

Dear Secondary Families,

As we enter the third year of implementing a grading and reporting system that supports standards-based instruction, we want to provide some updates specific to the “task rubric” and grading scale used in secondary schools.

About Standards-Based Grading and Reporting

- Standards-based grading & reporting provides students, parents, and teachers with more detailed information about student learning than our previous system of grading.
- Grades reflect student learning of academic standards (content and/or skills) and do not include factors such as attendance, behavior, effort, or responsibility.
- Assessment of learning AFTER instruction (summative) is more heavily weighted than practice work (formative) that is completed during the learning process. Summative work counts as 80% or more of the final grade, while formative work (practice, often including homework) counts for 20% or less of the grade. While practice work does not represent a large portion of the final grade, it is important and, if not completed, it can have a negative impact on a student’s grade.
- In a standards-based system, student learning is the focus. Sometimes, students may need more time and more than one opportunity to show what they know; our teachers are prepared to allow for multiple opportunities, within the guidelines teachers set and communicate to students. Students are responsible for completing their assessments, meeting expectations and deadlines set by teachers, and putting forth their best effort. Students are encouraged talk with their teachers when there are unforeseen circumstances related to deadlines.

Improvements to the task rubric and grading scale based on your feedback

Grading practices will remain the same as last year, but we have made improvements in two related areas: the task rubric and grading scale. These adjustments were designed by a task force consisting of teachers, curriculum staff, and building administrators.

The task mark rubric: What teachers use when marking student work

Revisions to the task mark rubric reflect what we heard from teachers and parents last year.

There were two key concerns about the previous rubric:

- A score of “1” was defined as “does not meet expectations;” yet, it allowed students to receive credit for unacceptable work that did not show evidence of learning;
- The language defining a 4 (“exceeds the standard”) made it unreasonably difficult for students to achieve a 4.

Using feedback from parents and teachers, the 2013 rubric was revised with the following descriptors for the achievement levels:

- 4 = Excellent, exceptional, extended (Note: No longer “exceeds”)
- 3 = Proficient, consistent, accurate
- 2 = Basic, simple, inconsistent
- 1 = Developing, limited, partial
- 0 = Unacceptable, inaccurate, insufficient evidence

Ph: (763) 391-7000
Fx: (763) 391-7070

11200 93rd Avenue N.
Maple Grove, MN 55369

district279.org

In addition to revised level descriptions, there are two other notable changes to the rubric:

1. The percent ranges have been removed. ***There are no set percentages that apply to every task;*** each task will be considered in light of the complexity of the task and the standards being assessed. This means that on one task, 80% correct might be a 3, while on another, 90% could be a 3. Teachers will determine and communicate their expectations in advance.
2. The letter grades have been removed. ***The rubric and the grading scale are used together, but are not the same.*** The revised grading scale is matched to the rubric levels, but the two cannot be used interchangeably.

The grading scale in the TIES grade book: Now used only for the trimester final (summary) grade

After revising the rubric language, the task force looked at several different grading scales in an effort to address concerns about both the upper and lower ends of the grading scale.

The scale selected combines a national expert's recommendations with our district practice of calculating end-of-term course grades for each student. The scale pairs the overall grade with additional information about student achievement on each standard (the task score). The grading scale translates 0-4 task scores into letter grades, *for summary reporting purposes*; it addresses concerns we heard about passing grades being calculated from a collection of task scores that did not show learning.

The grading scale that will be used for calculating the final grade is as follows:

3.51-4.0	A	2.17-2.33	C
3.00-3.50	A-	2.00-2.16	C-
2.84-2.99	B+	1.84-1.99	D+
2.67-2.83	B	1.67-1.83	D
2.50-2.66	B-	1.50-1.66	D-
2.34-2.49	C+	0.00-1.49	F

Using this scale, the grade book would calculate a passing grade (D-) with half of the task marks as 1s (developing, limited, partial) and half as 2s (basic, simple, inconsistent). Half 0s (unacceptable) and half 1s (partial) would not calculate as a passing grade.

At the other end of the scale, a majority of 3s and 4s as task grades would likely calculate as an A or A- for a summary grade. If students are earning 3s and 4s as task grades, they are doing quality work and are demonstrating learning at a high or excellent level that would likely result in an A or A- course grade.

The language on the rubric matches the scale; however, as noted above, they are not interchangeable.

If you have questions about standards-based grading, including the revised rubric or scale, please contact your school principal, Wendy Biallas-Odell, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Educational Standards (biallasw@district279.org; 763-391-7143) or Kris Rouleau, Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction, & Educational Standards (rouleauk@district279.org; 763-391-7254)