Proficiency-Based Learning
A Systemic Approach
Welcome

WIFI, etc. - TO INSERT

Don Weafer, Senior Associate

Becky Wilusz, Senior Associate
Welcome

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Jon Ingram, Senior Associate
Katie Thompson, Senior Associate
Welcome

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Reed Dyer, Senior Associate
Andi Summers, Senior Associate
Mark Kostin, Associate Director
Agenda

Welcome

Purpose of Grading

15 Fixes and Next Steps

Break

Habits of Work—Why They Matter

Lunch

Team Time / Feedback Sessions

Thursday, April 2, 15
I can describe grading principles and practices that support proficiency-based learning for all students.
Outcomes

I can explain the importance of habits of work for student success and strategies for assessing these habits separately from academic performance.
Outcomes

I can use strategies and resources to facilitate faculty and community discussions to reach shared agreements on the purpose of grading and effective grading practices.
Outcomes

I can refine my district / SU plan based on feedback from peers.
Framing Our Work

- Today’s work is about grading

- Tomorrow’s work is about reporting
Key Learning in Our Work

• Report Cards ≠ Step One

Parents fail to LOL at new report card system

November 13, 2014 by Shauna Chase  Leave a Comment

Fredericton — Many parents in the Fredericton area are displeased about a new pilot project introduced this fall by the Anglophone West School District.

The parents are saying that they were confused by their kids’ first report cards of the school year issued late last week. Instead of percentages or letter grades, children are assessed with meaningless acronyms. For example, “His Reading Is Okay But His Math Needs Some Work” is shown as “HRIOBHMNSW” on the report card. Kids who are struggling with gym but are excellent in academics have received a grade of “R4MBA,” for “Ready For Major League Baseball,” not to be confused with “R4MBA” for the “Ready For a Masters in Business Administration” being given to more academically inclined children.

Parents Jim and Grace Peters are among those outraged by the new system. Their 3 children used to be straight-A
Key Learning in Our Work

- Report Cards ≠ Step One

New report cards confuse parents across the country, not just in Montgomery County

By Lynh Bui  May 30, 2013

Parents in Montgomery County aren’t the only ones puzzled by new standards-based report cards that replace traditional letter grades with different codes.

By Winnie Hu

March 23, 2009

Report Cards Give Up A’s and B’s for 4s and 3s

PELHAM, N.Y. — There is no more A for effort at Prospect Hill Elementary School.

In fact, there are no more A’s at all. Instead of letter grades in English or math, schoolchildren in this well-to-do Westchester suburb are now filled with numbers indicating how they are faring on dozens of specific skills like “decoding strategies” and “number sense and calculation.” A 1, for instance, indicates a student is not meeting New York State’s academic standards, while a 4 signifies a student excels.
Before Report Cards

• Clear Standards and Criteria
• Consistent Assessment Practice
• Consistent Grading Practices
• Broad Base of Champions
One minute:
Write down the **top three purposes of grading** in your school / district / SU without consulting the other members of your team.
Common Purposes of Grading

- Guskey and Bailey found several common purposes of grading when asking educators across the country.
- Review the purposes—how are they similar or different to your top three?
- Common ≠ Recommended. Common ≠ Common.
Common Purposes of Grading

• To communicate student learning / student achievement
• To help students self-assess
• To select/identify students for educational paths or programs
• To provide incentives for students to learn
• To evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs
• To provide evidence of students’ lack of effort or responsibility

Text-Based Discussion

• Read *Starting the Conversation About Grading* (10-15 min)

• Team discussion (25 min)
  
  • For teams already **in-progress on grading**: how does this article help you reflect on the work you have done and processes you have used?
  
  • For teams **beginning this work**, how does this article help you think about what teachers need for process and support?
15 Fixes for Broken Grades

- Review the “15 Fixes.”
- As a team, complete the 15 Fixes Table
  - How does the “fix” support student learning?
  - What are the implications for our practice?
  - What are the toughest questions about each “fix”? 

Thursday, April 2, 15
Tackling the Tough Questions

• Share and decide on your top 2-3 toughest questions. Write them down on a poster.

• As a team, visit other teams’ posters.

• Discuss and write ideas on sticky notes in response to their questions.

  • You can leave probing questions in response
Team Debrief

• Review ideas from other teams
• Review sample action steps for beginning and refining work on grading practices.
• Discuss as a team: **What are our next steps?**
Break!
Habits of Work

• Schools assess and report HOW separately because they matter.

• Traditional grades and GPA are better predictors of educational success than test scores—because traditional grades include habits.

• It is not enough to track and report—we also have to teach these skills.
Habits of Work

• Examine categories of “noncognitive” skills from Consortium for Chicago School Research (CCSR).

• Share CCSR research on which skills matter most and which skills teachers and schools can impact.

• Look at some examples of tracking and teaching these skills.
CCSR: Noncognitive Skills

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS
Going to Class
Doing Homework
Organizing Materials
Participating, Studying
CCSR: Noncognitive Skills

ACADEMIC PERSEVERANCE
- Grit, Tenacity
- Delayed Gratification
- Self-Discipline
- Self-Control
ACADEMIC MINDSETS

I belong in this academic community.
My ability and competence grow with my effort.
I can succeed at this.
This work has value for me.
CCSR: Noncognitive Skills

SOCIAL SKILLS
Interpersonal Skills, Empathy, Cooperation, Assertion, and Responsibility
LEARNING STRATEGIES

Study Skills
Metacognitive Strategies
Self-Regulated Learning
Goal-Setting
CCSR: Noncognitive Skills

1. What is the relationship of each factor to student academic performance?

2. Is the factor malleable?

3. What is the role of classroom context in shaping the factor?

4. Are there clear, actionable strategies for developing the factor as part of classroom practice?

5. Is there evidence that attention to the noncognitive factor would address racial/ethnic or gender gaps in student achievement?
CCSR: Noncognitive Skills

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS
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- Doing Homework
- Organizing Materials
- Participating, Studying

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LEARNING STRATEGIES
- Study Skills
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- I belong in this academic community.
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SOCIAL SKILLS
- Interpersonal Skills
- Empathy, Cooperation
- Assertion, and Responsibility
Malleability and Strategies

ACADEMIC MINDSETS

LEARNING STRATEGIES

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS

SOCIAL SKILLS

ACADEMIC PERSEVERANCE
Context Matters: Examples
Health Science High + Middle College

• Attendance Data:
  • Top 10% of students: avg. 1.8 days absent/month.
  • Bottom 10% of students: avg. 6.5 days absent/month.

“I guess I’ve just grown used to the idea that [he] isn’t going to be there five days a week.” - Staff member
Health Science High + Middle College

- **Notice absences**: “we missed you” notes home, signed by teachers and administrators.
- **Home visits**: Administrators visited homes after fifth absence.
- **Reverse unexcused absences**: Paraprofessional made home visits when students were absent unexcused.
- **Celebrate attendance**: For individual students and classes. Nothing like a pizza party.
- **Reduce Teacher Talk**: Collaborative group strategies in class to increase student engagement.

Thursday, April 2, 15
Reflection

What elements of our school context contribute to or inhibit students developing academic behaviors, mindsets and strategies?
Tracking Habits of Work

• Look at the three sample methods of tracking habits of work.
• What would each tell you about students?
• How would it impact instructional and school practices?
• How will separating habits of work support your students in demonstrating proficiency?
School Artifacts: Grading Guides

• Use team time to look through grading guides linked in agenda.
• Process for examining guides.
• Keep in mind—all of these products are the result of inclusive processes.
Casco Bay HS Family Grading Guide

Our Grading Principles & Practices:
Our standards-based grading system uses the following principles to guide how we assess student achievement and communicate progress to families:

**Principle:** Grades should clearly communicate what students know and are able to do in each class.
- **Practice:** We report on student mastery of specific skills and concepts within a course (called “course standards”); traits like participation and effort are reported on separately.

**Principle:** Students should have multiple opportunities to show what they know and can do.
- **Practice:** We ask students to build a body of work to demonstrate their mastery of each course standard.

**Principle:** Schools should support students in acquiring all of the essential knowledge and skills in a course, versus just a portion of it.
- **Practice:** To earn credit, all of the course standards must be met.

**Principle:** Academic knowledge and work habits are both important to acquire for college and life.
- **Practice:** Students receive both academic grades (based on course standards) as well as habits of learning grades for each class.
Deriving an Overall Competency Grade based on Summative Assessment Grades

1. Look at your data set for a competency.
   - There is no reportable evidence.
     - The grade is NR, not reported at this time.
   - Ask yourself: “What is the mode of the data set?”
     - Ask yourself: “Is this mode a valid representation of the demonstrated level of performance?”

2. If the answer is "YES" to the question, you have your grade.
3. If the answer is "NO" to the question, ask yourself: “Is there confidence that the most recent demonstration appropriately documents a student’s mastery level?”
Mangiare!
Team Time

- Give and receive feedback.
- Plan process to refine grading practices in your district / SU.
- Identify one area of three-year plan to refine/improve.
April 2: Preview

- Gradebooks, Report Cards, Transcripts
- Team Time / Feedback
- Lunch
- Verification Processes and Policies
THANK YOU
Proficiency-Based Learning
A Systemic Approach
Welcome

WIFI, etc. - TO INSERT

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Becky Wilusz, Senior Associate
Team Reflection

Meaning

Action

Structure

Caring
In what ways have you contributed to the team’s work?

How has someone from another “corner” contributed to the team’s work?
It would help me in our work if we paid closer attention to _____ norm.

It would help me in our work if we added _____ as a norm for our team.
Welcome

Gradebooks, Report Cards, and Transcripts

Break

Team Time / Feedback Sessions

Lunch

Verification Processes and Policies

Close
“Expecting any report card, standards based or otherwise, to satisfy multiple purposes of grading is not only unwise, it may be perilous. …[T]his is precisely why so many report card reform efforts fail miserably. Either they attempt to serve too many purposes with this single reporting tool, or they expect that single tool to serve purposes for which it is ill suited.”

- Thomas Guskey and Jane Bailey

A Reporting System

- Report Cards, Progress Reports
- Narrative comments
- Standardized assessment scores/reports
- Phone calls, home visits, emails, conferences
- Homework, Projects, Assignments
- School / Teacher websites
- Student Portfolios, Exhibitions

Gradebooks are organized by standards, not by assignment types.
Gradebooks

How does setting up a gradebook this way help with instruction and assessment?

How might it help students reach proficiency?
## Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Proficiencies</th>
<th>Reporting Proficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For planning instruction + assessment</td>
<td>For reporting on student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many in number (10-50 per subject)</td>
<td>Few in number (4-6 per subject)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed in “Educator” Vocabulary</td>
<td>Expressed in Student and Parent-Friendly Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified
A Great Schools Partnership Learning Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Requirement</th>
<th>Reporting Method</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcripts and Report Cards</td>
<td>Cross-Curricular Graduation Standards 5–8 standards taught in all content areas &lt;br&gt;Body of Evidence &lt;br&gt;Students demonstrate achievement of standards through a body of evidence evaluated using common rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcripts and Report Cards</td>
<td>Content-Area Graduation Standards 5–8 standards for each content area &lt;br&gt;Verification of Proficiency &lt;br&gt;Students demonstrate achievement of content-area graduation standards through their aggregate performance on summative assessments over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Progress Reports</td>
<td>Performance Indicators 5–10 indicators for each cross-curricular and content-area standard that move students toward proficiency and the achievement of graduation standards &lt;br&gt;Summative Assessment &lt;br&gt;Graded summative assessments are used to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Teacher Feedback</td>
<td>Learning Objectives &lt;br&gt;Learning objectives guide the design of curriculum units that move students toward proficiency and the achievement of performance indicators &lt;br&gt;Formative Assessment &lt;br&gt;Ungraded formative assessments are used to evaluate student learning progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Report Card and Transcript Samples

1. Review sample report cards and transcript.

2. What information is included? What isn’t?

3. What can you infer about the purposes the documents intend to serve?

4. What do you like? What might you modify?
Collegiate Endorsement of Proficiency-Based Education and Graduation
56 New England Colleges and Universities Support Stronger Student Preparation

Over the past decade, the movement to adopt proficiency-based approaches to teaching, learning, and graduating has gained momentum in New England, and throughout the country, as more educators, parents, business leaders, and elected officials recognize that high educational standards and strong academic preparation are essential to success in today's world.

With some parents wondering about the effects that proficiency-based learning will have on their children or the college-admissions process, the Consortium reached out to higher education institutions throughout the region. We asked them directly about their support of proficiency-based learning, and their response has been both affirming and inspiring.

To capture the sentiment of higher education, we developed the Collegiate Endorsement of Proficiency-Based Education and Graduation, which has been signed by a significant—and growing—number of colleges and universities, as well as by the higher education systems in five New England states.

>> Download the press release

The Endorsement
Joining other institutions of higher education and the New England Secondary School Consortium in support of stronger academic preparation for postsecondary study, leading to increased collegiate enrollments and higher completion rates in our degree
1. Endorse proficiency-based approaches to instruction, assessment, reporting, and graduation that establish universally high learning standards and expectations for all students in K–12 schools.
2. Accept a wide range of transcripts if the students meet our stated admissions requirements and the transcripts provide a full and accurate presentation of what an applicant has learned and accomplished.
3. Pledge that applicants to our institutions with proficiency-based transcripts will not be disadvantaged in any way.
What Colleges Tell Us:

• The school profile is vastly underutilized (by public schools). A clear school profile is an invaluable complement to a student’s transcript.

• Students are compared and sorted in this process. The profile can help colleges understand what the student has done in comparison to his/her peers.

• In some cases, a 1-4 reporting system without finer gradations can be a challenge without a good school profile.
School Profile

• Review the **sample school profile** and **design considerations**.

• How might you ensure your school profile gives your graduates the greatest advantage when applying to postsecondary institutions?

• How might elementary/middle schools utilize a school profile to leverage support in their community and build champions?
Break!
Team Time

- Feedback Sessions
- Refine grading practice / plan process to refine grading practice.
- Review 2-3 policies, using process.
- Identify 1-2 areas of three-year plan to improve/refine.
Lunch
Transferable Skills / HOW

- Does the rubric language relate to the Transferable Skill?
- What aspects overlap? What is missing?
- What would be the most effective way to assess the “missing” aspects?
Verifying Proficiency

• Read “Verifying Performance Indicators” and “Verifying Graduation Standards.”
• How are these approaches similar / different to our current practices?
• Where does our work on verifying proficiency fit in our three-year plan?
Team Time

• Feedback Sessions
• Refine grading practice / plan process to refine grading practice.
• Review 2-3 policies, using process.
• Identify 1-2 areas of three-year plan to improve/refine.
Next Steps

• Webinar 4/28: PBL Policies
• In session: May 5-6 - Policy and Community Engagement
• In session: June 2-3 at Castleton
  • Break-out sessions and team time to refine 3-year plans
THANK YOU