

Last year I implemented a new grading system within my classes, and I will continue to use it this year. This system is known as Standards Based Grading (SBG). I decided to begin using this after reading several articles from school districts, teachers, and researchers on the shortcomings of our traditional grading system and the merits of SBG. The main goal of SBG is to communicate exactly what a student knows and can do, instead of merely reporting grades as a vague percentage that can be misleading due to several non-academic factors. I'd like to give you a brief rundown of how I use SBG in my math classes:

- ❖ The biggest change is how the assessments look and how they will be graded. After we learn each standard, or expectation, in class I will give the students a small quiz over that particular expectation. There are about 3 - 5 expectations per unit or chapter of study. At the end of the unit/chapter I will give a test that includes all expectations studied in that unit. Students will only need to complete questions that will improve their score for that expectation.
- ❖ The questions on the quizzes will be split into 2 different difficulty levels (2.0 and 3.0). The test at the end of the unit/chapter will include 3 difficulty levels (2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 level questions). Students' ability to correctly answer each level will determine what score they get for a particular expectation: 0, 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, or 4.0. See the back of this page for a detailed explanation of what each score means.
- ❖ The great thing about SBG is that students' individual strengths and weaknesses are made very clear. After each assessment, students will track their scores for each expectation on a chart to see their progress. Students also have the ability to reassess and possibly earn a higher score for that standard- these scores are not set in stone after one assessment!
- ❖ Students can expect to see less traditional homework assignments from me, and those that I do give will not be explicitly included in the gradebook- however, everything that I assign does play a role in a student's overall understanding of an expectation. Practice work that is sent home should not be ignored. I will still collect and review students' practice work.
- ❖ Since our school still uses a traditional grading system, I will be converting students' scores from the assessments (e.g. "3.5") into a separate score to put on SIS. You can view those on Parent Portal just like before. These will make up most of your student's grades that you'll see on his/her school report card. I do ask that you be patient, since I will not have as many things to put in Parent Portal as I have in the past. You are always free to call, email, or send a note to ask about our current progress in class. At every midterm and quarter I will send home the chart with your student's progress on it, as well as a separate report each quarter that shows how he/she is doing on those non-academic factors such as participation and attendance. These need to be discussed together, signed, and returned to me.

Explanation of Scores:

The numbers do NOT relate to a traditional *Grade Point Average (GPA)*. Rather, they are scores on each expectation that build from 0 to 4, depending on how well you have mastered the material. You have to understand all of the level 2.0 questions before you can get one of the higher scores.

4 (Mastery) - You go above and beyond the expectation by completing advanced and in-depth applications of the material.

3.5 - You can use all the skills presented and complete some advanced and in-depth applications of the material with partial success.

3 (Proficiency) - You can use all of the skills and concepts presented on your own- you've got it!

2.5 - You understand how to use the skills and concepts but may make a few key mistakes.

2 (Developing) - You understand the basic foundational material, but do not understand how to do the main skills and concepts.

1.5 - You can answer all the basic questions with help, and some on your own.

1 (Beginning) - You understand what to do on all of the basic questions, but need help.

0.5 - You understand what to do on some of the basic questions.

0 - You left it blank- there is nothing to grade!

I know that these changes might look a little confusing at first, but I am confident that with a little time and patience, things will start to make sense. I assure you that I am only making these big changes to benefit your student and to help him/her learn to their highest potential.

As always, I encourage you to contact me with any questions you have, whether about this new system or your student's progress in my class. I will do my best to explain things! Thank you for your understanding and your support.

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