



**Grading Practices at  
GCMS**

**PARENT  
COMMUNICATION  
Tips & Tools!**

# GRADING FOR LEARNING!

Dear Parents,

At Guion Creek Middle School, we believe student achievement occurs through clearly defined standards and authentic learning opportunities. GCMS strives to provide accurate, meaningful, and timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the learning process. Reporting of achievement should reflect student progress toward mastery of key academic concepts and identify multiple pathways to deeper learning.

**GRADES ARE NOT ABOUT WHAT STUDENTS EARN;**

**GRADES ARE ABOUT WHAT STUDENTS LEARN.**

What may look different?	What may look the same?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State standards tested listed in Skyward Gradebook</li><li>• Assessment grades use a 0-4 scale</li><li>• Assessments= 95% Practice=5%</li><li>• Fewer grades in the gradebook</li><li>• Multiple grades for one assessment</li><li>• Retake option for 95% assessments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter grades (A, B, C, D, F)</li><li>• Report cards</li><li>• Progress Reports</li><li>• Honor roll</li><li>• G.P.A.</li></ul>

# Why

## GRADING FOR MASTERY?

### Consider this scenario...

Two students sit in the same 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading class. Throughout one week, homework is assigned and taken for a completion grade daily. At the end of the week, a quiz is given to students on Friday at the end of the class hour.

Student 1	Student 2
<p>Does not complete any assigned homework, resulting in a 0/5 homework score.</p> <p>Earns a 10/10 on the end of the week quiz – showing Mastery of the reading content standard.</p> <p>Therefore, Student One earns a 10/15 in the class.</p> <p>10/15 = 67% which is a D (in the traditional grading system) for their overall score in that class.</p>	<p>Completes all of the homework assigned, resulting in a 5/5 homework score.</p> <p>Earns a 7/10 on the end of the week quiz – missing key elements of the reading content standard.</p> <p>Therefore, Student Two earns a 12/15 in the class.</p> <p>12/15 = 80% which is a B for their overall score in that class.</p>

Student One was able to prove Mastery of the content, but did not complete the tasks. Student Two ends the unit actually understanding **less** of the content but with a higher grade than Student One. Two letter grades higher for that matter.

**\*\*\*Do you see the disconnect between the two students' understanding and their grades?**

# Why

## STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Standards-Based Grading mandates a score (or grade) to represent a student's level of understanding. This process requires additional factors, such as behavior (late work, missing assignments, etc.) to be evaluated separately – producing authentic data on the student's knowledge base.

### **We utilize four key elements:**

- (1) Connection of specific vocabulary to a numeric value
- (2) Focused discussion around understanding rather than task completion
- (3) Opportunities for multiple attempts to prove mastery
- (4) Purposeful learning toward required content

Through this practice, students and stakeholders are able to evaluate success in a specific area without additional fluff skewing data of the students' level of understanding.

# What is a score

## IN STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Most Standards-Based Grading scales utilize a 4-tiered system. Each numeric value is connected to a vocabulary term describing the student's level of understanding:

0 = No Evidence

1 = Beginning

2 = Developing

3 = Proficient

4 = Distinguished

The numeric values correlate to a level of student understanding of the standards. The focus is on the learning process and the skills needed to show proficiency of the content. This helps us to use grades as an effective form of communicating mastery of skills and concepts. The grade represents what the student knows at that point in time!

Numeric Value	Letter Grade
4	(A)
3.5	(B+)
3	(B)
2.5	(C+)
2	(C)
1.5	(D+)
1	(D)
0	(F)

For each 95% assessment teachers use a rubric based on the grade level state standard to determine the level of understanding.