

**Standards Based Grading**  
**FWEA Membership Questions**  
February 28, 2011

***Q: How will parents be educated on the new system?***

A: There will be several opportunities that parents will have to learn about the new system. This will include district and building level events. There are also many other resources posted on the website and available in the buildings. Specially created documents for Student-led Conferences will be made available in multiple languages.

***Q: When will district literature be available to schools and parents/students that clearly explains why the grading processes are changing, and how they will work, in relation to both standards based grading and switching from traditional grades to the BAME scale.***

A: There are currently documents on our website at <http://www.fwps.org/cur/sbe/> that give parents information about Standards-based grading and reporting. New documents will continue to be added through the upcoming months such as graphic organizers, sample report card views, and screenshots of the grade book.

***Q: Because this is an extremely time intensive activity (including changing course syllabi, writing parent and student explanations of grading procedures, setting up grade books, etc) is the district providing sufficient, paid time that is exclusively to be used for these tasks to implement the board policy before the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year? Has there been an 'official' estimate as to how long it will take teachers to prepare for the change, based on the number of preps each teacher teaches?***

A: The misconception on the part of some teachers is that the Power Standards are something new that FWPS developed this year. We know the reality is that these are the same standards teachers have been using for 2 - 8 years, depending on when they were revised by the state. While it is understandable that teachers will need to align their instruction more closely to the Power Standards perhaps through curriculum mapping in August, we would hope most teachers are familiar with these as they are the standards they've been previously teaching.

***Q: When will CTE get feedback on the Power Standards they created for some 150 classes?***

A: Many CTE teachers have received feedback on their Power Standards. Many CTE teachers have had one-on-one support as Marie has visited teachers in their buildings in an effort to help them develop their Power Standards. Any CTE teacher requesting feedback on their Power Standards needs to simply email them to Nancy Hawkins and Marie Verhaar. CTE teachers will have another opportunity to work on their Power Standards and Learning Targets on March 18th at Truman.

***Q: What are we doing to insure student's accountability? With only summative assessment in the grade book, how can we insure students get the practice they need?***

A: It continues to be the responsibility of each teacher to provide students with many opportunities to practice without penalty through in-class assignments and homework. Teachers will be able to enter practice (homework or other formative assessments) in their

grade book, however, it will not calculate as part of the student's grade. School Districts around the state and nation as well as teachers right here in Federal Way have experienced the change of attitude and motivation in students within a short amount of time after implementing Standards-based Grading. Students discover very quickly that in to be successful on summative assessments, they must do the homework/practice to obtain feedback from their teachers. Teachers here in FWPS have stated that in time, more students are actually completing homework than before. They are taking more ownership in their learning as the emphasis is on what students have actually learned not just on what teachers have taught.

***Q: How is SBE going to work for self-contained (developmentally delayed, career development, etc.)?***

A: Students with intellectual disabilities will be evaluated on alternative standards that are individualized in student IEPs in the areas of Personal Management, Work and Recreation/Leisure. Students in Self Contained programs that have an academic focus such as Career Development will work on alternative grade level power standards and learning targets.

***Q: How is SBE going to work for EBD in SPED?***

A: Students in EBD are often performing on grade level. Their placement in an EBD class is not based on academic need but rather emotional/behavioral need. Teachers will focus on grade level standards and students will be evaluated on the grade level learning targets.

For all SPED students:

In the current system, SPED teachers have hundreds of standards to sift through as they determine which standards a student has yet to master. With the implementation of SBES, the essential standards have been identified, the Power Standards.

***Q: How will SPED students be evaluated in General Education classes and be held to a grade level standard that is above their instructional level?***

A: Students will be held to a grade level standard appropriate to their instructional level.

***Q: Special programs, such as Cambridge, already have set standards in place for those courses. Why are District standards being used at 9/10 instead of the standards designed for the course? The policy states, "The district will have common course codes. Common course codes will have common standards reported in teacher created syllabi." Since Cambridge courses have different course codes than regular courses, should they not have their own set of common standards?***

A: Teams of 9th and 10th grade teachers in AP, IB, and Cambridge have been provided time to compare the Advanced Program standards with the district identified Power Standards. In most cases, there is an alignment and correlation between the content of both sets of standards. Being the highly mobile district that we are, we have students frequently moving from school to school, hence program to program. In order to ensure consistency for students moving from an AP class to a Cambridge class, there must be some consistency. In cases where the 9th and 10th grade Advanced Program standards are dramatically different, programs have been able to substitute Advanced Program standards for Power Standards.

***Q: Do we/will we have funding available to meet the training needs of standards based grading for 2011 and beyond?***

A: Yes, the technology infrastructure of the work has already been established. Our current professional development structure will be recalibrated to support staff implementation needs.

***Q: At (High School), any student that earned a "D" was declared to be "Incomplete". The District has mandated that all teachers prepare a contract. Can the contracts be left to the professional discretion of the teacher?***

A: This is not the district policy. The policy does not start until the 2011-2012 school year. Please refer to the policy for further guidance on which students will receive an incomplete.

***Q: Why are we not requiring students to complete their contracts outside of class time (High School)?***

A: The district will work to establish criteria for incompletes for the 2011/2012 school year.

***Q: Are there going to be dates assigned for testing/formative assessments for all other academic areas, as we have in the math frameworks?***

A: No, the pacing guide and frameworks for math are unique to math and not "set in stone" and many teachers do not follow the dates in "lock step" with the frameworks.

***Q: Will there be Quality Control on all District generated assessments (i.e. spelling/grammar, formatting, bubble sheets)? If so, who?***

A: Yes, teaching staff and teaching support staff will continue to review documents. Pinnacle Instruction will also provide technical support.

***Q: How can teachers convey a student's work ethic/participation in the process of learning, at either the elementary or secondary level?***

A: We are working on various options for staff to use for the upcoming school year. However, learning behaviors will not calculate into academic course grades. Currently, staff can use the comment section of the report card to communicate learning behaviors.

***Q: What is the process for insuring that the curriculum we are currently using within the district supports the Power Standards that are being identified for all subjects?***

A: Teachers will continue to use their professional discretion to design effective daily lessons. In some cases, we have specific district adopted curriculums, which provide more structured instructional materials and assessments.

***Q: What guidelines or support will be available to accommodate multi-grade classrooms and the additional standards they must target and assess?***

A: We are discussing these needs, specifically in science and social studies, and reviewing opportunities, "agreements", and possible resource allocation.

***Q: How are elementary teachers going to teach and assess ALL of the power standards and learning targets meaningfully given our schedule and time constraints? What resources will be provided to assist with this?*** (“Integrating” curriculum has been given as an answer to the question above (time constraints at the elementary level to teach/assess all learning targets and power standards for all subject areas). Science and social studies cannot be taught through pure integration – not with a math framework that holds students/teachers accountable to specific content and a social studies text that is above most students’ reading levels and elementary teachers are expected to teach 5 component reading.)

A: It’s important to remember that Learning Targets are parts of the Power Standard. If you think of it as a mathematical term,  $LT + LT + LT = \text{Power Standard}$ . The Learning Targets are not additional content or skills. Presently, elementary teachers are charged with teaching **ALL** standards in their very tight schedule. With the implementation of our new policy, the shift has focused to LESS is MORE. Next year elementary teachers will be able to focus on the Power Standards and provide the depth that students need rather than trying to “cover” all the standards with the same level of emphasis. This question causes us to ask, “How are elementary teachers teaching Science and Social Studies now?” While we understand time must be allotted for science and social studies instruction in a separate block in addition to the literacy block, schools will have to examine their master schedules as well as what else teachers are teaching to carve out the time to teach the Power Standards. Some schools’ schedule accommodates this on days the student does not have rotation (PE/Music).

Elementary teachers have new Social Studies resources as well as Science Kits. We realize there are some gaps in resources for Science, which are being addressed. Teams will begin identifying various resources and eventually units that can be used to teach the content for which we do not have a Science Kit. Teachers have a vast amount of resources at their fingertips via the worldwide web. Textbooks were never intended to be the sole curriculum covered from the first page to the last. The text is a resource that can be used in many ways as part of highly effective instruction. Some schools have made the decision to purchase leveled text using their building budget that align with the science and social studies content to be used during guided and shared reading.

***Q: Why such a speedy timeline for SBE to be rolled out September 2011? Best practice for teaching focuses on scaffolding instruction so our students can reach mastery; why are we ignoring best practice when it comes to our teachers and not scaffolding this shift to SBE?***

A: We are not ignoring best practices. We are implementing best practices. Our teachers have been working with standards and revising their practices for the past ten years.

***Q: How will the whole child be honored through SBE?***

A: The whole child will be supported in many ways. There will be clear standards to support staff and students in a safe and healthy way. Learning objectives will be clear to challenge each student. In addition, intervention programs will be aligned to engage all students.

***Q: Core reading and math blocks are “sacred” and students are not allowed to be pulled for IEP, ELL or intervention support during these blocks, meaning that these students will miss instruction in other content areas. What is the plan for students with pull out services when***

***they cannot miss reading or math, yet they are being assessed by the general education teacher in the content areas they miss while receiving services?***

A: This is a building decision and may be addressed through a variety of ways. When students are “pulled out” for ELL or SPED services, the ELL or SPED teacher may provide intervention or support using resources with similar science or social studies content. For example, in one school, when the ELL teacher is working with students on language acquisition skills, she may be providing the student vocabulary instruction so he or she is able to better understand the science and social studies content being taught in the general education classroom upon his or her return. In other schools, specialists (interventionists, RR, and ELL) are “pushing into” classrooms rather than “pulling out” to provide intervention in the classroom while working on similar content. Teachers and specialists will continue to explore creative ways to differentiate and meet the needs of students. There are many innovative things currently happening in schools around our district. Schools will want to network together and learn from one another.

***Q: With an average of 10 standards per subject and a minimum of 6 subjects I am concerned about the amount of assessing I will have to complete (which takes away from teaching time). Can you address what this will look like for me?***

A: Perhaps we need to discuss what is meant by assessment. Assessment isn’t just about a paper and pencil “test”, checking for understanding, student presentations, conversations, etc... Every day teachers “assess” their student’s abilities and understanding. We will continue to provide coaching and various supports.

***Q: With reading/math emphasis in primary grades what is the expectation with science and social studies?***

A: The expectation hasn’t changed, in fact it has been made much more manageable. For example, there are over 40 science standards and your Science SBE Team has identified the most essential and narrowed down the focus to approximately 12 Power Standards. Elementary teachers are masters at integration. Science and Social Studies can be naturally integrated into the literacy block through the use of leveled text as a part of guided and shared reading. Building vocabulary and background knowledge through the 5 Component Reading Model provides students extended opportunities to meet the Power Standards. Many teachers use their non-rotation days for teaching science and social studies lessons.

***Q: What will the report card look like at the elementary level? Will it be multiple pages with information about all power standards/learning targets?***

A: BAME, not sure of the specificity of the pages yet.

***Q: Are we considering the developmental appropriateness of the power standards and learning targets (specifically for elementary aged children)?***

A: The Power Standards come from Washington State Standards. The State determines the appropriateness of standards, not the districts. We do not have the luxury of rewriting state standards. As teachers who hold Washington State Teaching Certificates, we are ethically bound to teach these standards. When the teams identify the Power Standards, they are using the criteria of endurance, leverage and readiness. Each year we will be auditing the Power

Standards we selected to ensure they continue to be the most essential, the safety net for all students.

***Q: Why are we not allowed to send unit math tests home? This is an important home/school connection for parents.***

A: This is not a policy, but standard practice in several buildings. We are reviewing and discussing the rationale of this practice.

***Q: The new grade book for elementary will have an impact on office staff that must enroll/withdraw students multiple times into one classroom. What assistance will be provided for this?***

A: This is not a grade book issue, but a student information system (SIS-student plus) issue. We can follow up with ITS on this.

***Q: How will SBE affect students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and students receiving ELL support? These students are pulled from the general education classroom to receive their support services which means they miss instruction in science, social studies, and/or writing.***

A: Working on reviewing different options and work with the district SPED team to identify the needs and what will work best.

***Q: Can we condense the power standards and learning targets BEFORE they go into grade book this fall?***

A: The Standards have already been condensed. For example, a fourth grade student has over 47 standards in science. Now there are 10 Power Standards.

***Q: Interventionists have required materials they must use. Do their materials align with the standards/learning targets? Is there a plan to change the materials?***

A: We are working closely with Title 1 in terms of material alignment and how to ensure the support materials match the Standards and LTs. However, much of what is being used still applies and can be adapted/modified/differentiated to align.

### **Technology Specific:**

***Q: Will there be dedicated time to get training on the grade book? If so, when? How much?***

A: Yes. We are doing much of this now, more so in elementary than secondary, but we will do more in the fall and are going to meet the reasonable needs of all buildings.

***Q: Why are we receiving PD after the fact on the new reporting system?***

A: The reporting system isn't new. We have been using the Grade Book since 2005-06. What is new is how it looks, what is measured, and how assessments play a roll. We will be developing a plan for Grade Book Training for all buildings as well as Pinnacle Instruction.

***Q: Why haven't we received any PD on standards based grading?***

A: We are not a standards based system yet. However, we have provided training and resources are available for many staff members, principals, coaches, etc.... We will also be providing more PD this spring and Fall.