

Assessment at Dansville Schools

THIS IS A HANDOUT THAT WAS SHARED WITH PARENTS RECENTLY AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:

In the interest of full disclosure and transparency, we want to touch base with our parents as we transition our grading and reporting practices to the next level. We understand there has been some confusion regarding how the grades have been reported in some classes, and we want to assure you that we are moving in a good direction with your child's education. We are committed to ensuring that your student's grades reflect their content knowledge and that their grades also give you feedback on how they can improve and how prepared they are for the next level.

Over the last five years, we have been moving toward a standards-based grading approach to ensure that expectations for what a student is supposed to know are very clear, that the assessment of those standards are very clear, and that the output of the grade is then based on their content knowledge.

Over the past few years, you may have noticed in some of your student's classes that they started receiving assignment grades on a 0-4 rubric scale instead of a percentage or letter grade score. Many of our classes have now moved toward a 0-4 rubric scale score, based on the 0-4 rubric we have been using the past few years, for the whole class. To hopefully alleviate any stress this change may cause, or answer any questions this might bring up, we wanted to give you a chart to compare how the rubric score correlates with other reporting measures. (Note: More detailed rubric explanations are available online on the class websites that are using this scale AND on PowerSchool in the class content. Also, the GPA is still determined by the percentage which is displayed on class reports under the rubric score.)

Rubric Score	Rubric Explanation	Letter Grade	Percentage	GPA
0	No knowledge shown	F	0-50%	0
.5		F	50-59%	0
1	Student demonstrates very limited proficiency of the standard.	D-/D/D+	60-69%	0.7-1.3
1.5		C-/C/C+	70-79%	1.7-2.3
2	Student demonstrates partial proficiency of the standard.	B-/B	80-85%	2.7-3.3
2.5		B/B+	85-89%	3-3.3
3	Student demonstrates proficiency by showing mastery of the standard.	A-	90-92%	3.7
3.5		A	93-95%	4
4	Student demonstrates deep understanding of the concept addressed by the standard.	A	95-100%	4

This is the basic rubric for classes at Dansville. Some classes have a more detailed rubric in their classroom.

Other Assessment Info:

Is there research to back this change in assessment up or is this just a good idea that our school came up with?

There is significant research behind all of the assessment changes that have taken place throughout Dansville Schools. In fact, the November issue of Educational Leadership is entirely devoted to articles written primarily by researchers who are trying to get educators to make these types of grading and assessment changes.

Are these changes only happening at the high school?

Actually there have now been changes in grading and assessment occurring throughout the district. There are middle and elementary teachers who have adopted the same types of practices as the high school.

What are the biggest changes that are being made?

1. The teachers have created **clear learning targets** written in student-friendly language to make sure that students and parents know exactly what is expected and will be taught.
2. The teachers are **digging deeper** in helping students become proficient in each learning target by **aligning everything they teach to the targets**. They are also providing clear feedback, based on rubric scales to make sure students know where they stand in their learning.
3. The teachers are **using common assessments in reading and math** to ensure that all students are guaranteed to be learning the same material.
4. **Students are self-assessing and tracking their progress** on their learning while they are learning the targets. In the past, this “homework” would have been graded, but in many cases it isn’t graded now, since the students are still trying to learn the concept or skill. Students are also tracking their work habits based on a rubric.
5. **Grades are based primarily on summative assessments**, which are the final tests, projects, etc. that show what the student has learned. The assessments are aligned to the targets and **STUDENTS CAN RETAKE THE TARGETS IN WHICH THEY ARE NOT YET PROFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT PROFICIENCY IS POSSIBLE FOR ALL.**

What are the results so far?

The staff has tracked increased achievement on end-of-course assessments and we have seen increases in our ACT scores at the high school. We are continuing to collect and analyze data to monitor student proficiency throughout the district.

How will this help our students do better on the MEAP with the new cut scores?

Between the assessment work and the RtI framework we’ve been implementing, we are confident that we are identifying students who need additional interventions and that all students are being given the chance to relearn and become proficient on all learning targets rather than just “moving on” with holes in their learning.