

Grading for Learning: A Philosophy for Success

The Sun Prairie Area School District has begun using standards-based instructional practices throughout all grade levels. As a result, the grading and reporting system needs to reflect the standards-based approach to teaching. The new grading system, called **Grading for Learning**, better reflects the standards-based instruction and assessment with which our teachers and students work every day.

Standards-based grading is beneficial in several ways:

1. It ensures consistent expectations across grade levels and it helps teachers and students focus on established standards in their learning.
2. It provides feedback regarding each student's proficiency level, allowing the teacher to better address the specific needs of each student.
3. It provides parents with valuable information regarding how their child is progressing on each standard and proficiency statement.

Grading for Learning at the Various Grade Levels

Elementary Students

Elementary students already receive number grades and have been assessed using standards and proficiency statements for several years. The difference for the coming year is minor changes to the [definitions](#) of the number grades. Elementary students continue to have [Conduct Grades](#) (also called Lifelong Learning Skills) reflected on their report cards. Having both of these allows teachers to separate behavior and conduct from the academic performance. [Definition of Proficiency Levels](#).

Middle School Students (Grades 6 & 7)

Middle school students will begin having report cards with the numbers 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 instead of the traditional letter grades. In this grading model, a 4 does not "convert" to an A, a 3 to a B, etc. Rather, the number grade refers to the student's level of [proficiency](#) within a specific area of learning - an established standard for the class. Middle school students will also have a [Conduct Grade](#) reflected on their report cards. As with elementary students, the [Conduct Grade](#) allows teachers to separate behavior and conduct from the academic performance. [Definition of Proficiency Levels](#).

Upper Middle School & High School Students (Grades 8-12)

Students in grades 8-12 will receive standards-based instruction and additional opportunities to practice as they learn the material, as will elementary and middle school students. However, upper middle and high school students **will continue to receive letter grades** which convert to a GPA. The GPA is a requirement for those who want to continue their education beyond high school. Like students in grades K-7, the students in grades 8 & 9 also have a [Conduct Grade](#) that allows teachers to separate behavior and conduct from the academic performance. At the high school level, it is called the [Contribution Grade](#).