

Habits of Work Grading and Reporting

In many traditional grading systems, behaviors such as attendance, tardiness, class participation, or the ability to complete work on time are factored into final grades alongside scores on tests and assignments. While attendance and class participation are vitally important to success in school, averaging together behaviors and learning can obscure academic progress and achievement, making it much harder to determine what students are excelling at or struggling with. Has the student failed to grasp critically important concepts, or did she simply not turn her homework in on time? Is it a learning problem or a behavioral problem? And what kind of support does the student need to address the issue and succeed in the course?

Proficiency-based systems are designed to identify specific **learning gaps** and academic needs, which teachers can then use to inform instructional adjustments, interventions, and **academic support**. For proficiency-based systems to be effective, learning progress needs to be monitored and reported separately from behavior. Student work habits, behaviors, and character traits are essential to academic success, which is why the Great Schools Partnership recommends that habits of work be monitored by teachers and reported for students and parents.

In many cases, schools develop a set of “habits of work standards” that teachers evaluate in every course and learning experience using a common rubric or a consistent set of scoring guidelines. Habits-of-work grades or performance levels appear alongside academic grades on progress reports and end-of-term report cards. If schools use online reporting systems, parents can login to monitor habits-of-work grades, and then provide their child with additional support as needed.

***NOTE:** When developing standards, schools should be aware that, in some cases, skill-based, cross-curricular graduation standards and performance indicators could overlap with habits of work. The Great Schools Partnership recommends that schools either (1) develop habits-of-work standards that are distinct from their cross-curricular standards or (2) choose to integrate both cross-curricular skills and habits of work into a single unified set of standards (many schools take this approach). If the standards have already been developed, schools may want to review the standards and eliminate any redundancies.

The following examples can serve to illustrate the kinds of work habits, behaviors, and traits that the standards might address:

Ethical Awareness

- Treats others with respect, understanding, and compassion
- Accepts responsibility for personal decisions and actions
- Understands the difference between ethical and unethical behaviors

Collaboration

- Works actively and cooperatively with others to achieve group goals
- Takes on a variety of roles and responsibilities within a group
- Fulfills individual responsibilities and commitments to a group



Civic Mindfulness

- Contributes positively to the class, school, and community
- Helps others to feel safe, welcomed, and comfortable
- Demonstrates stewardship toward the community and natural environment

We have also featured two habits-of-work grading and reporting models on this website—one from [KIPP](#) and [Riverdale Country School](#) in New York and another from [Casco Bay High School](#) in Portland, Maine—that can provide a point of departure for schools looking to create habits-of-work grading and reporting systems.

We encourage schools to investigate and discuss these models, and consider adapting them for their local needs and contexts.