



SHERIDAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 1
EMPOWERING LEARNERS, ENRICHING LIVES

STANDARDS-REFERENCED GRADING HANDBOOK

Learning is the constant; time is the variable.

The primary purpose for grading...is to communicate with students and parents about the achievement of learning goals (Brookhart 2004).

GRADING PHILOSOPHY:

- All students are consistently held to high academic expectations.
- Grading practices are fair and manageable, supporting effective teaching and learning.
- Grading practices yield understandable, meaningful grades that accurately reflect student learning.
- A preponderance of evidence from student work is used to determine proficiency.
- Procedures for grading are supported, monitored, and supervised.

WHY IS THE DISTRICT USING STANDARDS-REFERENCED GRADING?

The goal of Sheridan County School District 1 is to improve student learning by reporting grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning, and the shift to standards-referenced grading is an effort to reach that goal.

Accurate – The teacher gathers evidence of learning based solely on academic achievement. Valued skills such as behaviors and attitude are reported separately.

Consistent – For each unit of instruction, the teacher provides a proficiency scale that describes exactly what students need to know and be able to do. Proficiency scales establish clear expectations for learning at the beginning of a unit and are used to determine students' overall outcome scores.

Meaningful – The teacher uses a variety of assessment methods to track student learning on each outcome. Final grades are based on course- or grade-level outcomes.

Supportive of Learning – The teacher supports learning by focusing on the outcomes and components that have or have not been learned, rather than on accumulation of points to reach a certain total.

WHAT IS A PROFICIENCY SCALE?

Proficiency scales are the heart of a standards-referenced grading system because they guide instruction and learning.

- Proficiency scales display a progression of learning aligned to grade-level outcomes and components.
- Proficiency scale scores are associated with a level of performance.
- Students may use the proficiency scale to track their learning.
- Teachers reference the proficiency scale to guide their instruction and provide feedback to students.
- Teachers use a variety of evidence to determine a student's final score on the proficiency scale.

Proficiency Scale Template Example



Secondary Proficiency Scale

Outcome Number:

Outcome Descriptor:

Level	Description
Advanced Skills and Content	The student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications, such as: •
Target Skills and Content	While engaged in grade-appropriate tasks, the student demonstrates an ability to: •
Foundational Skills and Content	The student can define key vocabulary, including: The student demonstrates the basic skills and processes, such as: •

contains in-depth inferences and applications for this outcome

outlines what students must know and do to be proficient in this outcome

outlines the foundational knowledge and skill for this outcome

WHAT DO GRADES LOOK LIKE IN A STANDARDS-REFERENCED SYSTEM?

Because learning is a process that takes place over time and at different speeds for different students, grading in a standards-referenced system looks different.

Outcome Assessments – Standards-referenced grading focuses on measuring students' proficiency of an outcome on a common outcome assessment. Scores used to indicate student performance for an outcome align to the proficiency scale for each outcome and are reported in the following way.

4 – Student demonstrates an in-depth understanding by completing advanced applications

3 – Student demonstrates proficiency on the complex, targeted knowledge and skills

2 – Student demonstrates foundational knowledge and is still working to apply concepts and skills

1 – With help, student demonstrates basic knowledge and skills

0 – Even with help, no understanding or skill demonstrated

Scores of 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 may be used to indicate partial proficiency of a level.

Student work – Student work is designed to provide practice and application of new concepts and skills essential to developing proficiency on unit outcomes. Student work can include, but is not limited to, written work, hands-on activities, direct instruction, and group work.

- The purpose of scoring student work is to provide feedback to students and parents about student progress.
- While scores for student work will be recorded in the grade book, they will not be averaged into the final grade.
- Student performance on practice or formative assessments can be considered as evidence of proficiency for determining a final grade.

Grades K-8 Reporting – Scores will be reported using 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 for each subject area outcome test.

High School Reporting – Outcome test scores in each subject will be averaged to produce a final grade. Outcome scores will be reported as a 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0. The scores will be converted to a corresponding A, B, C, D or F grade in the grade book. The table below shows the conversion from a 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 score into an A, B, C, D, F score.

High School Conversion Chart		
Indicates level of proficiency. Teacher enters this score into the grade book.	The grade book converts the average of outcomes using the following range. *	Final Score - as calculated by the grading program.
4	3.2 - 4.0	A
3	2.7 - 3.1	B
2	2.3 - 2.6	C
1	1.8 - 2.2	D
0	0.0 -1.7	F

*Ranges were determined by using cut scores that define student performance at each level: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic.

References

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<https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/pd/wyoming-mtss/>

DISTRICT BEST PRACTICES

Teaching and Learning Practices

- Teachers provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations at the beginning of each unit of instruction.
- Learning targets should be posted in the classroom.
- Feedback on student work should be given to students in a meaningful and timely manner.
- Learning is based on complex tasks that involve critical thinking and problem solving.
- All students must have an opportunity to learn the higher order thinking required in level 4 components.
- Teachers involve students in tracking their own progress.
- Teachers record scores for the majority of components within a unit.
- In grades 6–12, a student may earn a zero for incomplete work. Efforts will be made to reteach a task or test that receives a score of 0, 1, or 2. A score of 3 means that further learning and retakes are optional for the student.
- Students may retake portions of the assessment needed to demonstrate proficiency.
- If a student is not proficient, they have opportunities to relearn.
- Data collected on non-academic factors may be reported separately.
- Concerns about a student's progress will be communicated to parents (as well as brought up at staff or SIT meetings) in a timely manner.

Student Work

- Student work is designed to provide practice and application of new concepts and skills essential to developing proficiency on unit outcomes.
- Student work can include, but is not limited to, written work, digital exercises, hands-on activities, direct instruction, and group work or homework.
- Student work can be used to provide evidence of learning that may help the teacher arrive at a final grade.

Practice

- Practice should not be assigned for concepts not yet addressed or for which instruction has not occurred.
- Students are expected to complete assignments in order to practice essential skills.
- When practice is assigned, feedback will be provided to students in a timely manner.
- If a student is not proficient, they may have the following opportunities to learn:
 - Friday School
 - Before, after, or during the school day

Checking for Understanding

- Teachers will use a variety of methods to measure individual progress and help students track their learning during a unit of instruction.
- Checking for understanding may include, but is not limited to, teacher observation, paper and pencil tasks, performance on digital exercises, quizzes, performance tasks, or conversations with the teacher.
- Additional instruction and reassessment will be provided to those students not demonstrating proficiency.
- Additional instruction and extension will be provided to students demonstrating proficiency.
- Checks for understanding can be used to provide evidence of learning that may help the teacher arrive at a final grade.

Assessments

- Common Outcome Assessments are administered for all units to assess student learning of the curriculum.
- Component checks occur within each unit and will be documented in PowerSchool. A score will be entered for a majority of components in PowerSchool. This information serves to keep parents and students informed of unit progress.
- Criteria on a proficiency scale for each outcome will determine the level of individual student learning.
- Students not meeting the criteria will receive additional instruction and practice to improve learning and will be reassessed.
- Common Outcome Assessments and other evidence will be used in the determination of a final score for the outcome.

TIER 1 INSTRUCTION

Tier 1 Core Academic Instruction is a foundational component of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework in education, and it is considered a preventative model for several reasons:

1. **Core Instruction:** Tier 1 instruction represents the first level of support provided to all students in a school or classroom. It is designed to meet the needs of the majority of students and is often referred to as "universal" or "core" instruction. By delivering high-quality, evidence-based instruction at this tier, educators aim to prevent academic difficulties for most students from the outset.
2. **Differentiated Instruction:** Tier 1 instruction incorporates differentiated teaching practices to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs. Teachers use various instructional strategies and assessment methods to engage students and provide necessary supports for success, reducing the likelihood of learning gaps or challenges.
3. **Preventative and Proactive:** By providing effective Tier 1 instruction, teachers aim to prevent academic difficulties from occurring in the first place. This proactive approach reduces the need for more intensive, individualized interventions in the future because students will experience success in the regular classroom setting.
4. **Alignment with Standards:** Tier 1 instruction aligns with academic standards and curriculum requirements, ensuring that students receive the foundational knowledge and skills they need to meet grade-level expectations. This alignment helps prevent academic underachievement and failure.

SCSD1 Reassessment Guidelines

- Students will be given the opportunity to reassess during the school day.
- The student must complete all the activities assigned by the teacher and provide evidence of learning in order to be allowed to complete the reassessment.
- The reassessment score will be recorded in the grade book and used to help determine the student's grade for the outcome. Completing a reassessment does not guarantee that the student's grade will increase.

Reassessment Study Activities	
Sample activities that students may complete as evidence of relearning by teachers.	
Sample Activities	Possible Evidence of Completion
Complete missing assignments	Completed assignments
Make flashcards	Completed flashcards
Create practice assessment	Completed practice assessment with answer key
Tutoring with a teacher	Signed note documenting tutoring time
Study your notes	Study log
Complete internet activities provided by your teacher	Screenshots showing completion
Design a review game	Completed game
Make a poster explaining a topic or process	Completed poster
Create a web diagram	Completed diagram
Write a summary for each of the individual topics in the rubric	Completed summaries
Complete review exercises in the textbook	Completed exercises
Other activities provided by your teacher:	

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Common Outcome Assessment: Each course and grade level outcomes are measured by common outcome assessments and scored consistently according to assessment guidelines developed by teachers.

Components: Individual skills and knowledge that make up an outcome.

Core Instruction or Tier 1 Academic Instruction: Instruction designed to meet the needs of the majority of students through evidence-based instruction that is aligned to state and district standards at grade level. Core instruction is designed to prevent academic difficulties and address the needs of the majority of students from the start, reducing the need for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.

Formative Assessment (Checking for Understanding): Assessments that are given frequently, usually on a weekly basis, help teachers understand students' proficiency with specific outcomes and components. Teachers will adapt their instruction based upon the information gathered from these assessments. Assessment tools in this category may include, but are not limited to, teacher observation, paper and pencil tasks, performance on digital exercises, quizzes, performance tasks, individual conversations, or teacher observations.

Learning Targets: The learning objective for the day's lesson.

Proficiency: The level of understanding or skill defined by grade level standards.

Proficiency Scale: A progression of learning aligned to outcomes and components and associated with levels of performance. The proficiency scale provides specific information on what a student must know or do to achieve a particular score.

Score: To mark, evaluate, or place a number (or letter) value on a single piece of student work.

Standards or Outcomes: Statement that describes what and/or how well students are expected to understand and perform. All district outcomes and components are aligned to the Wyoming State Standards.

Standards-Referenced Grading: A grading system where scores denote progress toward the understanding of a specific outcome.

Sheridan County School District No. 1 does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment of employment in, its educational programs or activities.

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Sheridan County School District No. 1, 1127 US Hwy 14, Ranchester, WY 82839.