



SHERIDAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

Individual Success Through Education

STANDARDS REFERENCED GRADING HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Standards-referenced grading provides better communication to students, parents, teachers and administrators on what each student knows and is able to do according to the identified outcomes. Positive and consistent work habits regarding student learning will be assessed and reported separately.

Why is the district using standards-referenced grading?

The goal of Sheridan County School District 1 is to improve student learning by reporting grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning, and the shift to standards-referenced grading is an effort to reach that goal.

Accurate: By basing a student's grade solely on academic factors, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors, such as effort and attitude, are still essential, but are not part of the student's academic grade and are communicated separately.

Consistent: For each unit, the teacher will provide a proficiency scale that describes exactly what the student needs to know and do. Proficiency scales establish clear expectations for learning at the beginning of a unit and are referenced consistently throughout the unit and semester.

Meaningful: A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a standards-referenced classroom, scores are recorded by the unit outcome rather than by type, such as tests or homework.

Supportive of Learning: This approach supports learning by focusing on the outcome and components that have or have not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The reassessment policy also supports student learning by allowing new levels of learning to replace old when a student shows improvement on an outcome.

Grading Philosophy

- All students are consistently held to high academic expectations, which include development of work ethic and social skills.
- Grading practices are fair and manageable, and support effective teaching and learning.
- Grading practices yield grades that are understandable and meaningful, and accurately reflect student learning.
- Teachers exercise professional judgment in their grading practices, using a preponderance of evidence.
- Procedures for grading are supported, monitored, and supervised by the school district.

What is a Proficiency Scale?

Proficiency scales are the heart of a standards-referenced grading system because they guide instruction and learning.

- Proficiency scales display a progression of learning aligned to grade level outcomes and components
- Proficiency scale scores are associated with a level of performance
- Students may use the proficiency scale to track their learning
- Teachers use the proficiency scale to guide their instruction and provide feedback to students

Third Grade Math Proficiency Scale Example

Outcome: M.A.3.1 - Students will apply place value and properties of operations to solve addition and subtraction problems. Students will identify arithmetic patterns.

Scores indicate a level of performance

Bulleted items are components that identify what students must know or be able to do.

| Score | Description | |
|-------|---|---|
| 4 | <p>In addition to a level 3 score, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve multi-step word problems. • Prove and defend answer with multiple strategies <p>Level 4 components contain in-depth inferences and applications for this outcome</p> | |
| | 3.5 | <i>In addition to a level 3 score, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications with partial success.</i> |
| 3 | <p>While engaged in grade appropriate tasks, the student demonstrates an ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine operation and solve addition and subtraction word problems • Apply and use patterns to identify errors • Identify patterns to complete arithmetic table <p>No major errors or omissions with level 2 or 3 elements.</p> <p>Level 3 components identify what students must know and be able to do to be proficient in this outcome.</p> | |
| | 2.5 | The student demonstrates no major errors or omissions regarding level 2 elements and a partial knowledge of level 3 elements. |
| 2 | <p>The student demonstrates no major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve basic 3 digit addition and subtraction problems • Identify missing numbers in patterns • Round whole number to tens and hundreds place <p>However, there are major errors or omissions with level 3 elements.</p> <p>Level 2 components identify the foundational knowledge and skill for this outcome</p> | |
| | 1.5 | The student demonstrates understanding of all level 2 elements with help and independent understanding of some level 2 elements. |
| 1 | With help, the student demonstrates understanding of all level 2 elements or some level 2 and 3 elements. | |
| | 0.5 | The student demonstrates understanding of some level 2 elements. |
| 0 | Even with help, the student demonstrates no understanding or skill. | |

What do grades look like in a standards-referenced system?

Since learning is a process that takes place over time and at different speeds for different students, grading in a standards-referenced system looks different.

Outcome Tests - Standards-referenced grading focuses on measuring student's proficiency of an outcome on a common district test. Scores used to indicate student performance for an outcome align to the proficiency scale for each outcome and are reported in the following way.

- 4 - Student demonstrates an in-depth understanding by completing advanced applications
 - 3 - Student demonstrates proficiency on the complex, targeted knowledge and skills
 - 2 - Student demonstrates foundational knowledge, and is still working to apply concepts and skills
 - 1 - With help, student demonstrates basic knowledge and skills
 - 0 - Even with help, no understanding or skill demonstrated
- 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 may be used to indicate partial proficiency of a level

Student work - Student work is designed to provide practice and application of new concepts and skills essential to developing proficiency on unit outcomes. Student work can include, but is not limited to, written work, digital exercises, hands-on activities, direct instruction, group work, and homework.

- The purpose of scoring student work is to provide feedback to students and parents about student progress.
- While scores for student work will be recorded in the grade book, they will not be included in the final grade.
- Student work on Level 2 components may receive a score of 3, 2, 1, or 0
- Student work on Level 3 and 4 components may be scored with a 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0
- Student performance on practice or formative assessments can be considered as evidence of proficiency for determining a final grade.

Grades K - 8 Reporting - Scores will be reported using 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 for each subject area outcome test.

- **High School Reporting** - Outcome test scores in each subject will be averaged to produce a final grade. Outcome scores will be reported as a 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0. The scores will be converted to a corresponding A, B, C, D or F grade in the grade book. Standards-referenced grading will have no effect on a student's GPA. At the high school level, the 4.0 scale will be converted to a letter grade which is used to determine GPA. The table below shows the conversion from a 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 score into an A, B, C, D, F score.

| High School Conversion Chart | | |
|--|---|---|
| Indicates level of proficiency. Teacher enters this score into the grade book. | The grade book converts the average of all outcomes using the following range.* | Final Score - as calculated by the grading program. |
| 4 | 3.2 - 4.0 | A |
| 3 | 2.7 - 3.1 | B |
| 2 | 2.3 - 2.6 | C |
| 1 | 1.8 - 2.2 | D |
| 0 | 0.0 -1.7 | F |

*Ranges were determined by using cut scores that define student performance at each level: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic.

District Practices

Teaching and Learning Practices

- Students will receive a proficiency scale at the beginning of each unit.
- Students will receive clear descriptions of achievement expectations at the beginning of each unit of instruction.
- Proficiency scale and learning targets will be posted in the classroom.
- Feedback on student work will be given to students in a meaningful and timely manner.
- Learning is based on complex tasks that involve critical thinking and problem solving.
- All students will have an opportunity to learn the higher order thinking required in Level 4 components.
- Teachers will involve students in tracking their own progress.
- Students needing to retake a test will complete a reassessment agreement.
- Data collected on non-academic factors (prepared for class, polite, positive attitude, productive, participation, persistence) will be reported separately.

Student Work

Student work is designed to provide practice and application of new concepts and skills essential to developing proficiency on unit outcomes. Student work can include, but is not limited to, written work, digital exercises, hands-on activities, direct instruction, group work or homework. Student work will not be averaged in the calculation of a final grade however; student work can be used to provide evidence of learning that may help the teacher arrive at a final grade.

Homework

- Students are expected to complete homework as assigned in order to practice essential skills.
- When homework is assigned, it will be corrected, recorded in the grade book, and provided as feedback to students in a timely manner.
- If a student is not proficient on student work, including homework, they will have the following opportunities to learn:
 - Friday School
 - Before, after or during the school day

Checking for Understanding

- Teachers will use a variety of methods to measure individual progress and help students track their learning during a unit of instruction.
- Checking for understanding may include, but are not limited to, teacher observation, paper and pencil tasks, performance on digital exercises, quizzes, performance tasks, or conversations with the teachers.
- Additional instruction and reassessment will be provided to those students not demonstrating proficiency.
- Quizzes or other checks for understanding will be recorded in the grade book as “practice” or “formative assessment”, but will not be calculated into the final grade.
- Checks for understanding may be used to provide evidence of learning that may help the teacher arrive at a final grade.

Outcome Tests

- Outcome tests will be administered to assess student learning of the prescribed curriculum.
- Outcome test scores will be used in the determination of a grade for the outcome.
- Criteria on a proficiency scale for each outcome will determine the level of individual student learning.
- Students not meeting the criteria will receive additional instruction and practice to improve learning and will be reassessed.
- If students demonstrate that past scores no longer accurately reflect their learning, that score will be dropped and replaced with the new score.
- In grades K-8, all outcome grades will be reported separately for each subject area.
- At the high school level, outcome scores will be averaged to produce a single subject score and then converted into an A, B, C, D, F grade.

Glossary of Terms

Learning Targets - The learning objective for the day's lesson.

Outcome Test: A test, such as a unit test, that measures the student's knowledge or skills on the subject matter that has been taught.

Checking for Understanding or Formative Assessment: Assessments that are given frequently, usually on a weekly basis, to help teachers understand what students know about the information being taught. Teachers will adapt their instruction based upon the information gathered from these assessments. Assessment tools in this category may include, but are not limited to, teacher observation, paper and pencil tasks, performance on digital exercises, quizzes, performance tasks, individual conversations, or teacher observations.

Score: To mark, evaluate, or place a number (or letter) value on a single piece of student work as compared to an outcome or component.

Grade: A simple, clear, and concrete summary representation of student achievement based on what a student knows at the end of a given time period. The number (or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance.

Proficiency: When a student reaches a level of understanding or skill on something that has been taught. Once a student is proficient, they are ready for the next level of learning.

Reassessment Agreement - An agreement between the student and the teacher outlining the learning that must take place before a student is ready to retake an outcome test.

Standards or Outcomes: Statement that describes what and/or how well students are expected to understand and perform.

Standards-referenced Grading: A grading system where scores denote progress toward the understanding of a specific outcome.

Proficiency Scale: A progression of learning aligned to outcomes and components and associated with levels of performance. The proficiency scale provides specific information on what a student must know or do to achieve a particular score.

4.0 Rubric: A grading tool used to provide feedback on student performance. The score signifies the knowledge and skill a student demonstrates toward a specific outcome. It moves from simple (2.0) to more complex (3.0) with a score of 4.0 requiring in-depth analysis and application. A score of 3.0 is the proficient level of mastering the targeted learning goal.

Gradebook Example


Example 1: Shows the unit outcome and list of components:

Student's standards-based scores are shown below. Click the scores to see assignments that make up those scores.

Class: Q4 4th Grade Mathematics

This is the unit outcome that states what students must know or be able to do.

Unit outcome grade determined by evidence including, but not limited to, student performance on the outcome test.

- Students will write numbers in various formats. Students will use place value to round, sequence and compare multi-digit whole numbers. 3 


| Date Due | Assignment | Grade |
|----------|---|--------------|
| 6/9 | Level 4: Solve problems using multiple strategies | 3 (Practice) |
| 6/8 | Outcome 4.1 Test | 3 |

Student performance on the unit outcome test.

- > Write numbers in expanded, word, and standard form
- > Round multi-digit whole numbers up to the millions place
- > Use less than, greater than or equal ($<$, $=$) to compare and sequence multi-digit numbers

Click on arrows to view component practice scores.

Example 2: Shows a drop-down view of scores from student work:

- Students will write numbers in various formats. Students will use place value to round, sequence and compare multi-digit whole numbers. 3 

| Date Due | Assignment | Grade |
|----------|---|--------------|
| 6/9 | Level 4: Solve problems using multiple strategies | 3 (Practice) |
| 6/8 | Outcome 4.1 Test | 3 |

- Write numbers in expanded, word, and standard form

| Date Due | Assignment | Grade |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 6/9 | Level 2: Writing Numbers | 2.5 |
| 6/8 | Level 2: Writing numbers | 2.5 (Practice) |

"Level" at the beginning of the assignment name indicates the level of student work based on the proficiency scale.
 *Level 2 is the foundational knowledge and skill for this outcome.
 *Level 3 indicates what students must know and be able to do to be proficient.
 *Level 4 indicates in depth inferences and applications.

- Round multi-digit whole numbers up to the millions place

| Date Due | Assignment | Grade |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 6/8 | Level 3 Rounding to the millions place | 3 (Practice) |
| 6/8 | Level 3: Rounding Numbers | 2.5 (Practice) |

"(Practice)" indicates that the score is not included in the final outcome grade.

- Use less than, greater than or equal ($<$, $=$) to compare and sequence multi-digit numbers

| Date Due | Assignment | Grade |
|----------|---|--------------|
| 6/8 | Level 3 Comparing numbers | 3 (Practice) |

The score provides feedback to students about their progress.