Seven "Secrets" to Transform Learning!

From a culture of Ambiguity and Student Compliance to a Culture of Learning learning

**Ashland Middle School
Ashland, Oregon**

Principals
Conference
2022

Why Are We Excited???

In 2013-14, we began a focused, school-wide approach to...

- Clearly communicate to students what "proficient" looks like in each subject area

- Better report to parents about their child's academic performance

- Align and articulate the essential learnings for each course

Within a few years...

- 93% of students report "rubrics help me understand what the teachers wants me to do on an assignment."

- 91% of students report that they, "Understand why I got the score I did on an assignment."

- 85% of students report that, "I know what to do if I am not yet proficient on an assignment or test."

Within a few years...

"Now that I'm so clear on what I want my students to do, I need to go back and look at my instruction to be sure I'm teaching it!"

-AMS Teacher

Within a few years...

- Our data validates this approach

- We now have a powerful tool to predict performance on SBAC

- It's helping us close the acheivement gap

- Learned some "Secrets"

"Secret" #1

Focus – Plan – Timeline

And MEAN IT!

Focus – Plan – Timeline

- **Focus**
  - **Choose a single high-leverage reform and commit to making it happen**

- **Plan**
  - **Assemble team**
  - **Research best practices**
  - **Identify stakeholders and needs**

- **Publish Your Timeline**
  - **Develop a multi-year timeline for implementation**
  - **Assess progress and revise annually**

Five Obstacles to Grading Reform
-Thomas Guskey

"…one of our oldest traditions in grading. It comes from the belief that grades should serve to *differentiate students* on the basis of demonstrated talent. Students who show superior talent receive high grades, whereas those who display lesser talent receive lower grades.

Although seemingly innocent, the implications of this belief are significant and troubling. Those who enter the profession of education must answer one basic, philosophical question:

Is my purpose to *select* talent or *develop* it?"

Five Obstacles to Grading Reform

-Thomas Guskey

"If … your purpose as an educator is to ***develop*** talent, then you go about your work differently. First, you clarify what you want students to learn and be able to do. Then you do everything possible to ensure that ***all*** students learn those things well.

If your purpose is to develop talent, this is what you strive to accomplish."

Our Focus

Standards-Based Proficiency Grading and Reporting

- ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS: Identify clear student achievement goals

- ASSESSMENT: Record and report student performance

- COMMUNICATION: Clearly to students and parents

- RUBRICS: Ensure students know what they need to demonstrate to reach the achievement goals

"Secret" #2

Choose the RIGHT

Research

What Others Have to Say

Rick Stiggins – <u>The Perfect Assessment System</u>

Thomas Guskey – *Five Obstacles to Grading Reform*

Rick Wormeli – *It's Time to Stop Averaging Grades*

Cathy Vatterott – <u>Rethinking Grading</u>

Laura McKenna– *Will Letter Grades Survive?*

John Hattie – <u>Visible Learning</u>

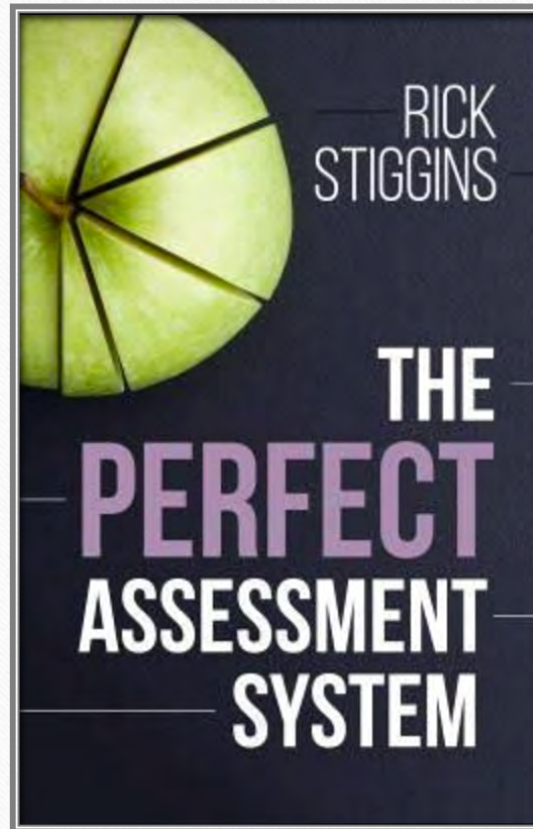**Dylan Wiliam –** Keeping Learning on Track

Rethinking Grading

-Cathy Vatterott

"NCLB exposed a dirty little secret - *grades don't equate with performance on a standardized test.* Some students who were compliant and hard workers got good grades but did poorly on the standardized tests. Some students tested well but received poor grades because of missing assignments, late work, or bad behavior.

We came to realize that often grades didn't reflect proficiency in learning at all."

Grading for Equity

-Joe Feldman

"Grades can clearly and more objectively describe what students know and can do. Grading practices can encourage students not to cheat but to learn, to persevere when they fail and not lose hope, and to take more ownership and agency for their achievement. And the power of these approaches can be especially transformative for struggling students – students who have been beaten down year after year by a punishing grading system of negative feedback and unredeemable failure."

In the Perfect System

- **The meaning of academic success is always clear to all – individually and collectively!**

- The exercises and scoring schemes can accurately and representatively reflect the learnings targets actually being made.

- We will *link our assessment practices to student motivation* in constructive ways that keep *all* students believing success is within reach if they keep striving.

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Student response to assessment results becomes:

- I understand these results
- I know what I need to do next
- I'm okay
- I choose to keep trying

Hattie

By teaching students how to **self-assess** based on **clear criteria**, teachers empower students to become "self-regulated learners" **able to monitor, regulate, and guide their own learning**.

Hattie

The reason students never develop these traits is that **our monopoly on assessment, feedback, and grading** has trained students to adopt **an attitude of total passivity** in the learning process.

Hattie's Effect Size

Rank	Influence	Effect Size
1	Student Expectations *	1.44
2	Piagetian Programs	1.28
3	Response to Interventions	1.07
4	Teacher Credibility *	0.90
5	Providing Formative Evaluation *	0.90
6	Micro Teaching	0.88
7	Classroom Discussion	0.80
8	Interventions for Learning Disabled	0.77
9	Teacher Clarity *	0.75
10	Feedback *	0.73

#2 Research

"Secret" #3

Set the Standard

Pull back the curtain

Rubrics 2.0

Problems with Traditional Rubrics

- **Often vague**
- **Too general**
- **Subjective**

Better Than Proficient	Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Not Proficient
Content is **mostly** accurate and **consistently clear**.	Content is **somewhat accurate** and **fairly clear**.	Content is **somewhat vague** or is **only partly clear**.	Content is unclear or not related to.
Writer exhibits control in development of ideas.	Write exhibits **some control** in development of ideas.	Writer exhibits **inconsistent control** in the development of ideas.	Writer exhibits no control in the development of ideas.

Rubrics 2.0

Transparent and Explicit
- **Distinct levels of learning – "PROFICIENT"**
- **Clearly defining expectations at each level**
- **Provide effective reporting on what students can do**

Rubrics 2.0

Efficient and Effective
- **Used to make Assignment Rubrics**
- **Reinforce important essential skills and knowledge**
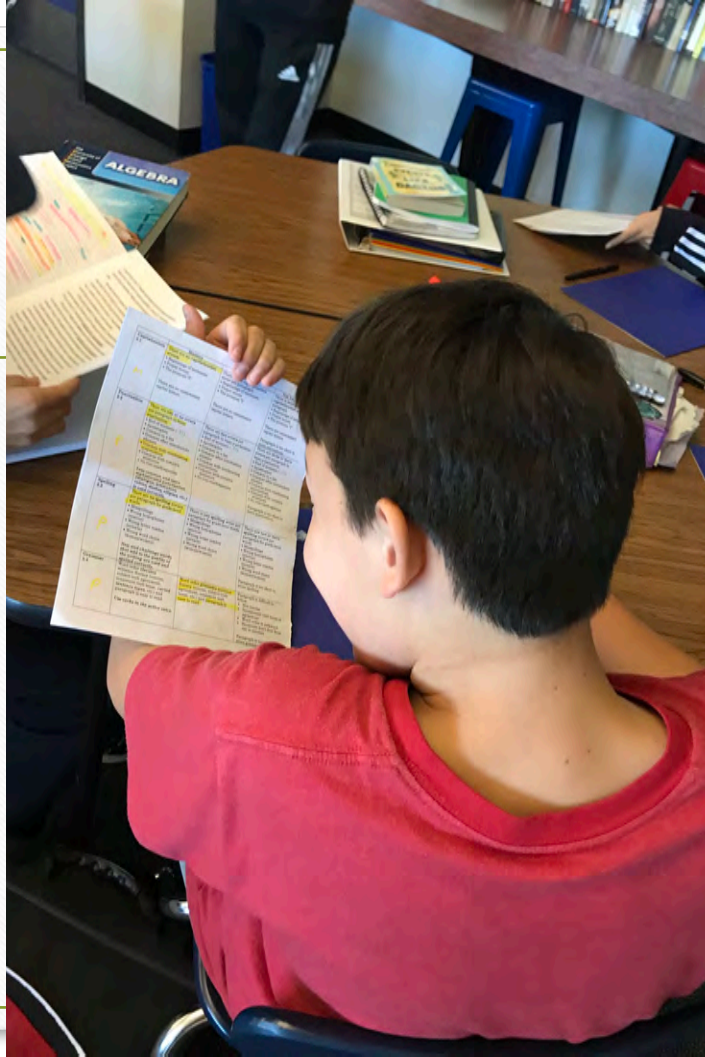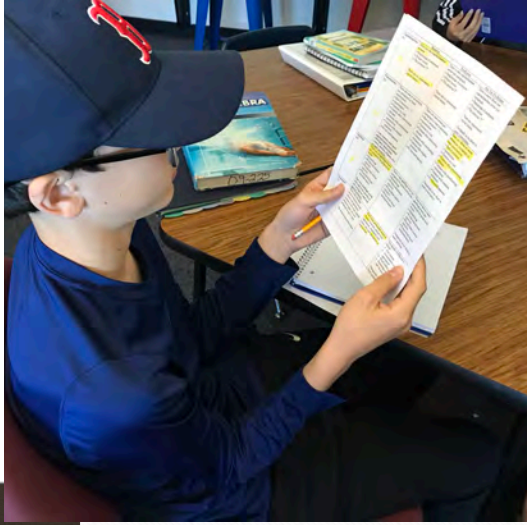
Essential Learning

Supportive Learnings

Supportive Learning Language

6ᵗʰ Grade Language Arts Essential Learning #4: Read, understand, and interact with literature.
CCSS ELA Literacy 6.RL.10

	Mastery	Proficient	Not Yet Proficient
Vocabulary 4.1	Ask about and look up definitions when words are unknown. *Use the vocabulary in another context.*	Ask about and look up definitions when words are unknown.	Does not ask about or look up definitions when words are unknown or defines words incorrectly.
Questions 4.2	Ask *who, what, where,* and *when* questions about characters, setting, and plot. *Ask why and how questions to investigate cause and effect, predictions, reasoning, etc.*	Ask *who, what, where,* and *when* questions about characters, setting, and plot.	Does not ask *who, what, where,* or *when* questions about characters, setting, or plot.
Connections 4.3	Describe how an event from the text is similar or different to your own life or experience. *Connect text to other literature (stories, dramas, poem), current events, media, etc.*	Describe how an event from the text is similar or different to your own life or experience.	Does not describe how an event from the text is similar or different to your own life or experience.
Figurative Language 4.4	Identify figurative language (metaphors, similes, etc.) and explain what it means. *Make a prediction or draw a conclusion about the story, theme, or characters based on an understanding of the figurative language.*	Identify figurative language (metaphors, similes, etc.) and explain what it means.	Does not identify figurative language or does not explain what it means.
Visualize 4.5	Create a picture or image of the sensory language from the story (what it looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels like). *Create a picture or image of the figurative language (metaphors and similes).*	Create a picture or image of the sensory language from the story (what it looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels like).	Does not create a picture or image of the sensory language from the story. The picture or image created does not represent the sensory language from the story.

"Secret" #4

BUILD and PROVIDE

the Tools

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Ashland Middle School
Rubric for Rubrics

	Mastery	**Proficient**	**Not Yet Proficient**
Essential Learning	The Essential Learning articulates *all* of the following criteria: ▪ Endurance (transcends a single unit of study) ▪ Leverage (applies to more than one content area) ▪ Readiness (prepares students for next level of learning) **The Essential Learning is written in student-friendly language.**	The Essential Learning articulates *two* of the following criteria: ▪ Endurance (transcends a single unit of study) ▪ Leverage (applies to more than one content area) ▪ Readiness (prepares students for next level of learning)	The Essential Learning articulates *only one or none* of the following criteria: ▪ Endurance (transcends a single unit of study) ▪ Leverage (applies to more than one content area) ▪ Readiness (prepares students for next level of learning)
Supportive Learning Alignment	The Supportive Learnings cover each of the discrete skills that make up the Essential Learning. **Supportive Learnings are written as a key word or concise phrase (2-3 words).**	The Supportive Learnings cover each of the discrete skills that make up the Essential Learning.	The number of Supportive Learnings does not cover all the components of the Essential Learning or there are extra/unnecessary Supportive Learnings.
Supportive Learning Language	Language explicitly defines what a student needs to do or know and is objective.	Language explicitly defines what a student needs to do or know and is objective.	Language is not explicit or is unclear and/or subjective.

Rubric Dos	Rubric Don'ts
Do use language that is clear, objective, and not arguable or open to interpretation.	**Don't** use descriptors that are subjective.
Pre-filming preparation includes a map of the story with the beginning, middle, and end labeled and a description of the actions.	*Give best effort . . . Is excited . . . Turn in high quality . . . Is entertaining to watch . . .*
Do differentiate between proficiency levels by adding a higher thinking skill (analyze, predict, justify, evaluate, etc).	**Don't** differentiate between proficiency levels by using percentages.
Compare the relevance of specific references (words, symbols, items, etc.) in the historical document from when it was written to now.	*Correctly answer 80% of literal recall questions about details and overall plot/content from the text.*
Do use a qualifier that is definitive.	**Don't** use frequencies that are nebulous.
Name all five elements of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and	*Sometimes, often, mostly, regularly,*

Do assess something you *know* a student can or can't do.

Calculate density of a solid or liquid and use appropriate metric units (g/mL).

Don't try to assess something you *think* a student can do.

Student understands . . . Student is unable to . . . Student likes . . .

"Secret" #5

LEAD targeted, ongoing, and facilitated

Professional Development

The Work

- **Professional Development**
  - **All Staff Trainings**
  - **Content Area PLC days**

Ashland Middle School
Facilitators' Checklist

✓ Remind the group to start by writing the **Proficient** level first.

✓ Review: *Proficiency is the level that you expect every student in the class to achieve after receiving the instruction and practicing the skill.*

✓ Ask questions below as appropriate to write and refine the Supportive Learning Language:

- What does Proficient look like for this discrete skill?
- Think about one of your strong students, what does the work they produce look like?
- If the students are doing that (i.e. writing an attention grabbing introduction) what does it look like? Can you give an example?
- How would you know that the student got it or understood it?
- Can the Supportive Learning Language be interpreted in more than one way? If so, clarify by adding examples or being more specific:

> *There is an articulate attention-grabbing introduction.* → *There is an attention-grabbing introduction (includes a fact, anecdote, question, quote, etc.).*

✓ Check to see that everyone has the same understanding of definitions.

| Summarize 3.1 | Compose a summary that contains the central ideas **and captures the meaning and message** of the text.

Isolate the most critical details which are necessary for a | Compose a summary that contains the central ideas of the text. | Summary lacks central ideas or relevant support.

Unnecessary details are used instead of necessary ones. |

"Secret" #6

Quality Control

Be ready to step on toes!

☑ Rubric Evaluation Checklist

- **Is the language within the rubric:**
  - ☐ **Objective (clear, explicit)?**
  - ☐ **Subjective (open to interpretation)?**

- **Is it written in student friendly language?**

- **Could a parent** grade the assignment based solely on the language?

- **Formatting?**

- **Mastery – application of knowledge**

6th Grade Language Arts Essential Learning #4: Read, understand, and interact with literature.
CCSS ELA Literacy 6.RL.10

	Mastery	Proficient	Not Yet Proficient
Vocabulary 4.1	Learn ten new challenging vocabulary words from text that enhance student vocabulary.	Learn five new challenging vocabulary words from text.	Does not learn new vocabulary from text.
Questions 4.2	Ask five thoughtful questions that show insight into the story, poem, or novel.	Ask at least three thoughtful questions about the story, poem, or novel.	Does not ask questions about the text.
Connections 4.3	Connect text, in a significantly meaningful way, to show understanding of how the story relates to your own life or experience.	Connect text, in a meaningful way, to show understanding of how the story relates to your own life.	Cannot connect text to own life or connection to text is not meaningful.

6th Grade Language Arts Essential Learning #4: Read, understand, and interact with literature. *CCSS ELA Literacy 6.RL.10*

	Mastery	Proficient	Not Yet Proficient
Vocabulary 4.1	Ask about and look up definitions when words are unknown. *Use the vocabulary in another context.*	Ask about and look up definitions when words are unknown.	Does not ask about or look up definitions when words are unknown or defines words incorrectly.
Questions 4.2	Ask *who, what, where,* and *when* questions about characters, setting, and plot. *Ask why and how questions to investigate cause and effect, predictions, reasoning, etc.*	Ask *who, what, where,* and *when* questions about characters, setting, and plot.	Does not ask *who, what, where,* or *when* questions about characters, setting, or plot.
Connections 4.3	Describe how an event from the text is similar or different to your own life	Describe how an event from the text is similar or different to	Does not describe how an event from the text is similar or

☑ **Rubric Evaluation Checklist**

- **Is the language within the rubric:**
  - ❑ **Objective (clear, explicit)?**
  - ❑ **Subjective (open to interpretation)?**

- **Is it written in student friendly language?**

- **Could a parent** grade the assignment based solely on the language?
- **Formatting?**
- **Mastery – application of knowledge**

"Secret" #7

Create the Products - See Results

Ashland Middle School Essential Learning Rubrics

6th Grade

6th Grade Language Arts
Essential Learning #1 Citing Evidence
Essential Learning #2 Plot Elements
Essential Learning #3 Summarizing
Essential Learning #4 Literature
Essential Learning #5 Writing Process

6th Grade Math
Essential Learning #1 Math Habits
Essential Learning #2 Problem Solving
Essential Learning #3 Operations
Essential Learning #4 Decimals
Essential Learning #5 Fractions
Essential Learning #6 Percents

6th Grade Science/Social Studies
Essential Learning #1 Investigation
Essential Learning #2 Graphing
Essential Learning #3 Matter
Essential Learning #4 Maps
Essential Learning #5 Timelines

6th Grade Art
Essential Learning #1 Focus
Essential Learning #2 Principles
Essential Learning #3 Creative Process

6th Grade Band
Essential Learning #1 Musicianship
Essential Learning #2 Cooperation
Essential Learning #3 Ensemble Member

6th Grade Health
Essential Learning #1 Communication
Essential Learning #2 Goal Setting
Essential Learning #3 Advocacy

6th Grade Orchestra
Essential Learning #1 Music Literacy
Essential Learning #2 Instrumental Skills
Essential Learning #3 Ensemble Skills
Essential Learning #4 Personal Management

6th Grade PE
Essential Learning #1 Motor Skills
Essential Learning #2 Rules
Essential Learning #3 Self-Management

6th Grade Video Productions
Essential Learning #1 Multimedia
Essential Learning #2 Storyline
Essential Learning #3 Process
Essential Learning #4 Collaboration

6th Grade Science INC
Essential Learning #1 Atoms and Elements
Essential Learning #2 Energy
Essential Learning #3 Personal Management

6th Grade Reading
Essential Learning #1 Personal Management

7th/8th Grade

7th/8th Grade Language Arts
Essential Learning #1 Conventions
Essential Learning #2 Reading
Essential Learning #3 Narrative Writing
Essential Learning #4 Explanatory Essay
Essential Learning #5 Speaking

7th/8th Grade Social Studies
Essential Learning #1 Personal Management
Essential Learning #2 Geography
Essential Learning #3 Impact
Essential Learning #4 Government
Essential Learning #5 Sources

7th/8th Grade Science
Essential Learning #1 Graphing
Essential Learning #2 Engineering
Essential Learning #3 Investigating
Essential Learning #4 Models
Essential Learning #5 How Scientists Think

Beginning Spanish
Essential Learning #1 Participation
Essential Learning #2 Activities, Hobbies
Essential Learning #3 Family, Friends, Pets
Essential Learning #4 School
Essential Learning #5 Food

Advanced Spanish
Essential Learning #1 Participation
Essential Learning #2 Clothing
Essential Learning #3 Weather, Calendar
Essential Learning #4 Town, Community
Essential Learning #5 House, Home

7th Grade Math
Essential Learning #1 Math Habits
Essential Learning #2 Problem Solving
Essential Learning #3 +/- Numbers
Essential Learning #4 Equations
Essential Learning #5 Proportions
Essential Learning #6 Area and Volume

Pre-Algebra
Essential Learning #1 Math Habits
Essential Learning #2 Problem Solving
Essential Learning #3 +/- Numbers
Essential Learning #4 Equations
Essential Learning #5 Proportions
Essential Learning #6 Area and Volume
Essential Learning #7 Geometry

8th Grade Math
Essential Learning #1 Math Habits
Essential Learning #2 Problem Solving
Essential Learning #3 Linear Equations
Essential Learning #4 Systems
Essential Learning #5 Geometry

Algebra
Essential Learning #1 Math Habits
Essential Learning #2 Problem Solving
Essential Learning #3 Linear Equations
Essential Learning #4 Systems
Essential Learning #5 Exponents
Essential Learning #6 Functions
Essential Learning #7 Quadratic Equations

7th/8th Grade Art
Essential Learning #1 Focus
Essential Learning #2 Principles
Essential Learning #3 Creative Process

7th/8th Grade Band
Essential Learning #1 Musicianship
Essential Learning #2 Cooperation
Essential Learning #3 Ensemble Member

7th/8th Grade Debate
Essential Learning #1 Speech
Essential Learning #2 Argument
Essential Learning #3 Collaboration

7th/8th Grade Drama
Essential Learning #1 Collaboration
Essential Learning #2 Creative Process
Essential Learning #3 Present

7th/8th Grade Health
Essential Learning #1 Health Information
Essential Learning #2 Decision Making
Essential Learning #3 Wellness Triangle

7th/8th Grade Orchestra
Essential Learning #1 Music Literacy
Essential Learning #2 Instrumental Skills
Essential Learning #3 Ensemble Skills
Essential Learning #4 Personal Management

7th/8th Grade PE
Essential Learning #1 Motor Skills
Essential Learning #2 Rules
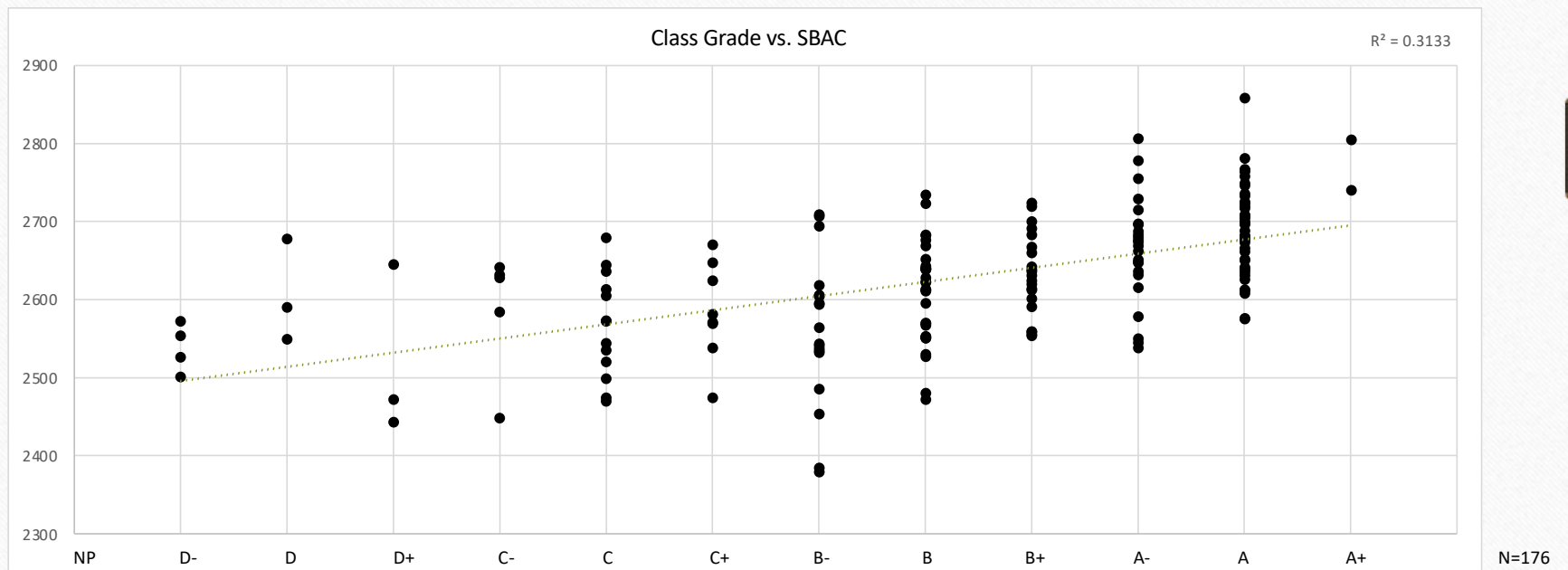Essential Learning #3 Self-Management

7th/8th Grade Video Productions
Essential Learning #1 Multimedia
Essential Learning #2 Storyline
Essential Learning #3 Process
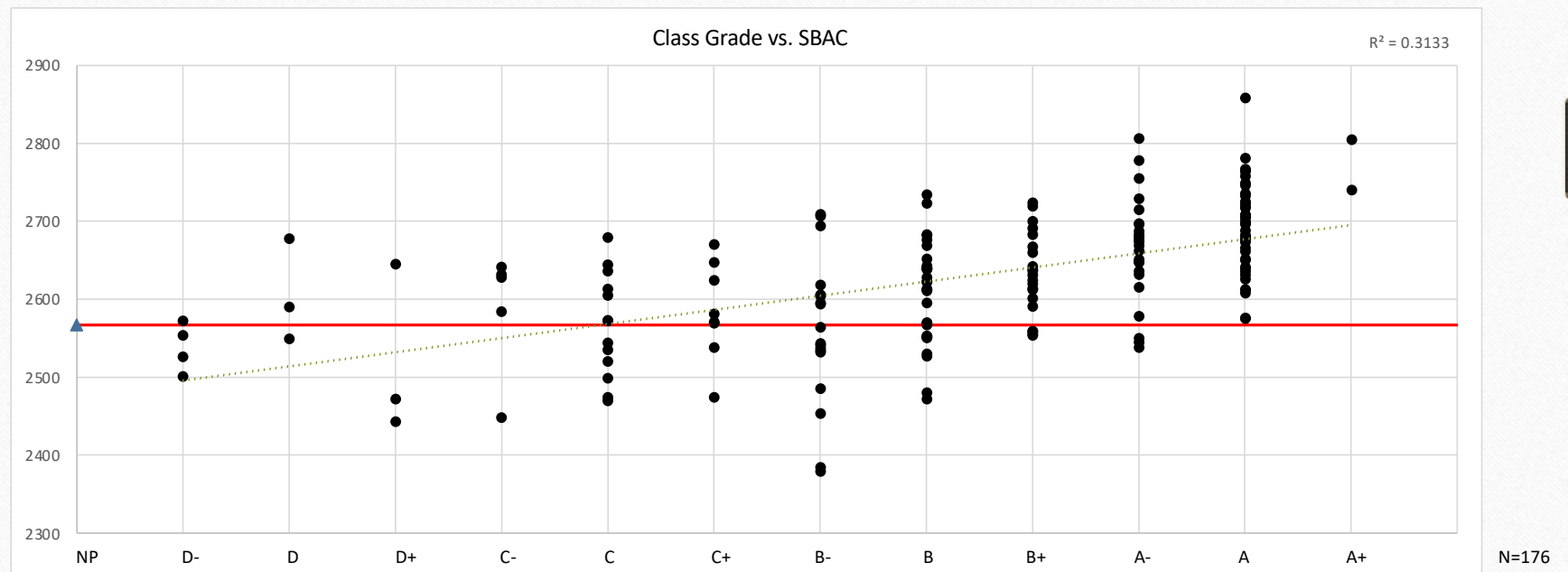Essential Learning #4 Collaboration

#7 Products

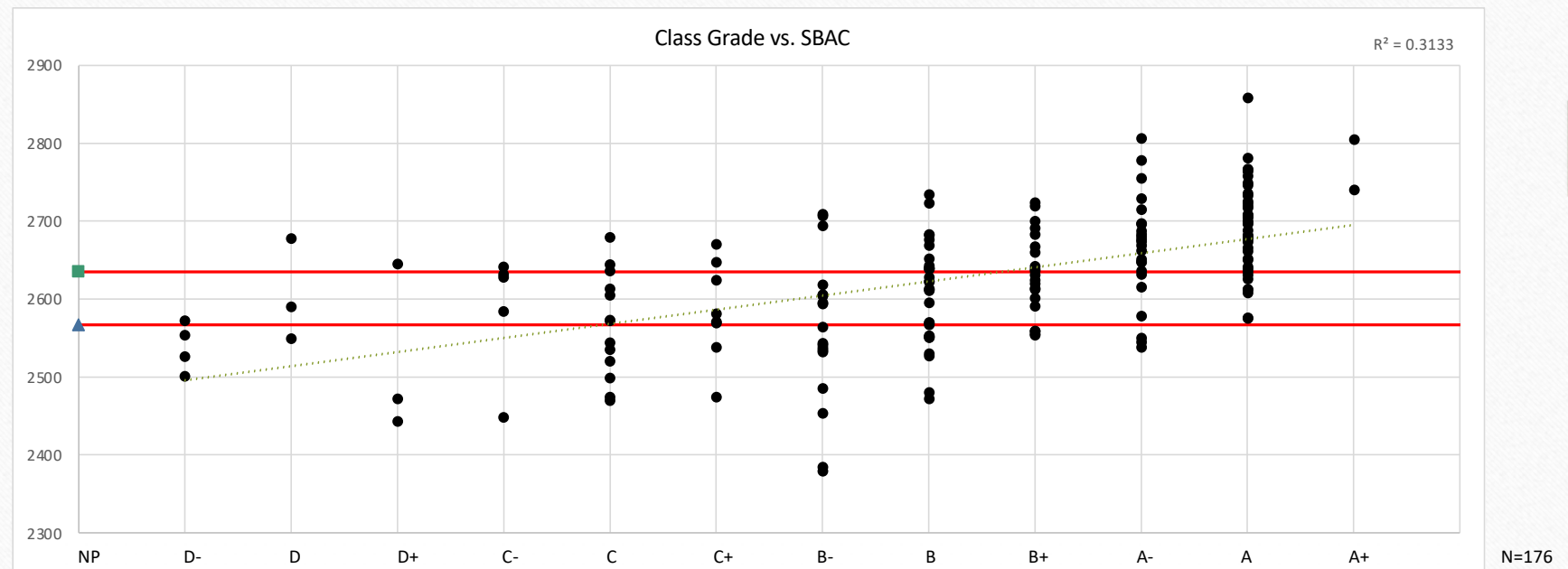# Proficiency Scores and SBAC

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Math 7th Grade

Class Grade vs. SBAC

$R^2 = 0.3133$

N=176

Math 7th Grade

Class Grade vs. SBAC

$R^2 = 0.3133$

N=176

Math 7ᵗʰ Grade

Class Grade vs. SBAC — R² = 0.3133, N=176
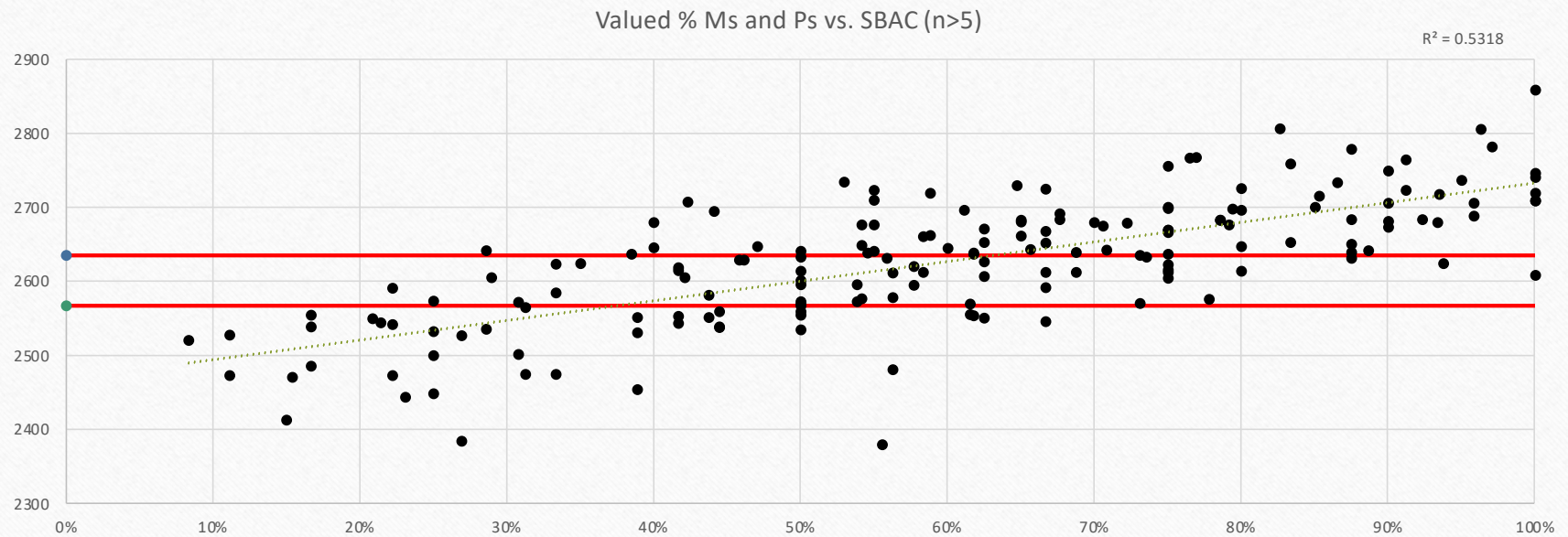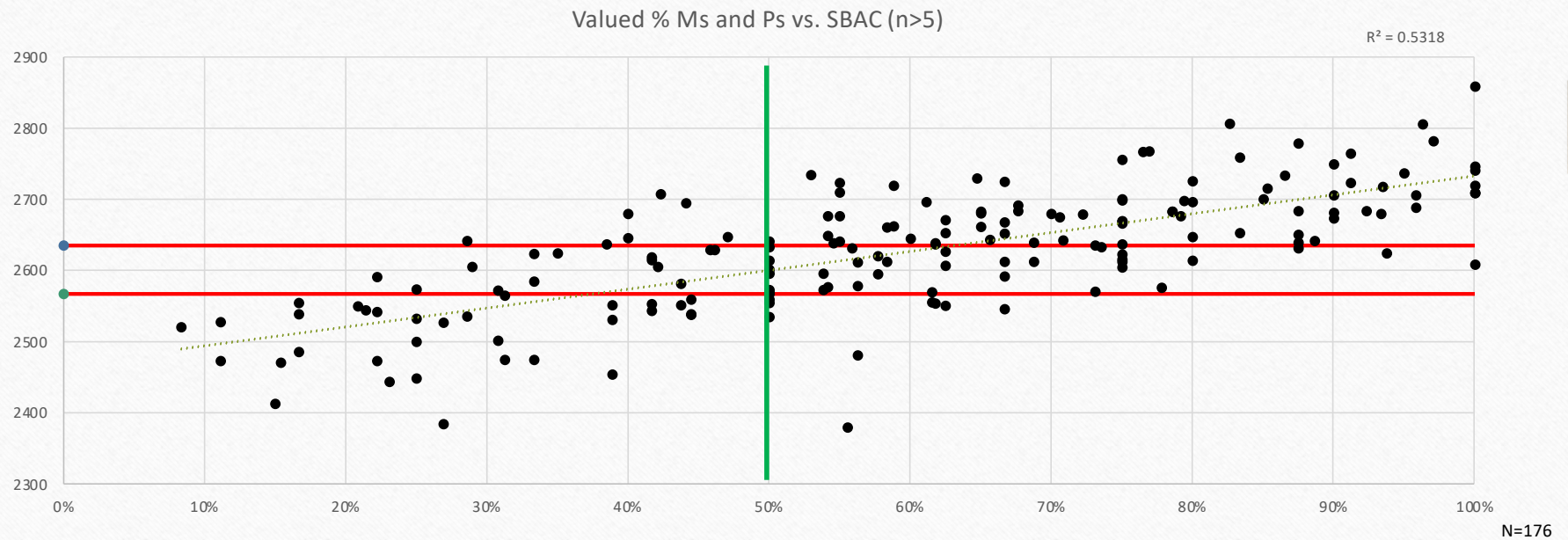
Percentage of Proficient or better

- Ms valued at 2
- Ps valued at 1
- Ns valued at 0

- If there were a total of 10 Supportive Learnings scored:
  - 20 total possible points (10 x 2)
  - 5 Ms x 2 = 10
  - 3 Ps x 1 = 3
  - 13 total points out of 20 possible = 65%
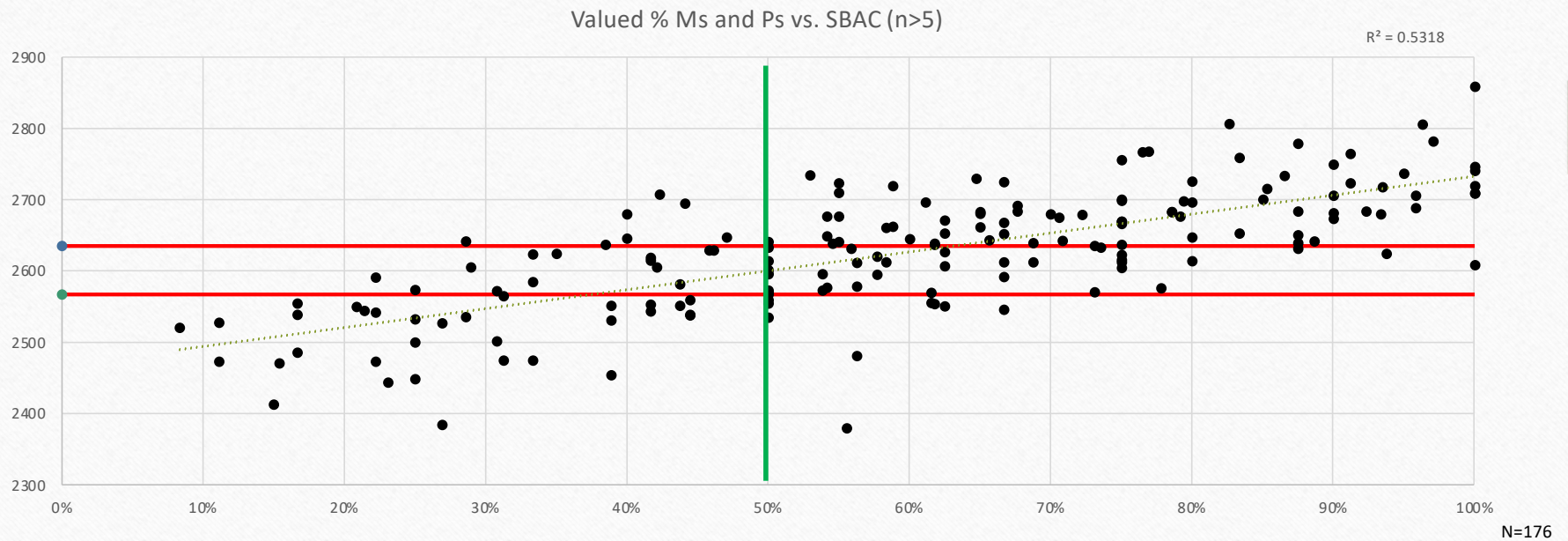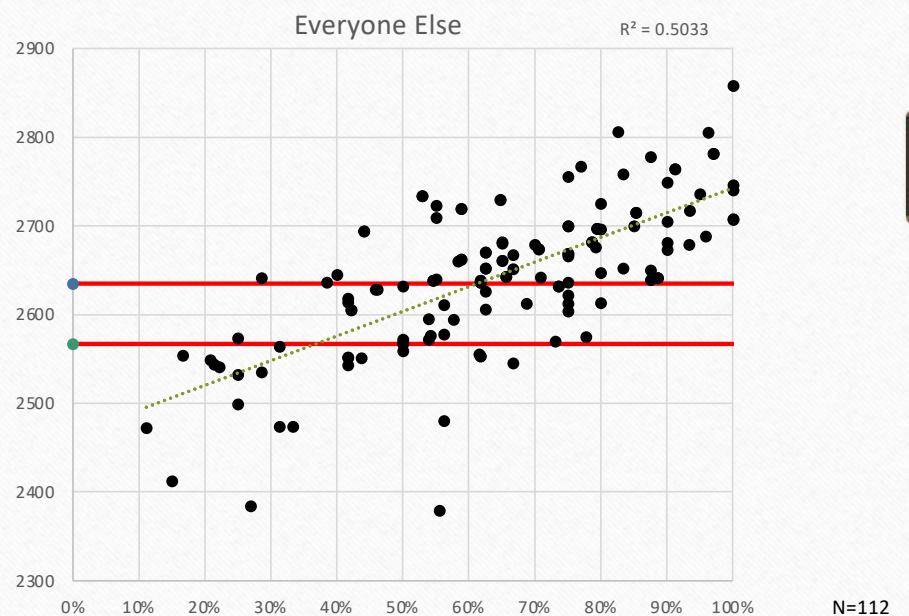
Math 7th Grade

Valued % Ms and Ps vs. SBAC (n>5)

R² = 0.5318

N=176

Math 7th Grade

Valued % Ms and Ps vs. SBAC (n>5)

$R^2 = 0.5318$

N=176

95% of students who score above 50% Valued Ms/Ps Meet or Exceed SBAC

Valued % Ms and Ps vs. SBAC (n>5)

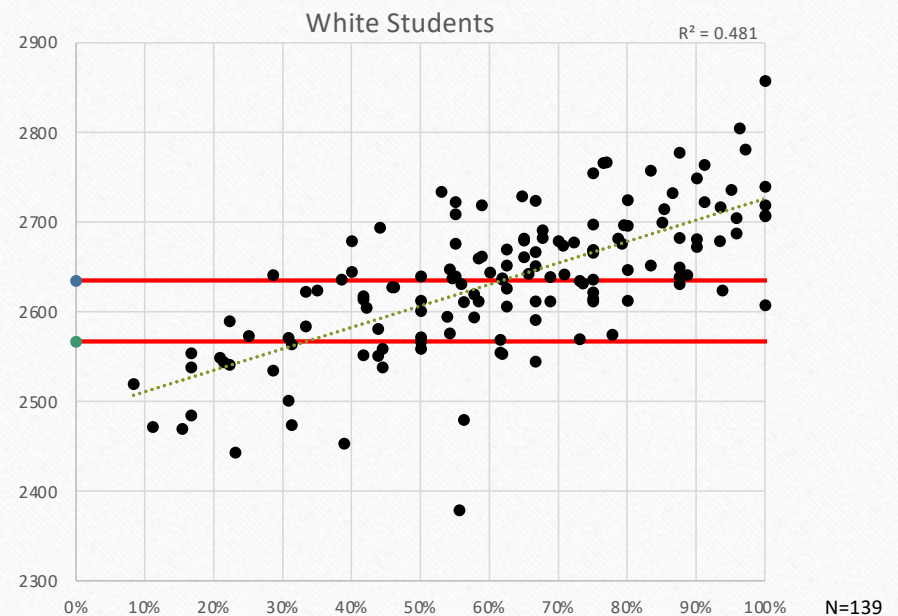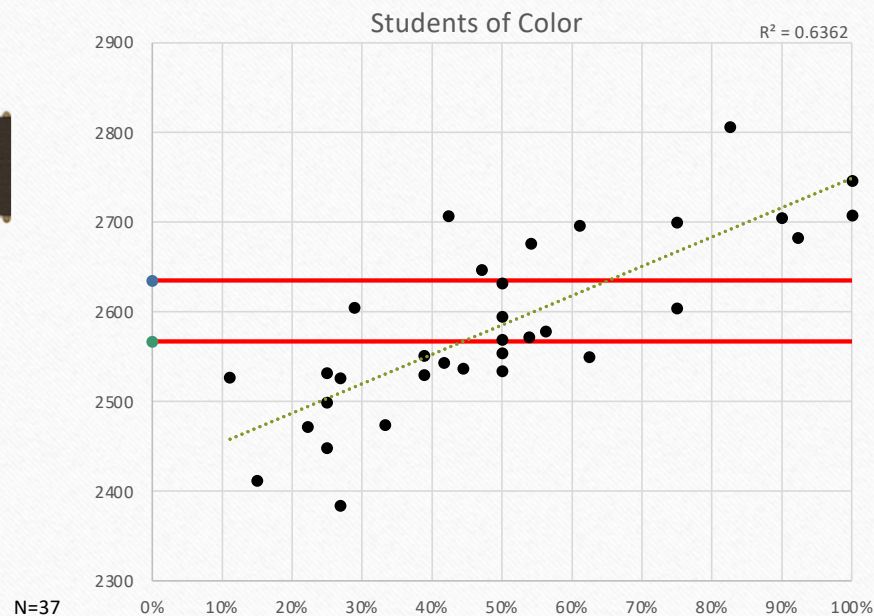$R^2 = 0.5318$

N=176

Economically disadvantaged students compared to everyone else in 7th math?

N=64   N=112
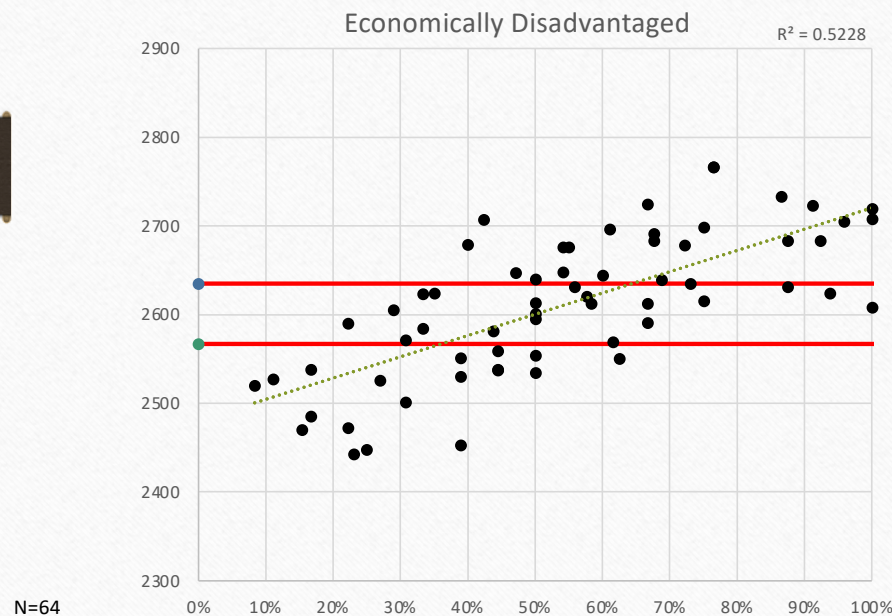
Students of color compared to everyone else in 7ᵗʰ math?

Students of Color — R² = 0.6362 — N=37

White Students — R² = 0.481 — N=139

Bonus
"Secret"

Communication Tools

Say what you mean!

Often and Regularly

- Develop a communication plan for staff, students and parents

- Newsletters, mailings, student conferences

- Meetings with parents

- Surveys (teachers, parents, students)

- Online access to information (research, rubrics, reports)

- Proficiency Reports

Communication Tools

Students and Parents

- Student Achievement Report

Teachers

- Rubric Generator

- **P**roficiency **A**chievement **R**eport

- Feedback Loop

Ashland Middle School

100 Walker Ave. Ashland, OR 97520   Grade: 6   Homeroom: Street   October 16th, 2018 11:34 AM

Mastery

M

Proficient

P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P

Not Yet Proficient

N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N

** or ■ = Not Yet Assessed   I = In Progress

☰ Language Arts -- Street ✉			
P P P P P N N N N N			
Actively engage in class using effective student habits.			P
Community	P	Participation	P
Personal Responsibility	P	Organization	P
Identify and define the elements of plot structure in a story and differentiate between major and minor elements.			I
Define Major Elements of a Plotline	N	Identify Major Plot Elements	**
Application of Major Events	N		
Write a summary of the text using main events and supporting details.			I
Identify Central Idea or Theme	**	Summarize	**
Use Own Words	N		
Read, understand, and interact with literature.			I

☰ Math -- Hardy ✉			8
P P P N N N N			
Actively engage in class using productive math habits and behaviors.			N
Community	P	Activate Self Learning	P
Organization Work Habits	N		
Make sense of problems, persevere, and communicate math reasoning when solving problems.			I
Make Sense of Problem	P	Strategies	**
Communication	**	Solution	**
Use order of operations to solve multi-step equations.			**
Step 1 - Groupings	**	Step 2 - Exponents	**
Step 3 - Multiply/Divide	**	Step 4 - Addition/Subtraction	**
Use standard algorithm for decimal mathematical operations.			I
Add Decimals	**	Subtract Decimals	**

Questions

- **Steve Retzlaff, Principal**
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- **Katherine Holden, Associate Principal**
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Links

- Proficiency Report

- AMS Sharepoint

- Rubrics

- PAR