

Learner-Centered Assessment

Roosevelt Middle School is using a Learner-Centered Assessment system in all classes for the 2015-2016 school year. A traditional grading system averages out a variable mix of homework assignments, quizzes/tests, and behavior/effort. A standards-based classroom separates effort and behavior from the learning of very specific skills and learning goals, providing very specific feedback.

How Does It Affect My Child?

Some of the potential benefits of Learner Centered Assessment “grading” include:

- Very clear expectations (kids know where they are and where they need to go).
- More individualized learning (no penalty for fast or slow learning).
- Keep working on a skill until they get it (get help and schedule a retake).
- Allows every student to be an expert at a certain skill (no more “I’ve always been a C student.”).
- Moves the focus away from grades and towards learning.

Where Will I Notice a Difference?

You will notice a difference in your student’s grade reports. You will see the following scores in your child’s grade book present for each assignment or assessment. The following codes represent your child’s understanding on that particular standard. Under this model, your student will not receive a traditional letter grade.

Proficiency Scale

E – Exceeds Expected Standards

M – Meets Expected Standards

W – Working Towards Standards

U – Minimal Understanding

X – No Evidence

How will I be able to tell what my child’s progress is?

The staff at Roosevelt would encourage you to look specifically at each skill that the student is expected to master. That will give you a better explanation of where your child can improve or what they need to work on.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the purpose of grading?

Effective grading practices should provide accurate, meaningful and consistent communication to a student and parent about what a student knows and is able to do as a result of their school experiences.

What is a Learner-Centered Assessment model?

Learner-Centered Assessment is a model reflective of standards-based grading, which aligns feedback on proficiency levels to established benchmarks. In this model, students and teachers are held accountable for the essential learning defined in benchmarks regardless of what school or classroom a student might be in or what teacher a student might have. Learner-Centered Assessment is associated with the work of international education researcher, Ken O'Connor.

Why are we working to improve our grading practices?

The intent of the Learner-Centered Assessment initiative is to provide accurate, meaningful and consistent communication to students and parents about student learning. Additionally, our intention is to engage in best practices, which are supported by years of educational research. This research has shown that when Learner-Centered Assessing (also known as standards-based grading) is done with fidelity, it is one of the highest leverage strategies for improving student achievement.

What is different as a result of the implementation the Learner-Centered Assessment model?

1. Grades are not based on the percent of material a student has mastered but rather on demonstrated mastery of the established benchmarks.
2. Homework is viewed as an opportunity for students to practice their learning without being penalized with a grade.
3. Grades are an accurate reflection of benchmark mastery as they do not include extra credit, which may have nothing to do with student learning. Additionally, they do not include academic behaviors such as effort, responsibility, and respect.
4. Zeros are not an acceptable grade to motivate students to learn. Instead students are encouraged to complete their required work because it is essential to mastery of the benchmarks.
5. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning prior to being graded.

How will this change in grading philosophy impact my child's experience in the classroom?

Students will understand what they are expected to learn, and they will receive regular feedback on the progress of their learning in regard to the established benchmarks. Typically, in the past teachers taught material, gave a test and then assigned a grade. In the Learner-Centered Assessment model the teacher determines what needs to be taught in regard to the benchmarks, teaches, assesses informally, reteaches and re-assesses informally until there is evidence that the student is prepared to be *formally* assessed.

Where is the best place to go to learn more about the grading initiative?

Classroom teachers, building administrators, and district administrators are resources for learning about grading reform.