

HALL-DALE HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT/PARENT STANDARDS-BASED GRADING GUIDE

For 2010-2011

What is the purpose of grading at Hall-Dale High School?

The purpose of grading is to measure student success and communicate progress toward being proficient in the standards described in our curriculum, and to do so in such a way to encourage learning. “Assessment for learning” means that assessment is used to tailor our teaching plans and our teaching style to better help students achieve the standards in our classrooms, and to provide information for individualized plans or interventions when needed. Not all kids learn the same nor do they learn in the same amount of time. The grading practices of teachers should be transparent and public and verbal or written progress reports should be shared with students often. The goal should be to help students feel they have *earned*, rather than been *given*, the final grade.

Why does Hall-Dale use a standards-based grading system?

The *Maine Learning Results* Guiding Principles envision our students as “self-directed, life-long learners,” and our own mission statement and core beliefs call for students to be self-motivated and engaged in their own educational planning and success. At the same time, teaching theory calls for teachers to make learning goals and objectives accessible, clear and understandable to students, and advises that these goals and objectives be the basis for instruction and assessment. In addition, a critical mass of educators has questioned and challenged the value of a traditional grade point system that lacks information about how students are achieving related to specific sets of learning. Finally, HDMS was deemed a ‘needs improvement’ school based on our students’ scores on the state assessment tool. The most recent SAT results for our 11th grade students indicate less than 50% graduate proficient in math. There is:

- A national movement toward standards-based education supported by various federal laws,
- An expectation in philosophy and law that Maine schools provide students an education based on Maine’s *Learning Results and The Common Core*, regional standards and national standards,
- The RSU #2 board developed a goal in 2009 calling for standards-based instruction and assessment.

We want our students to be focused on what they need to know and be able to do.

We want them to take a greater role in understanding and managing their own learning.

We want parents and students to see progress and achievement in meaningful, actionable terms.

Standards-based education and reporting can play a major role in realizing these goals.

What is standards-based grading?

Standards based grading is a grading system that evaluates student performance on objective criteria (standards) describing essential skills and knowledge. Hall-Dale High Schools standards were written by committees representing each of the eight content areas of the Maine *Learning Results*. Every Hall-Dale faculty member K-12 has contributed to this process. The Hall-Dale science standards, for example, were written by a committee of all the science teachers of the district’s science teachers along with elementary teachers focused on science. These standards strongly reference the 2007 Maine Learning Results (MLR). The point of the standards is to spell out what our students should know and be able to do as they move through the 6 through 12 grade sequence, culminating in graduation from high school. In a standards-based grading system, a student’s achievement level is determined by his or her performance on the individual standards.

What is the role of the teacher in grading?

Teacher judgment is at the heart of grading. Judgment is used in a variety of ways: when assessments are created, rubrics are written, scores are given, standards are weighted, grades are dropped, etc. Teachers may also examine a score in the grade book and change it, or not, depending on whether it matches what they have seen a student

demonstrate in the classroom. In whatever manner teachers use their judgment, they are encouraged to err on the side of the student. However a teacher uses their judgment, the following guidelines are essential: (1) when a teacher enters a score into Infinite Campus for a student’s record, he or she is satisfied that it is a fair and accurate representation of student performance, (2) the teacher has followed the faculty grading guide recommendations and requirements, and (3) there is reasonable agreement and support for reporting practices based on a consensus understanding within departments.

How do you determine a grade for an assessment?

All assessments should be scored on the following four-point scale:

- 4 = Proficient with Distinction
- 3 = Proficient
- 2 = Partially Proficient
- 1 = Not Proficient

When using standards based grading, *a grade may only be assigned if there is an equivalent description of performance.* The number is a numerical representation of a student’s performance (what they know and can do). The number has no meaning, unless it is associated (via the rubric) with a description of performance. If a student fails to complete and turn in an assessment, the teacher’s proper grading response should be to mark the assessment as incomplete under the academic standards being measured and to record a “1” on the associated work ethic standard.

How do scores track from assessments, to trimester grades and then to the transcript?

Using rubrics, students earn scores from assessments on individual content standards. These scores are used when a teacher reports a trimester grade. Trending is utilized, with emphasis on the most recent achievement, to inform the reported grade. If there is not sufficient data available to create a trend, no grade is likely to be reported in that trimester.

Trimester Grade Example

ALGEBRA 2 CONTENT STANDARDS	ASSESSMENT SCORES				TRIMESTER GRADE
Algebra Concepts	3	3	3		3
Numerations/Computation	2	2	3	2	2
Data	2				n/a

At the conclusion of the course, the teacher reports the final level of achievement for each content standard in the course. These final standards grades are then averaged to create the final course grade which is posted to the transcript and serves as the basis for GPA and class rank. Students must earn a 2.5 or better as a final course grade to earn credit.

Final Course Grade Example

ALGEBRA 2 CONTENT STANDARDS	FINAL STANDARDS GRADES
Algebra Concepts	4
Numerations/Computation	3
Data	2
	FINAL COURSE GRADE 3.00 (posted to transcript)

How can a student achieve “4”?

Assessments are set up in such a way that all students have the opportunity to achieve a 4.

The “4” achievement of learning uses higher levels of what educators call ‘Bloom’s Taxonomy’ such as analysis, synthesis and creation. These are common ways of demonstrating that one is proficient with distinction.

Students aspiring to exceed standards and those working to meet them must accept responsibility for their learning. With clear rubrics, students are empowered to achieve to high levels through their own efforts, rather than regarding grades as something “given” by the instructor.

What is the role of Work Ethic and Behavior in this grading system?

Because a standards-based reporting system is based on proficiency, it’s important to separate work ethic and behavior out from the content standards. In each class, each trimester, students will receive a work ethic and behavior score. By reporting these scores, we’re hoping to give more information to parents and students regarding academic performance as well as information on student behavior. In order to achieve honor roll status, a student must achieve a ‘3’ or higher in all work ethic and behavior standards. Any ‘2’ will preclude a student from achieving honor roll status.

Work Ethic/Quality of Work

Work Ethic/Quality of Work For Grades 6 - 12	1	2	3	4
Students will acquire and apply skills/concepts required to fulfill their education responsibilities, manage time, and be successful in the work place.	Student has completed fewer than half the required assignments or missed so many classes that they cannot learn the required material and the teacher cannot assess their progress.	Student’s written work does not consistently meet the teacher’s requirements for quality work (professional appearance, spell checking, etc.) OR Student completes work, but it is not consistently on time. OR Student is not consistently on time to class.	Attends class regularly except in case of serious illness AND Student’s assessed work and projects usually meet the teacher’s requirements for quality work (professional appearance, spell checking, etc.) AND Student consistently completes assignments on time, comes to class prepared, and brings required materials.	Student has excellent attendance and the student makes up missed work due to absences in a timely and responsible manner AND AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: Student is observed to invest extra effort in the quality and professionalism of their work, producing products that usually exceed the teacher’s expectations OR Student overcomes significant obstacles to meet the standard.

Behavior

Behavior Rubric For Grades 6 - 12	1	2	3	4
Expectations for conduct in the school environment	<p>Student rarely displays any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -respect for self, others and/or property -working cooperatively, collaboratively or independently -Following school behavior expectations -Accepting responsibility for actions 	<p>Student inconsistently displays any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -respect for self, others and/or property -working cooperatively, collaboratively or independently -Following school behavior expectations -Accepting responsibility for actions 	<p>Student consistently displays all of the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -respect for self, others and/or property -working cooperatively, collaboratively or independently -Following school behavior expectations -Accepting responsibility for actions 	<p>Student's behavior exceeds the teacher's expectations for the class in some way. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently positive attitude that enhances the classroom experience for all Actively and appropriately working to assist other students Volunteering in the classroom without being prompted or asked. Demonstrating excellent character in challenging or tempting situations Student's manners and courteous behavior set an example for others. Student demonstrates extraordinary focus on learning during class time.

What if a student does not do an assessment by the established deadline?

Work ethic and behavior rubrics will play a critical role in reporting issues of late work. While a teacher may very well require that a student complete an assignment or assessment, the work ethic rating will reflect the fact that the work was not completed by the deadline. Time is the variable and as such, when a student actually completes an assignment or assessment is less critical than demonstrating proficiency in a given standard. That having been said, timeliness in completing assignments is critical in relation to how work ethic is assessed and reported and will impact honor roll status.

What is the role of interventions in this system?

It cannot be stressed enough that the best "intervention" a teacher can offer is to take personal responsibility for each student at the classroom level. Monitoring progress and helping on a daily basis, anticipating and meeting learning needs, establishing relationships with both students and their parents, making parental contact by phone and email, updating Infinite Campus, and showing that we care for *and* expect the best from each of our students is the first and best stage of intervention.

Because it is the standard that matters as the learning objective, and not the individual assignment or assessment, and because our mission is to see that every student achieves proficiency in every standard, a thorough and aggressive set of interventions is vital to the success of our system. At the HDHS we have a number of scheduled intervention opportunities that continue to evolve. Current interventions in place include:

- Teacher one-on-ones
- Staffings
- Advisor-advisee monitoring process
- Vacation School
- Daily Intervention Labs
- Finishing School (in June)

As important as scheduling the time, though, is the structure of the intervention. In some cases, it may be the best use of that time for a student to work on overdue class work or assessments. More often, the student would be directed to do work that reinforces or reassesses the standards. For example, for a day of vacation school, a student might not spend time making up all the assignments they've missed regarding geometry. Instead, the instructor may decide to construct a full day of instruction and assessment that focuses on the geometry standard. One of the guiding thoughts of intervention is the idea, "if what you're doing doesn't work, try something else." Intervention is a way to get at the standard by trying something else.

Intervention notes:

As a Student you can request to be called to any Daily Intervention Lab with your teacher to receive additional support and help regardless of the current grade you have on an assessment or in the class.

As a Parent you may see a grade or assessment that you question. You are encouraged to make contact with the teacher of your child and in the course of that conversation you may also request your child be called to a Daily Intervention Lab for extra help and support.

It is important to note that the Daily Intervention Lab is available to all students regardless of their success or struggle in a class. Students are strongly encouraged to use this lab to move into the proficient and proficient with distinction columns for their rubrics and class grades.

All teachers also have office hours before and after school or by appointment during the day. These are posted outside their classroom doors.

How can Infinite Campus help with monitoring student progress?

Infinite Campus (IC) is the student information system in place at Hall-Dale High School. It is used to maintain contact information, manage student schedules, take attendance and track and report grades. Both students and parents or legal guardians have access to the IC Student & Parent Portal. Usernames and passwords are issued by the guidance office. Access to the portal is through Hall-Dale's website at www.halldale.org.

In addition to accessing student performance on individual assignments, the portal gives you access to print progress reports and report cards, see late work, view attendance history and contact teachers through email. While IC is a powerful tool, please note that it is simply a snapshot of data at the time of login. It serves as an effective place to start when reviewing student progress. Please contact teachers directly if the portal reveals information that seems questionable.

How does standards-based reporting relate to honor roll and class rank?

Honor roll and class rank still exist. To qualify for the honor roll, a student must have received at least a '3' in all content standards assessed as well as in all work ethic and behavior standards. A Standards Based Grade Point Average will be calculated with a 3.00 required to make honors and a 3.33 required to make high honors. Class rank will be based on the Standards Based Grade Point Average.

Standards Based Reporting and Extra-Curricular Eligibility

Eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities is governed by guidelines established by the Maine Principal's Association. The MPA requires that students be passing a minimum of 4 classes. At Hall-Dale High School for freshmen and sophomores who are being graded and reported relating to proficiency on standards, students must maintain a course grade of at least 2.5 in a minimum of 5 classes in the term immediately preceding the season. Upon being notified that a student has not met that requirement, the student is declared ineligible for a period of 4 weeks at which time their status is re-evaluated. During the period of ineligibility, students must participate in available interventions. Students declared ineligible may not participate in contests but may take part in practices at the discretion of the administration.

If you have further questions about grading, please contact Hall-Dale High School Principal Steve Lavoie at 622-6211 x 211 or slavoie@kidsrsu.org or Director of Guidance Greg Henderson at ext. 205 or ghenderson@kidsrsu.org.