

## **Dunkerton Community Schools - Standards Based Grading FAQ**

- 1. What is Standards-Based Grading (SBG), and why are we changing to this system?**
  - a. SBG is an approach to student learning and assessment in which the mastery of standards over time is what drives a student's grade, rather than a collection of points.
  - b. Teachers report what students know and are able to do in relation to district-adopted standards.
  - c. Research shows that standards-based grading helps students learn more effectively through improved student feedback.
  
- 2. What are the advantages of SBG?**
  - a. SBG provides improved feedback to students and parents. Parents will see specific areas of academic strength and weakness in the grade book rather than just a test score, homework score, etc. Students and teachers will know which standards need to be re-taught for each individual student.
  - b. SBG provides information and data regarding work habits and behavior separate from the information provided about academic skills.
  
- 3. How does Standards-Based Grading work?**
  - a. Traditional grading averages all of the work and other subjective factors that a student has done over a grading period. SBG removes extraneous factors (behaviors) and solely focuses on proficiency. Standards-Based Grading assesses a student's overall work and their most recent work so it really tells us what a student has learned and what they now know.
  
- 4. Shouldn't attendance, effort and completion of homework be rewarded?**
  - a. Yes, those things are important. However, they should not be included in the academic grade. These are behaviors, not learning targets. Students will be held accountable for these things and their progress will still be reported, through a "21st Century Skills" grade rather than through the academic grade.
  
- 5. Will I still be able to log into Infinite Campus to check my child's progress?**
  - a. Yes, progress will be reflected on Infinite Campus. If you have any questions about the progress being shown, you should contact your child's teacher.
  
- 6. What about homework? Does it count? How will students understand the importance of homework if it isn't part of the final grade?**
  - a. The purpose of homework is practice. Practice is important, but homework completion will not impact the academic grade. 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 a Driver's License. Only the driver's exam counts for whether they pass or not - 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 from those to which we give a driver's license. With SBG, we do not penalize students' practice; we assess the end results of their practice.
  
- 7. If students get multiple chances to show that they have mastered a standard, how will this teach students that "in the real world" they must do their best the first time?**
  - a. The ultimate goal is student learning. That is also the purpose of standards-based

grading. Standards-based grading provides teachers, students, and parents with information as to how a student is doing on specific learning outcomes. From this information, teachers, students and parents can make decisions that will improve student learning on specific learning goals. Students learn at different rates and may have a poor assessment performance on any given day for a variety of reasons. As such, students are given multiple opportunities to show mastery. In truth, this is almost always how things work in the real world. People are given multiple opportunities to show their skills on: ACT, SAT, GRE, ASVAB, driver's license exams, law school admission test, bar exams, aviation exams, medical college admissions test, among others.

- b. The goal of SBG is to ensure that they have the necessary skills BEFORE going into the real world. If we don't let them keep trying, we are saying that they don't deserve or need to attain those necessary skills.

#### **8. How will student progress be measured?**

- a. Students will receive one of the following indicators for each standard:
  - i. 4 - Thorough Understanding (Expert)
    - 1. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of course or grade level standard.
  - ii. 3 - Proficient (Practitioner)
    - 1. Demonstrates an understanding of course or grade level standard
  - iii. 2 - Developing (Apprentice)
    - 1. Demonstrates partial understanding of course or grade level standard.
  - iv. 1 - Attempted Understanding (Novice)
    - 1. Demonstrates minimal understanding of course or grade level standard.
  - v. 0 - No Evidence (No Effort)
    - 1. No Evidence of Standard

#### **9. Are we lowering expectations of students by moving to Standards-Based Grading?**

- a. No, students will actually be held more accountable for completing their work. In the traditional grading system, students could skip assignments, not try on a test, and just take the "F" for that assignment and still receive a final passing grade for the course. With SBG, students will not receive a final grade until they have attempted all of the essential standards. Under the traditional grading system, the penalty for not doing work was receiving an "F" and moving on. The purpose of SBG is to hold students accountable for their learning. Students will be given a "0" until the task is completed.

#### **10. How will students earn a letter grade at the end of the grading period?**

- a. There will be a conversion chart that will transfer the students grade into a final letter grade at the end of the grading period.
- b. Student grades are generated via summative assessments (90%) and 21st Century skills (10%). Summative assessment is work that demonstrates what a student knows and is able to demonstrate after the learning experiences have happened. 21st Century Skills are measurements of the behaviors that will benefit our students after their time at DHS.

#### **11. How will the change to Standards-Based Grading affect eligibility for extracurricular activities?**

- a. The state eligibility will remain the same, as students will receive a letter grade at the end of each grading period. If a student receives an incomplete at the end of a grading period (end of each semester), the student will be ineligible. Also, the incomplete will become an F.
- b. The local 2-week policy will change. If a student is receiving a "0" on any assignment/assessment during the two week grade check, they will be ineligible for the

two-week time period.

**12. What has the timeline been at Dunkerton Middle/High School for implementing Standards Based Grading?**

- a. 2016-2017
  - i. Secondary task force study - book study - attended SBG conferences
  - ii. All teachers began work to identify essential standards for each course
  - iii. Partial implementation by a few secondary teachers
- b. 2017-2018
  - i. Continued implementation by a few secondary teachers
  - ii. Teachers continued to work on essential standards and vertical alignment between grade levels
  - iii. Teachers established curriculum maps ensuring essential standards are aligned to class content
- c. 2018-2019
  - i. Pilot implementation from some teachers
  - ii. Teachers continued to work on essential standards, curriculum maps, depth of knowledge application to instruction and assessments.
  - iii. Teachers began work on assessments aligned to the standards, and creating proficiency scales for the standards.
- d. 2019-2020
  - i. All JH/HS grading will be Standards Based Grading
  - ii. Infinite Campus will apply Standards Based Grading to student scores.

**13. Are any other schools implementing Standards Based Grading?**

- a. Yes, many schools across the state of Iowa, and the United States are currently implementing, or going through stages to implement standards based grading. Many local schools are currently implementing Standards Based Grading, or have a plan in place to implement it in the next 2-3 years.