



Superior Public Schools
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#NebraskaWildcatNation



Instructional & Assessment Practices at Superior Schools

The mission of the Superior Public Schools is to provide a student-centered environment that ensures personal success by developing resilient, healthy, productive citizens through partnerships with families and the community.

TEACHING & LEARNING PRACTICES

A district-approved local curriculum will be used for each course taught at Superior Schools. The curriculum will consist of outcomes and components which are aligned to Nebraska state standards.

District-approved resources will be the primary resource used to teach the district's curriculum.

Research-based instructional practices will be used in all classrooms. Utilization of district-supported instructional strategies to support student growth and proficiency in the curriculum will be a priority.

Teachers will provide a specific learning target for the daily lesson.

Opportunities for intervention and enrichment will be provided to students based on data.

Teachers will check often for understanding. Feedback on student work will be given in a meaningful and timely manner.

"Learning is the constant; time is the variable."

HOMework

Homework is an opportunity for students to practice learned skills and demonstrate their level of understanding. It is used by the teachers to guide instruction and provide feedback to the students about their learning. Teachers are looking for quality, not quantity.

Elementary Teachers will provide meaningful homework that reinforces previously taught concepts and encourages family engagement which averages 10 min/grade level (not to exceed 30 minutes).

Secondary teachers will provide adequate class time to complete assignments. Assignments not completed in class will need to be completed at home. Homework may also be assigned as needed.

Homework performance is not an accurate portrayal of final proficiency or mastery. It's the path to learning. We grade students against standards, not the routes by which they achieve them.

Homework given for the purpose of additional practice will not be included in the student's academic score. Homework is a risk-free chance to experiment and practice with newly acquired skills without penalty.

ASSESSMENT

Teachers will use a variety of methods to measure individual progress and help students track student learning during a unit of instruction. Formative and summative assessments will be used to grade proficiency.

Quizzes or other checks for understanding (formative assessments) may be recorded as evidence of student learning.

REASSESSMENT

Students not demonstrating proficiency will receive additional instruction and practice to improve their learning. Reassessment opportunities will be provided to those students not demonstrating proficiency.

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WHY IS THE DISTRICT STARTING TO USE STANDARDS-REFERENCED GRADING?

Standards-referenced grading provides better communication to students, parents, teachers, and administration on what each student knows and is able to do according to the identified outcomes.

The goal of Superior Public Schools is to improve student learning by reporting grades that are **consistent, accurate, meaningful, supportive of learning**, and the shift to standards-referenced grading is an effort to reach that goal.

Consistent: For each unit, a teacher will provide a proficiency scale that describes exactly what the student needs to know and do. Proficiency scales establish clear expectations for learning at the beginning of a unit and are referenced consistently throughout the unit and semester.

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

Meaningful: A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a standards-referenced classroom, scores are recorded by the unit outcome rather than by type, such as tests or homework.

Supportive of Learning: This approach supports learning by focusing on the outcome and components that have or have not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The reassessment policy also supports student learning by allowing new levels of learning to replace old when a student shows improvement on an outcome.

PROFICIENCY SCALES

Proficiency scales are the heart of a standards-referenced grading system because they guide instruction and learning.

Proficiency scales display a progression of learning aligned to grade level outcomes and components. At Superior Public Schools, the following levels are used:

- 4 - Exceeds Expectations (above benchmark)
- 3.5
- 3 - Meets Expectations (benchmark)
- 2.5
- 2 - Approaching Expectations
- 1.5
- 1 - Does Not Meet Expectations



**EXCEEDS
EXPECTATIONS**



**MEETS
EXPECTATIONS**



**APPROACHING
EXPECTATIONS**



**DOES NOT MEET
EXPECTATIONS**

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GRADING PHILOSOPHY AT SUPERIOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- All students are consistently held to high academic expectations, which include development of work ethic and social skills.
- Grading practices are fair and manageable, and support effective teaching and learning.
- Grading practices yield grades that are understandable and meaningful, and accurately reflect student learning.
- Teachers exercise professional judgment in their grading practices, using a preponderance of evidence.
- Procedures for grading are supported, monitored, and supervised by the school district.

GRADING PRACTICES

Grading Practice #1:

Only include scores that relate to the achievement of the component.

- Score based on individual achievement, not group score.
- Non-academic factors, which may include cheating, late or missing work, insufficient effort, lack of participation, and negative attitude, are reported separately and do not penalize proof of meeting the component.
- An "I" for insufficient evidence will be given if there is not enough proof which may include missing work, refusal to complete assessments. and will be replaced with a grade once sufficient evidence is provided.

Grading Practice #2:

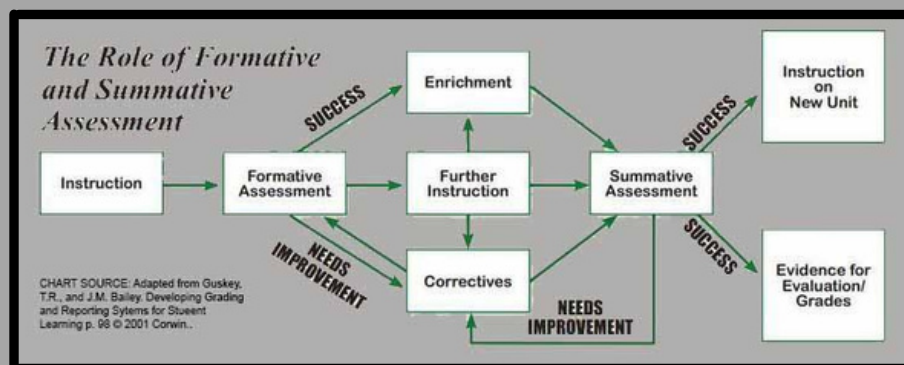
Use a variety of assessment methods to collect evidence of learning and proficiency.

- Evidence should include multiple, varying, validated assessments, which may include paper/pencil, verbal, labs, performance, and electronic measures.

Grading Practice #3:

Use grading and assessment procedures that support learning.

- Formative assessments will occur frequently to provide feedback towards mastery and guide instruction. Not all assessments need to be reported for achievements of components.
- A summative assessment will be given, but will not be the only evidence for a component.



The goal of frequent assessment is to modify learning. Formative assessments are scored and can be recorded but are mainly used to track student learning so that appropriate instruction can be planned. Including students in classroom assessment practices and scoring ensure that the expectations are clear to all, promotes student learning and encourages self assessment and mastery of the standards. Where learning is developmental and will grow with time, repeated practice and assessment provides evidence of progress.

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RECORDING AND REPORTING GRADES

Elementary teachers will record grades in Otus. Formative and summative assessment measures will provide the teacher with pieces of evidence of the student's learning. At the end of an instructional unit a grade will be given, using the district's proficiency scale, for each outcome that was taught.

This outcome grade will be reported to parents on the quarterly report card. Parents will also have access to the component grades through their parent account in Otus. Because moving from a traditional percentage report card to a standards-referenced report card is a process, the above grading practices will be fully in place for Math during the 2022-2023 school year. As other subject areas continue through the process of developing proficiency scales and common assessments, they too will be reported as standards-referenced grade. Until then, those subject area grades will continue to be reported in the same manner as previous years.

Secondary teachers will record grades in JMC as a traditional percentage report card. When all secondary courses complete the process of developing proficiency scales and common assessments, they too will transition to standards-referenced grading. Teachers may also use Schoology and Google Classroom to complete assignments.

Data collected on non-academic factors will be reported separately from the students' subject grade. This will be reported quarterly as Learning Attributes and include both areas of character development and skills for learning.

LEARNING ATTRIBUTES

Skills for Learning:

- Positive attitude towards learning
- Follows adult directions
- Demonstrates organizational skills
- Uses work time appropriately
- Stays focused during instruction
- Actively participates in classroom discussions
- Asks for help when needed
- Accepts help when needed

Character Development:

- Demonstrates positive attitude towards self
- Cooperates with others and solves peer conflicts
- Follows school and classroom rules
- Respectful to adults
- Continues to try when things are challenging
- Takes responsibility

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GLOSSARY

Benchmark-expected level of proficiency at grade level

Common Assessment- same assessment that is given and graded by common grade level/subject classrooms at about the same time to collect data

Components- specific concept or skill necessary for students to know or do in order to perform the outcome

Formative Assessment- periodic assessment tool for learning that is used to adjust instruction for individual students or a whole class which may include exit tickets, quizzes, interim assessments, etc.

Learning Targets- learning objective for the day's lesson

Otus- online service that collects and monitors student data K-5

Proficiency scale- a progression of learning aligned to outcomes and components and associated with levels of performance. The proficiency scale provides specific information on what a student must know or do to achieve a particular score. Our district's 4 proficiency levels are:

- **Exceeds expectations**- "I have a deep understanding of the outcome and components and can demonstrate it in multiple ways"
- **Meets expectations**- "I meet the expectations described in the outcome and components and can do them independently"
- **Approaches expectations**- "I'm getting close to meeting expectations and can do simpler parts independently"
- **Does Not Meet expectations**- "I still need help and support from my teacher to do the simpler parts"

Reassessment- opportunity to assess again over a learning outcome

Standards/Outcomes- statement that describes what and/or how well students are expected to understand and perform

Summative/Outcome Assessment- a test, such as a unit test, that measures the student's knowledge or skills on the subject matter that has been taught

Supporting Resources

Sheridan County School District #1- Standards Referenced Grading Handbook for Teachers, 2018.

Excelsior Springs School District 40 Assessment and Grading Handbook, 2011.

Curriculum Leadership Institute "Gray Binder," 2022.

Shimmer, Tom. Grading from the Inside Out. Blomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2016.