

## **POLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY GRADING GUIDE**

### **PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEFS**

#### **What is the purpose of grading at PRHS?**

The purpose of grading is to measure student progress toward meeting the PRHS graduation standards and communicate that progress to students, parents and colleagues. “Assessment FOR learning” means that assessment is used to tailor our teaching plans and our teaching style to better help students meet the standards in our classrooms. Not all students learn the same, nor do they learn in the same amount of time. Grading should never be used to threaten or punish, but rather to accurately reflect student progress toward meeting the standards. The grading practices of teachers should be transparent and teachers should keep their electronic grade books updated on a weekly basis. The goal is to help students feel they have earned, rather than been given, a final grade.

#### **What is standards-based grading?**

We use the definition created by the Great Schools Partnership: “The term standards-based refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In a school that uses standards-based approaches to educating students, learning standards—i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education—determine the goals of a lesson or course, and teachers then determine how and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations described in the standards.”

#### **What is the role of the teacher in grading?**

Teacher judgment is at the heart of grading. Judgment is used in a variety of ways: creating assessments; writing rubrics; assigning grades; weighting assessments; dropping grades; etc. In whatever manner teachers use their judgment, they are encouraged to err on the side of the student. In all cases, the following guidelines are essential: (1) when a teacher enters a grade into Infinite Campus for a student’s transcript, he or she is satisfied that it is a fair and accurate representation of student performance, and (2) the teacher has followed the Faculty Grading Guide recommendations and requirements.

**Why is it important to update the grade book weekly?**

Unlike in the past, we now have a grade book that is public. The public grade book is a powerful tool to assist students. The grade book has a variety of audiences who use it to help students: academic support teachers; school counselors; administration; parents; Roundtable advisors; students themselves; special education case managers; and credit recovery teachers. If the information in the grade book is not current, communication breaks down, and the school cannot respond appropriately to student and parent needs. Updating the grade book weekly ensures that everyone is looking at accurate information about student progress toward demonstrating proficiency.

Maintaining an updated grade book means that the teacher is providing accurate and timely feedback to students about their performance. Grading assignments in a timely manner and entering the grades in JumpRope on a weekly basis is expected.

**PROFICIENCY****What does it mean to be proficient? How does it differ from earning credit?**

By law, for a student to receive a diploma, s/he must demonstrate “proficiency” in Maine Learning Results standards. At PRHS, that means a student must pass all of the standards we have defined as “graduation standards” and the 21st Century Learning Expectations (defined below) with a score of 2.5 or higher by the completion of senior year. There is no difference between being proficient in a course and earning course credit. Earning course credit indicates that at the completion of the course, a student has earned a 2.5 or better in all of the standards of the course. Elective standards in elective courses (e.g., AP courses, upper level math) are *not* graduation standards, but to earn credit in an elective course, all standards must be met.

**How will this new rule for earning credit impact students? Teachers?**

This new rule raises the bar significantly for our students. A review of 9th and 10th grade progress reports after first semester 2014 showed that between 20 and 30 students in Humanities 1 and 2, Science 1 and 2, and Math 1 and 2/3 passed the course with an overall grade of at least a 2.5 but failed at least one standard.

This new rule also raises the bar for us as teachers. The expectation is that teachers will put interventions in place to support students before they fail (and before they are referred to credit recovery and/or summer school).

**What are 21st Century Learning Expectations, and how do students demonstrate proficiency in them?**

The 21st Century Learning Expectations (21st CLEs) are school-wide standards (aligned with Maine's Guiding Principles) that all students must meet to graduate. Students demonstrate that they are meeting the 21st CLEs in multiple ways in order to achieve proficiency prior to graduation. Students develop a digital portfolio that contains evidence of their progress towards meeting 21st CLEs and reflections on that evidence. 21st CLEs have also been assigned to Learning Areas and have been included in course templates as course standards.

**What is a graduation standard?**

A graduation standard is a standard that **all** students must meet to earn a diploma from PRHS. Graduation standards are the broad set of skills and knowledge students need to have in each content area to be considered proficient (i.e. Reading, Life Science, Algebra). These standards were set in June of 2014 and were based on the revised Maine Learning Results and our school-wide expectations. Graduation standards must be consistent across courses and must be vertically aligned within Learning Areas. Graduation standards may NOT be changed without administrative approval.

**What are elective standards and how are they different from graduation standards?**

Elective standards are the standards used in courses that are either beyond the level of the graduation standards (i.e., AP Statistics) or do not provide opportunities for students to meet the graduation standards (i.e., Human Nature). These standards are valuable in and of themselves, allowing students to pursue accelerated learning opportunities or take a course for pure interest, but do not provide opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency in the graduation standards.

**What is an indicator?**

All graduation standards are broken down into indicators. Indicators are the more specific descriptions of content knowledge and skills that students will encounter in a course. As defined by the Great Schools Partnership, "[Indicators] are a way for teachers to structure, sequence, and plan out learning [experiences] for a specific instructional period, typically for the purpose of moving students toward the achievement of larger, longer-term educational goals such as [graduation]." Our indicators were established in June of 2014 and may not be changed without administrative approval.

**Does a student have to be provided with an opportunity to meet every graduation standard and indicator that is assigned to a course?**

Yes. Teachers have graduation standards and indicators assigned to his/her classes and those standards and indicators appear in the JumpRope grade book by selecting the appropriate course template. If a graduation standard and indicator have been assigned to a course, all students must be given opportunities to meet them. Though students do not have to meet all indicators to show proficiency in a standard, they must be given at least three opportunities to address each indicator in a course.

**PROFICIENCY IN A STANDARD****What is appropriate evidence for meeting a standard?**

An assignment that is used to measure proficiency in a standard must:

- be assessed using a written rubric that clearly identifies the standards and indicators,
- be completed in class, unless it is part of a large summative assessment, *and*
- be given only after opportunities for practice have been provided.

If there is no rubric, or if the assessment is given “cold” (without instruction or practice), it may not be used as a measure for progress on a standard. The assessment may be formative or summative. As described below, an assessment on a content standard cannot be affected by the student’s Habits of Work in completing that assessment.

**What is a rubric and how should it be written in a standards-based grading system?**

A rubric is a description of student performance on an assessment or task. Rubrics must be written to the standards assessed and use a 4-point scale. Teachers may assign grades of 1, 2.5 and 3.5 without writing specific descriptions for those levels of performance. Rubrics may describe: performance on a particular assessment or project; general expectations for homework or answers to questions on a test; or expectations for daily work. Rubrics should be used as an instructional tool and distributed along with the assignment. Rubrics should be written to show students how to meet the standard(s), not as an explanation for why s/he did not meet the standard(s) after the fact. Below are examples.

## Humanities rubric

	EXCEEDS (4.0)	MEETS (3.0)	PARTIALLY MEETS (2.0)
<b>WRITING 1:</b> Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	<i>The writer ...</i> -- states a strong, clear thesis -- presents a counterclaim fairly -- develops claim(s) and counterclaim using several pieces of relevant evidence	<i>The writer ...</i> -- states a thesis -- presents a counterclaim -- develops claim(s) and counterclaim using evidence	<i>The writer ...</i> -- makes a claim, but it is vague or merely implied -- presents a counterclaim superficially -- uses limited evidence to support claim(s) and counterclaim
<b>LANGUAGE 2:</b> Demonstrate command of capitalization, punctuation and spelling.	-- demonstrates control of a wide range of standard English conventions (capitalization, punctuation and spelling)	-- demonstrates a limited command over standard English conventions (capitalization, punctuation and spelling)	-- commits many errors in standard English conventions (capitalization, punctuation and spelling)
<b>HISTORY:</b> Understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in U.S. history.	-- shows a mature understanding of issues related to the DREAM Act	-- shows an accurate but superficial understanding of issues related to the DREAM Act	-- shows a limited understanding of issues related to the DREAM Act

## Math rubric

### Statistics and Probability, S-ID: Interpreting Categorical and Quantitative Data

*Student can represent data with plots on the real number line, use statistics for shape, center and spread to compare data plots, and interpret differences in shape, center and spread in the context of the data sets, including accounting for how outliers may be affecting the plots.*

<b>2</b>	I can make a box plot or histogram
<b>3</b>	I can make and interpret a dot plot, histogram, frequency table and box plot I can describe a data distribution using SOCS
<b>4</b>	I can use the 3-SD Rule or Tukey's Rule to identify outliers I can compare data distributions with sufficient SOCS evidence I can make and defend a position based on sufficient SOCS evidence

### How is a final grade calculated for indicators, standards, and the course?

Each standard is calculated by JumpRope using a weighted average. A weighted average is “an average of the values of a set of items to each of which is accorded a weight indicative of its frequency or relative importance” (Merriam-Webster Online (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/weighted%20average>).

Each standard is calculated as a weighted average of its indicators, and each indicator is calculated as a weighted average of its assessments. Basically, indicators with more assessments will count more toward the standard grade, and standards with more assessments will count more toward the overall grade.

*From the JumpRope Help documents:*

“By default, assessment weights also contribute to the weight of standards. Since not all standards are created equally (some may be more important than others, and it's important to represent this in our mastery reports and calculations), JumpRope uses the following system to determine the weight of a standard with respect to other standards:

The weight of a standard is determined by adding up the weights of the underlying assessments. For example, if a standard is assessed five times by assessments with a weight of 1 and once by an assessment with a weight of 3, that standard will carry a weight of 8. Other standard weights will be calculated this way as well, and then the unit and/or course grade is thus a weighted average of the scores on the underlying standards.”

### **Can assessments be assigned different weights?**

Yes, but the options for weights are limited. An assessment can be weighted either 0, 1 or 2, without decimal values. A weight of 0 may be appropriate for formative assessments. Assessments may not be entered more than once as a way to give them more weight. Teachers must weight assessments through JumpRope rather than entering them more than once in a indicator. An assessment should be listed only once under a particular indicator.

### **How is an assessment's grade determined?**

All assessments should be scored on a 4-point scale. Below is a general rubric for assessment.

<b>Proficient</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Exceeds the standard:</b> The student's work includes complexity, sophistication, originality, depth, synthesis and/or application that clearly exceeds what would be expected to meet the standard in this assessment. The work, however, may not be perfect.
	<b>3.5</b>	<b>Exceeds the standard:</b> The student exceeds the standard and shows an inclination toward 4-level performance.
	<b>3</b>	<b>Meets the standard:</b> The student fundamentally meets the standard and fulfills the assessment requirements.
	<b>2.5</b>	<b>Meets the standard:</b> Student meets the standard and shows an inclination toward 3-level performance.
<b>Not Proficient</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Partially meets the standard:</b> The student has attempted to meet the standard but needs more time or effort to achieve proficiency.

	<b>1</b>	<b>Does not meet the standard:</b> The student does not demonstrate understanding or did not attempt the assessment.
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When using standards-based grading, a grade may be assigned only if there is an equivalent description of performance. The number is a numerical representation of a student's proficiency on the standard (what they know and can do). Since it would be very difficult to describe the difference between a 3.5 and 3.75 on an assessment in a substantive and meaningful way (just like we couldn't really describe the difference between a 87 and a 88 in the old system), teachers may not use grading increments smaller than those listed above when grading assignments.

### **Do students have the opportunity to “fix” an assessment?**

Teachers should use professional judgment when it comes to helping students learn. If a student will actually meet the standard(s) by “fixing” (i.e., rewriting, correcting) an assessment, then he or she should be allowed to fix it. If, however, the student will have other chances to meet the standard(s) and “fixing” the assessment would be counterproductive or a waste of time, the student should move on. This is the essential spirit of standards-based grading. It is the standard that matters, not the individual assessment.

### **What is the role of homework, and how is it assessed?**

Homework assignments should be relevant, purposeful and connected to learning standards. Assignments labeled as “homework” under “assignment type” in JumpRope should be assignments that are completed for practice and mostly outside of the classroom without direct teacher support. A student's content standard grades can not be affected by a failure to complete or turn in homework unless the homework is part of a larger summative assessment; however, it may affect the student's HOW grade. Homework, as defined here, may not be used as evidence of proficiency.

## **HABITS OF WORK**

### **How does the HOW standard figure in grading?**

Content standards are fundamentally different from the Habits of Work (HOW) standard. Content standards measure what a student knows and is able to do; the HOW standard measures a student's work ethic: their sense of responsibility, their effort, and their participation in class activities. A clear distinction must be made when assessing in these two areas. Content standards must be assessed on the work's merit alone, and not on the student's work ethic in doing that

particular assignment. For example, if a teacher will accept a project a week late, the teacher may assign a low HOW grade for that assessment, but may not lower the content standard score(s) simply because the work is late.

HOW grades carry no weight in the overall course grade. However, HOW grades can be used in several ways. For example, teachers may use them to communicate to students and parents the student's work ethic in relation to the class work, or as a gatekeeper for making up missed standards. VK will continue to work on articulating our philosophy and procedures about HOW.

### **What can a teacher do when an assignment is not submitted by the due date?**

When a student does not submit work on time, a teacher has several options for recording it in JumpRope.

- Leave the grade blank, and the student's grades will not be affected in any way.
- Give that assignment a "1" if the teacher will not accept the assignment at any time after the due date.
- If the teacher *will* accept the work late, the teacher must give the assignment an "M," which indicates that the work is missing. The M carries a score of 1, and it will show up in the student's "missing work" list on JumpRope. If the teacher decides at some point that she or he will *not* accept the assignment anymore, he or she must change the M to a 1. Teachers must accept any late work that is still listed as M in JumpRope. Remember: the only course standard that can be affected by late work is the HOW standard.
- A teacher may enter "AB" if the student was absent when the assignment was given or when it was due. Teachers should reserve this only for situations in which the student has had a prolonged illness or other extenuating circumstances that warrant an extension without penalty. AB carries a score of 0 with the expectation that the work will be completed.

### **Can a teacher lower a student's grade on content standards if an assessment is turned in late, or if it is poor in qualities unrelated to the standard?**

No. Students need to be given multiple opportunities for each standard. If a student does not complete assessments by established deadlines the student can be assigned a "1" for that assignment. If assessments are passed in after the established deadline, and are accepted by the teacher, the only grading standard that can be affected is the Habits of Work standard.

## **PROFICIENCY IN A COURSE**

### **How is an overall grade in a course determined?**

The overall grade for a course is a description of the body of work a student has completed for the course. The overall grade will be determined by averaging the numerical grades of each standard and using the language below to describe the body of work a student has completed.

<p><b>DS</b> Distinguished</p>	<p>Student consistently exceeds the standards of the course. This means that student's work includes complexity, sophistication, originality, depth, synthesis and/or application that clearly exceeds what would be expected to meet the standards in a range of assessments.</p>
<p><b>AD</b> Advanced</p>	<p>Student has differing levels of success on course standards, but clearly demonstrates an inclination toward "distinguished" work on several standards in a range of assessments.</p>
<p><b>CO</b> Competent</p>	<p>Student meets all the standards of the course. This means that student's work shows fundamental knowledge and skills.</p>

### What are the cut-points for a course grade?

DS+	3.9 - 4.0
DS	3.8
DS-	3.7
AD+	3.6
AD	3.4 - 3.5
AD-	3.2 - 3.3
CO+	3.1
CO	2.6 - 3.0
CO-	2.5
NC	2.4 or below

## **COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING GRADES**

### **When are grades reported?**

Grades are published in Infinite Campus three times during each semester. Progress report grades are published twice (due dates in the faculty grading calendar). Semester grades, when credit is awarded, are due in January and June.

### **What comments/narratives are required for grade reports?**

Comments and narratives are essential for many reasons. The comments and narratives you put in IC have several audiences. For example: 1) counselors using the comments to figure out why a senior failed 11th grade Roundtable (essential if the teacher has left or you can't remember); members of an IEP team meeting sorting out a student's grade status; counselors review your thoughts on a student to write their recommendations for colleges; administrators doing the same for students who need recommendations for scholarships; DPATH teachers trying to sort out what kids need to make up lost credits; Lesley setting up guided academic supports. You get the idea!

Progress report #1: A comment is necessary for any student with a No Credit, including 1) the name of the standard that the student is failing, 2) the number grade for the standard and 3) a brief comment about why he/she is failing.

Progress report #2: A full narrative is required for all students. For students with a No Credit, include 1) the name of the standard that the student is failing, 2) the number grade for the standard and 3) a brief comment about why he/she is failing.

Semester Grade: A list of failed standards is necessary for any student with a No Credit. Students with passing grades do not need any comments.

### **Why should I think carefully about how I name assignments that go into JumpRope?**

Teachers set up assignments by units, but students, parents and other school personnel only see a list of assignments by standard. Name them with enough clarity so multiple audiences can make sense of what the assignment is.