



FCS Standards-Based Grading

In 2018, Sheridan School District began moving towards standards-based grading in an effort to report more accurate, consistent, and meaningful grades. This year, we have updated our school information system to PowerSchool, allowing us to better report student scores on standards within each academic area. Our progress reports and report cards will look slightly different with the switch to the new system. This new layout will be easier to read and allow for more detailed information within a course, including scores for individual standards and/or standard clusters.

One other significant change in a true proficiency-based grading system is the removal of an overall grade within a course. **Our progress reports and report cards will now solely report scores on a proficiency rubric for key standards within the academic area and will no longer show an overall grade.** Although this is standard practice in most proficiency-based grading systems, including many of our neighboring school districts, this will be a change for FCS and may take some time to get used to.

Our report card grades will continue to focus on growth and measure where a student is on the path to year-end proficiency. **This means that assessments will be given for students to demonstrate their level of mastery of a standard. These assessments will make up a student's grade in that area.** Assessments will take many forms, which may include traditional paper/pencil tests, written responses, projects, presentations, performances, etc. We will report student grades on a 4-point scale that uses common definitions for all areas K-8.

Students will be scored on a 4-point scale instead of the traditional 100-point grading scale.

Score	NE / 0	1	2	3	4
Explanation	No evidence of student proficiency	The student is unable to demonstrate an understanding of the learning target without significant teacher support.	The student is beginning to demonstrate proficiency of the learning target with moderate teacher support.	The student has independently shown proficiency of the learning target.	The student has independently shown mastery of the learning target.
Requirements	Attempted assessment (student receives assessment and returns to the teacher with no evidence of understanding). *Meeting or plan needs to be established.	Completed assessment or part of the assessment and requires significant teacher support to do so.	Completed assessment, or the majority of assessment, and requires minimal teacher support.	Completed assessment that shows grade level understanding - no assistance from the teacher.	This can be done through the completion of assessment in addition to completion of at least 80% of classwork OR through completion of assessment and informal teacher assessment of student knowledge.

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This approach aims to provide the teacher, student, and parent with as accurate a picture as possible of the student's learning and to encourage a dialogue about how the student can master the material for the class. In particular, because learning is a process that takes place over time, each assessment will provide feedback for the student about what to focus on next. The student will be allowed to retake assessments as they improve their knowledge of the standard. If the new assessment shows a higher level of mastery, that new score replaces the old one.

As stated in previous years, our progress reports and report cards are nearing completion of a transformational process that has taken multiple years. We aim to continue communicating updates to our system during each reporting period to keep our families as informed as possible. Below are frequently asked questions that may be useful.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Standards-Based Grading

Q: Why did the District elect to change things?

A: Both the student and parents/guardians deserve detailed information on their progress towards mastering standards taught and assessed in each class. Our new system aligns our classes to the district, state, and national standards. It also aligns with research-based best practices and begins to create a report card similar to those used by many other districts in our area.

Q: I understood how well my child had done when I saw the A, B, C, D, F or O, S, N in elementary school. However, the new numbers are confusing.

A: Although these grade scales were commonly used in the past, there has not been a common understanding or definition of what these marks meant. The A, B, C, D, F, and O, S, N in elementary marks may have included behaviors (turning in work on time, bringing/sharing supplies, attendance, etc.) that are not directly related to academic achievement. Our goal is for a grade to accurately reflect student mastery of standards and communicate behaviors through other means, including messaging, conferencing, etc.

Q: Could a student do little classwork and still earn high marks?

A: Yes and No. If the student shows a high level of mastery without doing classwork, an honest and accurate assessment will still result in high marks. In addition, the teacher will likely communicate with the family that the student hasn't done the majority of the classwork. Again, this is why it is so important to report academic progress and behaviors separately. Both the student and parent deserve accurate feedback on both academic and behavioral performance.

Q: Could a student do little classwork and repeatedly take assessments with the hope of eventually improving?

A: No. A student who has done little classwork and who takes an assessment and scores a 0, 1, or 2 will likely be asked to show additional learning by completing said classwork before being given the opportunity to take an assessment a second time.