

## It's all about the motivation

During the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, 11 of our teachers implemented various aspects of standards-based grading (SBG). There were lots of successes. Teachers felt that the grades their students had earned truly reflected their mastery of the material. Both teachers and students focused more on achievement than ever before. Students began to focus on what they needed to know rather than how many points they needed to get a good grade. They realized that it's never too late to get a good grade if they put forth the effort and extra time. This realization was empowering to them. SBG created a motivation to learn unparalleled in traditional grading approaches. These classes in which SBG was implemented became less of a game of points and more of a stomping ground for academic excellence and mastery.



## We're Still Implementing...

We are in our first year of phasing in Standards-Based Grading (SBG) as a faculty. There is still much to do both within each individual classroom as well as the school, including our grade reporting system.

We appreciate your support as we move to SBG and hope that you will begin to see the academic benefits in your child at home.

If you have questions, please feel free to call the school and speak with Ben Jameson, principal, about Standards-Based Grading, at 801-412-2400 or email him at [ben.jameson@jordandistrict.org](mailto:ben.jameson@jordandistrict.org)



## A Parent's Guide to Standards-Based Grading

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**South Hills Middle**

Creating intrinsically motivated  
lifelong learners.

# What is Standards-Based Grading?



Standards-Based Grading (SBG) is a grading and reporting philosophy that focuses on accurately reporting how well your child is doing according to the learning goals based on the Utah State Core Curriculum. SBG focuses on four important components. Grades must: 1) Be Accurate; 2) Be Meaningful; 3) Be Consistent; and 4) Support Learning. This means that your student's grades should reflect what they know. Their work should help them practice important concepts and stretch their thinking all in a safe environment where students feel they can take risks in their learning.



## What are the benefits of Standards-Based Grading?

### Focusing on Achievement

Like a telescope focuses on the objective in sight, SBG focuses on what is most important about education: Mastering the material so that students can be successful in high school and beyond. Where traditional grading approaches include a student's behavior, work ethic, attendance, extra credit, and preparation, SBG focuses solely on evidence of achievement. Therefore, when a student earns an 'A', he/she has mastered the material. Your child's grade will truly reflect what he/she has learned. We still believe that behavior, attendance, work ethic and other traditional components are important. Students will be held accountable for them on their citizenship rather than their academic grade.

### All about Second Chances

In life outside of school, we do not often get the chance to simply opt out of an assignment given to us by our boss and just get a zero. Even if we're late or it's done wrong, we are required to learn from the experience and fix the final product. We maintain that school should reflect the same philosophy. Students are given deadlines for assignments and tests, but they are also given second chances to improve and show mastery and their grade will reflect their final achievement level. If our focus is on your child's achievement, then we must provide ample opportunities for our students to show us what they know – on tests as well as assignments.

### Getting Accurate Measurements

With traditional grading approaches, what it takes to earn an 'A' in one math teacher's class can be very different than the requirements for an 'A' in another math teacher's class. Often, it is never clear to a student what he/she has to do to get an 'A'. Because SBG focuses on student achievement, it requires students and teachers to collaboratively identify key points of knowledge, engage in the learning process to master that knowledge, and then find ways for each student to demonstrate their mastery of that knowledge. The key is getting an accurate measurement of your child's mastery. This might mean something different than a multiple-choice test. It may include a portfolio, reflective writing assignment, oral interview, lab, presentation, demonstration, or any number of other assessment methods.