

Monticello Middle School FAQ on Standards Referenced Reporting

Q: What are the major differences between Standards Referenced Reporting and Traditional Grading?

Traditional Grading System Versus Standards Referenced Grading System	
Traditional	Standards-Referenced
Based on Assessment methods. One Grade per subject	Based on learning targets with a proficiency score for each
Based on % system, often norm-referenced (someone can set the curve so it depends on other students) not criteria-referenced (depends upon set standards)	Criterion-referenced and proficiency-based using a limited number of levels with criteria and targets known to each student
Use an uncertain mix of achievement, attitude, effort and behavior. Use penalties (deducting points) and extra credit (points earned that may not be related to content)	Measures only achievement, behaviors reported separately. No penalties or bonuses given
Includes group scores	Includes individual evidence only that is produced in group work
May score and include everything in a course regardless of purpose	Emphasize the more recent evidence of learning
Assessments are often not clearly aligned to standards	Uses only quality assessment and carefully recorded data that aligns to standards
The teacher makes decisions about grading and announces these decisions to students	Discusses various aspects of performance with individual students
Assessment grades are final	Allow students opportunities to continue to learn and demonstrate mastery of content

Q: What is the difference between Standards Referenced Reporting at Monticello CSD and Standards Based Grading in other districts?

Standards Referenced Reporting differs from Standards Based Grading in a couple of very important ways. They are as follows:

Standards Based Grading	Standards Referenced Reporting
A system of grading based on defined number of learning levels	System based on traditional grade levels
Students advance through the system based on achievement of each level	Students advance through the system at the same pace as other students of the same age
Standards are used to guide curriculum and student progress is measured and used to determine advancement	Students will advance with varying levels of knowledge and skills
Students advance through system at their own pace	Standards are used to guide curriculum and measure student progress
Learning is the constant; time is the variable	Some promotion decisions may be made based on standards
	Time is the constant learning is variable – meaning students are still promoted on to the next grade level and are provided intervention if they are not mastering a grade level priority standard

*** Distinctions between Standards-Based and Standards-Referenced Educational Systems, Developed by Dr. Robert J. Marzano

Q: Why has Monticello Community School District transitioned to Standards Referenced Reporting?

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.

Q: What about homework? Does it count?

Practice (formerly known as homework) 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.) can be required, 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.

Here is a comparison to learning to drive. If a student is learning to drive on a learner's permit, they are practicing the skill of driving. After practicing for a length of time, the student would then need to pass the driver's exam in order to get an Iowa Driver's License. Only the driver's exam counts for whether they pass. The practice is not considered. When the student finally earns the driver's license (similar to reaching a learning outcome), their license does not reflect all of the mistakes they made during practice. It only reflects that they have attained the standard of driving skills that our state expects.

Q: What are the non-negotiables for Standards Referenced Reporting at Monticello Schools?

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:

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.

Q: How does my child reassess?

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.

Example of 7th grade retake form

Name: _____

Period: _____

Complete all portions of the form below. You will be expected to meet with the teacher to line up a time to retake and get the necessary materials.

PLAN	DO
What assessment do you want to retake?	<i>*Please attach ALL documentation of learning</i>
What was your score on this assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/> have made corrections on the assessment
What is the reason you did not master the material?	<input type="checkbox"/> have written a detailed explanation of errors made on the assessment. This explanation demonstrates my learning.
Why should you be given the opportunity to retake this assessment?	I have completed the following materials related to this concept in order to prepare for a retake:
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Student Signature:	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Teacher Signature:	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

ASSESS	REFLECT
<p>I understand that the retake assessment will NOT be the same version as the original assessment. In order to demonstrate mastery of this content, my teacher reserves the right to change the format of the assessment. For example, an original multiple-choice assessment may take the form of a short-answer essay for retake. The purpose of changing the test version is to ensure that I have fully mastered this content and can demonstrate my learning in varied formats.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What strategies helped improve your learning? 2. How do you feel after taking the assessment? Is there anything you would do differently?
<p>First Score: _____ Retake Score: _____</p>	

Q: Will my child still get a letter grade at the Middle School?

No. Monticello teachers will be utilizing a four point scale which provides a fairer 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. Parents will receive progress reports and report cards that list each standard a student has been assessed on in a course along with a proficiency level.

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 than 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.

Scale	Level of Proficiency	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

Q: What is a Proficiency Scale and how is it used?

Guiding Practices for Grading

1. The proficiency scale used at Monticello Middle School is a consistent 4 point interval grading scale.
2. Proficiency level, derived from the 4 point scale, will be based solely on achievement of course/grade level standards. Student participation, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported separately using the Employability Skills Rubric.
3. Scores will be based on a body of evidence.
4. Achievement will be organized by standard/learning topic and reported as a scale score.
5. Standard will be given a “mode” score and all standard “mode” scores will be averaged together for an overall course grade.
6. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
7. Accommodations and modifications will be provided to students that demonstrate academic need.

Sample of a Monticello Middle School Proficiency Scale

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:

I can describe the structure and function of cell organelles

I can identify how the organelles affect the cell as a whole

Describe the Assessment: Creation and Analysis of Cell Model

Date of Assessment: October (Fall)

Link to Assessment:

Common Formative Assessment, Formative Assessment, or Summative

Assessment: Summative

	<i>What</i>	<i>How Deep</i>
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 cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function.	Kind of know it
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

Q: What are 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](#)

Along with the teacher's Employability Skills Rubric assessment, students will reflect on their progress in regards to employability skills. This will be shared with parents in PowerSchool and at parent-teacher conferences as a communication tool with parents regarding learner behaviors in the classroom. It will be recorded in PowerSchool as a standard using a 4 point scale.