

Standards-Based Grading

St. Croix Central is excited to introduce a new grading system in the fall of 2014. Kindergarten through fifth grade students will be using standards-based grading in order to help students, teachers, and parents better understand the needs and strengths of each child in relation to the Common Core State Standards. The staff at SCC believes that standards-based grading will celebrate the strengths and support the challenges of all students.

What is standards-based grading?

In a standards-based system, teachers report what students know and are able to do relative to the Common Core State Standards. The system includes:

- The improvement of student achievement of required standards and targets in all content areas
- The mastery of defined targets instead of the accumulation of points
- The reporting of student achievement toward meeting learning targets at a given time by reflecting on mounting evidence based on various forms of assessments
- A record keeping system that provides teachers with information that allows them to adjust learning practices to meet the needs of students
- A system that encourages student reflection and responsibility

What is the purpose of standards-based grading?

The purpose of standards-based grading is to raise student achievement by clearly communicating students' progress toward learning targets.

Standards-based grading (SBG) aligns with the Common Core Standards as measured by consistent and accurate student achievement data and common criteria for grading. SBG also accurately communicates achievement of learning targets to students, parents, and educators.

How does standards-based grading work?

Traditional grading averages a student's achievement data with other characteristics, such as work habits. Standards-based grading removes extraneous factors and focuses solely on a student's academic achievement. Other characteristics are reported separately. Academic achievement in subject areas is subdivided into standards and their respective learning targets that students need to learn or master. Each target is assessed at some point throughout the school year.

What is the role of practice homework in SBG?

Assigned work, regardless of whether it is completed in school or at home, is designed to help students understand learning targets and better prepare students to learn new material. Students who do not complete this type of work would probably not score as high on later assessments due to lack of practice.

How does a standards-based report card improve teaching and learning?

Knowing where students are in their progress toward meeting standards-based learning targets is crucial for planning and carrying out classroom instruction. Teachers teach to the needs of their students. The new grading system is designed to give teachers more information about the student's progress in meeting the level of proficiency required by each standard. In addition, teachers share the standards with students and parents, helping them to better understand the learning that needs to take place.

“By comparing one child's performance to a clear standard, parents, children and teachers all know precisely what is expected. Every time a student attempts a task, the performance is compared to the standard, not to other children's performances. The most important advantages for children and families are fairness, clarity, and improved learning.”