

Saydel Standards Referenced
Grading Practices and Procedures: Woodside
Middle School and Saydel High School



Saydel Community School District Mission

To serve the unique learning needs of every student.

Saydel Community School District Vision

The Saydel Community School District will have an uncompromising commitment to quality education and high expectations for student achievement.

Standards Referenced Grading Mission

The Saydel Community School District believes student grades that are clearly and consistently communicated provide important insights about learning. Clear and consistent grading practices allow students the ability to evaluate their learning and set meaningful goals for themselves.

Why Standards Referenced Grading?

Standards Referenced Grading (SRG) is a reporting system in which teachers give students feedback about their level of proficiency on grade-level standards, and report on these grade-level standards. For Saydel, this means our teachers have worked to clarify essential standards and develop tiered learning targets and assessments to ensure every student is held to the same standards and the same high expectations. Implementing SRG will allow teachers to identify and communicate each to students and parents on a student's level of achievement on the standards being taught as opposed to scores on individual assignments.

In the Saydel Community School District, we are focusing on growth in our grading system with an emphasis on using grading as a way to help students grow in their learning and achievement. Saydel's Standards Referenced Grading effort focuses on the most recent and consistent level of performance on the standard by the student. A student that struggles with the standard at the start of a learning or grading period will be able to show their level of mastery by the end of the learning period. The student will receive a score, based on a 4-point scale, that reflects his or her growth.

Our updated grading efforts will focus on providing students with the feedback, tools, and strategies that they need in order to maximize their potential. SRG allows teachers to provide feedback to students on how they are performing as they show their level of mastery throughout a unit of study. Instead of simply averaging the points earned on assignments throughout a grading period, students are given feedback based on a 4-point scale.

“FAST” Grading

The Saydel Community School District commits to provide information around academic standards that are **fair**, **accurate**, **specific** and **timely**.

Fair	Grades are consistent between students. Grades are based upon student performance when compared to the same standard.
Accurate	Grades are based on academic achievement. Behavior and attendance are not used in determining academic grades.
Specific	Grades are given for specific content standards that are essential learning in a course. Students will know what they will be graded on.
Timely	Teachers provide students with timely feedback and support on performance so students can use the feedback.

Adapted from Elements of Grading: A Guide to Effective Practice (2016) By Douglas Reeves.

Saydel's Grading Guiding Principles

1. Grades are aligned to the academic standards for a course

- Practice 1.A: A consistent 4-point grading scale based on course level standards will be used to determine grades.
- Practice 1.B: Achievement is organized and reported by the standard.
- Practice 1.C: Accommodations and modifications are provided for exceptional learners.

2. Student proficiency will be based on a student-produced body of evidence

- Practice 2.A: Teachers will determine grades by looking at multiple data points, taking into account most recent academic performance opportunities to determine what a student knows and is able to do.
- Practice 2.B: Students will have many opportunities to practice skills prior to being assessed or having a grade determined. This practice will occur both inside and outside of school.
- Practice 2.C: Every 4.5 weeks teachers will make decisions and report a score for standards. This will cause a score to be calculated in PowerSchool and reported to parents for each essential standard.
 - The scores that appear in PowerSchool will be a numeric score on a scale from 0-4.
 - A score of No Evidence (NE) will occur only when no student work is submitted after the student is given multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding.

What appears in PowerSchool for student practice and assessment scores	
Score in PowerSchool:	Student work:
4	Exceeds Standard
3	Meets Standard
2	Approaching Standard
1	Beginning
0	No Evidence

Saydel's Grading Guiding Principles cont.

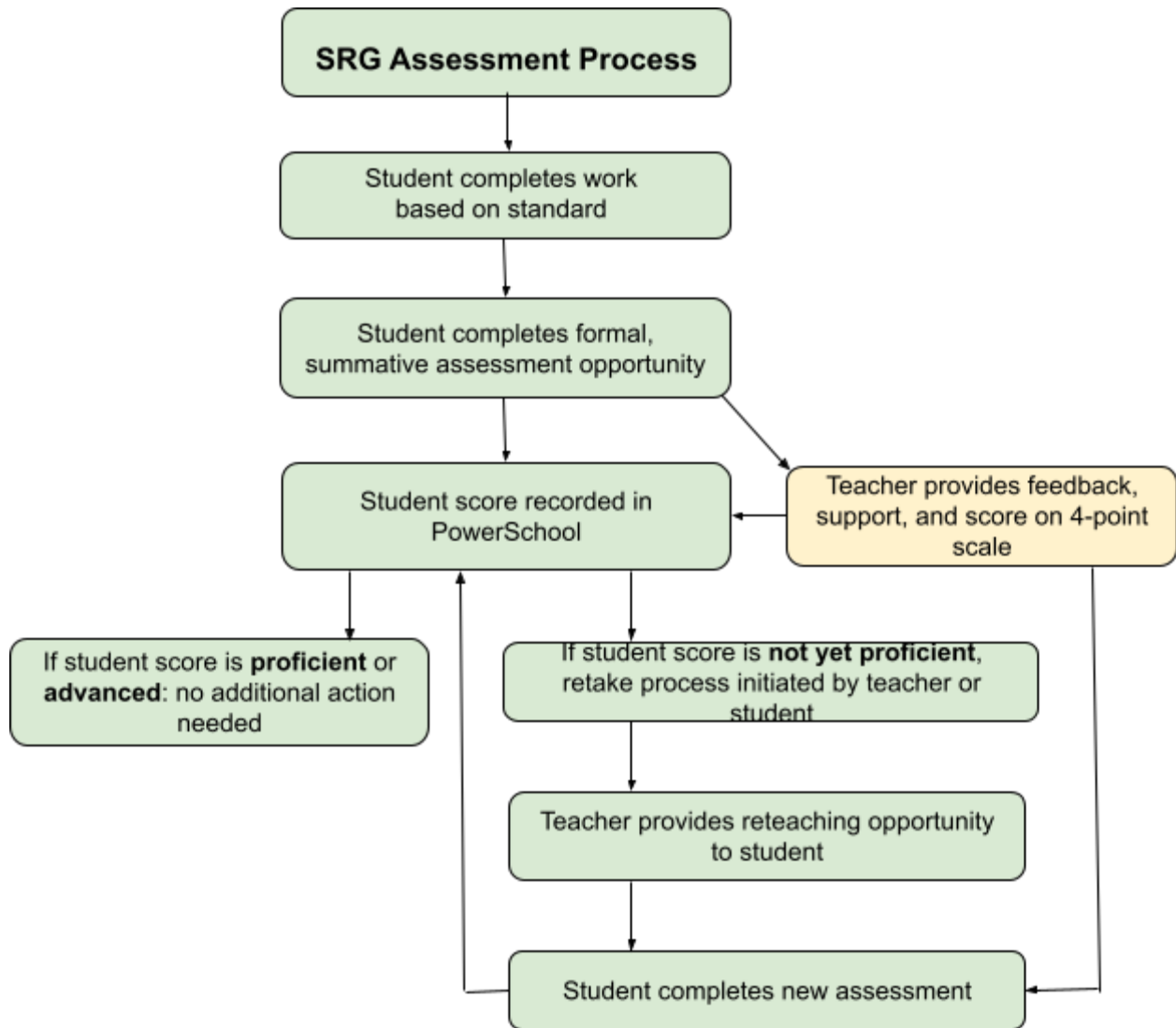
- At the end of the semester, students at **Saydel High School** will have an average score from all standards for each course. This average score will be converted to a Grade Point Average (GPA) for each student.
- Students at Woodside Middle School will not be given letter grades, so they will not have a GPA calculated.

Saydel High School standards referenced letter grade conversion scale				
SRG Practice level	SRG end of Semester Score (What you will see in PowerSchool)	Standard GPA Conversion	Traditional GPA equivalent (What will appear on high school transcript)	Weighted Course GPA
Exceeds Standard	3.50-4.00	A with Honors (+)	4.33	5.33
Meets Standard	3.00-3.49	A	4.00	5.00
Approaching Standard	2.50-2.99	B	3.00	4.00
Developing with Standard	2.00-2.49	C	2.00	3.00
Beginning with Standard	1.50-1.99	D	1.00	2.00
0 or NE (no evidence for standard)	0.00-1.49	F	0.00	0.00

Saydel's Grading Guiding Principles Cont.

3. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding through reassessment

- Practice 3.A: Teachers may require evidence of re-learning before students are able to retake/redo a summative assessment.



4. Behavior will be reported separately from academic achievement

- Practice 4.A: Teachers will utilize Habits for Success to report on behavior achievement.
- Practice 4.B: Behavior achievement will be reported every 4.5 weeks.
- Practice 4.C: Students will engage in self evaluation of Habits for Success.

Standards Referenced Grading Frequently Asked Questions

What is changing? What is staying the same?

What's changing	What's staying the same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What we grade: Not everything will go in gradebook ● How we grade using a 4,3,2,1 scale ● Multiple opportunities to show understanding ● Some classroom practices ● Grading to a standard (learning targets) ● Using a grade to support and develop students rather than label students ● The purpose of grades ● Practice work done in school or at home will not be graded ● Separation of academic and behavior grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Best practice teaching ● Habits for Success ● Using tiered learning targets ● Communicating student progress to families ● Assessment for learning ● Retakes and redos ● Time available for interventions ● Language of beginning, developing, proficient, exemplary ● High school students will still have a GPA at the end of each semester and year.

1. Does SRG have weighted assignments like some traditionally graded courses do?

Grade categories won't exist like they currently do because we are looking at a body of evidence for Iowa Core standards to determine a student's grade. Larger-scale projects and assessments will serve as the main pieces of evidence for teachers to determine a grade. In that respect, some assignments will definitely carry more "weight" than others. A student's grade is determined by a body of evidence rather than a mathematical formula with weighting involved. We may have a category for practice that does not directly factor into the overall student grade.

2. What will my high school transcript look like?

Students at Saydel High School will be issued transcripts that can be used in the same way they have been in the past. At the end of each semester, student scores on the 4-point scale will be converted to a GPA for students.

3. Will high school students still have the ability to take weighted courses?

Of course! To encourage student participation in college-level and career preparation courses, students are eligible to receive weighted grading for approved courses. Weighted courses will receive a 1 point increase. For example, if a student earns a 2.50-2.99 in a weighted course you would earn 4 grade points for that course versus 3 grade points in a non-weighted course.

Any new courses approved by the Board must indicate if weighted grading is requested. Guidelines for identification for course weighting are as follows:

- All AP courses
- All DMACC Concurrent Enrollment courses

- PSEO courses that transfer/are accepted for credit to Regent Universities
- Credit transferred in from accredited colleges and universities that meet district criteria to award credit to students.
 - Weighting for these courses will be awarded upon request on a case-by-case basis. Typical examples include courses completed at Drake and Grand View University
 - Students will see their counselor or administrator to initiate the request for weighted credit in these circumstances.
- Select Career Advantage Courses

4. What about AP or dual enrollment course credit at the high school?

AP courses will be graded using a 4-point scale as well. Students will continue to receive dual enrollment course credit through the higher education institution.

5. What role will homework have in SRG and the gradebook?

Students will have multiple opportunities to build proficiency of grade level standards through practice, whether done in class or as homework. This practice work is not graded because it is done in order to gain feedback on a student's progress through the learning process and mistakes should not be counted against their grade. Homework is also not a way to build up points that could then compensate for a poor performance on an assessment when a student was able to complete a task without mastering the material

6. Are due dates non-existent now?

Not at all! Students will still have due dates for assignments, projects and assessments. What will change is students' ability to re-do assignments or projects to be able to show how mastery has increased after receiving support from the teacher.

That being said, teachers will impose “cut off” dates for work at the end of grading periods. So, in March, a student wouldn't be able to go back and complete a scored assignment from November since the course has moved beyond that point.

7. At the end of the year, if I'm a parent and my child still isn't proficient, what is the plan?

One of the most valuable components of SRG is the accurate picture of student proficiency that is provided. We will continue to use our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for students to ensure they are receiving the support they need in the classroom as well as in intervention programs if necessary. For some students that could mean receiving support on previous year academic standards. Moving to standard referenced grading will allow teachers, parents and students a much clearer picture of student proficiency.

8. What does it look like in PowerSchool?

Teachers will record if students submit assignments for certain practice work given throughout a course. Those assignments will not be used to determine the body of evidence that will produce the final grade for a unit and or grading period. What will be used to determine a final score will be a body of evidence of student work consisting of no less than three assignments that are summative in nature. Summative assignments assess mastery in a different way than daily practice and homework assignments do.

9. Don't students need to feel the stress of grades and semester finals if we are preparing students for the future?

We believe that our job as educators is to teach students until they reach proficiency for all of the Iowa core standards. That is contradictory in some ways to traditional grading in that we won't be penalizing students for not knowing something. While it is true that most colleges and universities do not grade using SRG, we have decided that we are not going to continue with what we believe to be an antiquated practice that punishes students for what they don't know.

Additionally, we believe that moving to Standards Referenced Grading will prepare students in a better and different way for their lives after high school. Our goal is to graduate the most well-rounded students who have experience and expertise in all of our content areas. We feel that SRG lays a strong foundation for future success.

10. What if my student completes a reassessment and does worse on the reassessment?

Simply put, the student will have another opportunity through reteaching and completion of a different reassessment opportunity to show mastery. Subsequent reassessment opportunities would assess the same core standards using different questions, situations or scenarios.

11. At what point do you have to stop reassessing for mastery of a standard?

There could be instances where at the end of a unit, course or grading period a student may have exhausted their opportunities to demonstrate proficiency of a standard. One example for this would be at the end of a school year when a student moves on to a different grade level with different courses.

Additionally, there may be standards that students struggle to demonstrate mastery of. In these situations the teacher would look at the body of evidence that exists for the student and determine a final score for a unit or grading period. Our goal is for every student to be able to demonstrate their level of proficiency and we know that there will be times where students aren't able to demonstrate proficiency for every standard. It is our hope with multiple opportunities to show understanding and teacher support students would increase proficiency as time goes by.

12. What about special education students? Do they get assessed based on their grade level or skill level?

Special education students are to be graded the same as their nondisabled peers. Special education students will be graded on grade level standards using the same SRG scale unless they participate in Iowa Alternate Assessment. Students participating in Iowa Alternate Assessment will be graded on Iowa Essential Elements using an SRG scale.

13. Do behaviors affect your high school transcript?

No. At this time our behavior matrix, Habits for Success, will not be included in high school transcripts for students.

14. What student behaviors are tracked and reported?

We will continue to use our Habits for Success behavior matrix to provide students and parents feedback on things like student behavior and other 21st century skills such as problem solving and cooperation. These scores are recorded by teachers in PowerSchool in the same manner that academic grades are scored. Teachers are asked to update Habits for Success scores every 4 to 6 weeks for students. Parents and students can always view Habits for Success scores in PowerSchool.

15. What is a “body of evidence” and how does it differ from daily work?

After a student has had multiple opportunities to practice a skill or concept, teachers will have students complete tasks that are formative in nature. These formative tasks will show the student where they are in terms of success with the standard(s) being taught. These formative tasks will make up the body of evidence teachers use to determine student proficiency and scores.

Daily work (in class work and homework) play a vital role in student success in completion of formative tasks. Teachers assess student performance on daily work to drive whole class instruction as well as to indicate when students may need additional support.

16. My student participates in extracurricular activities. How will eligibility be determined using SRG?

Parents of high school students participating in extracurricular activities can refer to the High School Student Handbook for ineligibility policy.

17. How will high school students be eligible to be considered for the National Honor Society?

At the end of each semester, student scores on the 4-point scale will be converted to a GPA for students. Those GPA scores will be used as a factor to determine if a student is eligible to be considered for NHS membership.