

Howard-Winneshiek CSD

Standards-Based Grading

Parent Update & PowerSchool Guide

October 2018-2019

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Introduction

The purpose of this parent guide is to assist you in viewing your child's progress in PowerSchool.


How do I view my child's progress in PowerSchool?

The following paragraphs and images provide a brief narrative describing how to navigate the PowerSchool system to track your child's progress.

We once urged parents to have weekly, if not daily, updates automatically emailed from PowerSchool; however, we no longer advise this as the primary communication between school and parents, because it is not a true indicator of your child's progress at a given time in the grading period. In order to gain the best understanding of your student's current level of learning, we suggest you log into PowerSchool using your username and password. After doing so, you should see a screen that looks like the first image below.

From this screen, you can access more information on any of the classes in which your child is currently registered. Simply click on the blue letter grade or percentage score. If there is no letter grade or score that does NOT mean that there is not information recorded. Simply click on the double hyphen (--) instead. (also on image below)

Course	Q1	Q2
6th Grade Math Erickson, Kimberly K - Rm: 410	A 100	--
6th Grade Social Studies Kerkove, Travis - Rm: 414	--	--
6th Grade Reading Smith, Julie M - Rm: 415	--	--



After clicking on either the grade or the double hyphen, you should see a screen that shows all the due dates, categories (standards being assessed), and assignments (practice work or assessments.)

Due Date	Category	Assignment
09/05/2013	R PS #2	Survival Gear Activity
09/06/2013	R PS #2	Hatchet Comprehension Check PB 13
09/09/2013	R PS # 3	C - Hatchet Skills Check - Vocabulary
09/09/2013	R PS #2	B - Hatchet Skills Check - Noting Details
09/09/2013	R PS #1	A - Hatchet Skills Check - Summarizing

-OR- You will see a screen that shows all of the due dates, categories (daily work, assessments, etc.) and assignments (standards being assessed).

Due Date	Category	Assignment
08/23/2013	Daily Work	Ch 1 Application Problems
08/26/2013	Daily Work	Ch 1 Mastery Problem
08/27/2013	Daily Work	Ch 1 Review Problem
08/28/2013	Overall Standards	G1: Accounting Terminology
08/28/2013	Overall Standards	G2: Transactions

You will also possibly see:

- Colored codes

✔ - Collected, ▲ - Late, ■ - Missing, ◆ - Score is exempt from final grade, ✖ - Assignment is not included in final grade


- Scores (Three Point Scale : 3 , 2, 1, 0)
- Percentages (0 – 100%)
- Grades (A, B, C, D, F)

All practice work or any assessment with the code ✖ shows that it is NOT GRADED or included in the final grade. If a teacher is not assigning grades for the course, you will see a “NG” under the grade category.

Codes	Score	%	Grd
✔	✖		
✔	✖		
	✖	3.5/4	87.5
	✖	2/4	50
	✖	3/4	75
			NG
			NG
			NG




In addition, you can click on an assignment highlighted in blue to access more specific details about that assessment or standard.


08/22/2013	R4	This Week in History #00
08/22/2013	R1	Raymond's Run
08/22/2013	SL2	CNN Student News Week #00
08/23/2013	L1	Kinds of Sentences



Teacher	Cocking, John
Course	Lang Arts 8
Assignment name	Raymond's Run
Description	Bulls-Eye Skills: 1. Identify characters as protagonists, antagonists, flat, round, static, or dynamic 2. Comprehend, interpret, analyze, & evaluate literary text

You can often click on a score highlighted in blue to access more information about that assessment, including reassessment opportunities.

	4/4
	2/4
	3.5/4



Teacher	Smith, Julie M
Course	6th Grade Language
Assignment Name	B-Grammar Skills Check-Complete & Simple Subjects
Date Due	09/11/2013
Comment	Will need to attend re-teach session during homebase on 9/17 over skill.

Additional notes:

While there are many consistencies throughout the middle school and high school, the needs of different grade levels, content areas and teacher preferences result in slightly different reporting of scores. For example, while some teachers use the highlighted links mentioned above to post comments and reassessment opportunities, it is not a universal expectation. Please refer to classroom teacher's syllabus for additional information. And, as always, please feel free to contact teachers with individual questions.

After viewing PowerSchool, what questions should I ask my student or his/her teacher?

When a student's score in the gradebook is below proficiency, consider asking your student the following questions:

- What standards do you think you still need to learn?
- When was the last time you practiced / worked on [standard]?
- When was the last time you were assessed (i.e. test, quiz, project) on [standard]?
- When is your next opportunity to reassess on [standard]?
- What practice, studying and/or re-teaching opportunities have you completed in preparation for the next reassessment opportunity?
- What are you doing during homebase? Are you working on your homework/practice? Have you used homebase time to visit your teacher(s)? [High School]

When contacting a teacher about below proficiency standards in the grade book, consider asking the following questions:

- When was the last time all students were assessed on [standard]?
- When is the next opportunity my student will have to reassess on [standard]?
- What practice, studying and/or re-teaching opportunities should my student take advantage of related to [standard] before reassessing?

What is the Howard-Winn Standards-Based Grading Rubric?

In order to be consistent in every class at both the middle school and high school, the district adopted a SBG Rubric (as shown below). Please note, a score of "3" indicates a thorough understanding of the standard and is not intended to signify perfection.

4	3.5	3	2	1	0
Exceeding Proficiency with Standard	Nearly Exceeding proficiency With standard	Meeting proficiency with Standard	Approaching Proficiency with Standard	Emerging Proficiency with Standard	No Attempt

How are final grades calculated?

The final grade is calculated using all standards. The middle school and high school will continue to use plus and minus when reporting the final grade (example B+ or C-). High school students' grade point averages will continue to be calculated just as they were previously at the end of each semester. The following tables describe this process.

PowerSchool Translation

Rubric Score	PowerSchool Entry	Parent Sees
4	4	4/4 = 100%
3.5	3.5	3.5/4 = 85%
3	3	3/4 = 75%
2	2	2/4 = 50%
1	1	1 / 4 = 1
0	0 (or missing indicator)	0/4 = 1

Grading Scale

A	100-93	C+	79.9 - 77	D-	62.9 - 60
A-	92.9 - 90	C	76.9 - 73	F	59.9 and below
B+	89.9 - 87	C-	72.9 - 70		
B	86.9 - 83	D+	69.9 - 67		
B-	82.9 - 80	D	66.9 - 63		

"Plus" and "minus" grades will continue to be given as well within the above parameters.

Finally, high school grade point averages are calculated at the end of each semester based on final grades from each course using the grade point scale below. (Note: this scale and calculation method remains unchanged).

A	=	4.0	C+	=	2.33	D-	=	0.66
A-	=	3.66	C	=	2.0	Cr	=	0.33
B+	=	3.33	C-	=	1.66	F	=	0.0
B	=	3.0	D+	=	1.33			
B-	=	2.66	D	=	1.0			

How do students initiate reassessments?

Student initiated reassessment is an important part of a standards-based grading philosophy. If a teacher determines that a large number of students in a particular class did not demonstrate understanding, additional assessment opportunities may be given to all students. However, if a teacher determines a large number of students in a class have already demonstrated understanding, then reassessment will be administered individually or in small groups. At the teacher's discretion, students may be required to demonstrate steps towards additional learning prior to a "formal" reassessment. Additional learning requirements may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Completion of previously assigned homework/practice assignment(s) related to the specific standard
- Additional homework/practice assignment(s) related to the specific standard
- Teacher directed tutoring/learning session with selected resource
- Written reflection of past misconceptions of learning standard and/or new understanding of standard

Do students initiate all reassessments?

In order for reassessment to work at an optimal level, reassessment should be initiated by BOTH students and teachers. In some scenarios, it may be appropriate for a teacher to reassess some or all students during regular class time. In another scenario, it may be appropriate for a teacher to reassess individual or a small group of students who have demonstrated additional understanding of a standard.

What is the purpose of homework at Howard-Winn?

A task force of teachers and administrators identified homework as any meaningful task tied to a learning target or standard and can come in a variety of formats. Homework can be an opportunity for stakeholders to identify strengths and continue to improve upon weaknesses. *It is not calculated as part of the final grade.*

Feedback on homework is often provided to students during class. See the "How do I view my child's progress in PowerSchool?" section in this guide for more information describing homework completion communication to parents.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

If you have concerns regarding your child's progress or would like assistance understanding the PowerSchool gradebook, contact his or her teacher. If after meeting with the teacher, you still have questions or concerns, then contact the building principal.

Additional Frequently Asked Questions

Is Standards-Based Grading in place for all courses?

Yes, except NICC Dual Credit Courses.

Grades 7, 8, 9 in the 2017 school year

Grades 10, 11, 12 in 2018 school year

What is defined as an “entry” in the grade book?

Entries in the gradebook include homework (to show parents if work is being completed), standard(s) assessed, and final tests or midterms. Entries are anything that parents and students see in PowerSchool. Entries in the grade book that count towards the final grade will be limited to course or grade level standards.

What is the timeline for assignments to be entered into the grade book?

Teachers should be updating PowerSchool on a weekly basis. This was an expectation prior to standards-based grading as well. If a teacher has not entered assignments within this timeframe, parents should first contact the teacher. If the situation is not resolved, the next step is to contact the building principal.

What is SBG doing for at-risk students?

SBG policies allow students multiple opportunities to succeed through reassessment. Students who may not learn concepts the first time they are presented are given opportunities to continue their learning and strive for mastery. Students who may struggle with traditional learning frameworks are often provided the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of a concept in an innovative method during reassessment if necessary.

With traditional grading systems, work was due at a certain deadline and failure to meet this deadline resulted in a zero or F. For students with work-avoidance tendencies, it is common to purposely miss the deadline in a traditional grading system so that they ultimately get out of doing the work and can pass part of the blame of their failure onto the grading system. With the flexible deadlines of SBG, students are held accountable for completing the work even if they require additional time to do so. In a traditional grading system, the penalty for not doing the work is a 0. A penalty that research shows does little to motivate students with at-risk tendencies. With SBG, the penalty for not doing the work is doing the work even if it takes longer than anticipated to complete.

How do we communicate course syllabi and course/unit standards with parents?

Teachers are required to share course syllabi with students (when the class starts) at the start of the course. If you have not received communication in the form of a syllabus or course/unit standards, please first contact the teacher. If the situation is not resolved, you may contact the building principal.

Some teachers provide a list of standards to students at the beginning of each unit. Some teachers provide a list of standards to students at the beginning of each grading

period. Parents who wish to see a list of the standards may contact the classroom teacher.

What is the difference between a test and an assessment? What are the multiple ways teachers assess student understanding of standards besides the traditional hand-written test?

An assessment is any evaluation of learning. Examples of assessments include tests, quizzes, labs, projects, essays, teacher observations, speeches, and performances. Assessments are used to measure learning at the end of a unit of student (“summative assessment”); however, they are also used throughout the learning process to guide learning for both the instructor and the student (“formative assessment”).

An example of an assessment being used during the learning process is a teacher asking students to complete a one-question quiz at the end of class. The purpose of the quiz is to find out how well students understood the lesson. If quiz results indicate not many students understood the concept, it may be re-taught the next day in a different way. If quiz results indicate many students understood the concept, the teacher may move on to a new concept the next day.

An example of an assessment being used at the end of the learning process is individual students giving a persuasive speech to the entire class after several days of researching and practicing these skills.

Why did the Howard-Winn school district make this change?

- *Improved communication and additional feedback for parents, students and teachers* - parents and students will see areas of academic strength and weaknesses in the grade book rather than seeing a test score or homework assignment and wondering what the next steps might be. Teachers will know which standards they need to re-teach. Students will know which standards they need additional learning opportunities and/or practice.
- *Supports “assessment for learning,” one of the five characteristics of effective instruction from the Iowa Department of Education’s “Iowa Core” initiative* - In a traditional grading system, student assessments were often given for the purpose of entering them in the grade book. Assessment for learning means assessments are given for the purpose of identifying future learning opportunities/activities for students.

What is the difference between traditional grading practices and standards-based grading?

Traditional Grading System	Standards-Based Grading System
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects, etc.). One grade/entry is given per assessment.2. Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.3. Uses an uncertain mix of assessment, achievement, effort and behavior to determine the final grade. May use late penalties and extra credit.4. Everything goes in the grade book - regardless of purpose.5. Includes every score, regardless of when it was collected. Assessments record the average - not the best - work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Based on learning goals and performance standards. One grade/entry is given per learning goal.2. Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. Criteria and targets are made available to students ahead of time.3. Measures achievement only OR separates achievement from effort/behavior. No penalties or extra credit given.4. Selected assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) are used for grading purposes.

Adapted from O'Connor K (2002). *How to Grade for Learning: Linking grades to standards (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

How might standards-based grading impact my student's grade point average (GPA)?

We do not anticipate seeing any long-term changes in GPA or honor cords; however, we do believe quarter and semester grades in a standards-based system will be a better reflection of student learning.

- In a standards-based grading system, homework no longer counts towards the final grade; however, it is still assigned and important for students to complete to receive feedback on their progress towards learning the class standards. Some students may choose not to complete their homework. In some classes in the past, homework completion counting towards the final grade may have "masked" a student's overall grade. In a standards-based grading system, it does not. Students who have not yet demonstrated understanding of a standard (and/or are not satisfied with their current understanding) have the opportunity to improve their score.
- Students will be allowed **multiple opportunities** to demonstrate their understanding of classroom standards in various ways. Retakes and revisions will be allowed and encouraged.

How does this system prepare students for college?

Identifying one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner, being self-motivated to meet course objectives, developing strong study habits, and mastering course standards are all

aspects of this system that will help students in college.