

PLD Standards-Based Grading FAQs

What Is Standards-Based Grading? SBG is a system of grading and reporting that measures student mastery with each class's established set of learning goals. This approach aims to provide students with consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive feedback on their academic knowledge and skills for each course standard covered in their classes here at Dunbar.

How Long Has PLD Been Using Standards-Based Grading? PLD began studying SBG in 2012 and formed a grading committee that included more than 20 teachers in 2014. In 2016 we piloted SBG and moved to full implementation in the 2017-18 school year.

What Is a Course Standard? A standard is an established expectation of what a student should know or be able to do. Kentucky regulations require schools to teach the [approved standards](#).

Why Switch from Traditional Grading to Standards-Based Grading? Traditional grading systems are often influenced by non-academic factors such as effort, attitude, and behavior. While we think it is absolutely vital to continue to foster emotional intelligence and soft skills, we want grades to provide students with a clear, consistent, and reliable report of their academic learning.

What Will Grades Look Like Now? Teachers will evaluate the degree of student mastery on each standard using a five-point scale. Reporting student performance by standard in IC gives students, teachers, and parents a quick reference to easily determine which standards have been mastered and which ones need further study. Final course grades will be traditional letter grades (A-F)*.

**See Why Does My Student's Grade Look so Low in IC for more information about how IC reports grades.*

Why Does Your Scale Go from 0 to .1 and Not Just 1? This is a result of information from East Jessamine County High School. They had used 1 when they began using the 5-point scale and found that it resulted in grade inflation at the bottom of the scale. After using 1 for a year they changed to .1 for the lowest level and found that adequately addressed the issue.

Why Do You Use Whole Point Levels for 2-5? Using whole point levels for 2-5 equates performance levels to the GPA scale. It allows the gradebook to assign a traditional course grade.

How Can Standards-Based Grading Improve Student Learning? SBG encourages a shift in focus away from the accumulation of points needed to earn a certain grade (or perhaps just to pass a class) toward an awareness of what a student knows and is able to do in reference to each specific learning goal. When students do not initially demonstrate mastery of a course standard, they will be given additional opportunities to get there after receiving further instruction and support (see interventions and extensions during class time for more details on this).

Why are You Giving Our Students Two Chances on Everything? We want students to develop perseverance so that they continue working to improve their skills even when they encounter setbacks. When assessments are tightly aligned to the standards they are not easy. Students may need more

opportunities to reach proficiency on very difficult tasks. The idea is not to create a culture of constant retakes. Rather, it is to design a system that encourages students to maximize their learning. Too often, we see students stop working and give up in a class because they know that they have no hope of passing after the first month.

How Do You Expect Students to Do Homework That Has No Point Value? Homework should have intrinsic value for the student and the course. Students will not do it if there is no value in it whether there are points awarded or not. Many content areas have standards that support preparation and practice, so there are still ways for teachers to assess those areas in the summative category.

Who Decides What "Level of Rigor" is for Level 4 on the Rubric? The level of rigor is identified in the standard. Standards include both content (what is to be learned) and rigor (the level to which it is to be learned).

For example: **Science: Life Sciences, Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits: HS-LS3-3**

Apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain the variation and distribution of expressed traits in a population.

The rigor is established by the verbs *apply* and *explain*. The progression of levels of rigor from knowledge to synthesis is established in Bloom's taxonomy.

What is "Most of the Learning Targets" on Level 3 of the Rubric? Standards can be broken into simpler learning targets. For example, the above science standard could be broken into identifying appropriate mathematical concepts to use in a situation, using the mathematical concepts correctly to analyze the available data, interpreting the data based on the mathematical analysis, and explaining the results using sufficient detail. There are 4 targets, so students would need to be successful on at least 3 of them at that level.

How will "Teachers will Routinely Include Individual, Small Group, and Whole-Class Interventions and Extensions During Class Time Based on Student Learning Results" be Implemented in Each and Every Class? Teachers will set aside class time routinely (approximately every 2 weeks) to provide interventions and extensions based on student learning results on formative and summative assessments. Some teachers also include smaller scaled interventions in their regular instruction on a more frequent basis. The purpose of intervention is not just to support the lower performing students. It is to provide support at, above, and below the standards to help all students reach their potential.

Why Does My Student's Grade Look so Low (0.1-5/100 or 0-5%) in Infinite Campus?

Please be assured that your student's grade is calculating correctly to arrive at the appropriate final letter grade for the course.

We understand that it looks alarming to see an assignment grade post as 0.1-5 out of a possible 100 points or to see a final percentage score that is 0-5%. However, the student's overall grade for the course correctly reflects the letter grade corresponding to that numeric range in the school's grading policy if a grade has been entered into the summative or employability category.

Because IC always thinks that a grade is a percentage, IAKSS had to design procedures that calculate as a percentage within the 5-point scale. For example, a grade in IC that shows up as 4.53% corresponds to an A on the report card and the final transcript. If the average is 2.96%, it assigns a letter grade C.

The only time that the IC average would not accurately reflect the course grade is when a student is not meeting the minimal competency requirement* of earning a 2 or higher on at least 50% of the standards for a course.

Final Course Average	Letter Grade*
4.0-5.0	A
3.0-3.99	B
2.0-2.99	C
1.0-1.99	D
0-0.99*	F*

** Minimal Competency Requirement: In order to receive a passing grade, students must demonstrate minimal competency for the course by scoring at least a 2 on 50% of the standards assessed summatively during the semester. Students failing to meet this requirement will receive a failing grade on their report card and on the transcript unless/until the student attains minimal competency.*

We have taken several steps to communicate with our stakeholders about how to interpret the way that IC reports grades in this system:

- All course syllabi (except for Dual Credit courses, which use the university's grading scale and procedures) included information about the grade appearing as a 0-5% in IC because the percent symbol is hard coded into the grade display.
- Teachers have talked to their students about how to interpret their grades.
- Transcript reporting has been changed so that the percent grade will not be printed for courses using the SBG grading scale. All that will show on the transcript will be the final letter grade.

What is minimal competency? Minimal competency refers to the least a student needs to demonstrate to be eligible to pass a class. On the SBG scale, a 2 represents minimal competency. Students who score below a 2 on a summative assessment are strongly encouraged to complete the required practice to improve their learning. If a student fails to score a 2 or higher on 50% or more of the standards for a course, they will receive a grade on their report card and transcript.

Please note that, with the minimal competency requirement, it is possible for a student to receive an F for their course grade even if their IC average is above a 0.99.