

# Maria Montessori Academy

## Mastery Learning Through Standards Based Grading



### What is Standards Based Grading (SBG?)

SBG is based on a specific set of standards that students need to meet for each subject. Marks are not a comparison of one student to another, but rather a way to measure how well students are doing on specific learning goals for each class' standards and objectives.

**In short, it is a written description of what students are expected to know and be able to do based upon specific learning goals created by the individual teachers.**

### What are the advantages of SBG?

1. Improved communication and feedback for everyone – parents, teachers, and students.
2. Areas of strength in learning and areas in need of additional support will easily be identified rather than seeing a score and wondering what that score means and what the next step is.
3. Teachers will be able to readily identify which standards need to be re-taught
4. Students will know which standards they need additional support on and those that have demonstrated mastery on.
5. The 100 year old process of discussing grades shifts from a “What am I missing” discussion to “What have I not demonstrated sufficient learning on”.

Traditional Grading System	SBG System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects, etc.). One grade/entry is given per assessment.</li><li>• Assessments are based on a percentage system. <b>Criteria for success may be unclear.</b></li><li>• Use an uncertain mix of assessment, achievement, effort and behavior to determine the final grade.</li><li>• May use late penalties and extra credit.</li><li>• Everything goes in the grade book - regardless of purpose.</li><li>• Include every score, regardless of when it was collected. Assessments record the average - not the best - work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on learning goals and performance standards. One grade/entry is given per learning goal.</li><li>• Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. <b>Criteria and targets are made available to students ahead of time.</b></li><li>• Measures achievement only <i>or</i> separates achievement from effort/behavior.</li><li>• No penalties or extra credit given.</li><li>• Selected assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) are used for grading purposes.</li><li>• Emphasize the most recent evidence of learning when grading.</li></ul>



## How is the role of assessment different?

In the traditional model of student grading

assessments are used a tool to get points into the grade book. In a SBG system, assessments are used to measure students learning and current knowledge of specific learning goals to help identify students who need additional support.

## Are certain standards weighted in a Standards Based System?

No! All standards that are deemed essential and are incorporated into specific learning goals all have equal value and importance.

## How will students receive feedback beyond a score in a SBG system?

All teachers and students will operate from a consistent scale that defines what each proficiency level means so feedback can be targeted. Example, "You received a 70 because you could not identify some of the major documents or events that help frame the writing of the Constitution. In order to get an 85, you need to provide more examples, In order to get a 90 you need to explain how they influenced the framing."

## How do proficiency scores convert to grades?

Teachers will use formative assessments, class observations, interactions with students and other evidence to establish a student's proficiency. Proficiencies are a work in progress.

# Why is the school changing to SBG?

The goal of Maria Montessori Academy is to report grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning, and the change to standards-based grading is an effort to reach that goal. Here is how standards-based grading addresses each of those four criteria.

**Accurate:** By basing a student's grade on academic factors only, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors such as effort and attitude, are still essential, but are not part of the student's academic grade and are communicated separately.

**Consistent:** For each unit, the teacher will provide a rubric that describes exactly what the student will need to master. Using the rubrics establishes clear expectations for mastery up front and applies them consistently throughout the unit and semester.

**Meaningful:** A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a standards based classroom, scores are recorded by essential standards rather than by type, such as tests, homework, etc. Making it easier to identify areas of strength and areas of concern for each student.

**Supportive of Learning:** Standards-based grading supports learning by focusing on the materials that has or has not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The reassessment policy also supports students learning by allowing new levels of learning to replace old when a student shows improvement on an assessment.

# Common Grading Scale

What the Student Knows	Score	Letter Grade
<b>Exceeds Proficiency:</b> In addition to Score 85, the student <i>uses inferences and applications that go beyond</i> what was explicitly taught in class.	95	A+
In addition to Score 85 performance, <i>partial success</i> at inferences and applications that go beyond what was directly explicitly in class.	90	A
<b>Meets Proficiency:</b> <i>No major errors or omissions</i> regarding any of the information and/or processes (simple or complex) that were explicitly taught.	85	B+
No major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and process and partial knowledge of the more complex ideas and processes.	80	B
<b>Approaching Proficiency:</b> No major errors or omissions regarding the <i>simpler details</i> and processes but major errors or omissions regarding the <i>more complex ideas</i> and processes.	75	C+
Partial knowledge of the simpler details and processes but major errors or omissions regarding the more complex ideas and procedures.	70	C
<b>Developing Proficiency:</b> <i>With help</i> , a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes.	65	D+
With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes but <i>not</i> the more complex ideas and processes.	60	D
<i>Even with help</i> , no understanding or skill demonstrated.	59	F

## Shouldn't effort, work completion, and homework be taken into account when giving a student a grade?

These things are very important, but doing these things are behaviors. We include classwork and homework in the grade but only nominally as we see this as the practice needed to demonstrate learning. Logic would say if you don't practice (school work) you would not perform (assessment).

## What the Research Says About SBG

There is little evidence that supports the traditional methods of grading. It is a system that have been invented, inherited, and passed on from each generation of new students. A traditional grading scale works great if some of our main focuses in grading students are to track for educational programs, to determine a hierarchy for scholarships, pick a valedictorian or to provide evidence of a student's lack of effort.

"A grade should communicate how much a student has learned, and thus should only reflect abilities related to material listed in the course standards and objectives."

Rick Wormeli

"Standards based grading aims to eliminate the role of non-academic factors in grades, such as behavior and attendance." Robert Marzano

"Challenging these traditional grading methods will not be easy. They've been a part of our education experiences for so long that they usually go unquestioned, despite the fact that they are ineffective and potentially harmful to students. "

Tom Gusky

Traditional Grading System	Standards Based System
<p>Did you do your homework?"</p> <p>What did you get on your test?</p> <p>Is your homework done?</p> <p>What grade did you get on your spelling quiz?</p> <p>Go do your homework.</p> <p>Why do you have a C on this assignment?</p>	<p>How are you feeling about the new unit?</p> <p>Have you mastered the standard?</p> <p>How can I support you in the standard you may be struggling with?</p> <p>What standard do you plan to reassess?</p> <p>When will you see your teacher for reassessment?</p>



## Change the Dialogue

### GRADING GUIDELINES

1. Entries in the grade book that count towards the final grade will be limited to course or grade level standards.
2. Extra credit will not be given at any time.
3. Students will be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of content standards in various ways. Retakes and revisions will be allowed. **However, a student must prove he/she has mastered the content prior to the retake. This retake will need to be scheduled at a time that is convenient for the teacher.**
4. Teachers will determine grade book entries by considering multiple points of data emphasizing the most recent data and provide evidence to support their determination.
5. Students will be provided multiple opportunities to practice standards independently through homework or other class work. Practice assignments and activities will be consistent with classroom standards for the purpose of providing feedback. Practice assignments, including homework, will not be included as part of the final grade.

### *How does this system of retakes and time for learning being on a variable prepare students for the responsibility of adults in the REAL WORLD?*

Every student is at a different place in the learning continuum. To expect all students to be ready to apply and demonstrate learning at the highest level, at the same time is unreasonable. Adults flourish in the world of REDO's so why do we not apply that to students. Teachers get a chance to REDO as many as six times in a day, attempting to perfect their lessons and its presentation. Sometimes, people's lives are dependent upon "adult" assessments. Those assessments can and are redone over and over until the "adult" has demonstrated



Maria Montessori Academy is ready to begin this change. Aligning our grading practices is a natural progression to our Montessori philosophy. We are dedicated and engaged in the process of successful implementation of standards based grading.