



Family Grading Guide

Our Grading Principles & Practices:

Our standards-based grading system uses the following principles to guide how we assess student achievement and communicate progress to families:

- *Principle:* Grades should clearly communicate what students know and are able to do in each class.
Practice: We report on student mastery of specific skills and concepts within a grade level; traits like participation and effort are reported on separately.
- *Principle:* Learning cannot be averaged: students need time to practice and learn from mistakes.
Practice: We determine quarterly marks based on trends, and take more recent performance into account. These marks reflect a student's current level of achievement.
- *Principle:* Students should have multiple opportunities to show what they know and can do.
Practice: We ask students to build a body of work to demonstrate their mastery of each course standard. We call this body of work a *portfolio*.
- *Principle:* Schools should support students in acquiring *all* of the essential knowledge and skills in a grade level, versus just a portion of it.
Practice: Over the course of a school year, all of the grade level standards will be taught and assessed.
- *Principle:* Academic knowledge and work/crew habits are both important to acquire for a student's educational future and for life.
Practice: Students receive both academic marks (based on grade level standards) as well as habits of crew grades for each grading period.
- *Principle:* If students are working hard (as shown by their habits of work grade) to meet standards, they deserve more time and support to learn the material.
Practice: Students can receive additional time after the term has ended to meet course standards if they have a "3" or above in Habits of Work.
- *Principle:* Regular communication with families about student progress supports deeper learning.
Practice: We formally report progress 8 times a year through report cards, Celebrations of Learning, and Student-Led Conferences.

Grading Language and Scale:

Course Standards:

All curriculum at PHA is built around Utah *grade level standards*. A grade level standard is a description of concepts or skills that can be achieved during the course of a school year; they represent the essential things students must know or be able to do that year. Report cards communicate a student's achievement level of specific grade level standards.

Learning Targets:

All classes at PHA are built around *learning targets*, which are stepping- stones towards meeting grade level standards. Learning targets are discussed early in an expedition, unit, project or lesson, so students have a clear picture of what they are learning through doing the work.

Grading Scale:

Our standards-based grading language and scale is consistent with the scale that the state uses for the Utah Core Standards and is comparable to the 4.0 scale which is used in many schools and colleges. For each major assessment, teachers will develop *rubrics* (often with student input) that make clear the criteria that a student will have to meet in order to receive a 2, 3 or 4. The chart below describes our grading scale:

Score	Description	For overall course grade on report card this means....	On a classroom assignment this means...
1	Does Not Meet the Standard	A student's body of work has not met the majority of the standards assessed. <i>This is not a passing mark and raises important concerns about a student's ability to handle grade levels expectations.</i>	Does not demonstrate substantive progress towards meeting the standard or criteria of a given assessment by an established deadline. This may mean that a student has not met the majority of performance indicators or criteria for that assessment, or student has not made an attempt to meet criteria. <i>This is not a passing mark.</i>
2	Approaching the Standard	A student's body of work has met a majority of the standards assessed, but has just partially met one or more of them.	Demonstrates a substantive attempt to meet the standards of a given assessment by the established deadline, but needs more time to achieve competency and meet all the criteria for the assessment. <i>This is not a passing mark.</i>
3	Meets the Standard	The student has met (earned a 3) on each and every one of the course standards assessed during the term. This does <i>not</i> mean that a student has to pass each and every assessment, but his/her body of work must trend towards and ultimately meet the standard.	Fundamentally and competently meets the standard being assessed. <i>All of the criteria for Meets the Standard (e.g., in the rubric) are demonstrated in the work. This is a passing mark.</i>
4	Exceeds the Standard	A student's work has consistently and/or lately Exceeded the Standard in each and every course standard assessed up to that point.	The student's work goes substantially above and beyond the course standards in quality and rigor. Sometimes, a student will have to opt to complete a particular task(s) or prompt(s), not required of all, in order to be eligible for an Exceeds. <i>All of the criteria for Exceeds the Standard (e.g., in the rubric) are demonstrated in the work. This is a passing mark.</i>

Habits of Crew:

We recognize that quality habits of work are essential for students' future success in school and work. Each reporting period, students receive a discrete mark for each Habit of Crew. There is a clear correlation between quality Habits of Crew, academic achievement and learning. The better one's Habits of Crew,

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the more s/he will achieve and learn. Habits of Crew are regularly assessed in each course and each marking period, using the same grading scale (1-4).

To Earn a Crew Habit mark of 3, Do the Big 3.

Students must consistently (about 80% of the time):

1. Complete homework.
2. Meet deadlines.
3. Participate effectively in class activities (includes regular, on time attendance).

How do you earn a 4 for Crew Habits? Do the Big 3 *all of the time*.

Common Classroom Practices You Can Expect

1. A posted Crew Target for a set time period;
2. An opportunity for students to reflect on their progress (or not) towards the target, at least every two weeks;
3. Feedback from the teacher to the student about their progress, at least every two weeks.

The list below describes all of the Habits of Crew traits PHA supports and holds students accountable to acquiring; it includes “the big 3” described above. Teachers may provide additional criteria to define what a particular Crew Habit looks like in their classroom or discipline:

PHA Habits of Crew Traits:

Craftsmanship

- Learns from feedback.
- Willingly revises work
- Uses appropriate resources to solve problems.
- Meets deadlines and established criteria.

Responsibility

- Prepares adequately for class.
- Uses class time effectively
- Accepts responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
- Demonstrates stewardship.

Compassion

- Behaves ethically and treats others with respect.
- Makes sure group members feel safe and comfortable.
- Seeks to involve others in play.
- Considers the point of view of others.

Courage

- Is willing to try new things.
- Performs a variety of roles within a group.
- Helps students de-escalate when conflict arises
- Performs and speaks in public

Collaboration

- Contributes positively to the class.
- Works actively and cooperatively with others to achieve group goals.
- Fulfills individual responsibilities within the group.
- Uses group time effectively.

Perseverance

- Perseveres when things are hard.

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- Seeks solutions to problems.
- Setting goals and making a plan.
- Taking time to assess the effectiveness of a plan.

Appendix:

Traditional Grading vs. Standards-based Grading

Traditional Grading

Final grades are an average of performance, effort, homework completion, and other idiosyncratic criteria developed by the teacher. As a result, final grades can be unclear or might vary from teacher to teacher.

A certain average (ex: 70%) is required to pass a class and receive credit. Students may not have mastered a large portion of the material, but will still receive credit.

Work habits, such as homework completion, or on-task behavior, are averaged in with course grades. This practice can artificially raise or lower grades.

Grades are viewed as “rewards” or “punishments” for overall school performance.

Standards-based Grading

Final grades describe a student’s progress towards specific course standards (or learning targets). The specificity allows students and families to clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement.

To receive credit, students must meet the criteria for each and every course standard within a class.

Habits of work are reported and graded separately, and are evidence and skill-based. They are viewed as equally important as academic grades.

Grades are viewed as a tool for communicating student progress towards specific learning targets.

Parent & Student Perspectives: Standards-based Grading

“It makes you smarter.”

-- Mike O’Neill, student

“As long as students show consistent habits indicating concern for school work, they are given opportunities to show their achievement of high standards. Seeing a 2 on the report card seems as though it is close to a 50% of the highest possible grade, a 4. It shouldn’t be seen that way. The student has shown he or she has achieved some of the targets needed to meet the standard, and will meet the standard with extra time.”

-- Jill Roland, Parent

“We both admire that students have to pass each standard, so you HAVE to learn the concept in order to pass, which is extremely important.”

-- Chrissy and Noah Libby, Parent and student

“The old system of grading (A-F) is based more on a teacher’s own personal standards which can vary greatly from one teacher to another- what is one teacher’s B might be another teacher’s A. In standards-based grading... the faculty has some basic agreements of what they consider the standard. It is good to know my daughter is grasping the information that is considered to be the basic standard of

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understanding. And if she should fall below the standard, she understands what it will take to get back up there and she pushes herself to do that. And when she gets anything slightly above meeting the standard, she seems to take great pride in that and tries even harder.”

-- MaryAnne Lloyd, Parent