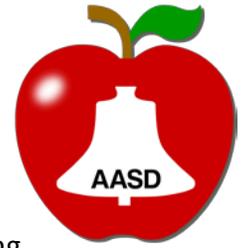


GRADING FOR LEARNING IN THE APPLETON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (AASD)



Why did our district move to standards based reporting?

Through professional reading and workshop attendance, teachers are continuously working to improve instructional and assessment practices. From this ongoing professional development, standards based reporting has emerged as a more accurate way to reflect true student learning. The targeted standards in a particular grade level or course are used as benchmarks to show a student's current level of performance as it relates to those standards.

The first example of standards based reporting in the AASD emerged at the kindergarten level in 2001. Student progress was rated along a continuum for specific areas of performance. In 2008, the West High School Mathematics Department piloted a benchmarking process to ensure student mastery of targeted course standards. In 2012, the Kaleidoscope Charter School Governing Board and staff adopted a standards based reporting process in combination with letter grades with great success.

These successful pilot experiences along with continued professional development and recent curriculum adoptions in English Language Arts and Mathematics brought standards based assessment to the forefront as a district initiative. The shortcomings and inconsistencies of previous grading practices could not be disregarded in light of this new professional learning.

Under the leadership of our Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction department, teacher teams continue to develop common assessments and rubrics that align with the AASD standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. This work has assisted staff members in moving forward with standards-based practices and standards-based grading to more accurately measure and report student progress in learning.

As educators in grades 7 – 12 refine their reporting practices, letter grades will continue to be used and will be combined with standards based reporting into one coherent system.

How will my child benefit from a standards based grading system?

The goal of a standards based grading system is greater consistency and accuracy in the measurement and reporting of actual student learning. The standards for a course or grade level represent the learning targets for end of year proficiency in a particular subject area or course. The standards based progress reports list these specific learning targets and show how the student is performing relative to those clearly defined learning targets. Factors such as work habits, behavior and other employability type skills are measured

separately. A standards based grading system provides a more accurate measure of the knowledge and skills that the individual has mastered.

How will you measure the other important factors such as behavior, study skills and work habits?

Learning habits play an important role in student success and it is essential to communicate with families regarding effort and behavior. Students will receive separate marks for effort and work habits on their progress reports even though these characteristics aren't included in the assessment of the student's academic skills. At the elementary level these effort and work habits are measured using agreed upon standards called *Characteristics of Life-Long Learners*. At the 7th-12th grade we are currently developing *Employability Standards* in the areas of Responsibility/Accountability, Social/Cultural Awareness, and Initiative/Self-Direction.

What are some of the next steps that will further develop the AASD *grading for learning* system?

Summer 2015

K – 12 teachers and principals will participate in ongoing professional development to refine their skills in using standards based practices and reporting. Consistent guidelines will continue to be clarified and reinforced with all staff.

Summer/Fall 2015

Teacher teams will continue to develop and share rubrics and other standards based practices across grade levels and buildings to increase consistency for students and families across the district.

Summer/Fall 2015

Representative educators and parents will review standards based reporting tools that have been used successfully in other schools and districts at the middle school and high school levels. This group will develop a proposal for a reporting tool that combines standards based reporting with letter grades in grades 7 - 12.