

Steps	Questions	Considerations/Implications
<p>Build a common understanding of grades and grading within the school community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we grade student work and performance? • What should grades on tasks or assessments mean or communicate? • What purpose do grades serve in our system? • To what extent does educational research support or conflict with our beliefs about grading? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many teachers, students, and parents have strongly-held, but unexamined, beliefs about grading and may struggle to shift their thinking. • It is possible that a group of educators could reaffirm beliefs that are not supported by research (zeroes motivate students to perform, for instance). • Abstract agreements about grading will probably continue to be challenged when they are actually implemented.
<p>Determine the purpose of each type of grade across the system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the purpose of a type of work a student does (practice, preparation for class, formative or summative assessment) impact the way it is graded or reported? • How should formative and summative assessments be valued in the gradebook? • How are habits of work and learning valued in the system? • If course grades are used, how are they determined? • How will the school verify that a student is ready to graduate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school or district should not try to answer all of these questions before digging into other aspects of the system, but if educators haven't put them on the table early in the process, they might cause problems later. • At some point, a school will have to decide what graduation means. What level of proficiency does a student have to meet to graduate? How many proficiencies, and how often? What requirements exist beyond proficiency? Will the school retain course requirements or credits?
<p>Modify the grade book as needed to align with the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways should the gradebook itself change to reflect what teachers actually assess (proficiencies, for instance)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifying the grade book itself may depend partly on what the grading program will allow.

purpose and meaning of grades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications for how teachers design assessments that might clarify and simplify grading? • How might teachers use grades as a source of feedback for students and even parents? • In what ways might the gradebook enhance student learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifying the grade book could increase the amount of time teachers spend on grading and recording scores. Consider practices that account for or limit that time. • Systems that add proficiency scoring on top of traditional scoring tend to be time-intensive and confusing for students, parents, and teachers.
Modify or create family and faculty grading guides that describe the system clearly and succinctly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will teachers know school-wide expectations for grading practices? • How will parents and students know how grades are produced and what they mean? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite all of the agreements and practices a school has arrived at about grading practices, implementation is messy. A common resource will ground discussions and help resolve conflicts when they arise.
Engage stakeholders to build understanding of a proficiency-based learning system and hear what their needs are for reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the school or district produce report cards and progress reports? • What is the audience for report cards and progress reports? • What does the audience actually want to know or be able to understand about student learning from a report card or progress report? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools often inform parents and other stakeholders of changes instead of engaging them in the process of designing a reporting tool that works for everyone. • Some schools start their proficiency work by leading with changes to the report card. Parents push back when they don't understand what they see, which can undermine PBL practices.
Design report cards or progress reports that communicate a student's level of proficiency and incorporate the needs of stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does our report card or transcript provide the information the audience needs? • To what extent do we need to change the report card to meet those needs? • Is there room in our system for traditional-looking reporting tools that relieve community pressure on our system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider if a translation from a PBL gradebook to a more traditional-looking report card is possible or desirable. Remember that the report card has less impact on student learning and teacher practice than the gradebook. • If major changes to the report card are made, the school will have to decide what

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will scores in gradebooks be aggregated to produce scores on report cards? • How might engaged stakeholders be used to explain and defend changes in reporting? 	<p>grain-size of proficiency is reported and how gradebooks will aggregate scores for them on the report card. Power law? Decaying average? Most recent score? Teacher judgment?</p>
<p>Design transcripts that verify graduation, communicate a student's final level of proficiency, and incorporate the needs of stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the audience for a transcript? • How might we create a transcript that gives the audience the most accurate information about student learning? • How might we anticipate and address what might be inaccurate, unfair, or inequitable uses of our transcript? • What details of student performance should be included on the transcript? Proficiency? Course scores? Habits of work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many colleges and universities in New England have signed a pledge that proficiency-based transcripts do not disadvantage students. However, they apply their own systems to transcripts to be able to compare students, and may default to undesirable measures if they don't understand what they see (most will produce a GPA for a student, for instance, even if one is not provided). • The risk of including traditional features on a transcript is that colleges might value those over the proficiency features of the transcript.
<p>Rewrite or refine the school profile to clearly explain the features of the transcript.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who in your school community is aware that you have a school profile and knows where to find it? • How might you use your school profile to communicate to any audience how to understand your system and the school's reporting tools? • To what extent can the school profile be leveraged to provide advantages to your students, not just communicate details of the transcript? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College admissions officers routinely stress how important school profiles are, but for many schools, those profiles are old, out-of-date, inaccurate, or hard to find. A strong profile is as important as a strong transcript. • Consider using private school profiles as models. Private schools use school profiles as marketing tools and generally do a much better job at communicating and selling their programs and students.