

Hybrid Grading Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Update 1-2-20

Why is BPS including a hybrid letter grade for 8th grade students?

It is BPS's intent to offer an indicator that will help families understand their students' current overall academic progress. Additionally, as standard scores are converted to letter grades for our 8th grade students, it is our hope that these overall indicators will help students to anticipate the level of academic "rigor" that will yield the corresponding letter grade as they transition to high school.

What's the difference between "standards-based education," "standards-based grading," and standards-based reporting?

"Standards-based education" requires educators to articulate clear learning goals that identify what students should learn (content) and be able to do (cognitive behaviors). In ND these standards are set forth in the North Dakota Century Code 15.1-21

"Standards-based grading" involves measuring or assessing students' proficiency on well-defined course objectives or standards to be learned in a given grade-level or course.

"Standards-based reporting" is the communication or sharing of the learning goals and the students' progress with educational stakeholders i.e. students, families, teachers, school leaders, and community members.

Is standards-based grading going away?

No. Tracking and reporting on a student's academic progress based on their level of proficiency in each standard is core to helping each student reach his/her potential. Knowing which skills your student is proficient at and which they need to continue to work on is necessary and important information for teachers, students, and parents to work together to personalize each student's education.

Where can I see the letter grade?

Your 8th grade student's letter grade will be visible on the "Grades and Attendance" tab of PowerSchool.

If you don't have an online Powerschool account, you can get instructions on how to create one from your school's secretary or contact your student's teachers directly for a report on your student's progress.

Is a "3" the same as an "A"?

Not exactly. In a standards-based system, a "3" indicates proficiency on a standard. An "A" indicates that your student has reached proficiency or higher on the majority of standards that have been taught and assessed in a course at any given time.

Do these letter grades count in my student's GPA?

No*. Your student's GPA is calculated from credit bearing high school classes. Hybrid letter grades for 8th graders are intended only as an additional means of communication on your student's academic progress.

*with the exception of Enriched Algebra and Enriched Geometry

How can my 8th grade student get a better letter grade?

Since the letter grades are calculated based on your student's level of proficiency, the best way to improve the letter grade is to work with your student's teacher to identify standards on which your student is below proficient, and for the student to practice and re-assess until their proficiency has improved.

Do daily homework assignments count towards the letter grade?

The majority of the time homework is intended for students to practice and receive feedback on skills that they will later be more formally assessed on. As such, it is often not included in standards scores, and therefore not a part of the letter grade.

Other types of homework include homework for preparation, review, application, and extension. Homework is assigned purposefully, and encouraging your student to do his/her best on homework regardless of the type is a key factor in academic success.

Will I be able to see my student's growth?

Being able to see growth trends is a key benefit of tracking and reporting on student academic progress by standard. The PowerSchool portal will continue to give trending information on your student's standards scores.

Information is available online at: <https://sites.google.com/bismarckschools.org/powerschoolresources/home>. As always, your student's teacher is your primary source of information when it comes to your student's growth towards proficiency in any course.

Do Respect and Responsibility scores count in the letter grade?

No. The hybrid letter grade is only an indicator of students' academic achievement.

Respect and responsibility scores help to track and encourage student behaviors that impact academic achievement. Additionally, the "2Rs" scores are used to determine eligibility for extracurricular activities.

Do the letter grades determine eligibility?

No. Eligibility for middle school students is determined by the student's scores on the respect and responsibility standards. This represents no change in the current MS eligibility process.

How can I assist in helping my student understand what a letter grade is?

Since many of our 8th grade students have never received letter grades, it will be important for teachers and families to communicate clearly that the letter grade is simply an overall indicator of proficiency levels for standards that have been assessed at any given point during a course. It is our hope that using letter grades as this overall indicator will be familiar to parents, and help them to understand their students overall academic progress.

Will my PowerSchool App have more information?

PowerSchool App users will be able to see overall letter grades for 8th grade courses.

Additionally, all data that a teacher has entered into his/her gradebook including standards scores from assignments and assessments as well as indicators of missing or incomplete work will be available at the BPS PowerSchool portal using a modern browser such as Chrome or Firefox. Information on accessing this information is available at <https://sites.google.com/bismarckschools.org/powerschoolresources/home>, and you can always contact your students' teachers if you have any questions.

Will any other grade levels be getting hybrid letter grades?

Currently only 8th grade students will see hybrid letter grades. Our focus at all grade levels will continue to be helping all students reach proficiency and above for as many standards as possible.

Where can I find additional information on Standards-based Education at BPS?

More information is available at <http://bit.ly/bpshybridinfo>.