# Monticello Middle School Standards-Referenced Reporting Handbook



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**Purpose of Grades**

Grades communicate the academic achievement of a student at a particular point in time (Guskey, 2015).  Communication, in the form of grades, reflects what a student knows and can do in relation to content area learning goals as defined by the Common Core and Iowa Core Standards.

**Philosophy**
Grant Wiggins (1993,1996) and Marzano (2010) described s*tandards-referenced grading* as a system in which  teachers give students feedback about their proficiency on a set of defined standards and schools report students' levels of performance on the grade-level standards, but students are not moved forward (or backward) to a different set of standards  based on their level of competency.  Monticello Community School District believes in an intervention and enrichment approach to standards proficiency.   When a student struggles to reach proficiency, we will intervene on the student's behalf to provide intervention and additional opportunities to learn and relearn the standards.  If a student demonstrates proficiency on a standard prior to teaching and learning occurring, we will provide enrichment opportunities to enhance student application of a standard.

In this system, learning goals are clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders.  Over time, students receive specific and targeted feedback regarding learning goals.  As students progress in their learning, they are better suited to reflect, self-assess, set goals, and develop action plans.  Students conclude learning cycles knowing precisely their academic strengths and growth areas due to the implementation of standards referenced grading practices.

Standards-referenced grading is a research based approach to assessing and reporting student achievement.  Many scholars in the field of education, including Thomas Guskey, Robert Marzano, Ken O'Connor, and Rick Wormeli, support the implementation and extension of standards-referenced grading.  The following handbook reflects standards-referenced reporting practices and implementation at Monticello's Middle School.

*We believe:*
- *Standards-referenced reporting more accurately assesses student achievement.*
- *Standards-referenced reporting practices clearly communicate learning goals to all stakeholders.*
- *Standards-referenced reporting develops self-directed and intrinsically motivated learners.*

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- *Standards-referenced reporting better addresses the needs of all students.*
- *Standards-referenced reporting is focused on student learning.*
- *A 4 point grading scale enhances the validity and reliability of academic grades.*
- *Practice is essential for concept development, but not necessary for grade calculation.*
- *Behavior is vital to student success and should be reported separately in the gradebook.*
- *Academic grades should reflect academic achievement only.*

**Standards-Referenced  v.  Traditional Grading**

The focal point of standards-referenced reporting/grading is learning.  Contrary to standards-referenced grading, a traditional grading system has numerous flaws that inaccurately represent student achievement.  Many non-academic components in a traditional grading system reward external factors (extra credit, homework, positive learned behaviors, etc.) that distort the overall academic grade (O'Connor, 2011, p.15).  Rewarding these factors makes it difficult to discern whether a grade reflects what a student knows and can do, external factors, or a combination of both (O'Connor, 2011, pp.3-4).  For example, students that complete extra credit may improve their grade without necessarily improving their learning.  In many instances, credit is awarded to students based upon the completion of extra credit rather than the quality of learning displayed within the task.  At other times, students receive additional credit for bringing classroom materials to the teacher, (tissue paper, dry-erase markers, etc.), none of which contribute to the development of knowledge and skills (Townsley, 2015).  By separating or eliminating external factors in the grading process, students and parents are given an accurate representation of academic achievement (O'Connor, 2011, pp. 22).

Most traditional systems are predicated upon a 100 point grading scale and the attainment of points to determine a final grade.  In addition to having one hundred degrees of variation, the 100 point scale is negatively skewed toward the bottom end of the grading scale (Reeves, 2004, p.324).  The typical percentage range for each letter grade is ten points, however, the grade range for an F is sixty points (Reeves, 2004, p.324).  A zero, the most damaging grade, has six times the weight of all other letter grades (Reeves, 2004, p.325).  Student are not only more statistically likely to receive an F within a 100 point scale, but the F also has more impact than any other grade.  The result of implementing a 100 point scale is an inaccurate representation of learning.  A 4 point scale in a standard-referenced  system has less variation from one level of achievement to another equating to a more accurate measure of scholastic acquisition.

As students progress through their learning, a traditional grading system emphasizes point attainment rather than knowledge and skill development.  Grades are economic bartering in a traditional system (Wormeli, 2010).  If student X scores Y amount of points they receive Z for a grade (Wormeli, 2010).  Additionally, some students play the "points game" and do just enough to pass with minimal effort or learning.  Students in traditional grading systems are focused on

earning points rather than learning and making deeper connections with content.  The shift from points to learning in standards-based grading is more conducive to learning and academic development.

**Standards-Referenced  and Traditional Grading (Continued)**

External factors, such as homework, decrease the validity and reliability of academic grades (O'Connor, 2011, pp.3-4).  Homework, or practice in a standards-based system, is vital to development, growth, and improvement of learners over time.  Unfortunately, traditional grading practice includes homework/practice as part of the final grade calculation.  This penalizes students that require additional time and practice to learn the content (Wormeli, 2010).  Students that "get it" quickly are rewarded while others needing additional time and practice are inadvertently punished.  Including homework/practice in the final grade discourages students from persevering through academic challenges and perpetuates a defeatist attitude toward learning.  If practice is essential to improving skills necessary to succeed, students should not be penalized for their development.  In standards-based grading, it is more important that students learn the content rather than how quickly they learn it.

The purpose of grades is to communicate and reflect the academic achievement of a student (Guskey, 2015).  When determining academic achievement it is important to exclude behavioral factors within the academic grade.  Appropriate behavior inside and outside of the classroom is so important to academic success that it is necessary to assess and record these skills separately.  Grading of student behavior, known as 21st Century and Employability Skills, in a traditional classroom inflates or deflates academic achievement.  Late work penalties, for instance, artificially lower an academic grade and present a false representation of student knowledge (Guskey, 2013, p.70).  Rather than penalize the academic grade it is more accurate to assess late work within 21st Century and Employability Skills.  Improving a grade for class participation is a more accurate assessment of collaboration and discussion than academics.  Interactions with peers and adults are more accurate measurements of cooperation and respect and should be assessed therein.  A standards-based grading system seeks to reduce if not eliminate these factors by recording academics and 21st Century and Employability Skills separately within the gradebook.

**Non-Negotiables**
At Monticello Middle School, ten non-negotiables guide the implementation of standards-referenced grading practice.  Each teacher implementing standards referenced grading within their classrooms will adhere to the following:

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1. Learning targets are clear and communicated to students and parents using a variety of methods.
2. Grading is based upon a student evidence of learning.
3. Scores from assessments are reported by individual learning targets.
4. Students may demonstrate proficiency over time.
5. Students have the opportunity to reassess learning according to the reassessment guidelines.
6. Formative assessment may be included in final grades at the discretion of the teacher.
7. Homework, referred to as practice, is not included in a student's final grade.
8. Extra credit is not offered
   a. Additional practice to help develop skills will be determined by teacher or upon request.
9. Academic achievement is scored separately from employability skills so students, parents and teachers are able to clearly distinguish between behavior and knowledge.
10. Employability skills will be reported out at the quarter, but may be reported out more frequently at the discretion of the teacher.

**Assessment**

Multiple assessment methods will be utilized throughout grading periods.  Assessments will fall under two broad categories: formative and summative.

**Formative assessments** (practice, class activities, quick check, etc.) are assessments for learning.  These assessments are given periodically to check student progress (Marzano, 2010, p.22).  Formative assessments could be included in the final grade (based on teacher discretion)  because they are used to monitor progress and plan future instruction.

**Summative assessments** (tests, projects, papers, etc.) are assessments of learning. These assessments are utilized at the end of a learning cycle to determine academic achievement. "If the assessment occurs after the learning is complete, and is used to give a grade or provide a final measure of student results, it is *summative*" (Bailey & Jackicic, 2012, p.14).

Summative assessments will assess individual learning targets of Common Core & Iowa Core standards.  Scores on the individual learning targets will be recorded in the PowerSchool gradebook.  Students may reassess after completing relearning activities determined by the instructor.

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**4 Point Scale**

Utilizing a four point scale provides a more fair and accurate representation of what a student knows and can do (Reeves, 2004). A four point scale will be used to record scores within the gradebook.

| Scale | Grade | How Deep |
|-------|-------|----------|
| 4 | Mastery (M) | Understand it at a deeper level |
| 3 | Proficient (P) | Know it |
| 2 | Making Progress (MP) | Kind of know it |
| 1 | Needs Support (NS) | Barely know it |
| 0 | Not Assessed (NA) | Not Assessed |

*Sample Proficiency Scale*

| Teacher: Sarah Goldsmith |
| --- |
| Subject: MS Life Science (Grade 7) |

| Standard: MS-LS1-2  Develop and use a model to describe the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function. |
| --- |

| iCan Statement:<br>I can describe the structure and function of cell organelles<br>I can identify how the organelles affect the cell as a whole |
| --- |

| Describe the Assessment:  Creation and Analysis of Cell Model<br>Date of Assessment:  October (FAll)<br>Link to Assessment:<br>Common Formative Assessment,  Formative Assessment, or Summative Assessment:<br>Summative |
| --- |

|   | *What* | *How Deep* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **4** | Developed, revised, and used a model to illustrate the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function. Illustrated relationships between parts of a cell. | Understand it @ deeper level |
| **3** | Developed and used a model to describe the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function. | Know it |
| **2** | Developed a model to represent the function of a | Kind of know it |

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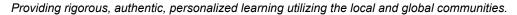| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function. | |
| **1** | Observed a model to understand the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function. | Barely Know it |

**21st Century and Employability Skills**

In addition to academic achievement, teachers implementing standards referenced reporting practices also assess students' 21st Century and Employability Skills. The following areas are assessed using the 21st Century and Employability Skills rubric: Participation, Work Completion, Behavior, and Collaboration.

The following terms are used to describe the frequency of expected behavior exhibited in relation to the criteria within the 21st Century and Employability Skills Rubric: proficient, making progress, and needs support.

See the example below for assessing 21st Century and Employability Skills

**5th grade Rubric**
**6-8th grade Rubric**

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**6-8  Employability Skills Rubric**

**Student Name:**

|  | PARTICIPATION | WORK COMPLETION | BEHAVIOR | COLLABORATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Uses time effectively | Meets high expectations in established timelines | Demonstrates appropriate classroom conduct | Works appropriately and productively with others toward a common goal |
| **P - Proficient (3)** | · Arrives on time<br>· Brings materials<br>· Participates in individual, whole group, and small group activities<br>· Advances the goals of the class through personal contributions and by assisting others. | · Works with commitment until expectations are met<br>· Makes revisions, learns from mistakes<br>· Organized<br>· Seeks help and asks questions in a timely manner | · Follows rules and procedures<br>· Respects others<br>·Accepts responsibility for personal choices and mistakes | · Communicates effectively with peers<br>· Respectful and encourages to others ideas and opinions<br>· Manages and resolves conflict appropriately<br>· Follows through with assigned work within group |
| **MP - Making Progress (2)** | · Consistently arrives on time<br>· Brings materials<br>· Participates in individual, whole group, and small group activities | · Works to meet most expectations<br>· Consistently makes revisions, learns from mistakes<br>· Organization is adequate<br>· Often seeks help and asks questions | · Demonstrates adequate personal behavior choices to follow classroom rules and procedures.<br>· Consistently respects others<br>· Often accepts responsibility for | · Communicates with peers appropriately<br>· Respectful to others ideas and opinions<br>· Can resolve most conflicts<br>· Consistently follows through with assigned work within group |

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| | | | personal choices and mistakes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NS - Needs Support (1)** | · Seldomly arrives on time<br>· Occasionally brings materials<br>· Does not participate often | · Meets some expectations<br>· Rarely makes revisions, learns from mistakes<br>· Unorganized<br>· Does not seek help or ask questions | · Inconsistently follows rules and procedures<br>· Does not respect others<br>· Rarely accepts responsibility for personal choices and mistakes | · Does not communicate effectively with peers<br>· Does not respect others ideas and opinions<br>· Does not manage or resolve conflict<br>· Does not follow through with assigned work |

## Final Grade Composition

How it works:  Let's say a grade level content area has 8 standards that are being reported on for the Semester.  There may be several marks (1-4)  that are put in over the course of a Semester for each standard. For each individual standard the teachers calculate the mode (number that occurs most often) mark for the standard.

So if a student  scores 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 4, 3, 4 on a standard the mode would be a "2" for that standard even though the student is moving toward proficiency on that standard close to the end of the Semester.  This student has demonstrated learning over time and is moving towards standards mastery at the end of the semester.  The teacher would take into consideration the demonstration of learning over time and report a higher level of proficiency then the mode in on that specific standard.  This means of marking and reporting gives students, teachers and parents the ability to see learning over time and give students credit for their learning rather than an average score that does not provide consideration for learning.

## PowerSchool Gradebook

**How to Look Up Grades in PowerSchool**

## Practice

Practice is vital to the development of concepts and skills.  Lack of practice makes it more difficult for students to achieve learning goals.  Because of this, the completion of practice (daily work, homework, practice problems, etc.) is strongly suggested, but not included in a student's academic grade. Practice completion or lack of completion, is shown in the Employability Skills Rubric. All practice work must be completed prior to a student's request to reassess a standard.

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**Reassessment -** *If a student scores below proficient, <u>reassessment is required.</u>*
Each grade level team will determine specific criteria for reassessment. The reassessment will not be the same version as the original assessment, and will require the student to receive support for student learning.

5 Retake Form
6 Retake From
7 Retake Form
8 Retake Form

## <u>Supports for Student Learning and Reassessment:</u>

| <u>What I Need (WIN) Time</u> | <u>Lunch Learning Lab</u> |
|---|---|
| - Reteaching: Revisiting what students are not understanding in a small group or individualized setting. | - Work Completion: Student understands assignment, but needs additional time to complete. |
| - Reassessment: After reteaching has taken place, reassess student on the standard(s). | - Resource: Student understands material, but needs support in getting started. |
| | - Organization: Helps student access materials to complete class expectations. |

## Potential Relearning Activities:

| Sample Activities | Possible Evidence |
|---|---|
| Complete missing assignments | Completed assignments |
| Create practice assessment | Completed practice with answer key |
| Tutoring with a teacher | Teacher signature |
| Study your notes (30 minute min.) | Study log |
| Complete internet activities provided by the teacher | Screenshots |
| Design a review game | Completed game |
| Make a poster | Completed poster |
| Create a web diagram | Completed diagram |
| Written summary | Completed summary |
| Complete review exercises | Completed exercises |
| Reflection | Completed Reflection |

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| YouTube Clips | Link and reflection |
| Khan Academy | Link and reflection |

**Late Work-** *If a student scores below proficient on a summative assessment and has missing and/or late work, <u>reassessment is required.</u>*

Formative practice (daily work, homework, practice problems, etc.) and summative assessments (tests, papers, projects, etc.) are to be submitted to the instructor in a timely manner.  Failure to complete assigned work will result in the following protocol:

1. Contact the student and request for WIN Time.
2. Contact parents/guardians regarding the situation.
3. Contact intervention team/data team regarding the situation.  (This may lead to an individual conversation between the student and building administrator.)
4. If issues with completing work persist over the course of two or more units, schedule a meeting with the student, parents, administration, guidance, and teacher to discuss academic issues.

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