

Hermiston School District

Elementary Standards-Based Grading Handbook

Definition of Terms

Assessment - A measurement of student performance with a particular regarding a particular standard (skill/concept).

Formative Assessment - A check of student progress with learning. An assessment designed to *inform* the design of future instruction and interventions by checking student learning progress relative to a standard.

Summative Assessment - A *summary* of student learning. An assessment designed to measure the degree to which students have attained a particular standard at the conclusion of instruction.

Proximity to Proficiency Assessment - An assessment that highlights the degree to which a student has attained mastery of a grade level standard. These assessments primarily have implications for differentiating grade-level instruction and readiness for increasing levels of cognitive complexity with grade level standards.

Gap Assessment - An assessment that highlights the skills/concepts students are missing from previous learning experiences (i.e. previous grade levels). These assessments primarily have implications for intervention and informing the teacher regarding what gaps may need to be accommodated as instruction with grade-level standards occurs.

Feedback - Information provided to the learner that identifies specific areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth in their learning.

Rubric - Criteria that is used to categorize student performance on a standard. A quality rubric contains specific criteria the learner and teacher can use to communicate what mastery of a standard requires, as well as identifying where the student is on their journey toward mastery.

Standards-Based - Teaching that prioritizes designing instruction, lessons, and assessments around grade-level standards.

Standards-Based Grading - Grading system that utilizes evidence of student performance on subject-specific standards, as measured by rubrics, to calculate a score/grade.

Priority Standard - A subset of state teaching standards selected for their comprehensiveness and importance to student learning. A priority standard is a standard that encompasses one or more supporting standards. By students attaining mastery of a priority standard, they have likely mastered the corresponding supporting standard/s. Priority standards are selected for their *endurance* (knowledge that lasts over time), *readiness* (their importance for next level learning), *leverage* (knowledge/skills that can be applied in multiple contexts), and their presence on external *assessments* (emphasized on high-stakes summative assessments).

Learning Target - A concrete goal (objective) written in student-friendly language that clearly describes what students will learn (content/standard).

Success Criteria - Criteria shared with the student by which the teacher and student are able to determine if the student has achieved the learning target (objective/goal). Students should be able to explain the degree to which they have met the success criteria.

Introduction

The Hermiston School District has the pleasure of working with a community of diverse learners from various backgrounds. We believe such diversity is an asset we can utilize to reach even greater levels of success with our students, staff, and community. We believe that every student deserves to walk across the stage at their high school graduation with every possible opportunity for college and career available to them. We owe it to our children to provide them the educational experiences they need to attain the knowledge and skills that afford them a life of their choosing, not one that has been decided for them due to a lack of quality education. This is the equitable “future-focused” outcome we all strive for. To accomplish this, we believe it is critical that we guarantee a system of alignment across all of our elementary schools. We believe in the idea of being a school district as opposed to a district of schools. With this in mind, we hold firm to the idea that regardless of what school a student attends in the Hermiston School District, we ensure they receive an equitable education built upon a foundation of effective, research-based educational practices.

One such practice is prioritizing grade level state and national content standards in the educational experiences designed for students. Due to the plethora of standards in each content area, it is necessary to prioritize certain standards that provide teachers and students a level of comprehensiveness so as to ensure that by mastering those “priority” standards, students will have mastered all standards. We call these standards our priority standards. In order to create greater clarity across our educational system for teachers, students, and parents regarding the level of rigor required of students to master the priority standards, identify where each student is on their journey towards mastery of each priority standard, and effectively communicate such progress to all stakeholders, it is imperative we adopt a grading system designed for such a purpose.

Traditional grading systems are seldom helpful for students, teachers, and parents. In the traditional grading system students earn marks such as a letter grade from A-F, or some variation of letter grading (plus, check, minus). Due to a lack of clarity inherent in a traditional grading system, students and parents do not receive actionable information that allows them to understand the particular academic strengths and areas

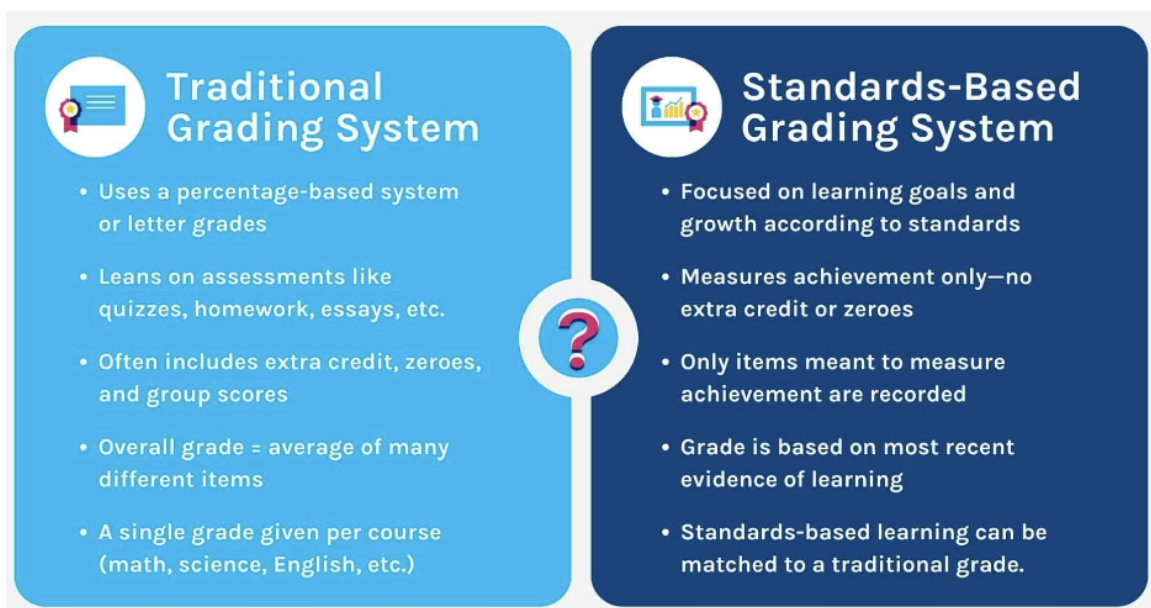
of growth the child possesses relative grade level proficiency. At best, traditional grades help parents see whether their child is “doing what the teacher wants them to do.” At worst, traditional grades stratify students into categories of successful and unsuccessful students, rendering those not succeeding to assume they are not academically capable learners. Not surprisingly, such grading practices hurt students from underserved populations and exacerbate achievement gaps between demographic groups (Feldman, 2018; Alex, 2022). Also troublesome is the pressure frequently felt by students who succeed academically in this system to maintain their arbitrary standing as one of the “smart” kids.

Traditional grading systems limit parent and student agency (Dueck, 2014). Subsequently, the teacher is positioned as the deciding factor regarding how well students are doing. Even if a teacher utilized specific criteria by which to determine grades, such criteria is seldom common across an entire school district, school, or even classrooms in the same grade in the same school (Reeves, 2004) resulting in a “hodge-podge” of grading practices (Guskey, 2015). According to Marzano (2000) & Townsley & Buckmiller (2016), with over 100 years of use of the traditional grading system in American schools, no meaningful research exists that supports its use.

A question may arise as to why the traditional grading system was ever instituted in the first place. The answer to that can be partially attributed to the goals of the industrial age in the United States during the 20th century. One goal of the education system in American schools at this time was to identify students who were “good at school” and could move on to higher education from those students who would be better suited for work in the industrial sector (Townsley & Buckmiller, 2016).

Moving to an era of public education that believes all students can reach high-levels of academic proficiency has been a seismic change for American public schools in the 21st century. Traditional grading is an ill-fitting system in this new paradigm (Craig, 2011), continually pulling educational institutions working with a 21st century “all students can reach high levels of learning” mindset into a 20th century “some students are suited for high levels of learning and some are destined for manual labor” model.

Standards-based grading is one such 21st century grading model. With all teachers focused on the same priority standards, they are able to communicate specific learning objectives to parents and students. With rubrics in hand that clearly delineate the progression of learning, and the evidence required for students to demonstrate mastery of each priority standard, all stakeholders are empowered with actionable information they can use to intentionally target student learning needs (Scriffiny, 2008). The standards-based system puts the student squarely in the driver's seat of their learning and empowers the parent with information to support their child's learning progress. A standards-based report card, then, is nothing more than a tool to communicate student progress relative to those priority standards. Powerschool (2023) has published an infographic that summarizes some of the key distinctions between traditional and standards-based grading.



“Teachers at every level must be able to defend the grades they assign and must have evidence to support their decisions. To serve as meaningful communication, grades must be fair, accurate, and reliable. They are more likely to be so when thoughtful professionals concur on the purpose of grades, look at the evidence they have and then decide the grade that best summarizes that evidence.” (Guskey & Jung, 2016, p. 54)

This guide is meant to be a resource for the students, families, and educators of the Hermiston School District. The goal for the remainder of this guide is to elucidate an understanding of standards-based grading, specifically the ways in which the Hermiston School District is implementing this 21st century grading system.

Principles of Standards-Based Grading

Federal Way Public Schools in Washington State published six principles of standards-based grading that have helped guide our work here in Hermiston.

Principle 1 - Grades and reports will be based on clearly specified learning goals and performance standards.

Principle 2 - Evidence used in grading will be valid.

Principle 3 - Grading will be based on established criteria.

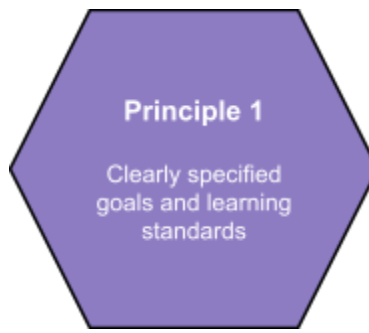
Principle 4 - Not all performances should be included in grades.

Principle 5 - Grade a standard based on most recent work.

Principle 6 - Report achievement and other factors separately.



Let's take a look at each of these principles to articulate how we make that a reality in the Hermiston School District for elementary students. Essentially, how each of the six principles is enacted in our standards-based grading work.



Principle 1 - *Grades and reports will be based on clearly specified learning goals and performance standards.*

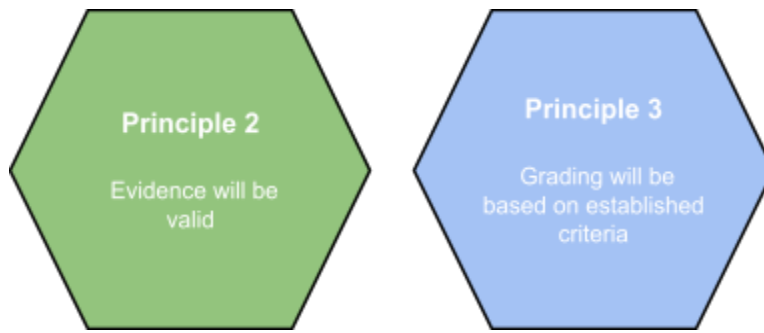
In Hermiston, we have formed three separate subject-specific committees composed of teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators. Each committee identifies priority standards for their assigned subject and grade. For example, our English Language Arts Committee has representatives from across the school district at each grade level. The grade level committee members go through a process each year to identify and review the highest priority standards for students to master by the end of that grade level. The same is true of our Math and English Language Development Committees. The priority standards each grade level identifies are chosen from the collection of grade level standards adopted by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). It is impossible for any teacher to teach every single standard for every subject in every grade. There just isn't enough time in the day. Even if there was, many standards supplement and/or complement other standards. This leads us to a process of identifying which standards are the most comprehensive for our students to learn. That is, which standards would be the most important for a student to master such that by way of mastering that more comprehensive standard, they have mastered the smaller, more supplementary, standards. This is an important distinction because whenever a school district undergoes the process of identifying priority standards for student learning, a concern is rightfully shared that the school district may be narrowing the curriculum, thus limiting the scope of what students have the opportunity to learn.

Another question that may be asked is how does each committee identify which standards are a priority and which standards are supplementary. For this, we have utilized a process developed by Ainsworth (2013) and learned through our partnership with the International Center for Leadership in Education. Committee members assess each standard according to four criteria. The criteria are:

1. Endurance - Will proficiency of this standard provide students with the knowledge and skills that will be of value beyond the present?
2. Leverage - Will proficiency of this standard have application to other standards within the content area and crossover to other content areas.
3. Readiness - Will proficiency of this standard provide students with the essential knowledge and skills that are necessary for future success?
4. External Exams - Will proficiency of this standard prepare students for the concepts and skills they are most likely to encounter on annual standardized tests, college entrance exams, and occupational competency exams?

It should be noted that no one criterion is more important than another. For example, just because a priority standard is included on the end of year state assessment, does not mean it is automatically a priority standard. If that standard had minimal leverage and endurance, then it would not be selected as a priority standard. Essentially, all four criteria are brought to bear on each standard. Those standards that best exemplify align with all four criteria are the ones selected by each committee.

With the priority standards selected, teachers are now armed with the specific standards by which to align their curricular materials. This also creates alignment across all six elementary school buildings, while at the same time allowing for teacher autonomy and flexibility in addressing those standards. Walking into multiple 3rd grade classrooms over the course of a week, you will see similar standards being taught, but the resources each grade team prioritizes in order to help students reach mastery of that standard is up to the teacher and team. Not all students are the same. Students require diverse resources, methods, learning structures, etc... in order to master certain concepts. Teachers use their knowledge of child development, content, pedagogy in order to meet the needs of their students. That is the art of teaching!



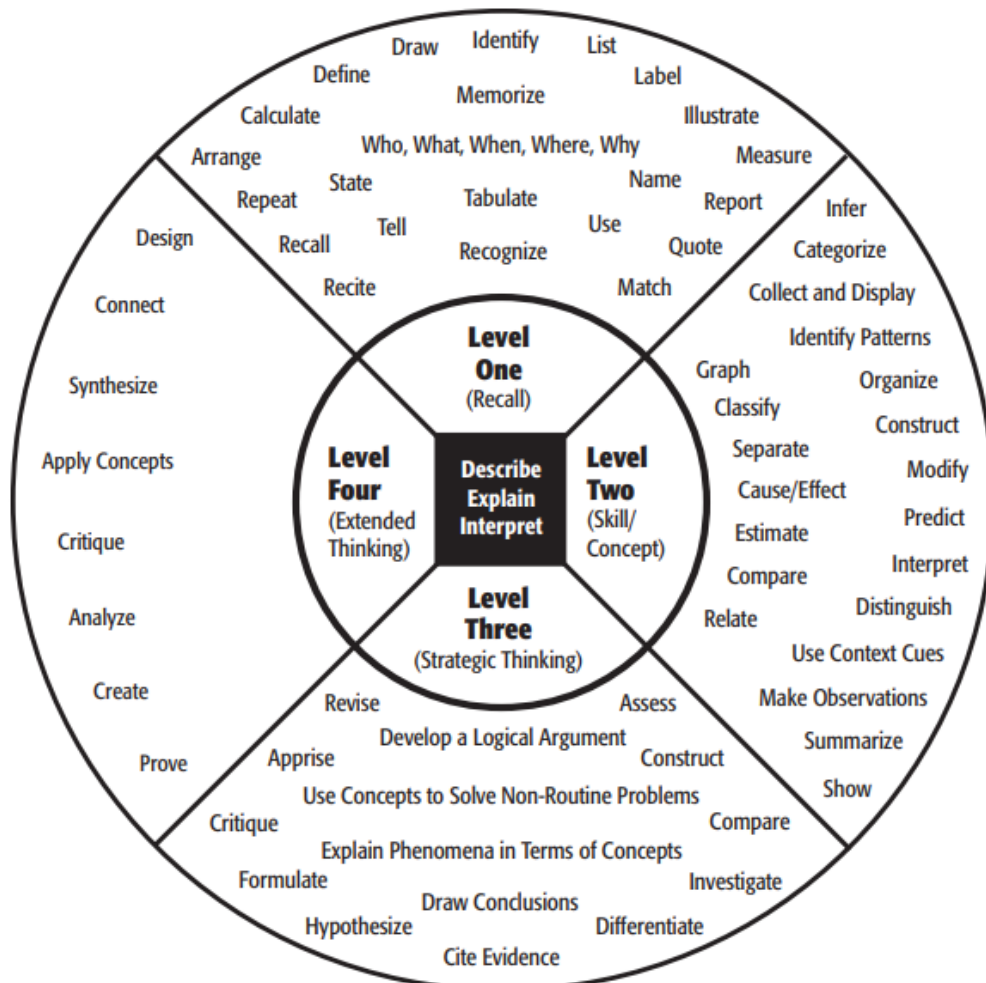
Principle 2 & 3 - Evidence used in grading will be valid; Grading will be based on established criteria.

As a system, if we do not ensure that teachers possess a common metric by which to evaluate student mastery then we have done little to ensure equity across our system in the rigor of the assessments teachers utilize in order to determine student mastery of the priority standards. For example, one of our 5th grade English Language Arts priority standards is for students to integrate information from several texts on the same topic to write or speak about the subject. Without a common metric for teachers to utilize, a student in School A might receive an assessment where they are asked to read two articles about recycling and then answer a 10 question multiple-choice assessment comparing and contrasting the information in each article. At the same time, a student in School B is asked to research and analyze multiple sources on the pros and cons of recycling to then compose a multi-paragraph essay justifying their position on whether the federal government should pass legislation mandating a recycling program in every municipality in the United States. Both assessments would, to some extent, assess the standard identified. However, it is clear that each assessment varies significantly in the evidence required to show mastery.

In the Hermiston School District, each grade level committee has created a 4-point rubric for each priority standard. This rubric aligns with the depth of knowledge (DOK), outlined in the Oregon State Standards. This is the DOK required of students in order to demonstrate mastery. In the Hermiston School District, we utilize Webb's (2006) Depth of Knowledge to determine the level of complexity in each standard (see image below). This helps teachers understand what kind of learning experiences students need in order to reach the depth of knowledge required of each particular priority standard. Every standard has a DOK level the student must attain in order to demonstrate proficiency with that standard. For example, if a student can successfully recall information, label a graph, match items, etc... with a DOK 1 level standard, we

would say the student is proficient. However, let's say a standard requires a DOK 3 level of understanding. Now the teacher must provide instruction at a much deeper level and subsequently design learning experiences that engage students in significantly more advanced thinking. In this case, students may be asked to develop an argument, hypothesize given a set of conditions, investigate a phenomena, etc... Essentially, they need to utilize the level 1 knowledge they possess for a standard and apply it in a more rigorous context. If a standard asks for DOK 3 level of understanding and a student is not able to complete those kinds of DOK 3 level tasks, regardless of how much they might recall, then they are not proficient until they can do so. This makes the task of writing rubrics to each priority standard even more important so teachers have clear guidance and students receive equitable learning opportunities.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels



With an understanding of the DOK required of each priority standard, the committees set out to create task-specific rubrics clearly showing what students need to be able to do to demonstrate proficiency for each priority standard. Each rubric is on a scale of 1-4. The 1-4 scale separates out like this:

- 4 - Exceeds Standard**
- 3 - Meets Standard**
- 2 - Nearly Meets Standard**
- 1 - Does Not Meet Standard**

A score of 1 would be well below the standard. A score of 2 would mean the student is close to meeting the standard and may just need some additional time, practice, and opportunity. A score of 3 means the student has reached the end of year grade level expectation for that standard. A score of 4 would show the student is above end of year expectations for that standard. This scale is important to consider when making judgements about student learning. We would expect most students in the first portion of the school year to be a level 1 or 2 for most of the standards. If many students were 3 or 4 in the first portion of the school year, then there would be little left for students to learn in that grade level. As the year progresses, and students have the opportunity to learn those standards, their rubric scores will increase. A score of 3 by the end of the school year is success as it shows the student has reached the grade-level outcome for the given standard.

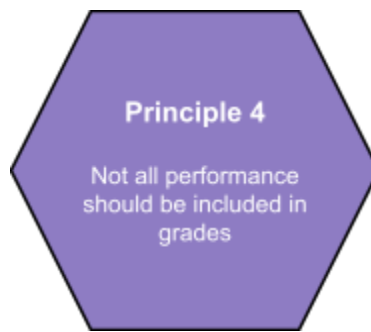
Rubrics often suffer from subjective and vague language which creates a poor delineation between levels of proficiency. Consider the following rubric:

1	2	3	4
With teacher guidance and support, partial success on level 2 skills.	With prompting and support, applies learned reading strategies, or applies to below level texts only.	Consistently and independently applies learned reading strategies to texts on grade level	In addition to a score 3.0 performance the student demonstrates in depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught, for example: Independently and consistently applies reading strategies to above grade level text.

We can see that the rubric is evaluating the degree to which students use reading strategies. Independently applying reading strategies to comprehend text is a critical skill for all children to possess. However, the rubric gives us no insight into what reading strategies we are assessing. In addition, what do they mean by “prompting and support” or “consistently and independently applies.” What is a “level 2” skill? What’s the difference between “teacher guidance” and “prompting and support”? Finally, how does a student show they have gone “beyond what was taught?” The writer of this rubric likely knows exactly what they meant in each of those statements. Unfortunately, anyone not privy to the thinking that went into creating this rubric is left to interpret each of those items for themselves. All of us have our own interpretations for what we think those terms mean. That’s the problem. Significant variance in learning experiences for Hermiston students would exist if similar rubrics were created for our priority standards. This is why committee members wrote task-specific rubrics. A task-specific rubric provides teachers with concrete language describing the kinds of learning experiences, tasks, and assessments students need in order to show they have met the proficiency level required in each standard. Below is a sample of a task-specific rubric for one of our 3rd grade English Language Arts priority standards.

	1	2	3	4
<p>3.RI.9 Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.</p>	<p>Given two texts on the same topic, the child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unable to identify 2-3 shared main ideas <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unable to support 2-3 shared main ideas with 1-2 key details from both texts 	<p>Given two texts on the same topic, the child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify 2-3 shared main ideas <p>PLUS one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support 2-3 shared main ideas with 1-2 key details from both texts explain how each shared main idea is similar/different in both texts by comparing/contrasting the key details that support them 	<p>Given two texts on the same topic, the child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify 2-3 shared main ideas support 2-3 shared main ideas with 1-2 key details from both texts explain how each shared main idea is similar/different in both texts by comparing/contrasting the key details that support them 	<p>Given two texts on the same topic the child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete all criteria in 3 <p>PLUS one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze & explain which of the two texts most comprehensively addresses the topic by comparing/contrasting the 1-2 key details supporting the main ideas in each text analyze & explain how both texts complement each other by demonstrating how the 2-3 points/1-2 key details in one text supplements information in the other.

These task-specific rubrics become the criteria by which teachers grade students thus ensuring consistency across the entire elementary system and, more importantly, transparency and equity for students and parents. The scores students earn from these assessments will reflect their current level of proficiency with the priority standard and subsequently will be the scores teachers enter into the grade book. As Progress Reports (end of quarter) and Report Cards (end of semester) are generated to share with students and parents, these “grades” are then considered to determine a current score for each student relative to each priority standard.



Principle 4 - *Not all performances should be included in grades.*

As mentioned in Principle 1, every teacher is able to determine how to best meet the needs of the learners in their classroom. Some teachers might offer additional practice opportunities for a skill by way of homework. Some might feel the progress checks available in the curricular materials are a good indication of how students are progressing. Others might believe that the learners in their classroom need something else entirely in order to show their progress towards proficiency of a standard. This can vary between teachers, and even in their own classroom as they move through the school year. So what does this mean? It means a distinction needs to be made regarding what gets counted for grading purposes. For this, a quick differentiation between formative and summative assessment is helpful.

Formative Assessment - A check of student progress with learning. An assessment designed to *inform* the design of future instruction and interventions by checking student learning progress relative to a standard.

Summative Assessment - A *summary* of student learning. An assessment designed to measure the degree to which students have attained a particular standard at the conclusion of instruction.

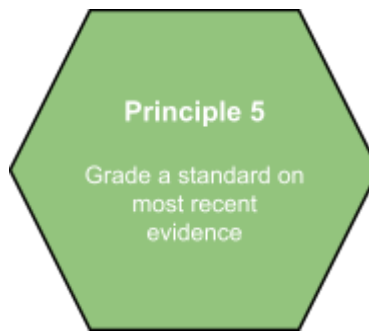
The two definitions above are helpful because we can see which type of assessment would be best for grading purposes and which type of assessment would not be as useful. The question to ask in determining this is which assessment, formative or summative, will provide the most comprehensive understanding of how well a student has learned a particular standard. If you guessed summative assessment, you are right!

The individuals at Federal Way Public Schools (2023) have a fantastic explanation of this:

“Formative (Practice) Assessments provide information about what the scholar understands, and prepares him/her for summative assessments much like an athletic team practices before a final game. This promotes two-way communication between teacher and scholar to develop ownership and promote growth through continual learning. It is rarely factored into a final grade. It is typically used for practice and not usually included in grades. However, there are circumstances when formative may turn into summative and included in grades” (Federal Way Public Schools, 2023).

The last line in the quote is important. Formative assessments can become summative assessments. Each grade level team gets to decide that. A 2nd grade team might review a common formative assessment they recently gave and decide the assessment was a quality measure of student performance relative to a priority standard. Therefore, they mutually agree that the formative assessment will be used as a score to report student mastery for that standard. As long as the team agrees and there is consistency in how students were measured, then this is perfectly acceptable.

Also of note is what has not been mentioned in this section on what is included in grading. Daily work, pop-quizzes, homework, etc... are all reasonable tools teachers are likely to utilize in the course of instructing students. Those tools can be helpful in providing students additional practice and opportunities to learn. They can also be helpful to teachers as they monitor student learning progress. However, they are not worthy of inclusion in a standards-based grade book because they do not reflect the comprehensive evidence required for a student to demonstrate their level of proficiency on a standard. More on this in Principle 5.



Principle 5 - Grade a standard based on most recent work.

Consider the following table reporting a series of assessment scores for three different students who are working to obtain their skydiving certification. This certification will allow the individual to lead skydiving expeditions for members of the public.

	Eval 1	Eval 2	Eval 3	Eval 4	Eval 5	Eval 6	Eval 7	Eval 8	Eval 9	Average
Student 1	100	90	100	90	80	70	80	60	50	80
Student 2	80	90	70	80	60	80	60	70	40	70
Student 3	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	50
Passing Score	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	

In a traditional grading system, the student who has continually made progress throughout the course and is currently demonstrating the most knowledge/skill related to skydiving is the student that would receive an F (Student 3). The question here is, who would you rather jump out of a plane with. Clearly the same “failing” student. We would certainly hope this skydiving school uses a standards-based grading system where certification is based on whether or not the students demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills as opposed to an average of all of their assessments from the start of the course to the end. In fact, that’s how most certifications work. We wouldn’t certify a heart surgeon based on how well they performed on their first few assessments of their surgical skills in their first year of medical school. The medical licensing board would base their decision to award a license to practice medicine on a comprehensive assessment of their current skills. Standards-based grading is the same. Consider the following excerpt from Wormeli (2011);

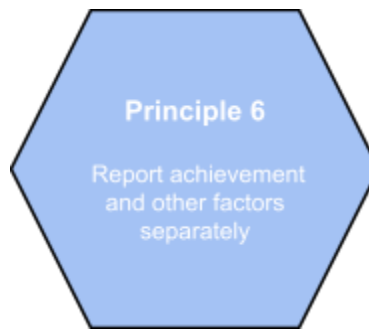
“LSAT. MCAT. Praxis. SAT. Bar exam. CPA exam. Driver’s licensure. Pilot’s licensure. Auto mechanic certification exam. Every one of these assessments reflects

the adult-level, working-world responsibilities our students will one day face. Many of them are high stakes: People's lives depend on these tests' validity as accurate measures of individual competence. All of them can be redone over and over for full credit. Lawyers who finally pass the bar exam on their second or third attempt are not limited to practicing law only on Tuesdays or only under the watchful eye of a seasoned partner for the duration of their careers. If an assessment of competence is valid, achieving its passing scores grants the assessed individual full rights and privileges thereof" (p.2).

If we believe students gain knowledge and skills the more opportunities and time they have to learn, it makes little sense to use their performance on a previous assessment of a priority standard in a calculation of their grade. Instead, we would utilize their most recent performance on a comprehensive assessment of that priority standard. We are concerned with their level of understanding today, not their level of understanding last month. In fact, the entire educational system should be built upon what skills students possess now. When looking at differentiating instruction, providing modifications, providing accommodations, designing intervention lessons, etc... we review the most recent data for each student. Standards-based grading is no different.

Looking at it from another angle, it is not hard to imagine why many students become disengaged from learning as a school year progresses. Imagine Student 3 again from the skydiving example. What if the skydiving instructors said that skydiving certification was based on an average of performance and not performance at the conclusion of the course. After the first few assessments, Student 3 would realize they have almost no chance of earning a passing score. Imagining Student 3 dropping the course is a likely result. In a compulsory education system like ours, students are not allowed to drop out. Instead, they disengage, develop negative perceptions of their capacity to learn, and often exhibit behavioral problems (Dueck, 2014). Once this begins for a student, it is a hard cycle to break as their belief in their academic ability continues to spiral downward. Ensuring students know that everyday is a new opportunity to learn and show what they know by evaluating their learning based on what they can do today and not what they couldn't do yesterday, sends a positive message that academic success is a journey, not a destination.

There is one exception to the “most recent evidence” principle when grading a student’s level of proficiency on a priority standard, especially when inputting the score into a progress report or report card. It is possible that a teacher might have an assessment that is not the most recent, but is a more comprehensive example of a student’s current proficiency level. For example, a teacher may have recently given a multiple choice assessment that had several questions requiring students to demonstrate their ability to identify the main idea and key details of a story. However, the previous week, the students read an article and completed a graphic organizer where they had to write the main idea of each section of the story in their own words and include 3 key details supporting each main idea. When deciding which assessment to use as an indication of each student’s current level of understanding, the teacher could make a strong argument that the graphic organizer assessment is a better representation. The point here is that there is some flexibility when determining scores for a progress report or report card between utilizing the most recent and/or the most comprehensive evidence. However, some of you savvy readers may be thinking that if a teacher designs their assessment tasks in line with the rubrics discussed in principles 2 & 3, this becomes a non-issue. If you had that thought, you’d be correct.



Principle 6 - *Report achievement and other factors separately.*

Most student report cards include grades for academic performance in core subjects (reading, writing, math, PE, music, science, etc...) as well as marks for citizenship and behavior. Citizenship and behavioral categories include things like following directions, completing work on time, and being respectful. These categories are often marked with a plus, check, or minus with a plus being very good and minus being not good at all. The marks students receive for these categories are intended to communicate to the parent how well their child is demonstrating work and social skills in the classroom. These are certainly important things for a parent to know. However, they do not belong on a standards-based report card.

This principle may be one of the more challenging principles for us to wrap our heads around if for no other reason than it has been done this way for as long as anyone can remember. It is so common that you would be hard-pressed to find too many examples of school districts that do not do this. Why then is the Hermiston School District breaking from this long-held tradition? Information to a parent regarding how well their child is exhibiting appropriate work and social skills in the classroom is so important that to wait until progress report or report card time to share that degrades the usefulness of such information. If a child is struggling socially and/or behaviorally, the parent should be receiving that information immediately so that as educators, we can partner with our families to intervene for the child. Few would disagree with that. If the teacher is frequently communicating with parents when concerns arise, marking a plus, check, or minus on the progress report and/or report card becomes superfluous and, distracting from the purpose of the report card. The same holds true for students who are successfully displaying appropriate work and social skills. As educators we should be communicating with the families of these students so they can continue to support the success of their child.

In both cases, regular communication with families regarding their child's behavioral and social success demonstrates that we see our families as educational

partners. As a result, in the Hermiston School District, citizenship and behavior are not categories included in the standards-based report card system. Instead it is a feature of our regular communication with students and their families.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Reporting Periods

For grading purposes, the school year is broken into four terms. Each term is a time when teachers communicate student proficiency for the priority standards taught up to that point in the school year.

Term 1 - Progress 1 (P1): Beginning of Year - End of October

Term 2 - Semester 1 (S1): Beginning of November - End of January

Term 3 - Progress 2 (P2): Beginning of February - End of March

Term 4 - Semester 2 (S2): Beginning of April - End of School Year

The timeframe listed for each term is an approximation as there can be slight variance to when a particular term begins and ends. Term 1 coincides with Fall Parent Conferences. We call this reporting period Progress 1 (P1). Teachers will share a P1 progress report with parents at fall conferences relaying their child's current level of proficiency on the standards taught up to that point. The end of Term 2 is the end of the first school semester, at which point teachers send home the report card showing the grades for Semester 1 (S1). Term 3 is the second progress reporting period and also coincides with spring conferences at the end of March. Parents will have an opportunity to review a report of their child's progress at this conference. Finally, Term 4 concludes the school year with the Semester 2 (S2) report card being mailed home.

Rubrics

In principles 2 and 3, the importance of task-specific rubrics was discussed. These rubrics form the backbone for how teachers design assessments to evaluate each priority standard and the criteria by which teachers evaluate student understanding. A score in the gradebook for any particular priority standard should always be evaluated against the rubric for that priority standard. The priority standard rubrics ensure students across the Hermiston School District are assessed equitably. Whether a student attends school A or school B, a score of 2 for a priority standard means the same thing. This ensures our students and parents can put stock in the

validity of their child's academic achievement. It also allows educators across the school district to understand trends in student achievement.

Content Area Priority Standards

Priority standards have been identified in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and English Language Development (ELD). In each of these content areas, several standards are listed. Each of those priority standards will receive a score of 1-4 on the progress report/report card. Some standards are instructed later in the school year. When that happens, the teacher will input N/A into that cell so the parent and student know that students have not been assessed on that standard because they have not had the opportunity to learn that standard yet. For ELD, not all students will receive a score on the progress report/report card. Only the students who are receiving English Language Development services will have scores for those priority standards.

Scores for Other Content Areas

ELA, ELD, and Math are not the only important subjects for students to learn. Science, Social Studies, Music, Health, and Physical Education are also critically important to a well-rounded education for our students. However, priority standards in these grades have not been identified yet. Music and Physical Education are currently working through this process. Soon we will begin looking at the viability of identifying priority standards and rubrics in Science, Health, and Social Studies. Until that time, students will receive one of the following score designations in each of the aforementioned content areas.

- + - Exceeds Grade Level Expectations
- = - Meets Grade Level Expectations
- - Does Not Meet Grade Level Expectations

Teachers of these content areas will continue designing learning experiences for their students based on state and national standards for that content area. In addition, they will continue to design assessments that align to the level of complexity the academic standards they teach require. The key difference is there will not be a specific set of standards for that content area that all teachers are focused on as there will also not be

a specific set of criteria that is aligned across all classrooms by which to evaluate student understanding. This doesn't mean students are not receiving great learning experiences and that the teachers are not evaluating their learning effectively in these content areas, it just means there is likely to be some variance in the standards teachers focus on and the scores students receive based on those standards.

Report Card/Progress Report Scores

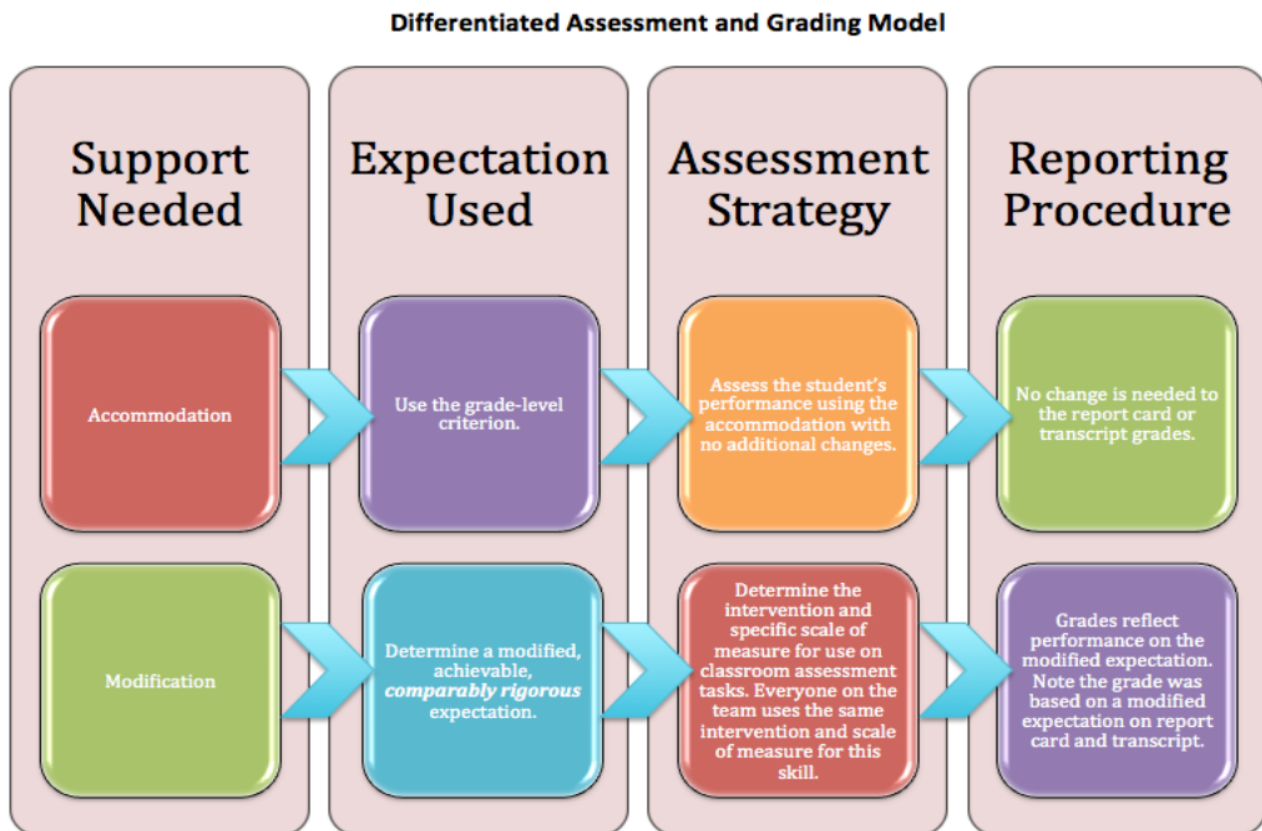
In the explanation of principles 2 and 3, the scale that is used to score each priority standard was shown.

- 4 - Exceeds Standard**
- 3 - Meets Standard**
- 2 - Nearly Meets Standard**
- 1 - Does Not Meet Standard**

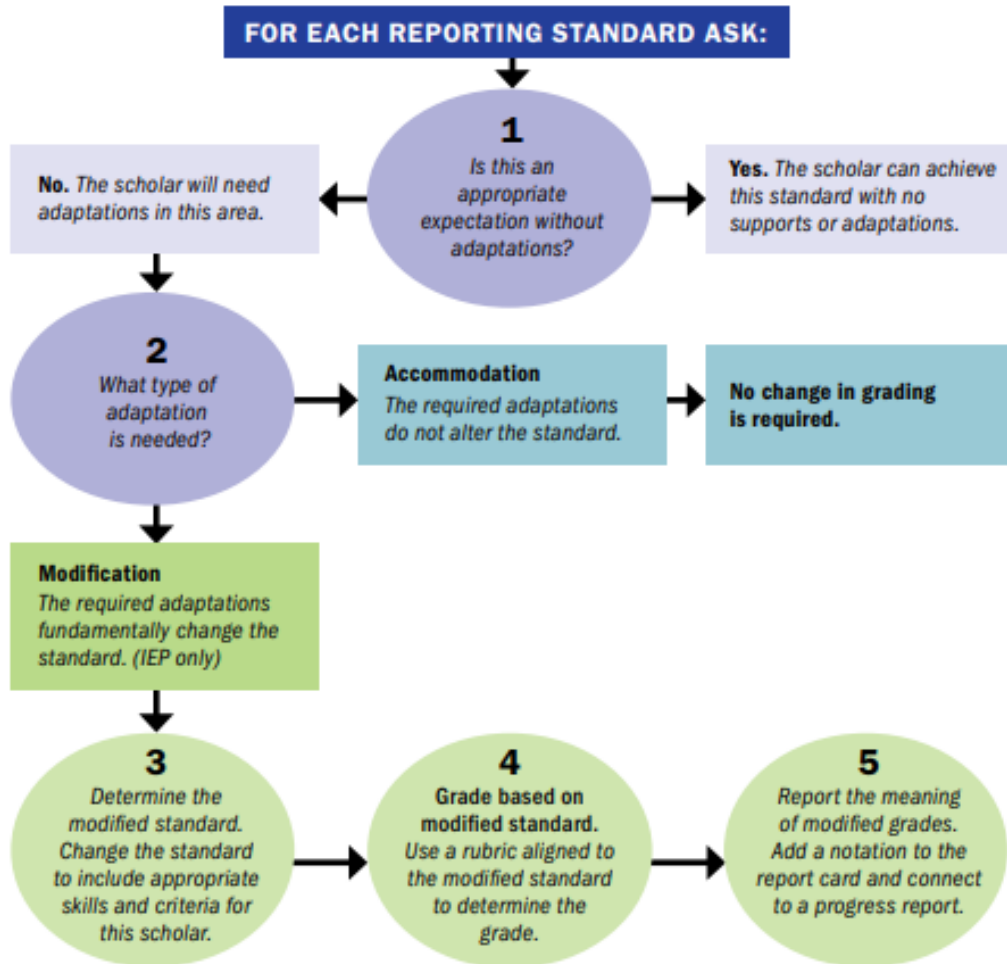
Each priority standard rubric uses this scale. It is critical to understand that each rubric was written to end of year grade-level learning outcomes. A student should not be expected to achieve scores of 3 and 4 on each priority standard in the first couple terms of the school year. It should take most students most of the year to achieve such mastery. A score of 3 shows the student has met the standard for that grade. A score of 4 means they possess a level of proficiency beyond their current grade level. Our goal is that by the end of the school year, our students have achieved level 3 or 4 in most standards. Let's say a student did have all 3's and 4's on their first progress report at the end of October. That would mean they have mastered all of the standards for their grade. That teacher would have little else to teach them, grade-level wise, for the remainder of the school year. A potential difficulty may exist for some students and parents absent this understanding of how standards-based grading works. If a student and/or parent is accustomed to receiving all A's and B's on their report card, they may erroneously conclude that all of the sudden they are struggling in school. This is not the case. Again, we should see the majority of students with 1's and 2's in the first few terms, moving to 3's and 4's in the last two terms.

Students Receiving Special Education Services

Students receiving accommodations, per their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504, will continue to work toward meeting grade level academic proficiency on each priority standard. As such, they will receive the same progress report/report card reflecting priority standard scores for the grade level in which they are placed, just as any student would. All students, regardless of whether they are receiving special education services, need support and some accommodation to succeed. Designation as a student receiving special education services does not change the expectations they, their parents, and the Hermiston School District have for their learning. It just changes the ways in which we accommodate and support their learning. There is an exception, however. Students receiving a modified curriculum per their IEP, will have a reporting system that reflects their growth toward their individual goals set forth in their IEP. This report is included as an addendum to the report card. Jung (2018) has a helpful diagram explaining how this works.



An alternate graphic depicting a similar progression was developed by Guskey & Jung (2007).



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