

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

BELIEF STATEMENT

A standards-based grading and reporting system is transparent and clearly understood by all stakeholders.

What is standards-based grading?

Standards-based grading communicates how students are performing on a set of clearly-defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what students know, or are able to do, in relation to pre-established learning targets, as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of the grading period, which can mask what students have learned, or not learned, in a specific course.

How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?

Unlike traditional grading systems, a standards-based grading system measures students' mastery of grade-level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. Thus, students who may have struggled at the beginning of a course, when first encountering new material, may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content/concepts by the end of a grading period.

In a traditional grading system, students' performance for an entire quarter is averaged together. Early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates.

Standards-based report cards separate academic performance from work habits and behavior in order to provide parents a more accurate view of students' progress in both academic and behavioral areas. Variables such as effort, participation, timeliness, cooperation, attitude and attendance are reported separately, not as an indicator of the students' academic performance.

Why is Risley International Academy using standards-based grading?

Risley's use of standards-based grading seeks to provide meaningful feedback so, both, students and parents can track student progress toward mastery of key academic concepts, reflect upon strengths and weaknesses, and identify multiple pathways to deeper learning. Standards-based grading also aligns well with the grading policies set forth by IB (International Baccalaureate) for the MYP (Middle Years Program).

How are my student's grades determined?

Students' performance on a series of summative assessments will be used to determine the students' overall grade in a course. Practice assignments (homework) are just that - practice, and thus should serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Scores on practice assignments will not be used as a component of students' academic grade. Teachers may require students to complete all/or some of their practice work prior to allowing them to retake an assessment.

How should a student/parent view student grades now that the system of A-F has been aligned to the IB 8-point scale? What is considered to be an A in the new grading system?

One cannot really compare a traditional grading system to a standards-based grading system. It is like comparing "apples to oranges". Standards-based grading identifies a standard and indicates whether or not students are meeting a standard at a given point in the school year. A crosswalk has been developed to align performance on an A to F scale to the IB proficiency rubric.

How will Honor Roll/Merit Roll be determined?

The traditional concept of Honor Roll does not easily match up with standards-based grading. A committee has been formed to develop the criteria for academic recognition. It is our intention to recognize and acknowledge the academic accomplishments of Risley International Academy of Innovation students, as well as those who consistently display the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

How will we determine eligibility for student athletes?

Eligibility for student athletes has been discussed with the District Athletic Director, and he agrees that Risley can determine eligibility through academic performance based on an adopted interval scale and/or the marks on non-academic indicators.

How will this translate to high school?

A committee chaired by the principal of Risley International Academy of Innovation will meet with the feeder high schools to discuss the grading and reporting process. This discussion will include a review of the adopted interval scale as well as the standards-based report card.

How will students transferring from a non-standards based system be impacted?

All students in the United States are involved in the learning of standards, primarily the Common Core. Since these students are taught the same standards, it will be a simple process of informing the student and parent/guardian of the process and procedures used at Risley International Academy of Innovation.