria for a student product listed in the leftmost column and with levels of performance listed across the top row often using numbers and/or descriptive tags. An analytic rubric focuses on aspects of the performance so that the teacher and student can focus in on these aspects diagnostically. A developmental and single-point rubric is an analytic rubric. When scoring with an analytic rubric each of the criteria is scored individually. *Found at http://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/feedback-grading/rubrics/Pages/types-of-rubrics.aspx, accessed on :February 8, 2017. Also includes components of SEWAC definition, 2009.*

Approaching Proficiency Level: Demonstrates a basic understanding of the standards with gaps and errors and provides evidence of learning that is inconsistent or incomplete. *Found at http://www.sunprairie.k12.wi.us/ district/proficiency_levels.cfm; Accessed on February 21, 2017.*

Assessments: Any method used to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.

Benchmark Assessment: An assessment used to determine if specific, key developmental / academic milestones have been met at specific times in the academic year (multiplication facts, balancing equations, writing a topic sentence).

Checklist: Checklist is a list of specific components of an assignment that describe components of the task, but are not related to quality.

College and Career Ready: Focuses on students having critical thinking skills, communicating effectively, collaborating with others, and solving real work problems in additional to having knowledge in academic content areas. *(WI DPI)*

Common Assessments: A form of interim assessments used to ensure that same content (grade level, department or content area) performance evaluations are more consistent, reliable and effective. This allows for comparison across multiple classrooms, courses, schools and/or learning experiences. Common assessments, either formative or summative, share the same format and are administered in consistent ways.

Standards Based Definitions

Criterion: A description of specific categories for quality such as ideas, organization, scientific reasoning, or musicianship.

Criterion Referenced: Tests and assessments designed to measure and evaluate student performance in a specific body of knowledge or acquired a specific skill set against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or learning standards at a specific stage of education—i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do. *Found at http://edglossary.org/; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Curriculum: Intentionally designed set of learning experiences to introduce, support, and challenge each child's understanding of articulated standards. The curriculum is the inter-relationship among standards, learning targets, learning activities, success criteria, valid & reliable assessments, and teacher's and students' utilization of strategies and resources to build knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In a guaranteed and viable curriculum (Marzano, 2003), the curriculum is 1) published and aligned to assessments, 2) prioritized relative to the amount of instructional time, 3) provides each student with the opportunity to learn the articulated learning targets in the curriculum, 4) drives system-wide effort toward clear, prioritized school/district goals, and 5) is affirmed, augmented, or clarified, based on utilization of valid, reliable measures of student achievement.

Descriptive (Formative) Feedback: Specific information in the form of written comments or conversations that help the learner understand what she or he needs to do in order to improve….Feedback is most effective when it focuses on a student's performance on a learning activity as related to the learning target and success criteria. It is specific, timely, and communicated in language that is understood by the learner. It opens the opportunity for mistakes to be viewed as learning opportunities when time is provided for students to take action. The purpose of formative feedback is not to justify a grade, but to be internalized and acted upon by the learner to improve his or her learning. *Modified from http://standardstoolkit.k12.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CCR.Protocol_1.Descriptive_Feedback_Strategies.pdf; Accessed on February 20, 2017 (developmental feedback)*

Developing: A basic understanding of core skills and concepts. Student partially meets performance expectations by demonstrating basic understanding of core concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards in familiar contexts with minor gaps in understanding; proficiency descriptor agreed upon by Standards Based Learning leadership committee and instructional coaches in Spring 2017.

Developmental Rubrics: Generally based on a theory of development, is a subset of analytic trait rubrics with the main distinction between it and other analytic trait rubrics is that the purpose is not to evaluate an end product or performance, but instead, to answer the question, "to what extent are students who engage in our programs/services developing this skill/ability/value/etc.?" *Found at http://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-com mons/teaching-guides/feedback-grading/rubrics/Pages/types-of-rubrics.aspx#holistic, Accessed on February 8, 2017.*

Diagnostic: A distinct form of measurement with the purpose to determine, prior to instruction, each student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills. Establishing these permits the instructor to adjust the curriculum to meet each learner's unique needs. *Found at aub.edu.lb/ctl/Documents/.../Diagnostic%20formative%20summative%20asst.pdf; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Effort: is the result of an attempt. Stiggins (1997) states that the definition of "trying hard" vary from teacher to teacher; thus, if effort is included in the grade, "we add noise into the grade interpretation process. *Found at http://grading.dmschools.org/uploads/1/0/4/8/10487804/effortparticipationandattitude-oconnor.pdf; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Standards Based Definitions

Enduring Understandings: Overarching prioritized statements of understandings that help teachers and students organize key content and skills within, and across, each discipline or a curriculum. Enduring understandings have value beyond the course, are core to the discipline, require uncoverage rather than coverage, and promote inquiry.

Equity: Equity encompasses a wide variety of educational models, programs and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal.

Essential Elements of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS): Alternate achievement standards (in English language arts, mathematics and science) that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards to satisfy the U.S. Department of Education requirements to have alternate achievement standards for students with significant intellectual disabilities that are clearly linked to grade-level academic content standards, promote access to the general curriculum and reflect professional judgement of the highest expectation possible.

Essential Question: A question that lies at the heart of a discipline or a curriculum, and is utilized by teachers to promote student inquiry and uncoverage of a subject. Essential questions do not yield a single straightforward answer (as a leading question does), nor draw student attention to minutia (as a trivial question does), but sustain student inquiry around the core of a discipline. An essential question can either be overarching, provocative or topical (unit-specific) in scope.

Evidenced-based: Any concept or strategy that is derived from or informed by objective evidence—most commonly, educational research or metrics of the teacher and student performance.

Feedback: Information about an individual's performance that clarifies the gap between current performance and the goal. Quality feedback is specific, criterion referenced, timely, and understood by the learner.

Fixed Mindset: A belief that individuals are born with a limited amount of capacity that cannot be modified. When individuals with a fixed mindset struggle on a task, they mistakenly "believe that if success is not immediately attainable, it probably is not ultimately attainable" *(Frontier & Rickabaugh, 2014, p. 132).*

Formative Assessment: An assessment or learning activity designed to inform the teacher and learner about areas of strengths and need as related to the learning targets. An assessment is formative only if it is used to guide and modify next steps in teaching and learning. Answers the question 'How am I progressing toward the learning target and where do I go to next?' *(Hattie, 2009)*

Grade: The number or letter reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance as aligned to course learning goals. *(Ken O'Connor)(Dr. Tony Frontier).*

Grade Book: A communications tool that provides stakeholders (student, families, teacher, school) with accurate and up-to-date student records. The marks and scores in the grade book are used to provide feedback in the form of standards-based proficiency. Grades shall reflect student progress through a variety of valid, reliable assessments of student progress toward standards including, but not limited to, such things as: in-class assignments and activities, homework assignments, portfolios or work samples, research projects, authentic performance assessments, quizzes, tests and examinations.

Standards Based Definitions

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset: Individuals with a growth mindset believe intelligence is malleable; they see their effort and strategy as the primary factors in developing their capacity. Individuals with a fixed mindset believe they are born with a limited amount of capacity that cannot be modified. When individuals with a growth mindset struggle on an activity, they see that as feedback to increase their effort or adopt a new strategy. Conversely, when individuals with a fixed mindset struggle on an activity, they mistakenly "believe that if success is not immediately attainable, it probably is not ultimately attainable" *(Frontier & Rickabaugh, 2014, p. 132).*

Growth Mindset: A belief that intelligence is malleable and that effort and strategy are the primary factors in developing capacity. When individuals with a growth mindset struggle on a task, they see that as feedback to increase their effort or adopt a new strategy.

Holistic Rubric: Consists of a single scale with all criteria to be included in the evaluation being considered together (e.g., clarity, organization, and mechanics) and are almost always used as scoring rubrics. With a holistic rubric, the rater assigns a single score (usually on a 1 to 4 or 1 to 6 point scale) based on an overall judgment of the work. The rater matches an entire piece of work to a single description on the scale. *Found at http://resources.depaul .edu /teaching-commons/teaching-guides/feedback-grading/rubrics/Pages/types-of-rubrics.aspx#holistic, Accessed on February 8, 2017. Also includes components of SEWAC definition, 2009.*

Homework: Intended to be practice, whether guided or independent, and practice is not an assessment of learning; it is an assessment for learning, a formative assessment. The purpose of practice is for a student to improve their understanding. Homework can still be scored, graded, or rated according to a rubric, and it can even be reported in some separate way; however, it should not be counted in the grade as students are still emerging in their understanding of content standards. *Found at http://abud.me/homework-in-the-standards-based-grading -classroom/, Accessed on February 8, 2017.*

Interim (or benchmark): Assessments administered periodically during a course or school year (for example, every six or eight weeks) and separately from the process of instructing students (i.e., unlike formative assessments, which are integrated into the instructional process) used to evaluate where students are in their learning progress and determine whether they are on track to performing well on future assessments, such as standardized tests, end-of-course exams, and other forms of "summative" assessment. *Found at http://edglossary.org/; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Learning Activity: Tasks specifically aligned to standards and aligned targets that are designed to support learning needs in a manner that is developmentally appropriate, engaging, of appropriate depth or complexity relative to where students are in a progression of learning, and on topic. Follows the format of "Do (learning activity) _ so I can (learning target)___."

Learning Environment vs Performance Environment: Learning environments "emphasize to students that their main purpose in being in school is to learn, improve, and master the material" (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2002). In a learning environment, mistakes and confusion are expected and questions are honored throughout the learning process as a means to developing new understandings or improving one's skills. This is in contrast to a performance environment, where everything counts regardless of where one is in the learning process. In a performance environment, students may be unwilling to ask questions, make mistakes, or take risks, because the underlying culture assumes that good students know material before it has been taught and demonstrating high ability is more important than acknowledging the need to learn.

Standards Based Definitions

Learning Progressions: The intentional sequencing of standards across grades or stages of academic progress that map out a specific sequence of knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn as they progress through their education. There are two main characteristics of learning progressions: (1) the standards described at each level are intended to address the specific learning needs and abilities of students at a particular stage of their intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development, and (2) the standards reflect clearly articulated sequences—that is, each grade-level learning expectation builds upon previous expectations while preparing students for more challenging concepts and more sophisticated coursework at the next level.

Learning Standards: Concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education (end of course, grade level or grade span) that describe educational objectives, but do not describe any particular teaching practice, curriculum, or assessment method. Content standards describe the declarative knowledge that students should be able to understand. Process standards describe the the procedural skills that students should be able to do.

Learning targets: Short term goals or statements that are derived from a standard that clearly state what is expected of students to know and be able to do at the end of a learning experience. Targets provide focus for teacher's lesson design, assessment, and feedback. Targets provide focus for student's effort and inquiry as related to learning activities and success criteria.

Mark/Score: The number or letter given to any student test or performance. *(Ken O'Connor).*

Modification: Modifications are changes to the curriculum and assessments that do fundamentally alter the learning goal or grade level expectation. Modifications are support to the very skill that is being measured. *Found at https://www.studentgrowth.org/2017/05/22/is-it-an-accommodation-or-a-modification/; Accessed on August 13, 2017.*

Non-Academic Components: Parts of feedback or communication to students/families that should not be included in the grade. This includes participation, work habits, Career and/or College Readiness factors, and completion/follow-through of non-academic components (i.e. turning in a permission slip or parent signature for reviewing a classroom syllabus).

Norm Referenced: Designed to rank test takers on a "bell curve," or a distribution of scores that resembles, when graphed, the outline of a bell—i.e., a small percentage of students performing poorly, most performing average, and a small percentage performing well. To produce a bell curve each time, test questions are carefully designed to accentuate performance differences among test takers—not to determine if students have achieved specified learning standards, learned required material, or acquired specific skills. *Found at http://edglossary.org/; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Standards Based Definitions

Participation: The act of taking part in something. When teachers combine measures of students' academic achievement with evidence of participation, preparation, or punctuality, the result conflates means and ends. A single grade that combines such diverse constructs is just as confounded and impossible to interpret as a physical condition grade that combines height and weight….Teachers must meet three additional conditions to "grade" students on class participation. First, teachers must clearly state class participation as an explicit goal. Second, teachers must identify, explain, and model specific, observable indicators of exemplary participation for students. In other words, students must know the kind of participation behaviors that are expected and what they look and sound like in the classroom. And finally, because participation reflects a qualitatively different dimension of student performance than achievement, teachers must report a "participation" grade separately from an "achievement" grade to keep the communication meaningful. *Found at http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol10/1007-guskey.aspx; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Percentage: A score earned by a student who has completed a formative or summative assessment. This type of score is ONLY VALID when all items contributing to that score reference THE SAME standard. If there is more than one standard contributing to that score, the percentage is an invalid score and should not be utilized.

Performance Environment: Where everything counts regardless of where one is in the learning process. In a performance environment, students may be unwilling to ask questions, make mistakes or take risks because the underlying culture assumes that good students know material before it has been taught, and demonstrating high ability is more important than acknowledging the need to learn.

Performance Task: Any learning activity or assessment that asks students to perform to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and proficiency (a tangible product). (UbD)

Portfolio: A purposeful collection of significant samples of work accompanied by clear criteria for performance which evidence effort, progress or achievement.

Pre-Assessments: A type of formative assessment that is administered before students begin a lesson, unit, course, or academic program. Students are not necessarily expected to know the academic content or skills evaluated by pre-assessments. Pre-assessments serve three primary functions 1) to establish baseline data to monitor and measure learning, 2) to inform teacher's efforts to best align curriculum and instruction to students' learning needs, and 3) to clarify for students as to where they are now in relation to learning targets and success criteria to inform their efforts for next levels of learning.

Priority Standards (also known as Power Standards): Learning standards that have been determined by the district to be the highest priority or most important for students to learn. In a standards-based system, these standards are often the categories used as the basis for reporting student progress.

Proficiency: Consistently demonstrates understanding of core skills and concepts. Student consistently meets performance expectations by demonstrating understanding of core concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards in familiar contexts.

Proficiency levels: Indicator of student proficiency in achievement and are cumulative in nature relative to prioritized standards.

Quiz: A brief assessment used to measure growth in knowledge, abilities and/or skills.

Standards Based Definitions

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Proficiency: Consistently demonstrates understanding of core skills and concepts. Student consistently meets performance expectations by demonstrating understanding of core concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards in familiar contexts.

Proficiency levels: Indicator of student proficiency in achievement and are cumulative in nature relative to prioritized standards.

Standards Based Definitions

Reliability: The extent that an assessment can provide a consistent measure of learning of specific groups of students in specific learning contexts. The extent that common work samples can be scored in similar ways by different evaluators.

Rigor: Expectations of depth and quality and complexity of academic tasks. Could include scales such as Bloom's Taxonomy, Webb's Depth of Knowledge, or Biggs and Collis's SOLO Framework. SOLO describes learning objectives as prestructural, unistructural, multistructural, relational, and extended abstract.

Rubric: A criterion referenced evaluation tool that articulates different levels of quality of a performance as related to prioritized standards. Quality rubrics (1) articulate criteria for quality (depth and sophistication of skills) rather than quantity (number of ideas/items of the task), (2) align language of quality to the standards, (3) use a minimal number of rubrics related to key skills that occur again and again, (4) follow directions for the task (which is important, but it is not evidence of meeting standards, and (5) use a scale that can trace progress over time.

Holistic Rubric: A holistic rubric consists of a single scale with all criteria to be included in the evaluation being considered together (e.g., clarity, organization, and mechanics). With a holistic rubric the rater assigns a single score (usually on a 1 to 4 or 1 to 6 point scale) based on an overall judgment of the student work. The rater matches an entire piece of student work to a single description on the scale. Holistic rubrics are almost always used as scoring rubrics. *Found at http://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/feedback-grading/rubrics/Pages/types-of-rubrics.aspx#holistic, Accessed on February 8, 2017. Also includes components of SEWAC definition, 2009.*

Analytic Rubric: An analytic rubric resembles a grid with the criteria for a student product listed in the leftmost column and with levels of performance listed across the top row often using numbers and/or descriptive tags. An analytic rubric focuses on aspects of the performance so that the teacher and student can focus in on these aspects diagnostically. A developmental and single-point rubric is an analytic rubric. When scoring with an analytic rubric each of the criteria is scored individually. *Found at http://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/feedback-grading/rubrics/Pages/types-of-rubrics.aspx, accessed on :February 8, 2017. Also includes components of SEWAC definition, 2009.*

Checklist: A list of specific components of an assignment that describe components of the task, but are not related to quality (3 paragraphs, 3 main ideas, uses 5 different colors). Technically, not a rubric, but often mistaken for and used as a rubric – see scoring guide).

Scoring Guide: Articulation of quality components for a specific assignment, and only that assignment (For example, how to determine points for document analysis on an AP History test, or how to determine points on constructed response math items on a state test.)

Skill or Process Standards: Content in courses that can be described as actions, performances, or reasoning. These are in contrast to content standards that emphasize facts and knowledge.

Single-Point Rubrics: Break down the components of an assignment into different criteria. Once you establish what you expect, you can always describe how a student went beyond the criteria (and it's likely that students will go beyond in very different ways) and you can always describe what they still need to work on in order to meet the criteria. Some teachers use three boxes, with only the middle one filled in, in order to have space to indicate where the performance meets the expectations, where work needs to be done, and what is truly exceptional. *Found at https://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gseassessment_resource_rubrics.pdf, Accessed on February 8, 2017.*

Standards Based Definitions

Standards: Prioritized, published, expectations for student attainment of prioritized knowledge and skills in a discipline. Learning standards are concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. Learning standards describe educational objectives—i.e., what students should have learned by the end of a course, grade level, or grade span—but they do not describe any particular teaching practice, curriculum, or assessment method (although this is a source of ongoing confusion and debate).

- Content standards describe the declarative knowledge that students should be able to understand.
- Process standards describe the procedural skills that students should be able to do.

Standard Area (strand): A grouping of standards or power standards.

Standardized: Any form of test that (1) requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from common bank of questions, in the same way, and that (2) is scored in a "standard" or consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of individual students or groups of students. *Found at http://edglossary.org/; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Standards Based: A system that measures student outcomes relative to standards.

Standards-Based Grade: A symbol that represents a student's demonstration attainment of standards. (traditional grading systems represent an average score of points accumulated across various tasks such as homework, quizzes, and tests)

Standards Based Grading: Involves reporting the most recent, and best, evidence of a student's individual accomplishment of prioritized standards and learning targets as related to success criteria. This is in contrast to traditional grading systems that focus on accumulation or averaging of points obtained across each grading/reporting period.

Standards-Based Learning: Utilization of standards to prioritize, design, and align curriculum, instruction, assessment, and feedback across courses, units, and lessons. In a standards-based learning environment, each teacher sees content through the eyes of the learner to "create a direct, formative link between 1) students' ability to accurately self-assess their learning and 2) strategies students and teachers utilize to focus their efforts to access next levels of learning" *(Frontier & Rickabaugh, 2014, p. 69).*

Standards-Based Report Card: is to give a clear picture of the student's achievement on key academic targets. These targets, reflecting the learning standards of the State of Wisconsin through the Common Core, have been identified as particularly important for students' success as they continue through school.

Standards-Referenced: A system that designs curriculum as the input to determine what content should be taught, but does not necessarily develop all learning goals, activities, success criteria, curriculum, and assessments on the standards.

Success Criteria: Explicitly states what quality performance looks like as related to the standards so that students and teachers can assess work using a shared language of quality. Success criteria answer the question "What does good look like?" Follows the format of "Do (learning activity)__ so I can (learning target)____. Evidence of quality work related to the target will include (success criteria)____." Success criteria should emphasize qualitative (depth, sophistication, accuracy), rather than quantitative (2 pages, 4 ideas) criteria.

Standards Based Definitions

Summative Assessments (also known as post assessment): A valid, reliable measure of student's understanding and skills of articulated standards, learning targets, and success criteria at the end of a learning sequence. Summative assessments are given at the conclusion of a specific instructional period, and therefore they are generally evaluative, rather than formative or diagnostic. Summative-assessment results are often recorded as scores or grades that are then factored into a student's permanent academic record. *Derived from http://edglossary.org/summative-assessment/; Accessed on February 21, 2017.*

Summative Feedback: When a teacher informs students about their level of performance upon reaching an endpoint, such as assessment, at the conclusion of the unit. *Found at http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/sum mative-feedback/39138; Accessed on February 20, 2017.*

Validity: Refers to the accuracy of an assessment to measure what it is supposed to measure.

The What, Why & How

Why the change?

Traditional grading is subjective. On a traditional report card, an overall grade is given in each subject. That grade is a combination of homework, tests, work habits, as well as, a student's understanding of subject content. However, the focus tends to be more on assignment completion and missing work instead of understanding. When a student receives a letter grade on their report card, it does not tell the parent, teacher, or student what the student specifically knows and is able to do.

To better understand this standpoint, let us think about a traditionally graded classroom where students are evaluated on a 100-point scale. At the end of the marking period, all points are tallied and divided by the number of possible points. If the outcome is 92%, an A is achieved. The dilemma with this system is that the focus is no longer on learning the content and skills, but on getting the grade. Students must have clear expectations. If they don't understand the game, they will quit playing. This can lead to increased discipline issues, apathetic students, and disengaged students. A standards based system can lead to fewer failures, repeaters, discipline, and increased elective opportunities.

Traditionally, doing work was about the subject, like math or English. Each specific skill that was being learned was not necessarily identified. Thus leading to technical learning of following directions or guessing correctly on work, which entail would lead to a good grade. Questions of right or wrong and a percentage score was the basis of grading. Understanding what was being learned well and how to improve seemed to be missing. Do the grades that were earned tell the full story of learning?

The practice of averaging scores does not conclude a student has mastered the content. Think about a doctor, pilot, driver, etc. We want professionals to have mastered each skill rather than have an area of strength make up for a possibly severe deficit in a different area.

By using standards-based learning and assessment, we better focus on three components of strong teaching: learning goals, assessment and feedback. Learning goals indicate what standards will be covered, and what the expectation is for each skill. Assessment focuses on how well students learn the skills from the learning goals. Teachers can be clear with the feedback provided to students because learning goals are clear. Thus, teachers are better able to provide student feedback regarding growth achieved and areas where more growth (or work) is needed.

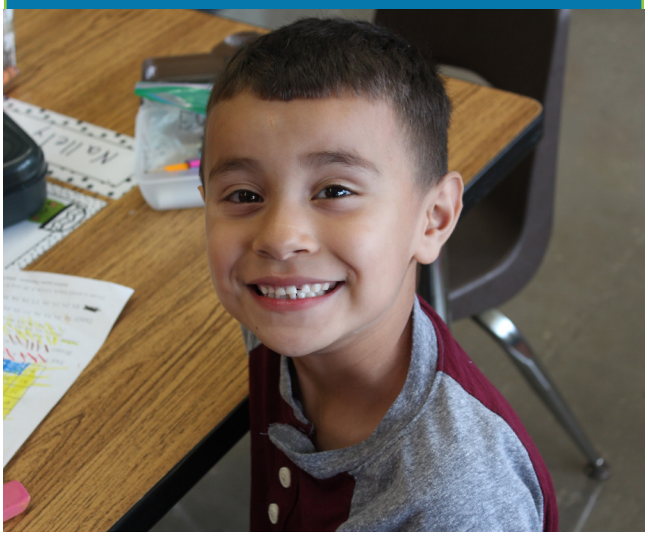
Racine Unified School District (RUSD) is moving to standards-based learning and assessment, using a new standards-based report card, because it is focusing more clearly on student learning and evidence, and how to provide important feedback to students to help them reach their goals.

The What, Why & How

Why now?

The request to make the shift was started with conversations of teachers in 2015, requesting the district to focus on standards. Voluntary curriculum writing committees made up of teachers were established to develop the vision and create the report cards aligned to the key standards for each grade level. After the development of the report cards, other groups of teachers, along with, principals, parents and students reviewed the report cards and provided feedback. The ideas were included as development continued.

Standards-based learning and assessment is not unique to Racine; it has been gaining in popularity, and RUSD believes the time is right to bring it to its schools to ensure the success of students to be college and/or career ready by the time they graduate. RUSD, in collaboration with leaders from nearby school districts that have already made this transition, have developed a model that will support its students.



The What, Why & How

What is grading based on in a standards-based learning and assessment system?

- Standards, not assessment methods
- Levels of proficiency, not points and percentages
- Achievement only with behaviors reported separately
- A focus on skills, not activities

How do proficiency levels replace letter grades in a standards-based learning and assessment system?

- Students are given a proficiency score (1-4) and descriptive feedback on their progress based on a collection of work rather than on each individual assignment to describe how well a student has mastered a concept. The grading scale aligns with proficiency levels used on the State of Wisconsin assessment systems.
- Elementary and middle school students have two standards-based reporting periods with progress reports in the middle of the semester.
- Students are evaluated based on expected progress at that particular point in the school year instead of being evaluated on expected progress at the end of the year.
- Final scores reflect a student's achievement of grade-level standards in all content areas. High school content areas' proficiency scores will "roll up" to a letter grade.

What is a standards-based learning and assessment system at a glance?

- Prioritized content standards for each grade level with end of the year expectations
- A well designed curriculum, quality teaching, engaged student learning and strategic assessment practices
- Tells what students know and are able to do now and what would move students to the the next set concepts to understand
- It uses a standards-based report card that provides feedback across courses, units, and lessons.
- College and Career ready work habits, participation skills, effort and behavior, are reported separately from achievement

What is the purpose of standards-based learning and assessment?

Standards-based learning and assessment is a system of reporting student proficiency on a number of learning standards. Using a collection of student work to draw upon, this system provides feedback on how well a student has mastered a concept. Students are given a proficiency score (1-4) on their report card based on the collection, rather than, on each individual assignment.

When using a standards-based report card, work habits, effort and behavior, also known as college and career readiness skills, are reported separately so that the grade received reports only the student's achievement toward the standards. A student who struggled on a learning outcome at the beginning of the year, but knows and demonstrates a clear understanding of the outcome by the end of the year, should receive a grade that reflects that growth in understanding.

The What, Why & How

What ineffective grading practices will be eliminated utilizing standards-based learning and assessment?

- Point penalties for late work, academic dishonesty or attendance
- Extra credit points for things unrelated to standards
- Assigning group scores when students engage in cooperative learning
- Curving class scores or grades
- Averaging student scores
- Assigning zeros to student work
- Grading homework

As the year progresses, proficiency levels may drop. What does this mean?

Certain standards on a report card measure foundational skills. If a student has mastered that skill prior to the expectation, the student would receive an A for Advanced until they reach the point in time where the skills should be mastered. At that time, the student would receive a P for Proficient since they are no longer advanced as many of their peers have caught up by then. Example: if a student comes into Kindergarten knowing half the letters and sounds of the alphabet, that student would be above the benchmark, or Advanced. This student may know all his/her letters and sounds by December which would also be Advanced. By the end of the year, the expectation is that all students know their letters and sounds, so on that standard, the student is no longer Advanced, but is now Proficient.

How do proficiency levels explain the understanding of learning?

Students who receive an "Advanced" score of "4" are performing above the grade level expectation. Students receiving a "Proficient" score of "3" are performing at the level expected for their grade level at this point in the school year. Students receiving a "Developing" score of "2" are performing below the level expected for their grade level at that point in the school year.

Special Student Populations

How is an English Language learner, who is still acquiring English language, assessed using a standards-based report card?

English Language (ELs) learners are assessed at their current grade level expectations using the appropriate grade-level standard based report cards in the same manner and with the same frequency as non-EL general education students with appropriate accommodations.

A supplemental EL progress report will be provided with additional information regarding language acquisition. EL students come to our schools with a variety of educational backgrounds and require a variety of supports to access the curriculum standards. At times, while maintaining access and engagement in rigorous grade level standards, the educational program for an EL student may be adjusted, based on language proficiency, to enable the student to acquire more academic vocabulary and acquisition of content. Any modification will be noted on the report card as a comment. During parent conferences, teachers will discuss with parents the following: the child's current level of English proficiency, the child's opportunity to learn the content, and/or the child's ability and or growth to demonstrate the appropriate grade-level standards.

How is a Dual Language learner assessed using a standards-based report card?

Students in the Dual Language Program are Spanish and English speaking students working to achieve the skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing in two languages. The goal is greater success in Spanish and English, along with the understanding of customs and values of the cultures associated with the two languages being taught. The premise is to foster continued development and retention of a child's literacy skills in their native language and to utilize the language as a vehicle for exploring and acquiring a second language. Students in the Dual Language Program are graded according to grade-level standards in line with their peers on the grade-level report card.

How is a student with an IEP assessed using a standards-based report card?

Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are assessed at their current grade level using the appropriate grade-level standards-based report cards in the same manner and with the same frequency as students without an IEP. Research has demonstrated that children with IEPs who struggle in reading and mathematics, can successfully learn grade level content and make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services and supports are provided.

Grade-level standards should allow all students to engage, access and be assessed in ways that fit their strengths, needs and interests. Furthermore, students with IEPs must be provided specially designed instruction that meets their individual needs. It is expected that each individual student with an IEP will require unique services and supports matched to their strengths and needs in order to close achievement gaps in grade-level standards.

Alternate standards are only available for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students who participate in the alternate achievement standards, as determined by the IEP team, will receive a standards-based report card that is aligned to the appropriate grade level alternate achievement standards.

A supplemental IEP progress report will be provided with additional information regarding the student's progress on IEP goals.

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