ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46

Standards Based Learning and Assessment Handbook

Teacher and Administrator Resource

Standards Based Learning and Assessment Handbook Committee
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Introduction

At all U-46 schools, we use standards based learning and assessment (SBLA) to align student learning to student needs based on state and national standards. This practice provides fair and equitable grading based on evidence of ongoing student learning against specified standards. Assessments based on SBLA accurately and fairly demonstrate that students have the knowledge and skills necessary for the next grade, next course and finally for college and career.

Standards based learning and assessment creates a culture in which students actively engage in their own learning through continuous feedback (see research/appendix). Using standards based learning and assessment also moves teacher practice into increasing student ownership of the learning process, a critical attribute of the distinguished practice in the Danielson framework. This relationship of feedback between teachers and students allows for deep reflection about student growth.

Standards based learning and assessment practices provide a clear picture to students and families as to what assessment criteria are used and the district's expectations of student learning and achievement.

U-46's Seven Guiding Principles direct the work that we do under standards based learning and assessment. The principles are:

1. Grades should reflect proficiency on well-defined standards-based learning targets that are clear to all stakeholders.
2. Grades should be based on academic performance using summative assessments.
3. Grade scales should be devised to give equal incremental value to each letter grade.
4. Students should be expected to complete work for credit.
5. Students should be given multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge.
6. Feedback should be timely, specific, and related to learning targets.
7. Students should be given multiple opportunities to reach mastery on specific, standards-based concepts and skills.

Purpose

To guide our work as educators, we consider the following four questions:

1. What do we want students to learn?
2. How do we know if students learn it?
3. What do we do if students did learn it?
4. What do we do if students didn't learn it?

Standards Based Learning and Assessment provides the detailed direction to respond to these questions and support student achievement. The purpose of SBLA is to improve student achievement by focusing instruction and the alignment of curriculum with the essential standards.

Standards Based Learning and Assessment

SBLA measures the mastery of the learning objectives. It is based on a specific set of standards that students need to meet for each grade/content level. Marks are not a comparison of one student to another, but rather a way to measure how well students are doing on grade-level/course level standards.

The Standards Based Learning and Assessment Approach

- Indicates what students know and are able to do.
- Scores indicate a student's progress toward the attainment of a standard.
- Clearly communicates expectations ahead of time.
- Is based on complex tasks, as opposed to rote memory.
- Occurs when appropriate, not just on scheduled days.
- Emphasizes the more recent evidence of learning.

The Standards Based Learning and Assessment Timeline

2010 and prior: Secondary Assessment Committee Call to Committee to initiate research and review of instructional and grading practices. The committee has equal representation by ETA membership and U-46 administration. Elementary schools have already implemented a standards based report card.

2013**:** Substantial changes to secondary grading scale to initiate transition to SBLA. Changes included removal of the traditional zero as work shifted to an equal incremental grading scale.

2014-2015**:** Secondary Grading Scale revised again to support a 0 – 4 Marks system and a Standards Based System with no calculations. Call to Committee to review SBLA practices for elementary and secondary sites. Work initiated to support implementation of SBLA with Secondary Math courses. Extensive revisions made to Infinite Campus and Tableau to improve usability for teachers, students, and parents.

Beginning in 2015, the full implementation of SBLA includes the use of standards and standards based rubrics, common summative assessments, and a comprehensive, standards based learning plan for students. Professional development and support is offered for all of the above listed components, in an ongoing basis. In addition, student learning and progress in a standard is reported for all stakeholders. The timeline below outlines when specific content areas began full implementation of standards based learning and assessment:

2015: Middle School Health Education courses begin implementation of standards based learning and assessment.

2016**:** Secondary Math and Elementary Physical Education courses begin implementation of SBLA.

2017: Elementary Math, Secondary Language Arts and Middle School Physical Education courses begin full implementation of SBLA. All elementary courses review the SBLA 7 guiding principles.

2018: Elementary and Secondary Science courses begin full implementation of SBLA.

2019: Secondary Music, Secondary Social Studies, High School Physical Education, and BEACON Magnet Academy courses begin full implementation of SBLA.

Standards Based Learning and Assessment Guiding Principles

Principle 1

Grades should reflect proficiency on well-defined standards-based learning targets that are clear to all stakeholders.

• Be clear about what students must know and be able to do.

• Have a clear understanding of what each level of performance looks like before students begin work by utilizing scoring rubrics.

• Ensure that questions are tied to essential standards and depth of knowledge.

• Data collected on non-academic factors (effort, participation, attendance, attitude, adherence to class rules, late work etc.) should be reported separately.

• Base grades/scores on individual achievement, not group scores.

• Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.

• Apply other consequences for academic dishonesty other than reduced grades/scores.

• Homework, practice, and formative assessment is a risk-free chance to use newly acquired skills without penalty, and therefore, will not count toward the grade calculation.

Benefits

By reporting on specific learning standards, SBLA provides more feedback about how a student is progressing toward learning each standard. This allows reporting of student learning more accurately and the degree to which students have attained mastery of learning objectives.

Students' homework is tied closely to learning objectives and students see those connections. Teachers provide feedback on homework to practice new skills. The use of a coding system to record student performance on practice/homework, such as "turned in" or using "+, -" could be used.

Attendance, effort, behavior, participation and other factors are important but separating these from achievement factors gives parents a clearer picture about their student's learning. Students will be held accountable for these factors but they should be reported separately.

Resources

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are content and grade/course-specific learning objectives that can be validly measured to document student learning over a defined and significant period of time (e.g., semester or year). SLOs can constitute an instructional improvement process, driven by teachers in all grades and subjects.

https://www.u-46.org/Page/10103

Ken O'Connor on Grading Effectively

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGcjhaQuXK8

Principle 2

Grades should be based on academic performance using summative assessments.

• Use multiple measures to determine student achievement. Include more than one kind of assessment to examine the same kind of knowledge or skills (ex: paper/pencil assessments, performance assessments, lab assignments, and personal communication) to evaluate student achievement on grade/course level standards. Only summative assessment scores will count toward the overall grade.

• Provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate they have acquired the knowledge or skill expected with mastery on a standard.

• Use rubrics to plan and assess student learning tied to specific standards or reporting strands to collect and report evidence of student learning.

• Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations and mark each assessment on clear, pre-established criteria.

• Compare each student's performance to preset standards not based on student's achievement compared to other students. Use grading and assessment procedures that support learning.

• Use only evidence from summative assessments to determine grades. Information from formative and summative assessments should be used to provide feedback on progress toward mastery of the standards and to develop interventions and re-teaching opportunities.

• The information that provides the most accurate depiction of students' learning is the most current information. If students demonstrate that past assessment information no longer accurately reflects their learning, that information should be dropped and replaced by the new information.

• Homework, practice, and formative assessment should be risk-free; a chance to practice newly acquired skills without penalty or counting toward a final grade.

• Include students in the grading process. Students should track their own progress on identified standards.

• Communicate SBLA grading practices with students and parents.

Benefits

Formative and summative assessments link curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and intervention. Provides clear focus and makes grading consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning.

The goal of frequent assessment is to modify instruction. Formative assessments are used to track student learning so that appropriate instruction can be planned. Recording formative assessment scores serves as a communication tool for students and parents, outlining a student's current progress with a standard. Including students in classroom assessment practices and scoring ensures that the expectations are clear to all, promotes student learning and encourages self-assessment and mastery of the standards. Where learning is developmental and will grow with time, repeated practice and assessment provides evidence of progress

Resources

What is the difference between formative and summative assessment? --Carnegie Mellon University, the Eberly Center

https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/formative-summative.html

Assessment for Learning Defined by Rick Stiggins, Assessment Training Institute: Research evidence gathered in hundreds of studies conducted literally around the world over the past decade shows that the consistent application of principles of assessment FOR learning can give rise to unprecedented gains in student achievement, especially for perennial low achievers.

http://downloads.pearsonassessments.com/ati/downloads/afldefined.pdf

Principle 3

Grade scales should be devised to give equal incremental value to each letter grade.

• Levels of mastery within a reporting strand will be calculated by using the mean (average) of all reported scores in the strand.

Standards Based Learning and Assessment Rubric Scale:

Mastery (4) - Demonstrates ability to apply extended thinking about the skills and knowledge of the standard
Proficient (3) - Demonstrates skills and knowledge of the standard
Basic (2) - Demonstrates a basic understanding of the skills and knowledge of the standard
Below Basic (1) - Demonstrates a below basic understanding of the standard; may demonstrate gaps in skills and knowledge
No Evidence (0) - There is no, or insufficient, evidence of learning to assess the standard at this time
Not Evaluated (NE) - This standard has not been evaluated at this time

• The overall letter grade for the course will be calculated by using the mean (average) of all reporting strand scores.

Letter Grade Equal Incremental Grading

Equal Incremental Grading	
A	**3.21 – 4.00**
B	**2.41 – 3.20**
C	**1.61 – 2.40**
D	**0.81 – 1.60**
E	**0.80 - Below**

• Students and parents will see an "in progress" grade for the course within Infinite Campus.
• Grade calculations will be pre-set at the course level, with a proficiency estimate available for teachers within each strand.

Benefits

Accurate grade determination provides the real measure of an individual's achievement and is fair to all learners. The use of a grading scale that is unequal, such as the 100 point scale, distorts the final grade as a true indicator of mastery. The smaller equal interval scale will cause grading practices to be more accurate and consistent. Mean calculates the overall strand score as the average of all scores entered.

Resources

Formative Assessment & Standards-Based Grading, by Robert Marzano
Tips for standards-based assessment using well-constructed scales.
https://www.marzanoresearch.com/resources/tips/fasbg_tips_archive

Principle 4

Students should be expected to complete work for credit.

• As stated under Principle 2, practice or homework is expected and should be a risk-free chance to experiment and practice with newly acquired skills without penalty.

• Work will only be considered and entered as formative when feedback measuring the student against their progress on the standard is provided on the work.
• Formative and Summative work can be completed outside of the classroom, but the purpose of the work must meet the following definitions:

- *Formative Assessment* - Periodic assessment tool for learning that is used to adjust instruction for individual students or a whole class. Excluded from the calculation of the overall grade.
- *Summative Assessment* - An evaluation tool designed to show information about a student's achievement at the end of a period of instruction. Used to establish the overall grade of a course.

Benefits

As students complete work, they provide evidence of their learning. In SBLA, teachers have the freedom to use all work as formative or summative as needed. This work informs both their knowledge of the student and their teaching on a regular basis. By collecting evidence regularly, teachers are able to use the data to drive instruction. Students are provided a clear understanding of what is required of them either in skills or knowledge to demonstrate mastery.

Resources

Late Work: A Constructive Response By Rick Wormeli
A convincing discussion on accepting late work: "In the real world, airplanes take off minutes and hours late every day. Dentists run late, people request permission for filing tax forms late…"
https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Documents/Co-Teaching%20Modules/Module%202/09%20LateWork_A%20Constructive%20Response%20By%20RickWormeli.pdf

Enough with the Late Penalties! By Tom Schimmer an independent education author, speaker, and consultant from Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada). He is recognized as a leader and expert in the areas of assessment *for* learning, sound grading practices, educational leadership, and positive behavior interventions and supports.

https://tomschimmer.com/2011/02/21/enough-with-the-late-penalties/

Principle 5

Students should be given multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge.

• The assessment should match the intended learning outcomes.
• Assessment methods should reflect the individual learning styles of students.

There can be multiple measures (ex: paper/pencil assessments, performance assessments, lab assignments, and personal communication) to evaluate student achievement on grade/course level standards. Only summative assessment scores will count toward the overall grade.

Questions to consider when implementing this practice:

- What does mastery of the standard look like? Is it project, performance, etc. based?
- When is it appropriate to offer choice?
- Do/should all students need to complete the same assessment to show mastery?
- Should students have a choice in how they show mastery of a standard?
- How many ways (how often) does a standard need to be assessed?

Benefits

Allowing students to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways ensures that teachers can be more responsive to the needs and strengths of the members of their class. Teachers are not limited to using a specific type of summative assessment (short answer, multiple choice, etc.), but are encouraged to combine different methods of assessment to obtain the best information about their students' progress.

Resources

Learning Celebrations are Authentic Assessments of Student Understanding, Johns Hopkins University: When students have multiple choices in ways to demonstrate their knowledge, the evidence of their learning is more accurate.

http://archive.education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/strategies/topics/Assessment%20Alternatives/meyer_glock.htm

http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-research

Principle 6

Feedback should be timely, specific, and related to learning targets.

• Feedback should be tied to standards and rubrics used to measure student learning.
• Formative assessments and practice/homework should be recorded in Infinite Campus as feedback and as a communication tool for students and parents. However, these scores will be excluded from overall grade calculations.
• Teachers can record a 0-4 assessment score in Infinite Campus, which aligns to a level of proficiency on a standards-based rubric. This can help a student or parent identify the student's current placement in the learning progression.

Questions to consider when implementing this practice:

- What does useful feedback look like?
- What does *timely* mean for formative? For summative?
- When is numerical feedback appropriate? When is it not necessary?
- What feedback needs to be reported in the grade record?
- How do I communicate the feedback timeframe to parents and students?
- How is feedback related to a standards based rubric?

Benefits

By reporting on specific learning standards, SBLA provides feedback about how a student is progressing toward learning each standard. This reports student learning more accurately because we provide information about the degree to which students have attained mastery of learning objectives.

This feedback is specific and clear to students and parents. Rubrics used clearly state, not only the score a student received, but also how the student can increase their understanding of the standard. As many rubrics are designed by grade level teams, or PLCs, this provides more consistency in grading. Rubrics facilitate the assessment process so that students receive feedback in a timely manner.

Resources

IDEA: Provide timely and frequent feedback on tests, reports, projects, etc., to help students improve
http://ideaedu.org/research-and-papers/pod-idea-notes-on-instruction/idea-item-no-17/
Feedback: How Learning Occurs by Grant Wiggins. Wiggins is widely known for his work in assessment reform. He is the author of *Educative Assessment* and *Assessing Student Performance*
http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artId=61

Principle 7

Students should be given multiple opportunities to reach mastery on specific, standards-based concepts and skills.

Guidelines

• Anything that counts for a grade must have an opportunity for reassessment.
• If a student reassesses, the first score is replaced by the most recent score, even if the most recent is lower.
• Students will be provided re-learning opportunities before reassessment that are meaningful and promote student learning and growth such as:

- assessment corrections
- reflection
- completion of missing work
- additional standards-based practice

• The decision to complete the relearning opportunities and take a reassessment is ultimately student choice.
• Teachers will establish a time frame for when a student can complete an additional attempt on a specific skill or standard before the next summative assessment. The guidelines for this will be clearly communicated to parents and students by the teacher.
• Teachers can determine how the multiple opportunities are presented to the student, whether within the structure of normal classroom time or time outside of the classroom.
• Full mastery (4) must be available to the student on a summative reassessment; however, completing a summative re-assessment does not guarantee a higher score.

When determining the need for additional opportunities please consider the following questions:

- What steps will be in place for a student that requests an additional opportunity?
- What limits will be placed on reassessments to ensure timely grade reporting?
- How much of the material needs to be reassessed?

Benefits

Multiple opportunities to assess students on the same standard allow a student to reach a level of mastery they might not otherwise achieve. This allows for students to demonstrate mastery in spite of extenuating circumstances.
The most recent score most accurately represents a student's current level of mastery in a skill and, therefore, replaces the first score, even if the most recent is lower. In order to effectively communicate with students and parents, teachers are encouraged to use the comment function within Infinite Campus.

Resources

Rick Wormeli: Redos, Retakes, and Do-Overs, Part 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM-3PFfIfvI

Rick Wormeli: Redos, Retakes and Do-Overs, Part 2
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgxvzEc0rvs

Grading and Assessment Definitions

Accommodation - means that the content of the standard remains the same, but the method for demonstrating mastery of that content may be adjusted. For example, to meet science standards, a student may require an audiotape of lectures in science class because of difficulty in taking notes. In addition, he or she might need to take a social studies end-of-unit assessment orally. Although the format for answering questions would be different, the content of the questions would remain the same, and the student would be judged, like all other students, on the content of his or her responses. (Jung Guskey 2010 article)

Assessment - Gathering and interpreting information about student achievement using a variety of tools.

Benchmark Assessment - An assessment that measures a student's achievement level on all standards in a course that will be repeated periodically to check for improvement.

Common Assessment - The same assessment that is given and graded by common grade level/subject classrooms at about the same time to collect data.

Depth of Knowledge – the complexity of mental processing that must occur to answer a question, perform a task, or generate a product.

Evidence of Learning - collection of student work samples to illustrate skill growth, understanding of concept, or standard proficiency.

Formative Assessment – A periodic assessment tool for learning that is used to adjust instruction for individual students or a whole class.

Grade - A simple, clear, and concrete summary representation of student achievement based on what a student knows at the end of a given time period. The number (or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance.

Gradual Release Model – structured method of pedagogy framed around a process devolving responsibility within the learning process from the teacher to the eventual independence of the learner

Learning Targets/Essential Understandings/I Can Statements – brief statements that describe what students will be expected to learn by the end of an instructional interval.

Level of Proficiency - evidence to illustrate student understanding or growth within a standard, skill set, or concept

Mastery - Demonstration of student performance against standard criteria at a pre-established level.

Modification - means changing the standard itself. A 3rd grade English language learner, for example, may have strong oral communication skills, but may not be ready to work on the grade-level standards for writing. For this student, the instructional team may decide to provide additional support in the area of writing and to expect the student to master 1st grade writing standards. (Jung Guskey 2010)

Performance Task – A goal-directed assessment exercise. It consists of an activity or assignment that is completed by the student and then judged by the teacher or other evaluator on the basis of specific performance criteria.

Proficiency Scale - Proficiency Based Rubrics - "rubrics aligned with standards-based grading scales from the start, so that progress is described in terms of achievement of that standard" (How to Create Rubrics by S. Brookhart) Reporting Strands → Instructional Focus / Standards → Learning Objectives

Rubric – a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor.

Score - To mark, evaluate, or place a value on a single product as compared to a standard or objective. The number (or letter) "score" given to any student test or performance.

Standards - Statement that describes what and/or how well students are expected to understand and perform.

Standards Based Learning and Assessment (SBLA) – The achievement level is based on mastery of essential standards. This is a grading system where scores denote progress toward the understanding of a specific standard.

Student Learning Objective - is a targeted, long-term goal for advancing student learning. This data-informed process involves diagnosing and improving specific student learning needs.

Summative Assessment - An evaluation tool designed to show information about a student's achievement at the end of a period of instruction.

Test - An assessment intended to measure the student's knowledge or other abilities.

Transfer of Knowledge – the progression of information or understanding from teacher to student, student to student, and student to teacher.

Type I Assessment – a reliable assessment that measures a certain group or subset of students in the same manner with the same potential assessment items, is scored by a non-district entity, and is administered either statewide or beyond Illinois. Examples include assessments available from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Scantron Performance Series, Star Reading Enterprise, College Board's SAT, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate examinations, or ACT's EPAS® (i.e., Educational Planning and Assessment System).

Type II Assessment – any assessment developed or adopted and approved for use by the school district and used on a district-wide basis by all teachers in a given grade or subject area. Examples include collaboratively developed common assessments, curriculum tests and assessments designed by textbook publishers.

Type III Assessment – any assessment that is rigorous, that is aligned to the course's curriculum, and that the qualified evaluator and teacher determine measures student learning in that course. Examples include teacher-created assessments, assessments designed by textbook publishers, student work samples or portfolios, assessments of student performance, and assessments designed by staff who are subject or grade-level experts that are administered commonly across a given grade or subject. A Type I or Type II assessment may qualify as a Type III assessment if it aligns to the curriculum being taught and measures student learning in that subject area.

Units/Strand/Reporting Standards – a predefined set of standards and skills that are grouped together for reporting purposes.

Unpacking Standards – determining the depth and rigor of each standard at a particular level, matching essential questions with outcomes, determining what proficiency looks like, making a rubric, identifying the necessary steps to demonstrating proficiency, determining prior knowledge.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What is Standards Based Learning and Assessment?

Standards Based Learning and Assessment measures the mastery of the learning objectives, or how well students understand the material in class. It is based on a specific set of standards that students need to meet for each grade/content level. Marks are not a comparison of one student to another, but rather a way to measure how well students are doing on grade-level/course level standards. A standards-based approach allows parents and students to understand more clearly what is expected of students and how to help them be successful in their educational program.

What is the goal of Standards Based Learning and Assessment?

The primary goal of SBLA is to improve student achievement by focusing instruction and the alignment of curriculum with the essential standards. SBLA will provide better communication to students, parents, teachers and administrators on what each student knows and is able to do according to the identified standards and separately assess the influence of positive and consistent work habits on student learning.

How does Standards Based Learning and Assessment differ from traditional letter grades?

SBLA informs us what students have actually learned and know. SBLA measures students' knowledge of grade-level content over time by reporting the most recent, consistent level of performance. So, a student might struggle in the beginning of a grading period with new content, but then learn and demonstrate proficient performance by the end of the grading period. In traditional grading, the student's performance for the whole grading period would be averaged and early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with proficient performance later in the course resulting in a lower grade. In SBLA, a student who reaches proficiency would be reported proficient and the grade would reflect current performance level. In SBLA, most course factors like attendance, effort, work habits, and attitude will be reported separately in order to give a more accurate report of student progress.

Everyone knows what an A-B-C-D-F and 100 point scale represents. Why change?

According to the District Strategic Plan, the district will implement and support a challenging standards based curriculum across all content. This goal promotes SBLA allowing all stakeholders to view the specific skills or concepts a student has mastered or needs to improve. Traditional grading often measures many different factors and compares how well students do to their classmates. SBLA measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade level standard/skill, not the work of other students. In the 100 point system, the question becomes "100 percent of what?" We need criteria to have consistency and accuracy about what students know and are able to do. When a percentage system is applied, it can be misleading. 100 percent correct on a set of very easy questions is very different from a slightly lower percentage on a set of difficult items. A 100 point scale does not consider difficulty of work and leads to an inaccurate measure of student learning relative to a specific learning goals. Grades must be accurate and consistent to be useful. The use of a grading scale that is unequal, such as the 100

point scale, distorts the final grade as a true indicator of mastery. The smaller equal interval scale will cause grading practices to be more accurate and consistent.

What is the effect on the GPI or GPA?

SBLA will have no effect on GPA. At the high school level, the 4.0 scale will be converted to a letter grade which is used to determine GPI or GPA.

Can a student have Level 4 evidence of learning and lack Level 2 evidence of learning?

No. Well-balanced standards based instructional environment and resulting assessment structure does not allow for this scenario.

What student evidence determines grades?

Students' overall grades are determined using summative assessment evidence. If students demonstrate that past assessment information no longer accurately reflects their learning, that information must be dropped and replaced by the new information.

What about extra credit?

Extra credit does not measure learning. In a standards-based system, students are actually able to demonstrate their learning in many different ways and timeframes. In a traditional system in which points determine everything, extra credit and extra points will influence a grade and not reflect any additional learning. For instance, a student that has a 2.0 on a specific learning goal may have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning at the 3.0 level. However, in a traditional system in which extra points are simply added in to the overall grade, extra points can be earned regardless of whether or not learning may have occurred.

What research has the district used in developing Standards Based Learning and Assessment?

The district has utilized research from the following experts in the field: Dr. Robert Marzano, Ken O'Connor, Jay McTighe, Rick Wormeli, Thomas Guskey, Douglas Reeves, and Rick Stiggins.

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