



## **GRADING & REPORTING SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATION**

### **Superintendent Explanation**

Beaverton is committed to the implementation of a standards-based learning system to ensure our students are college and career ready. We have and will continue to invest resources and teacher expertise to establish clear and consistent standards articulated from kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, strategies to provide feedback to students, and using scoring guides to provide a consistent lens to assess student work. Our teachers at all levels are working hard to put these powerful concepts into practice, and our feedback continues to show strong support for our efforts and progress.

One area within our standards-based system that has generated continued concern is the conversion of a student's performance in multiple learning targets into a single letter grade for the course. We acknowledge that a standards-based system that is intended to provide more detailed information on student learning becomes challenged when rendering a single mark. That said, a letter grade is and will continue to be the most universally recognized mark of student learning. For this reason, we must address the question about the conversion from multiple standards to a single letter grade.

Throughout this year, we have been actively seeking and listening to teachers, students and families in a number venues and formats:

- Staff and parent surveys
- Student forums
- Listening sessions and public testimony
- Discussion and collaboration with our Beaverton Education Association
- Teacher committees on this specific subject

A committee of teachers, with representatives from each of our high schools and middle schools, came together in April and May of this year to wrestle with this dilemma and develop recommendations. On May 23, 2014 the committee presented me with a series of options, identifying the pros and cons of each recommendation. Regardless of the method selected to convert learning target marks into a letter grade for the course, the committee recommended we maintain use of our 1-4 scoring guide strategy (1-8 for MYP schools). The 1-4 scale provides an appropriate level of consistency, kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and assists with providing feedback, both on a student's current level of proficiency and what should be done to improve.

**District Goal:** All students will show continuous progress toward their personal learning goals, developed in collaboration with teachers and parents, and will be prepared for post-secondary education and career success.

The Beaverton School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups. It is the policy of the Beaverton School District that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, marital status, age, veterans' status, genetic information or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment.

## **Superintendent's Decision**

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, we will change the way we convert achievement in learning targets to a letter grade (in schools that currently award letter grades). The overall marks received for each learning target will be averaged. This method will be used within our electronic grade books to recommend a letter grade to the teacher.

By moving to a letter grade recommendation based on averaging, we move forward in several key areas:

1. Averaging is a method familiar to all stakeholders
2. Averaging maintains a requirement of high marks in a majority of learning targets to receive a higher letter grade
3. Averaging removes the issue of a student with a low mark in only one area receiving a low grade

The following proposed scale is based on the proposals of our teacher committee and the scale from the U. S. College Board. The scale will be reviewed and finalized for use in the 2014-2015 school year.

Letter Grade	Scale
A	3.6-4.0
B	2.7-3.5
C	2.0-2.6
D	1.3-1.9
F	0.0-1.2

I understand that everyone may not embrace this decision. Yet, it is my hope that this shift will eliminate some of the most problematic issues and allow us to focus on the classroom practices that we know have a positive impact on student achievement.

It must be noted, the individual teacher maintains the right to determine how students will demonstrate their learning and how their progress will determine the letter grade. Many of our teachers have led our standards-based work over the past several years and do an outstanding job of teaching and assessing the learning targets. Our teachers will still have the ability to override the averaging system and use professional judgment specific to grade conversion as long as the course learning goals and process used to assess and determine student achievement is communicated to students and parents at the beginning of each course.

## **Our Future Work**

We have a great deal of work yet to do. There are many courses at the high school level where the learning targets and rubrics have yet to be developed by our teachers. This work, plus the ongoing efforts to refine the learning targets and rubrics currently in place, will remain a priority. Ongoing teacher collaboration around effective methods of providing multiple opportunities and effective feedback to students should never end. In addition, we must do a better job of clearly communicating the expectations of every course from the very first day of class. Students and parents should have no questions around what will be taught, how students will demonstrate their learning and how they will be assessed. Finally, we will continue to solicit feedback and be responsive to our students, parents and teachers.

There is a reason why this is difficult work and there are no simple answers. It is complex, it is significant, and it is important. Thank you for your continued dedication and support.