



Standards-Based Grading Practices for Grades 6-8

Portland Public Schools (PPS) uses grades as a vital tool to reflect students' progress and understanding of academic concepts, aiming to provide clear, timely, and accurate feedback. Standards-based equitable grading ensures fairness by focusing on students' knowledge and skills while minimizing biases and excluding nonacademic factors like behavior. This method can boost achievement, especially for minority and disadvantaged students, by using clear criteria and multiple chances to demonstrate understanding.

PPS GRADING SCALE

Highly Proficient	The student demonstrates learning that goes above and beyond what was explicitly taught and/or applies knowledge and skills in complex and novel situations.
Proficient	The student demonstrates expected knowledge and skills for the grade level.
Close to Proficient	The student demonstrates foundational knowledge and skill necessary to meet the standard, including isolated facts and details, simpler or sub-procedures, and/or required vocabulary.
Developing Proficiency	The student demonstrates a need for direct teacher help and support, demonstrates minimal understanding, or demonstrates minimal work.

GOALS

- ✓ Align with growth mindset principles.
- ✓ Break down subjects into specific learning objectives.
- ✓ Provide precise feedback.
- ✓ Enhance transparency.
- ✓ Reduce bias.
- ✓ Accurately reflect students' mastery of academic standards.



Traditional Grading and Standards-Based Grading

KEY SIMILARITIES

Goal of student success. Both grading practices aim to evaluate and communicate student learning and progress, helping to identify areas of strength and those needing improvement.

Teacher assessment. Both assess student work and provide feedback to guide learning.

Reporting to families.

Both involve regular reporting to families about student progress, aiming to keep parents and caregivers informed and engaged in their student's education.

KEY DIFFERENCES

Ideology of grading.

Standards-Based: Assesses specific learning objectives with precise feedback and opportunities for reassessment.

Traditional: Often includes homework and other non-mastery, formative factors in averaged grades. Summarizes performance with numerical scores.

Grading scale.

Standards-Based: Uses a 4-point scale.

Traditional: Uses a 0–100-point scale.

Learning targets.

Standards-Based: Helps students understand what they need to learn.

Traditional: Helps educators understand what they need to teach.

Final grade calculation.

Standards-Based: Uses a calculation based on Standards, not assignments.

Traditional: Aggregates scores from various assessments.

Grade contributors.

Standards-Based: Uses assessments aligned with learning standards for feedback and understanding progress.

Traditional: Aggregates various assessments and behaviors, such as timely work, into a single grade.

For more information about the research behind standards-based grading, refer to this [FACT SHEET](#).

