



River Forest  
Public Schools

## Standards-Based Grading Practices 2017-18 Communication Plan

### BACKGROUND

District 90 has begun investigating the process of changing its grading protocols from traditional grading methods to a standards-based grading approach. Standards-based grading measures student academic proficiency against well-defined learning objectives, which for District 90, are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards. Much of this initial work is being advanced by the Superintendent's Leadership Council (SLC), the Strategic Plan's Student Growth and Achievement Action Objective Team, and the District 90 Office of Curriculum and Instruction. Additional stakeholder groups will likely join this effort in the coming months. The expectation is that standards-based grading protocols will be adopted throughout the District in the 2019-20 school year.

This communication plan will support the work and implementation of this District-wide initiative by providing multiple communications along multiple channels to all target audiences.

### STANDARDS-BASED GRADING COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

The following goals have been identified as instrumental to this communication initiative:

- All stakeholders and stakeholder groups - including students, parents, community members, faculty and staff, media, and others - will understand the rationale and purpose of transitioning to standards-based grading protocols
- All audiences and stakeholders will feel well-informed about the vision for the standards-based grading approach and its contribution to the District's tradition of academic excellence.
- Faculty, staff, and students will understand the practical application of standards-based grading protocols in the classroom.
- Through all communications channels, District 90 stakeholders - including students, parents, community members, faculty and staff, media, and others - will discern the District's commitment to providing an equitable educational experience for all students facilitated by the use of a standards-based grading approach.
- Communication efforts will continue to affirm high quality instruction, student achievements, faculty and staff professionalism, and the benefits of equity and inclusiveness through the use of standards-based grading practices.

## TARGET AUDIENCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

- Students
- Faculty and staff
- Parents/guardians
- Board of Education members and administrators
- Community residents and other stakeholders (members of the media, civic organizations, government agencies, and interested others)

## KEY MESSAGES

While the key messages will be tailored to the needs and interests of a specific target audience, all of the key messages for the 2017-18 transition year will focus on the following:

- The vision for standards-based grading in D90
- The rationale for standards-based grading in D90 (i.e. research, best practices, prerequisite for equity, etc.)
- The planning and implementation process for standards-based grading in D90 over time

## COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS AND VEHICLES

This communication plan will rely on current outreach channels to inform and reach out to the District's various audiences and stakeholders:

- Primer (general message to all stakeholders)
- School Messenger (targeted to specific audiences)
- Employee Connection Newsletter (targeted to faculty and staff)
- Community Information Brochure (targeted to community residents and other community stakeholders)
- The Patch (targeted to community residents and other stakeholders)
- Wednesday Journal, Forest Leaves, etc. (targeted to community residents and other stakeholders)
- Wednesday Journal Blog (targeted to community residents and other stakeholders)
- Talking/Message Points for PTO and school newsletters (targeted to students and families)
- Promotional support of special events related to standards-based grading (guest speakers, seminars/workshops, etc. will be targeted to specific audiences)
- District 90 website and social media sites, such as Facebook

This communications plan is intended to advance the process of transitioning to a standards-based grading approach during the 2017-18 school year. As the transition process progresses, it will be updated annually, and adjustments will be made as needed.