WEST FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ELEMENTARY

STANDARDS-BASED GRADING & REPORTING

GUIDEBOOK
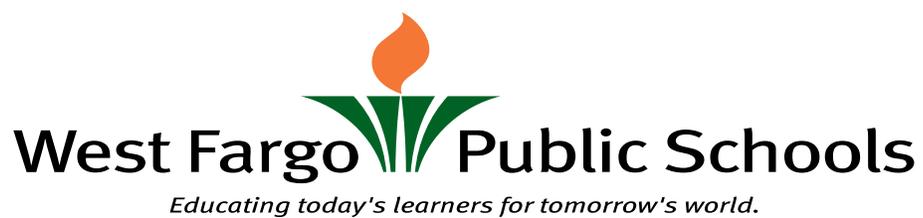
2018-2019

Educating today's learners for tomorrow's world.

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The purpose of a report card is to communicate with all stakeholders regarding progress toward district identified content learning standards and College and Career Readiness skills. It indicates the learner's learning strengths and where additional practice is needed.

Research on Standards-Based Grading

Research, education experts, and practitioners have emphasized that assessment and grading practices need to: 1) have meaning, 2) support learning, and 3) be consistent across classrooms and 4) enhance motivation to learn (O'Connor, 2011). In addition to the three overarching expectations surrounding assessment and grading, Schimmer (2016) acknowledges that Standards-based grading (SBG) and assessments practices have a significant impact on learners' growth mindset and self-confidence.

Effective assessment practices provide the descriptive feedback for learners to improve on their learning. This form of feedback occurs while the learning is occurring (formative assessment). Grades are a form of feedback to a learner, indicating their progress toward reaching the standards. Learners and parents/guardians need a precise picture of what has been learned and what still needs to be learned. Research has indicated that grading and reporting around specific standards, while using formative assessment with feedback relating to the progress toward the standard/learning target, significantly improves learner achievement and motivation. Black and William (1998) and Hattie (2009) meta-analysis demonstrates that high-quality formative assessment and feedback is one of the leading educational practices to positively impact learner achievement. Standards-based grading and assessment practices provide the methodology that includes accuracy, meaning, consistency, and motivation for all learners to achieve.

AdvancEd Requirements – Items that we must address:

From the 2015 visit from AdvancED, WFPS was giving improvement priorities that the district must address before the 2020 visit. Two of the priorities will be addressed with standards-based grading.
- Create and implement a formalized process that drives curriculum, instruction, and assessments throughout the district by organizing and utilizing the data from all facets of the system, including: 1) multiple assessments of learner learning, 2) evaluations of professional practices and 3) program evaluations. (Indicators 3.2, 5.2)
- Design and implement grading and reporting systems, based on clearly defined criteria, that represent learner attainment of standards, skills, and competencies which are consistently aligned both vertically and horizontally across the district. (Indicators 3.10)

A strong Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum ensures that our district is committed to learner learning.

"Guaranteed" **means** that all learners, regardless of their teacher or school, will have access to the same content, knowledge, and skills across the district. *"Viable"* means schools make sure that the necessary time is available and protected so learners will be able to learn the guaranteed curriculum (Marzano).

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum and PLCs

Having a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) drives our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and ensures equity amongst our schools and classrooms.

- What do we want our learners to know and be able to do? (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, Mattos, 2016)

The PLC process needs a vetted scope & sequence in order to have common formative assessments (designed by the team) that can be discussed and utilized to drive instruction and provide professional development for our teachers.

According to *Learning by Doing* (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, Mattos, 2016)

•The purpose of our school is to ensure all learners learn at high levels.

•Helping all learners learn requires collaboration and a collective effort.

How are Report Cards and Proficiency Scale Designed

Each academic area has defined trimester proficiency scales for specific learning categories. These categories of reporting often include more than one academic standard as defined by the state of North Dakota. The academic standards required have been prioritized and placed into a scope and sequence, which aligns to the statements reflected in the proficiency scales for each trimester. The entire statement for the category is be considered at the end of the grading period when determining whether a learner has achieved a "3 - Meeting Expectations." This document often refers to the entire learning category when referencing "standards."

Mark on Report Card	Meaning of the Mark
4- Exceeding Expectations	Learners reach a level of mastery beyond the grade-level standards. They are able to apply and adapt to authentic or unpredictable situations or circumstances. These learners can draw upon their conceptual understanding to solve real problems that show a level of creativity and sophistication. These learners are able to accurately self-assess and have a depth of understanding that seamlessly connects related or previously explored concepts.
3- Meeting Expectations	Learners independently demonstrate competence within the standards. Whether basic or sophisticated, these learners have met the standards and are capable of selecting the appropriate strategy for most situations or circumstances. With assistance, these learners can occasionally apply their proficiency to more authentic situations or circumstances. While they haven't consistently achieved more advanced demonstrations, these learners have fully met the expectations of the intended learning.
2- Partially Proficient	Learners are those who inconsistently demonstrate an understanding of the grade-level standards, and sometimes require assistance and guidance to reach full proficiency. Connections to related or previously explored concepts are either minimal or inconsistent. Learners will occasionally reach the proficiency level on some standards, while also demonstrating some learning at the novice level. These learners have some transferable skills and a limited conceptual understanding that goes beyond right or wrong.
1- Novice	Learners are those who can only demonstrate a very basic understanding of the grade-level standards and concepts. These learners are at the beginning stages of learning; explanations and demonstrations are task specific, inconsistent, linear, and isolated in that they show little connection to any related or previously explored concepts. These learners often operate at the recall and replication level.
IE- Insufficient Evidence	Not enough evidence has been collected at this time.
NA-Not Assessed	This component was not assessed in depth during this marking period.
* Asterisk	Modifications: shift the expectations from the grade-level. (Asterisk) Accommodations: Supports put in place to help achieve grade-level expectations. (No Asterisk)
Tom Schimmer, *Grading From the Inside Out*	

Learners on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP/Special Education):

MODIFICATIONS
Shift the expectations from the grade level.

ASTERISK
2* - making progress toward modified learning targets
3 - meeting expectations on modified learning targets

Students Requiring Modifications

Students working on Grade Level Standards and Learning Targets with Accommodations.

ACCOMODATIONS
Supports put in place to help students achieve grade-level expectations.

Students working on Grade Level Standards and Learning Targets

• The IEP takes precedence over the grade level standards and proficiency scales. The special education teacher/team will review which specific standards may be met on grade level for each learner.
  o If the team determines the learner COULD potentially attain achievement of a grade level standard with some accommodations, they shall be given that opportunity. If the learner is taught the grade level standard, that standard/category would **NOT** be marked with an asterisk.
  o If the team determines [the learner] needs to be taught at a level that is not in alignment with the grade level standard, that category would be marked with an asterisk.
• A learning target or objective [not on] grade level may or may not be reported on the standard report card. If the [target] is closely aligned to a report card category and makes sense to communicate i[t, it is reported] with or without the asterisk as needed.
• Learners on an IEP w[orking on modified standard]s will receive a score of 2 or 3 with an asterisk to indicate that progress [...]
  o Since st[udents...] not appropriate to report "4- Exceeding Expec[tations...] ptionally exceeded expectations, achi[eved...] grade-level standard and reported without an as[terisk...]
  o [...] include an asterisk since the [...] curred.
• In add[ition...] the IEP is an excellent form of parent communication and learner feedback.

Learners Learning English (EL):

• Learners who are English Learners must have access to the Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum designated by the school district after one year of receiving services for language instruction in all academic areas other than English Language Arts.
  o English Learners must be given the opportunity and taught to the grade level standard with necessary accommodations, that standard/category is **NOT** marked with an asterisk.
  o A specialist providing specific supplemental interventions to English Learners will determine in collaboration with the core instruction teacher whether a standard/category is marked with an asterisk to indicate that instruction has been modified.
    o The need for modifications for English language learners is generally time-limited since learners will be expected to increase to a level of English proficiency where only accommodations are required.
• A unit guide for a sheltered instruction course may be inclusive of accommodations to help clarify instructional practices and a scaffold of learning targets, the standard/categories on the report card are **NOT** marked with an asterisk.
• In English Language Arts, a learner's ACCESS score will help inform the instructional level. If not in alignment with the grade level standards, achievement in that standard/category would be marked with an asterisk accordingly.
• In addition to the standard report card, a progress report addressing language instruction is an excellent form of parent communication and learner feedback.

What are the advantages of Standards-Based Grading?

- Allows learners, teachers, and parents/guardians to gauge each learner's progress according to each standard or category of learning.
- More accurately represents learner's knowledge and skills at each grading period.
- Provides multiple opportunities for learners to show what they know.
- Doesn't penalize learners for mistakes made during the learning process.
- Increases consistency in grading policies and criteria across teachers and schools.

How is indicating that so many learners are "meeting expectations" possible?
- If the Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum for our district is successful, approximately 80% of our learners will be meeting expectations.
- Each category receives a separate score, providing more precise feedback than one overall score for an academic area.
- An analogy that may be helpful is to think of it like a "driver's license," which is held by both a driver who barely passed the test as well as one who achieved 100%.

What evidence do I need to collect?
- Teachers can collect information about learner understanding through observations, questioning, and listening to their partner or small group discussions; or they can create more formal assessments like an exit slip, answering a question with a technology tool, completing a worksheet, providing a written response to a prompt, or taking a quiz or test.
- PLCs are focused on the four questions and the process of collecting and analyzing learner work to help inform instruction and increase learner achievement; therefore, determining the evidence that is needed is an integral part of the PLC process. Tracking learner data on the day-to-day work related to the curriculum brings a deeper meaning to the PLC process.
- The district-wide curriculum team will work to provide sample rubrics, prompts, projects, and assessment questions that align with the proficiency scales in order to help guide teachers and their PLC teams in this process.

Are grades collected based on the whole standard or only on the part of the standard currently being taught?
- Grades recorded to provide learner feedback and inform teacher instruction throughout the grading period are scored in relation to what is currently being taught. Did the learner meet the expectations that were set for the assignment?
  - Individual learner data indicates a trend toward the designated proficiency scale by the end of the grading period.
  - Collective learner data helps to inform instruction, allowing the teacher to adjust and reteach if the majority of the learners are not achieving as expected or accelerate if the majority of the learners have already attained the skill.

What if I am surprised by how a learner performs on a summative assessment?
- If a learner does not perform as a teacher would expect, more evidence is collected.
- If there is a surprise and a learner suddenly seems to have learned what they haven't been demonstrating in class; confirm this new found understanding with a conversation or further demonstration.
- If there is a surprise and a learner suddenly cannot perform as previously observed, have a conversation and determine an appropriate way to reassess or allow the learner to demonstrate their skills.

What about grades for supplemental service programs? (eg LLI)
- If a learner receives supplemental services to enhance core instruction, no report card grade is required.
- A specialist providing specific supplemental interventions will determine in collaboration with the core instruction teacher whether a standard/category is marked with an asterisk to indicate that instruction has been modified.
- A progress report addressing supplemental services is an excellent form of parent communication and learner feedback.

What about grades for alternative core programs? (eg ReadWell)
- Alternative core programs should be graded in the same manner that is utilized when a learner is on an IEP; see that section of the guidebook.
- In addition to appropriate grades on the report card, a progress report addressing alternate core services is an excellent form of parent communication and learner feedback.

What does a child need to do to achieve a 4?
- It is important to understand that a 4 in Standards-based grading is not the same as earning an "A" in the traditional system.
- West Fargo Public Schools defines a 4 as "Consistently meeting most requirements for exceptional work related to course standards and demonstrating a deep level of knowledge and skill for this point in the school year." This means that learners need to do more than simply have a basic understanding of the course. To earn a "4" learners need to demonstrate they have a greater understanding by elaborating on their answers, solving more challenging problems, or showing connections between varying concepts that they have made on their own.
- Some learners may find this aspect of Standards-based grading more challenging since "going above and beyond the minimum standard" may take extra effort and persistence.

If a child does everything that is asked of them, why didn't they get a 4 (or even a 3)?
- In a Standards-Based Grading system a learner's grade depends on showing mastery of the standards. Completing the assigned work is important to a learner's learning, but grades will be based on what a learner can demonstrate that they know.
- Grades determined in our Standards-based grading system more accurately show what learners know and can do.
- If a learner completes all assigned work, but is unable to demonstrate the knowledge and skills, the learner will not receive a 3.

Section Seven
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