

SAU39 Mastery Based Grading Parent Overview

Why are we changing?- Over the past 6 years, SAU39 has reviewed, rewritten, and updated curriculum in every subject area to better align with the NH State Standards and the NH Minimum Standards for School approval that require scoring on competencies and the use of performance assessment in the classroom. We have improved both our instruction and assessment practices to provide students with the content and skills they need to be successful. Our changing reporting practices represent the next step in ensuring compliance with NH State requirements, common expectations for students K-12, and increasing the level and accuracy of communicating student learning so that teacher, student, and parent can better partner to support all students.

What are students scored on?- Students are assessed separately on both content standards and Work Study Practices or habits of work. Content standards (and their scores) are grouped together into Academic Competencies such as Writing in English Language Arts, Geometry in Mathematics, or Performance in the Arts. It is helpful to think of the standards as small glasses of water that are used to fill a large bucket, or competency. Teachers instruct and assess on standards to help students demonstrate mastery of the broader competencies. Across K-12, each content area shares a set of common competencies that outline what students are expected to know and be able to do to demonstrate mastery. Teachers also score on the Work Study Practices of Self-direction, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity. By providing information on Work Study Practices separate from content standards, we can clearly work together to celebrate students areas of strength and identify areas where they can improve.

How is student work scored?- Rubrics (or scoring guides) have been developed for each standard in our curriculum as well as each Work Study Practice. Rubrics describe the characteristics of the work at each achievement level and teachers match student work to these descriptors. Teachers work with students to help them understand the rubric and exactly how their work will be scored. Students have access to these rubrics before they turn in work or are scored so that they can self-assess their learning during the learning process rather than just at the end.

How is homework scored?- Most homework is assigned as practice and scored against habits of work or Work Study Practices (it is scored under self-direction). If it's just practice, we don't score students against a content standard since they are still in the process of learning. If homework is part of ongoing work or a deeper project, it will be scored against content standards. This is usually only the case if some of the work has been done in class or if it takes place at the end of a unit.

What does it mean when my student scores a 3?- Our system uses a 4-pt scale described in the following terms: 1- Beginning standard, 2- Approaching standard, 3- Meeting standard, 4-Extending beyond standard. Standard refers to the NH State Standards and our School Board approved curriculum.

Why can my student only receive a 2 on some assignments? - Each assessment a teacher gives, whether it is practice along way, or a final unit assessment, will be assigned a maximum achievable score (MAS). The MAS of an assignment is the highest score (on a 1-4 scale) a student can achieve on that assignment. The MAS is determined by comparing the skill in the task to the standard the assignment is being scored against. Foundational knowledge is important but it is often a building block to the standard (3). Therefore, foundational knowledge is often assigned a MAS of 2. This does not penalize students (*Please see "How does our system reflect the learning process?" below.*) If the

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assignment requires the student to meet the standard, the assignment is given a MAS of a 3 or 4 if it goes beyond the standard.

How does our system reflect the learning process? When starting a new unit or presenting a new concept, teachers present introductory lessons. These lessons are foundational and scored out of a 2, where the target for students is a 2/2. As students progress through the learning, they are offered more complex material and tasks where they can demonstrate their understanding at the level of the standard (3) or beyond the standard (4). All students will be given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding at a level 4 throughout a unit and the year. Our grading software takes the date of the assignment and the MAS of the assignment into consideration when calculating an overall score for each standard. Later assignments and those with a higher MAS are taken more heavily into account.

What if my student isn't doing well? Will they have an opportunity to improve their scores? – Yes! At times reassessment will happen on the spot and other times it will happen throughout the course of learning. While we want to offer opportunities for re-assessments, students must complete some type of remediation and demonstrate a readiness for reassessment before it can take place.

When will my student receive an overall score for their courses? - All grades are rolling until the end of the course. This means that students continue to demonstrate evidence of their learning and earn scores throughout the course. For example, in some systems each trimester/semester starts with a clean slate and no scores. In our mastery learning system, scores will continue to accumulate and evolve over the duration of the course to reflect the ongoing learning. This ensures that students are not penalized for the learning process and previous mistakes. Rather, a student's score is a reflection of what they know and are able to do at the end of the course. Students are essentially building a portfolio of work to demonstrate their level of mastery.

Where can I go for more information?

<https://oneschoolstreet.org/mastery-based-learning-and-grading/>