

MIT Academy FAQ for Standards-Based Grading

What is standards-based grading?

Standards-based grading communicates how students are performing on a set of clearly defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to pre-established learning targets, as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of a grading period, which can mask what a student has learned, or not learned, in a specific course.

How does standards-based grading differ from traditional grading?

Unlike with traditional grading systems, a standards-based grading system measures a student's mastery of grade-level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. Thus a student who may have struggled at the beginning of a course, when first encountering new material, may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content/concepts by the end of a grading period.

In a traditional grading system, a student's performance for an entire quarter is averaged together. Early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates. Standards-based report cards separate academic performance from work habits and behavior in order to provide parents a more accurate view of a student's progress in both academic and behavioral areas. Variables such as effort, participation, timeliness, cooperation, attitude and attendance are reported separately, not as an indicator of a student's academic performance.

How are my child's marks determined?

A student's performance on a series of assessments (both formative and summative) will be used to determine a student's overall grade in a course. Practice assignments (homework) are just that, practice, and thus should serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Scores on practice assignments should not be used as a major component of a student's academic grade. Teachers may require students to complete all of their practice work prior to allowing them to take, or retake, an assessment.

Will my student still receive teacher comments on their report card?

Yes. Individualized feedback is an essential component of standards-based grading. Effective feedback is a more useful source of information than simply assigning a numeric value or letter grade to student work.

What will each of the numbers in the 4 point scale represent?

A score of (4) would indicate that a student **exceeds** a standard by consistently demonstrating an advanced level of understanding and/or the ability to apply their knowledge at a higher level. A score of (3) would indicate that a student has independently **meets** the standard. The student demonstrates mastery of the standard.

A score of (2) would indicate that a student is **approaching** an understanding of a standard, but still may be in need of additional instruction and/or support.

A score of (1) would indicate that the student has a **minimal understanding** of a standard.

How should a student/parent view student grades now that the system of A-F has been replaced by a 4 point scale? What is considered to be an A in the new grading system?

You cannot really compare a traditional grading system to standards-based grading. It is like comparing “apples to oranges”. Standards-based grading identifies a standard and indicates whether or not a student is meeting the standard at a given point in the school year. A score of (3) is defined as meeting grade level standards and indicates that a student has demonstrated mastery of the skills that were expected to be learned by that point in the grading period.

What about GPA calculations for Honor Roll or college transcripts?

The standards have an associated percentage range and gpa grade calculation that is used to determine a GPA for Honor Roll or transcripts. So that you can see what the grade would be, there is also an equivalent grade. Please keep in mind that the “equivalent grade” is only so that you can see how the GPAs are calculated by PowerSchool.

Standard	Percent Range	Equivalent Grade (used to calculate gpa)
4.0	96 - 100	A
3.5	90 - 95	A
3.0	80 - 89	B
2.5	70 - 79	C
2.0	65 - 69	F
1.5	60 - 64	F
1.0	55 - 59	F
0	0 - 54	F

Is it possible to achieve a grade of 4?

Yes it is. However, a score of (4) indicates performance that is consistently above what is

expected for mastery at that point in the school year. Level 4 work would indicate a much deeper understanding of a standard, the ability to apply that knowledge, make connections and extend learning beyond the targeted goal.

If a student receives 1's all year, does that mean the student will be retained?

Intervention classes are in place to support learners who are behind in math and reading. If a student receives 1's or 2's, it means his/her work is not yet meeting grade level standards. A number of academic interventions will be offered to those students who are struggling to meet the established standards. Grade level retention is not a practice that is generally supported by research.

How will I know if my child needs help?

Receiving a 1, 2, * or IE (insufficient evidence) on a grade report/report card can be a sign that a student is in need of extra support in the areas where they are receiving low marks. This is one benefit of a standards-based report card, areas in need of support are clearly evident.