



Guiding Principles in Secondary Grading



THE PURPOSE OF OUR GRADE REPORTING SYSTEM IS TO DESCRIBE A STUDENT'S CURRENT ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY AND PROGRESS.

The collection of evidence that demonstrates academic proficiency is determined through a teacher's professional judgment in conjunction with other teachers in their content area.

Rationale: Teachers' judgment, in conjunction with teacher learning communities, are important and meaningful methods for ensuring accuracy, fairness, and reliability in grading.

"Teachers who trust their own minds—knowing that informed colleagues would likely make the same judgment—offer grades that communicate meaningful, reliable information to all" (T. Guskey and L. Jung, "Grading: Why You Should Trust Your Judgment").

"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" (T. Guskey and L. Jung, "Grading: Why You Should Trust Your Judgment").

"...knowledge is situated in the day-to-day lived experiences of teachers and best understood through critical reflection with others who share the same experience" (V. Vescio, D. Ross and A. Adams "A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning.").

"Teachers must use assessments to determine whether their students are achieving the standards, to decide whether to revisit critical knowledge & skills, to alter or enhance instruction when necessary, and continue to assess and reteach, as needed, until all students have achieved the standards. This means that one-size-fits-all instruction and assessments will not do" (C. Taylor, and S. Bobbitt Nolen. *Classroom Assessment: Supporting Teaching and Learning in Real Classrooms*).

Although computerized grading programs have advantages, teachers' judgment has been shown to be more reliable" (T. Guskey and L. Jung, "Grading: Why You Should Trust Your Judgment").

Grade level and/or subject area teams:

- Plan and implement curriculum
- Collaborate and analyze common assessments and assignments to define proficiency
- Utilize multiple forms of evidence to inform student grades
- Calibrate student scores across departments



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A student's grade should represent academic proficiency.

Rationale: A grade should be based on what a student knows and can do. Including non-academic measures within the grade calculation inaccurately reflects proficiency.

"We most often use grades to indicate student proficiency as it relates to standards or learning outcomes for a subject, and since most curricular standards make no reference to behavioral attributes (like punctuality), we compromise accuracy when we combine achievement (curricular standards) and non-achievement (anything else) factors" (T. Schimmer, *Grading from the Inside Out*).

"Distinguishing specific product criteria and reporting an achievement grade based on these criteria allows teachers to offer a better and more precise description of students' academic achievement and performance" (T. Guskey, *On Your Mark*).

"Punitive grading does not complement the overall aim to measure learning outcomes, increase student confidence, and provide an environment of fairness and equity. If grades reflect behavioral penalties, then they do not relate directly to learning outcomes" (M. Dueck, *Grading Smarter Not Harder*).

"For many students, cheating is a win-win. If they cheat and get caught (and get an automatic zero), then they don't have to do the work they didn't want to do in the first place; if their cheating goes undetected, they earn credit they don't deserve. The academic penalty for not doing the work on one's own should therefore be doing the work on one's own. The teacher should deal with the behavioral violation separately" (T. Schimmer, *Grading from the Inside Out*).

Academic grade could include:

- Assignments aligned to learning targets and standards
- Presentation or demonstration (verbal and written report, debate, performance, application of skill)
- Quizzes and tests aligned to learning targets and standards
- Projects and reports that demonstrate individual student learning

Academic grade should NOT include:

- Extra credit or bonus points unless tied to academic learning targets or standards
- Penalties for late work
- Neatness
- Effort
- Attendance
- Work habits



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Success indicators such as work habits, initiative, citizenship and collaboration (WICC) are monitored and recorded separately from a student's grade.

Rationale: The Issaquah School District believes that although success indicators may not be directly calculated in a student's grade, they have a significant impact on student learning.

"Reporting achievement separate from behaviors means that everyone can know as accurately as possible what a grade means in achievement terms. Another benefit of the expanded format reporting is that it enables a school/community to show very clearly and forcefully which behaviors it values in students" (K. O'Connor, *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*).

"If teachers intentionally develop these important student attributes, they are responsible for assessing them and informing parents about the level of proficiency their children have reached. If they don't, they send the signal that the attributes don't really matter" (T. Schimmer, *Grading from the Inside Out*).

"By offering separate grades for product and process criteria, teacher can distinguish between the irresponsible high achiever and the highly responsible low achiever" (T. Guskey, *On Your Mark*).

Examples for monitoring WICC:

- Student self-evaluation
- Conferring notes
- ISD WICC rubric
- Mobile apps or programs for tracking behaviors (example: Class Dojo, OneNote)



OneNote



ClassDojo

Examples for reporting WICC:

- Narrative comments in Skyward report card
- WICC comments in report card





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Assessments and other evidence of student's academic proficiency are rooted in common learning standards.

Rationale: A grade should represent proficiency in curricular standards. Grades provide feedback and communicate consistency among classes.

"In essence, assessment in education is any process used to gather information about student learning; that is, what students know, are able to do, and believe at a particular point in time" (T. Guskey, *On Your Mark*).

"Standards in education represent the goals of teaching and learning. They describe precisely what we want students to know and be able to do as a result of their experiences in school. Standards specify the particular knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions that we hope students will gain through interactions with teachers and fellow students in school learning environments" (T. Guskey and J. Bailey, *Developing Standards-Based Report Cards*).

"In education, standards represent the goals of teaching and learning. They describe what we want students to know and be able to do as a result of their experiences in school" (T. Guskey, *Practical Solutions for Serious Problems in Standards-Based Grading*).

Examples:

- Align learning activities (assignments, essays, projects, tests, class discussion, etc.) to learning targets and standards
- Develop formative assessment strategies to monitor student progress towards mastery of standards
- Assess what was taught

Standards of Learning:

- Local
- Regional/State
- Federal
- Mentor or Colleagues
- Professional Organizations





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Student exceptionalities are an important consideration when determining a student's academic grade.

Rationale: Teachers consider the needs of all students, including but not limited to English language learners, advanced learners, students with special needs, and students with diverse cultural backgrounds when determining and reporting academic grades.

"If ... your purpose as an educator is to develop talent, then you go about your work differently. First, you clarify what you want students to learn and be able to do. Then you do everything possible to ensure that all students learn those things well" (T. Guskey, *On Your Mark*).

"Because every student's needs are unique, schools should deliver personalized learning opportunities and interventions" (M. Dueck, *Grading Smarter Not Harder*).

"When teachers ask students to complete tasks that are not within their developmental reach, the students are set up for failure" (C. Taylor, and S. Bobbitt Nolen, *Classroom Assessment: Supporting Teaching and Learning in Real Classrooms*).

"Cultural differences underlie all assessments, affecting what is measured, how it is measured, and how the measurements are interpreted. Being rooted in culture, background, community, and family, such differences have the potential of preparing children differently for school learning whether the learning is in language, social studies, science, or math. Importantly, cultural differences affect student perceptions and interpretations" (M. Shermis, and F. Di Vesta, *Classroom Assessment in Action*).

Examples:

- Use of Individualized Education Plan & Section 504 plans to guide accommodations and/or adaptations
- Differentiated instruction
- Corrective Instruction/Reteaching
- Additional opportunities to show proficiency differentiated by student need
- Use of multiple modalities and/or student choice to show achievement



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Students are provided multiple opportunities to show proficiency.

Rationale: The purpose of teaching is to help each student reach proficiency and to empower all students to achieve academic excellence.

"Assessments ... are an indicator of a person's ability at a single moment in time. As such, outcomes can be affected by variables totally unrelated to the learning targets" (M. Dueck, *Grading Smarter Not Harder*).

"When learning is developmental and results from a process that unfolds over time so that student achievement increases with practice, the more recent evidence should "count" for the student's grade: old, outmoded evidence should be discarded" (K. O'Connor, *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*).

"An assessment ... approach that insists on rigid timelines and forbids retests may reflect reality, just not the reality of what the student has truly learned" (M. Dueck, *Grading Smarter Not Harder*).

"When it comes to classroom tests, we too often send the message to students that they must get it right the first time. If we reflect at all on the tested content, it is by telling students what they should have done once the testing is over. Yet in nearly every other area of the real world, we embrace and celebrate mastery through repeated effort" (M. Dueck, *Grading Smarter Not Harder*).

Examples:

- Build assessments by standard – student may retake the section that was missed
- Build assessments by depth of knowledge within a standard – student may retake the level of incomplete understanding
- Base final grade on evidence of mastery and teacher professional judgment
- Allow students multiple ways to demonstrate understanding:
 - Provide alternative projects
 - Give students choices for the ways in which they demonstrate understanding
 - Ask students to correct and justify responses and explain what went wrong the first time
 - Ask students to review errors and use as a study guide
 - Confer with students



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Learning goals, and how they will be assessed are shared with students before learning begins.

Rationale: Students tend to perform at a higher level of competence when they know where they are going, how they are going to get there, and why they need to be there. Knowing the learning targets ahead of time, allows students greater ability to self-assess their knowledge, thinking, and skills to better prepare themselves for assessments.

"To provide information to students for self-evaluation. As a feedback device, grades can also redirect students' effort and ideally lead to improvement in academic performance" (T. Guskey and L. Jung, *Answers to Essential Questions About Standards, Assessments, Grading and Reporting*).

"If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else" (P. Laurence, *J. Peter's Quotations: Ideas for Our Time*).

"Student learning standards are statements that describe what educators want students to learn and be able to do as a result of their experiences in school. They define the learning expectations or goals that educators strive to have students gain. As such, standards provide the foundation for every school's curriculum and instructional program" (T. Guskey and L. Jung, *Answers to Essential Questions About Standards, Assessments, Grading and Reporting*).

"Standards help students identify their learning strengths as well as areas of struggle or difficulty. This helps parents better understand what is expected of their children in school and how to target improvement efforts when needed" (T. Guskey and L. Jung, *Answers to Essential Questions About Standards, Assessments, Grading, and Reporting*).

Examples:

- Learning goals are made explicit through lesson plans, guides, scope and sequences, outlines, curriculum maps, and course syllabi

Learning goals are shared with students:

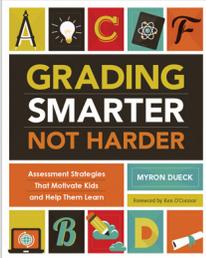
- Objectives on the whiteboard before lesson
- Course syllabus
- Objectives shared verbally
- Display or visual of learning goals for unit, course, or term



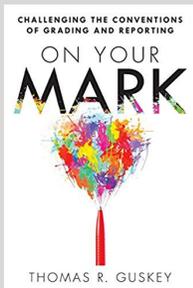
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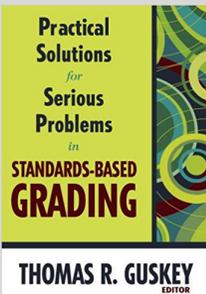
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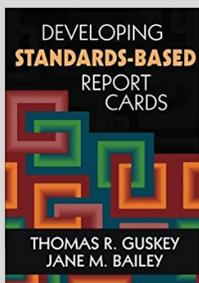
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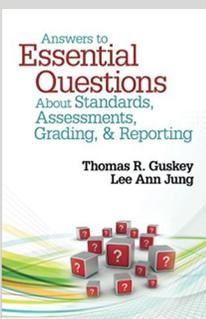
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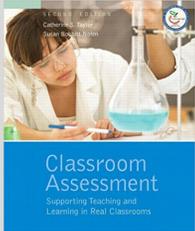




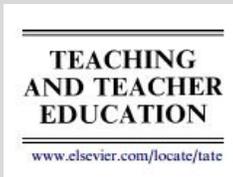
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