

### **What is standards-based learning?**

Standards-based learning focuses a student's learning on the essential outcomes (standards) for a class, or how well the student understands and can apply the key material in class. At the beginning of each unit, the teacher will break down the standards for the unit into smaller components and criteria using a proficiency scale. During the unit, learning is monitored frequently to gauge understanding and application of the material. Teachers will use a variety of assessments, such as traditional pencil and-paper tests, projects, discussions, or reports, as well as other non-traditional methods such as observation, individual work, or conversations with a student. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating a student's mastery of the essential standards.

The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, student, and parent as accurate a picture as possible of the student's learning and to encourage a conversation about how the student can master the material for the class. In particular,

because learning is a process that takes place over time, the teacher will provide feedback to the student about what to focus on next, and the student will be allowed to show improved learning over time by relearning and reassessing. If the new evidence shows a higher level of mastery, the new score replaces the old one.

### **How is standards-based learning different from traditional grading?**

In the traditional 100-point grading system, a student's grades are typically based on all of the work assigned in class, including classwork, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the grade book based on the type of assignment rather than on the essential standards for the class. The grade may also include points for non-academic factors, such as participation, effort, or attitude.

Standards-based learning looks at how well a student has demonstrated proficiency on the standards, so the grade book does not separate out tests, homework, or projects. Instead, all of the work a student does is used to assess what a student knows and can do. Students' scores are tracked by component and standard to give the teacher, student, and parent a very detailed picture of each student's learning. Non-academic factors like behavior, attitude, and attendance are not included in the grade, but are recorded and reported separately.

### **Why is CAA using standards-based learning?**

The goal of Columbia Adventist Academy is to improve student learning by reporting grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning, and the shift to standards-based learning is an effort to reach that goal. Here is how standards-based learning addresses each of those four criteria.

**Accurate:** By basing a student's grade solely on academic factors, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors, such as effort and attitude, are still essential, but are not part of the student's academic grade and are communicated separately.

**Consistent:** For each unit, the teacher will provide a proficiency scale that describes what the student must know or do to demonstrate proficiency. The proficiency scale establishes clear expectations for mastery at the beginning of a unit and is referenced consistently throughout the unit and semester.

**Meaningful:** A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a standards-based classroom, scores are recorded by the essential standards rather than by type, such as tests or homework, making it easier to identify areas of strength and areas of growth.

**Supportive of Learning:** This approach supports learning by focusing on the material that has or has not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The reassessment policy also supports student learning by allowing new levels of learning to replace old when a student shows improvement on a standard.

### **What does the number scale (4, 3.5, 3, 2.5, 2, 1.5, 1, .5 and 0) on the proficiency scale mean?**

The scores on the scale represent a learning continuum and are NOT equated to grade point average. Each of the levels builds on the others and explains the learning students have to demonstrate in order to earn a score (See the sample rubric on the last page of this document). Students must demonstrate proficiency as they move up the scale. For example, a student may not earn a 3 until they demonstrate proficiency of the level 2 concepts or skills. The scale designations are as follows:

4 – The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the material by completing and explaining advanced applications of the material.

3.5 – In addition to a 3.0 score, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications with partial success.

3 – The student demonstrates proficiency on the complex, targeted knowledge and concepts/skills for the class.

2.5 – In addition to a 2.0 score, the student demonstrates partial knowledge of 3.0 elements.

2 – The student understands the foundational material, but is still working to master application of the concepts and skills.

1.5 – The student demonstrates understanding of all 2.0 elements with help and independent understanding of some 2 elements.

1 – The student is able to demonstrate an understanding of all of the foundational material with support.

0.5 – The student demonstrates understanding of some 2.0 elements.

0 – Even with assistance from the teacher, the student shows no understanding of the material.

### **What is the grade scale for standards-based learning?**

Evidence of Proficiency (assessment) scores on FACTS reflect the following number scale: 4, 3.5, 3, 2.5, 2, 1.5, 1 or 0. These scores are used as mounting evidence to determine proficiency scale scores.

Proficiency scale scores are averaged and translated to a letter grade to determine a grade point average.

### **Why is the grade scale for standards-based grading different?**

Standards-based grading focuses on measuring students' mastery of a specific set of standards. The grade scale reflects the level of proficiency achieved for each standard.

The number scale grade for each proficiency scale is averaged and then entered into a traditional letter grade to determine a grade point average for report card and transcript purposes. In order to translate the number score into a traditional letter grade, we adjust the cutoffs to reflect the 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 scale. The resulting scale is shown below.

This is the number scale grade = This is the standards-based grade range = This is the letter grade

4	3 – 4.0	A – A-
3	2.5– 2.99	B+ - B-
2	2 – 2.49	C+ - C-
1	1 – 1.99	D+ - D-
0	> 1	F

One common misconception that arises when moving to standards-based grading is that a student only needed to get a 25% percent to pass, and while technically correct, this misconception misses what exactly the 25% percent means. In a traditional grading system, a 25% means that a student answered 25% of the questions correctly. In SRG, this means that a student reached the 1.0 level on the proficiency scale, which is based on the learning the student demonstrated and is completely unrelated to how many questions the student answered correctly. This distinction is an important one as the SRG interpretation sets a much higher level of expectation for student learning.

### **How will my student be assessed?**

A student's learning is assessed using a variety of formative and summative assessments. These tools include formal assessments such as traditional paper-and-pencil tests, projects, written papers, lab reports, or verbal assessments, but they may also include informal assessments such as classroom discussions or teacher observations. Essentially, everything that a student does in a standards-based class provides the teacher with evidence of the student's learning.

### **What can my student do to raise their grade in a standards-based class?**

The goal in a standards-based class is to ensure that students master the essential standards for the class. The student should meet with the teacher to determine which assessments need improvement and establish a reassessment plan with the teacher to learn the material and set a date to be reassessed. If the student demonstrates a higher level of mastery on the re-assessment, then the newer

score will replace the older score. Again, the focus is to improve the student's mastery of the content and skills required in each unit, so extra credit points, or score penalties for retesting, are not used in standards-based grading.

### **What does my student need to do in order to be reassessed?**

After completing an assessment in a standards-based class, the student can ask for a reassessment using the process described below. A sample reassessment agreement is included at the end of this document.

1. The student communicates with the teacher to identify which learning goals need to be reassessed and at what levels. The teacher may require specific activities to prepare for the reassessment, such as completing missing assignments. Any activity selected by the student or teacher must have evidence that it has been completed.
3. Together, the student and teacher will decide when, where, and how the student will be reassessed. Students may reassess for up to one week after an assessment has been scored and returned to them.
4. Once all of the relearning activities have been completed, the student will show the necessary evidence to the teacher.
5. The student is now ready to be reassessed.

The reassessment process supports a student's learning by:

- Ensuring that learning takes place before reassessment.
- Identifying the specific steps the student must complete to be reassessed.
- Clarifying the reassessment process for both the student and the teacher.
- Identifying exactly how the student will be reassessed.

If you have any additional questions about the reassessment process, please contact your student's teacher. See a copy of a sample reassessment agreement below.

### **Why should my student do the homework assigned in class if it isn't included in the grade?**

Many students feel that in a standards-based class they don't have to worry about anything except the final test. This is incorrect. It is important for students to understand that their teacher is evaluating their performance on learning tasks, or homework and classwork, on a daily basis. Teachers analyze student work to determine growth and improvement towards proficiency of a specific skill or content. When assigning a final score, each teacher has the responsibility to take into account all the work a student completes during a quarter or semester. If a student chooses not to do an assignment, not only are they missing an opportunity to practice a skill, or apply a concept, they also miss an opportunity to display mastery of a standard to their teacher.

**Why doesn't my student have a grade yet?**

A standards-based focus is on the learning a student demonstrates over time; therefore, their grade may not be updated as frequently as it was when every daily or weekly assignment impacted the grade. This shift is especially noticeable at the beginning of the grading period when it may take a few weeks for the teacher to collect enough evidence to determine each student's level of proficiency. However, while the overall grade may not change as frequently, the teacher is still recording information on other learning tasks, such as in-class learning activities and tasks that provide important feedback about what work is being done and how well students met expectations.

Please contact your student's teacher at any time if you have questions about your student's grade. Teachers are required to update grades weekly to reflect work completed in class, or email a weekly update regarding the class' progress.

**Are non-academic factors, such as effort, attitude, participation, and behavior part of the class grade?**

These factors have always been and will continue to be an important part of every student's success. However, in standards-based grading, these factors will be communicated separately from the student's academic grade.

**How will standards-based learning affect my student's GPA and transcript?**

Standards-based grading reports an overall letter grade for each high school course once a proficiency scale score is entered into FACTS. At the end of the grading period, all proficiency scale scores are averaged into a single term score.

**If we change schools, how will my student's grade be transferred if the new school does not use standards-based learning?**

When a student transfers to a new school, the transfer grade is determined by the student's current letter grade. For example, if the student currently has an average of 3 on the standards-based proficiency scale, the current letter grade is a A-, so the transfer grade is sent as an A-.

**What classes are currently using standards-based grading?**

All classes at CAA are standards-based.

**How can I get more information about my student's grade or about standards-based grading?**

If you have questions or concerns about your student's learning in a class or if you would like more information on standards-based grading, please contact the teacher, the principal or the vice principal of academics.

## Reassessment Agreement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part A: Areas of Strength

I've reached the proficient or advanced level on the following standards:

_____	3.0	4.0
_____	3.0	4.0
_____	3.0	4.0

### Part B: Areas for Improvement

I need to reassess the following standards at the indicated levels:

_____	2.0	3.0	4.0
_____	2.0	3.0	4.0
_____	2.0	3.0	4.0

### Preparation Information (To be completed by student with teacher's help)

Before my reassessment, I will complete the following activities to prepare:

Date	Activity	Evidence of completion
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Reassessment Information (To be completed by student and teacher)

Date	Time	Location
_____	_____	_____

Reassessment Method: (To be determined by teacher)

- ☐ Written Response
- ☐ Verbal Response
- ☐ Revised Form
- ☐ Same Form
- ☐ Other

### Reassessment Approval

I have completed all of the necessary activities and am ready to be assessed.

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Student Signature

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Teacher Signature

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Date

### Reassessment Guidelines

- The student must complete all the activities and provide evidence of learning in order to be allowed to complete the reassessment.
- If a student is unable to take the reassessment due to missing evidence or failure to show up, the student will be allowed to reschedule the reassessment once.
- No reassessments will be allowed two weeks before the end of a quarter or semester.
- The reassessment score will be recorded in the grade book and used to help determine the student's grade for the outcome. Completing a reassessment does not guarantee that the student's grade will increase.

### Possible Reassessment Activities

#### Sample Activities

Complete missing assignments  
Make flashcards  
Create practice assessment  
Tutoring with a teacher  
Study your notes - 30 minute - minimum  
Design a review game  
Make a poster explaining topic or process  
Create a web diagram  
Write a summary for each of the individual topics in the proficiency scale  
Create review exercises  
Online video tutorials

#### Possible Evidence of Completion

Completed assignments  
Completed flashcards  
Completed practice assessment with answer key  
Signed note documenting tutoring time  
Study log  
Completed game  
Completed poster  
Completed diagram  
Completed summaries  
  
Completed exercises  
Completed tutorials

### Sample Proficiency Scale

Score	Description	Additional Notes
4	<b>In addition to a level 3 score, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are not just harder tasks, but learning that requires deeper or more rigorous thinking.</li> <li>• Examples of this type of learning may include: applications for real-world use, teaching another person the material, using information to solve problems in a different context, explaining connections between ideas, demonstrating a unique insight, and/or creative application of skills.</li> </ul>	
3.5	<b>In addition to a level 3 score, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications with partial success.</b>	
3	<b>While engaged in grade appropriate tasks, the student demonstrates an ability to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This level is the focus for the entire rubric.</li> <li>• This is the expected level of performance for all students.</li> <li>• This level includes essential learning goals, state standards, and related skills and processes. No major errors or omissions with level 2 or 3 elements.</li> </ul>	
2.5	<b>The student demonstrates no major errors or omissions regarding level 2 elements and a partial knowledge of level 3 elements.</b>	
2	<b>The student demonstrates no major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This level is the basic learning necessary and serves as the foundation for the higher levels of learning.</li> <li>• Examples of this type of learning may include recall questions, fact-based skills, and basic applications.</li> <li>• This level does not represent partial understanding of the level 3 elements. However, there are major errors or omissions with level 3 elements.</li> </ul>	
1.5	<b>The student demonstrates understanding of all level 2 elements with help and independent understanding of some level 2 elements.</b>	
1	<b>With help, the student demonstrates understanding of all level 2 elements or some level 2 and 3 elements.</b>	
.5	<b>The student demonstrates understanding of some level 2 elements.</b>	
0	<b>Even with help, the student demonstrates no understanding or skill.</b>	