

## Standards-Based Grading Information and FAQ

Rochester High School will be using Standards-Based Grading practices in our core curriculum classes: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Precalculus.

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### **Q: What is standards-based grading?**

**A:** Standards-based grading is a research-based method (Marzano, 2009; ASCD, 2008; Miller, 2013) of measuring students' mastery of specific standards, or skills, in the classroom. The philosophy follows Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck's philosophy of the growth mindset, which says that anybody is capable of achieving proficiency in a skill if they work hard enough at it.

Standards-based grading allows students to take ownership of their own learning by assessing their own proficiency on standards and enables them to demonstrate proficiency repeatedly throughout the year. Students will have opportunities to "re-take" miniature quizzes (mini-quizzes) on topics in which they are not deemed proficient. A student's final grade will be based solely on his or her achievement of the standards and performance on summative chapter tests.

As a parent, standards-based grading will help you to identify specific areas in which your child is successful, as well as areas in which your child needs some extra practice. It is our intention to be as transparent as possible with the standards in order to help students achieve the greatest success.

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### **Q: What is the purpose of standards-based grading?**

**A:** The purpose of standards-based grading is multifaceted:

- To encourage **student ownership** of their own learning
  - To teach students that hard work results in achievement
  - To eliminate "behavioral grades" from the grade book
  - To foster a **growth mindset** in which students realize that they can make great strides in mathematics, regardless of prior experiences
  - To support **clear communication** between teachers and parents about a student's achievement in class
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### **Q: How will students be assessed on specific standards?**

**A:** Students will be given mini-quizzes every 2 or 3 days. The mini-quiz will cover one or two sections of material. These quizzes will be pre-announced. All mini-quizzes will be scored out of 10 points. In the past a typical math quiz would cover three or four sections of material. So, by assessing students on less material often, students will gain better insight into where their strengths and weaknesses lie. Each mini-quiz should serve as a foundation for the chapter as a whole.

**Q: Will students still be responsible for completing homework, even though it will not be factored into the grade?**

**A:** Yes. Homework, also known simply as "daily practice" is **essential** to mastering mathematics. Homework is treated as a vehicle for achieving the standards and, thus, will not be counted in the final grade. This philosophy parallels that of an athlete or a musician. The games/concerts are evaluated, not the practice. If an athlete/musician wants to improve he/she practices harder, works longer, and figures out what is preventing him/her from achieving more. The same applies for the mathematics classroom.

Homework will be recorded in Synergy using the following codes: "C" (complete), "P" (partially complete), "I" (incomplete-less than half done) and "N" (not handed in). If homework is completed late, it will be marked in the grade book as "L" (late-and complete).

The idea is that students require varying amounts of practice. If your student regularly earns "partials" on his or her homework, but is able to show mastery of the standards on the mini-quizzes, then there is not much to worry about. However, if your student is earning "partials", "incompletes" or "not handed in" many assignments and has difficulty demonstrating mastery of the standards on the mini-quizzes, then this should serve as evidence that their current study habits and time commitment are not working. In order to improve, students need to make sure they are doing the daily homework correctly and completely, seeking help when necessary.

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**Q: What is the process for re-assessing a skill for achievement?**

**A:** Students will have the opportunity to re-assess any mini-quiz given throughout the quarter. Re-assessments can be completed anytime during the quarter that the mini-quiz was given. They will be administered at a designated day and time per teacher if the following criteria are met:

- Student has signed up in the classroom to take a "re-take" as a means to communicate to his/her teacher that he/she is interested in being reassessed
- Student has completed all assigned homework for that particular mini-quiz
- Student submits corrections to the "mini-quiz" being re-assessed (if he/she doesn't know how to correct the work, then he/she should seek out teacher support before the mini-quiz reassessment day)
- The "re-take" score will replace the original mini-quiz score

**Q: How do I know this methodology works for RHS students?**

**A:** Rochester High School has been using research based Standards Based Grading practices in core math classes for the past two years. We have collected data from each of our courses. Our data shows an increase on summative chapter tests and comprehensive cumulative exams. We have been very impressed with student growth following the implementation. Our math process at RHS is focused on mastery of curriculum and student success.

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**Q: Will students be able to re-take summative tests? (eg. Chapter tests)**

**A:** No. Students are provided daily feedback on their knowledge/mastery of the curriculum. Ample opportunities are given for each student to learn from their mistakes and gain the mathematical skills. Students are expected to “own their learning” throughout each unit, within the timeline of the testing date. Deadlines are a necessary goal for college/career readiness. (Again, using the analogy of a musical performance or athletic event, concerts/games are not redone when results are less than expected.) The practice and learning must take place within a reasonable amount of time. Typically two days of review are given prior to each summative test. Students will have received daily opportunities to practice and get feedback on standards, mini-quizzes covering several standards throughout each unit with feedback and opportunities to learn from mistakes, and a final review of all curriculum immediately preceding each unit test.

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**Q: What research supports this method for assessment?**

**A:** Research by renowned education researchers such as Robert Marzano (2009), Ken O'Connor (2011), Myron Dueck (2014), and many others indicate the benefits of standards-based grading.