

Standards-based Grading: Background/Timeline

2008-2009

- One high school teacher begins to experiment with standards-based grading as a result of learning about it at the Iowa Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference.

2009-2010

- A second high school teacher begins to move towards more standards-based grading based on conversations with the first teacher.
- A group of eight high school teachers choose to go through a ten-week study of articles focused on formative assessment and grading. (<http://tinyurl.com/scsdfasbg>)

2010-2011

- High school teachers who completed the study begin to implement changes to their grading and assessment practices.
- Two middle school teachers begin to implement changes to their grading and assessment practices.
- End of year: District establishes a study for 2011-12 that "stakeholders will analyze and study aspects of standards-based grading and reporting at all grade levels."

2011-12

District study: "SCSD stakeholders will analyze and study aspects of standards-based grading and reporting at all grade levels."

August

- Solon administrators hear Doug Reeves keynote emphasizing changing grading practices, "Leadership Focus: Doing the Right Things, Right Now" at School Administrators of Iowa conference. (pdf of slides: <http://tinyurl.com/82fczpw>)

October

- High school and middle school teachers discuss assessment and grading during professional learning time.
- High school teachers read and discuss "Making the Case for Standards-Based Grading" article online. (<http://tinyurl.com/mcfsbg>)
- Presentation to Lakeview teachers about ongoing discussions at middle school and high school. (video: <http://tinyurl.com/scsdsbgvideo>)

November

- High school teachers currently implementing changes to their grading practices share with colleagues during professional learning time.

December

- SIAC members learned about standards-based grading through presentation and discussion with administrators, teachers and students. (Dec. 8)

January

- High school teachers research articles and practitioner's perspectives on homework, standards-based grading and assessment (Jan. 16).
- Middle school teachers discuss proposed grading guidelines (Jan. 16).
- Board work session on standards-based grading (Jan 23)

February

- Board members learned about standards-based grading from administrators, teachers and students during a work session. (Feb. 6)

March/April

- Teachers continue to read articles, discuss proposed grading guidelines, and communicate with educators from other schools.
- Video and additional information posted on SCSD website
- Student survey (Week of March 26)

- Anonymous staff perceptions survey based on proposed grading guidelines (Week of April 2)
- SIAC sponsored parent/community forum (April 3)
- Proposed grading guidelines, implementation plan, survey data and other documents on board agenda as informational item (April 9)
- Board of education approves grading guidelines (May 14)

2012-13

First year of two year implementation.

- Professional learning at the middle school and high school focuses on implementing the grading guidelines.
- Middle school and high school teachers implement the grading guidelines with at least one of their classes by the beginning of the 4th quarter.

September

- High school principal led several parent information meetings.
 - Thursday, Sept. 20, 3 p.m.
 - Thursday, Sept. 20, 5 p.m.
 - Thursday, Sept. 20, 7 p.m.
 - Monday, Sept. 24, 7 p.m.
 - Wednesday, Sept. 26, 7:30 a.m.
 - Sunday, Sept. 30, 7 p.m.

October

- Administration sends district-wide implementation update to parents.
- Teachers communicate reassessment policies and schedules with students as well as post them in their rooms and on their websites.

Summer 2013

- Middle school and high school teachers were paid to participate in an optional one day workshop focused on implementing the grading guidelines. This was in response to Spring 2013 teacher survey data.

Summer 2013

Board of Education commissions standards-based grading task force (comprised of teachers and administrators) with the purpose of "discussing each major theme from the board of education's report and identifying specific outcomes within the board of education's boundary conditions."

This committee created a homework purpose statement:

Homework is any meaningful task tied to a learning target or standard and can come in a variety of formats. Homework can be an opportunity for stakeholders to identify strengths and continue to improve upon weaknesses

This committee also reconfirmed homework will not be a part of the final grade.

2013-14

SCSD 2013-14 District Goal:

"Provide support for continued implementation of Standards-Based Grading and reporting at all grade levels"

Context: Elementary Building

Elementary principal and a small group of teachers familiar with the principles of standards-based grading.

Step 1: Understanding Power Standards

1. School leaders agree on a *process for identifying power/priority/essential standards.
2. Individual teachers pilot power/priority/essential standard protocol to see how it works using state/local standard lists.
3. Teams of teachers are allocated time to determine the most important standards in each content area which will be communicated on the report card. (Initial attention should be given to determining when each standard will be reported throughout the year, although this may be a dynamic process from year to year)

Step 2: Developing rubrics and assessments

1. For a unit of study, identify the standards which are to be taught. Look at a previously created end-of-unit assessment to ensure each standard is assessed OR create a new assessment for the unit of study.
2. Identify the specific questions/prompts from the assessment aligned with each standard (or aspects of the project). For example, questions 1 and 3 might align with Standard 5.MD.5.
3. Ask a group of students to complete the assessment!
4. Identify one standard. A group of teachers sorts student work into four piles (assuming a 4-point scale) and then agrees on the characteristics of each pile. These characteristics are the basis for writing rubrics for the standard! Repeat for other standards.

Step 3: Developing *school-wide grading guidelines

1. Borrow liberally from another school and/or create a committee of teachers for the purpose of agreeing on grading guidelines/principles (Internet samples; Ken O'Connor's books may be helpful).
2. How will teachers measure and report non-academic indicators such as work habits?

Step 4: Writing homework and reassessment *statements

1. What is the purpose of homework/practice in the building or district? How much homework/practice will be assigned each night/week and for what purpose?
2. How and when will teachers initiate re-teaching and re-assessment opportunities for students based on the most essential standards?

Step 5: Establish a building-wide intervention time/schedule

1. Students who are struggling with the most essential standards are provided additional time and support in a smaller group setting.

Step 6: Implementation in classroom and communication with students

1. Commit to trying out a standards-based report card for at least one content area. Collect feedback from parents and teachers.
2. Establish a timeline for utilizing a 100% standards-based report card.
3. *Draft communication to parents (e.g. sample report card, FAQ, why this change is being made, how it will benefit students and parents). Consider utilizing a video, frequently-updated web page and/or parent nights.

Step 7: Refinement

Context: Secondary Building

Principal and a small group of teachers familiar with the principles of standards-based grading.

Step 1: Understanding Power Standards

1. School leaders agree on a process for identifying power/priority/essential standards.
2. Individual teachers pilot power/priority/essential standard protocol to see how it works using state/local standard lists.
3. Teams of teachers are allocated time to determine the most important standards in each content area which will be communicated on the report card and/or in the grade book.

Step 2: Developing rubrics and assessments

1. For a unit of study, identify the standards which are to be taught. Look at a previously created end-of-unit assessment to ensure each standard is assessed OR create a new assessment for the unit of study.
2. Identify the specific questions/prompts from the assessment aligned with each standard (or aspects of the project). For example, questions 1 and 3 might align with Standard 5.MD.5.
3. Ask a group of students to complete the assessment!
4. Identify one standard. A group of teachers sorts student work into four piles (assuming a 4-point scale) and then agrees on the characteristics of each pile. These characteristics are the basis for writing rubrics for the standard! Repeat for other standards.

Step 3: Developing school-wide grading guidelines

1. Borrow liberally from another school and/or create a committee of teachers for the purpose of agreeing on grading guidelines/principles (Internet samples; Ken O'Connor's books may be helpful).
2. How will teachers measure and report non-academic indicators such as work habits, if at all?

Step 4: Writing homework and reassessment statements

1. What is the purpose of homework/practice in the building or district?
2. How and when will teachers initiate re-teaching and re-assessment opportunities for students based on the most essential standards?
3. What will the re-learning plans look like for students who initiate reassessments? How long will students have to complete reassessments?

Step 5: Building reassessment opportunities

1. When will students be provided additional time and support for re-teaching and re-assessment opportunities during the school day?
2. How will teachers balance the need to work with students who are struggling on many standards with feeling obligated to working with students who simply want to improve from a B+ to an A?
3. Does the school have separate "skill" and "will" interventions in mind? In other words, what supports are provided to students who appear to be capable, but are not giving their best effort?

Step 6: Implementation in classroom and communication with students

1. Early adopters commit to trying out standards-based grading. Collect feedback from parents and teachers.
2. Establish a timeline for 100% implementation of the grading guidelines. Consider providing additional time for teachers to initially write re-assessments.
3. *Draft communication to parents (e.g. sample report card or grade book screen shot, FAQ, why this change is being made, how it will benefit students and parents). Consider utilizing a video, frequently-updated web page and/or parent nights.

Step 7: Refinement

**Examples/samples available