

Frequently Asked Questions MS/HS Target-Based Grading

1. What made us identify this as a needed change?

Almost a decade ago, we started looking at our grading practices. As we learned, it became more and more apparent that students' grades should be based on how well they comprehend a specific target and not a percentage of work completed. Target-based proficiency grading empowers students to understand their own learning strengths and areas that need improvement. Students get direct and timely feedback on the areas and skills they need to focus on.

2. Does a student have to be perfect to earn a 3?

No. A score of 3 means your child has demonstrated content proficiency and skill application of the outcomes for the particular target at this point in the school year. Please see the descriptions below.

Proficient (3) You Got It	Approaching (2) Almost There	Needs Support (1) Not Quite Yet	NE No Evidence
Student has demonstrated full evidence of learning and application in relation to the proficiency target at this point in the school year. Evidence gathered indicates consistent understanding and application.	Student has demonstrated partial evidence of learning and application in relation to the proficiency target at this point in the school year. Evidence gathered indicates progress is being made with identified gaps in understanding or application.	Student has demonstrated limited evidence of learning and application in relation to the proficiency target at this point in the school year. Evidence gathered indicates large gaps in understanding or application.	Student has not provided any evidence of learning and/or application in relation to the proficiency target at this point in the school year.

3. Can a student only earn a 3 at the end of the year?

A student may demonstrate proficiency on a target at any time within the school year. The complexity of the target may change over time, but the score students are receiving is based on the desired expectation at that point in time.

4. Can a student exceed a 3?

No. A proficiency score of 3 is the highest level of attainment.

5. Is there a certain amount of targets required in each curriculum area?

No. This is up to the teacher(s) and is based on our Wisconsin State Standards.

6. What is the correlation between the “current” system and the “old” system?

Based on the work of a team of teachers from the middle school, as well as administrators from the district, data from the building was used to create the current scale. After examining many options for what scale to use, the scale below gave the best correlation between the previous scale using percentages and the current scale used for our target-based grading system.

The most recent proficiency score for each target is used to calculate a scale score average, which is converted to a letter grade in Skyward:

Scale Score Average	Letter Grade	GPA Points Earned
2.85-3.0	A	4
2.71-2.84	A/B	3.5
2.57-2.70	B	3
2.43-2.56	B/C	2.5
2.29-2.42	C	2
2.15-2.28	C/D	1.5
2.00-2.14	D	1
1.99 or below	F	0

7. It looks like a 2 equals a D, is that correct?

A 2 is when a student is approaching proficiency on the learning target. That means that they partially demonstrate content proficiency. At the beginning of the school year or the beginning of a semester, a student may only have one score in the gradebook. If that score is a 2, it equates to a D. It is important to remember that over the course of the semester, many targets will be scored, and the grade is an average of the most recent evidence on the targets that have been assessed.

8. Does this change how GPA and class rank are determined at the high school?

No. GPA is calculated based on the letter grade as it has been, as shown in the chart above. Class rank continues to be determined by each student’s overall GPA. If there is a tie for the highest GPA in a graduating class, our existing tie breaking system is applied to determine a valedictorian and salutatorian.

9. Do colleges/universities accept this grading system?

Yes. Target-based grading does not change the way grades are represented on a high school transcript or the way a GPA is calculated. The high school transcript is the only record of high school grades that colleges request for admittance. The high school transcript is also the only record of high school grades used in scholarship decisions. In fact, most colleges themselves use this grading scale of A, A/B, B, B/C, etc.

10. Can you retake a summative assessment?

Yes. A student may reassess on target(s) after they have demonstrated new evidence of learning on that target and completed any other reassessment requirements in place for the class.

11. Why isn't homework included in the academic grade?

Homework is a tool that helps learning (practice). We do not want to penalize students while they go through the learning process. Homework completion is included in the determination of the student's PAW scores.