Selecting an Online Grading and Reporting System

Many schools that transition to proficiency-based grading and reporting use online systems to manage the process. In some cases, schools choose to adapt or modify their existing online grading platforms or student-information systems, while others decide to use systems that have been specifically engineered to support proficiency-based teaching, assessing, grading, and reporting.

Regardless of the system or systems selected, it is likely that the choice will present a variety of compromises. For example, modifying a student-information system could prove to be cumbersome and inefficient, while selecting a more specialized option could increase costs and require educators, students, and parents to learn and use two separate systems. What districts and schools need to determine is (1) what they need or want their system to do and (2) which option delivers the best balance in terms of functionality, features, and associated costs.

While the Great Schools Partnership encourages districts and schools to investigate technological solutions that can improve their operational efficiency and instructional effectiveness, we do not recommend or endorse any particular system.

To help schools navigate the decision-making process, we have compiled the following considerations. It is likely that the online systems you investigate will not have all of the functionality and options listed below. School leaders, teachers, and technology directors should determine their priorities, and then match those priorities to the best-suited systems.

Student Information	Yes	Partially	No
1. The system can be synchronized with the school's student-information system.			
2. The system can be synchronized with multiple student-information systems (in the event that a district or school needs to switch systems).			
3. Students and parents can remotely access information about student progress through a secure online portal.			

Standards	Yes	Partially	No
1. Educators can upload or bulk-import their own school or district standards.			
2. The system can support a hierarchical organization and presentation of cross-curricular and content-area standards (e.g., graduation standards, performance indicators, and learning objectives). systems).			
3. The system allows schools to customize the language of the standards to fit the model they are using (e.g., graduation standards, performance indicators, and learning objectives vs. essential understandings, measurement topics/power standards, and learning targets).			

Assessments	Yes	Partially	No
1. Scores on assessment tasks can be used to measure progress across multiple standards.			
2. Each assessment-aligned standard or performance indicator receives its own score.			
3. Scoring guides aligned to standards are readily available on the site and allow for online scoring.			
4. Assessments can be uploaded and shared with colleagues.			
5. The system can differentiate between formative and summative assessments (if necessary or desired).			
6. The system has built-in functionality that allows for students to take assessments online (if desired).			

Reporting	Yes	Partially	No
1. Customizable report generation is available for districts and schools.			
2. Districts or schools can customize the levels of student progression (e.g., by grade level, grade span, or non-grade-level sequence).			
3. The system allows schools to customize grading scales.			
4. The system can apply and display multiple calculation methods for course reporting that are more accurate than averaging, including methods such as trend, power law, or decaying average.			
5. Entering student assessment scores is efficient and hassle free for teachers. For example, scores can be typed in (not just selected by clicking on a dropdown menu) or teachers can input scores by selecting particular students, assessments, standards, or courses.			
6. Teachers can report out content knowledge and skills separately from habits of work, behaviors, and character traits.			
7. Teachers can easily and visually review course data to identify trends and gaps in student learning.			
8. The initial presentation of student learning progress—whether it's for teachers, students, or parents—is visually appealing and easy to read, interpret, and understand.			
9. Parents can quickly and easily navigate the system to identify areas of strength and areas of concern in their child's performance.			
10. Missing or low-scoring assignments are clearly and visually identified.			
11. The system can generate transcripts that report out both course performance and standards performance.			

Instructional Design	Yes	Partially	No
1. The system has integrated curriculum-management tools that can be aligned to standards-based scoring and reporting.			
2. The system supports the ability to differentiate assessments for students.receives its own score.			
3. The system supports the ability to differentiate standards for students (if needed). and allow for online scoring.			
4. Instructional units can be shared with other educators in the school or district.			

Technical Support	Yes	Partially	No
1. Training and professional development are available for the technology directors, school leaders, and teachers who will use the system.			
2. Customer support is tailored to the distinct needs of technology directors, school leaders, and teachers.			
3. Customer support is readily available and responsive when problems arise.			
4. The system providers have the technical expertise and willingness to work with other online systems and products.			

Technology	Yes	Partially	No
1. All sensitive student information and data are secure and password-protected in accordance with applicable state and federal law.			
2. The system has sufficient safeguards and redundancy to guard against data loss in the event of system failure.			
3. The system works and displays well on different devices (desktops, tablets, and smart phones).			
4. The system supports multiple integrated communication formats, such as email, text messaging, and voice.			
5. The system is designed to allow for modifications and upgrades as technologies and online standards evolve.			
6. The system is designed with the end users (teachers, students, parents in mind), and the user interface is attractive, intuitive, and easy to navigate.			
7. The system is actively being developed and improved based on user feedback.			