



September 2012

Dear Parents and Students,

Beginning this school year, all teachers in our secondary schools are changing how they evaluate student work. This letter is one of a variety of ways in which we will inform families about these changes. Teachers will also communicate individually with parents when they share their course grading expectations as well as in other types of communications.

The changes stem from a 2011 state law which requires that a student's academic abilities be assessed using standards-based proficiency measures. Our district will make this transition beginning this fall while also maintaining the current letter grades now given in all secondary schools.

There are four key factors in these changes:

- Oregon's new graduation requirements include passing state exams in reading, writing and math in order to receive a regular diploma.
- Course requirements to receive high school credit and meet college entrance requirements have become much more rigorous.
- The growing emphasis on standards and performance assessments makes current reporting practices inadequate.
- The Medford School Board has set a goal to extend student learning beyond minimal levels of proficiency.

The primary purpose for grading in our district is to communicate academic progress to students, their families, employers, and post-secondary institutions. A grade should reflect what a student learns and is able to do in a course. Non-academic factors like attendance, attitude, behavior, and completion of practice work are valuable, but will be communicated separately via Career Related Learning indicators or comments on progress reports.

Beginning this year, all grading and reporting will be based on state adopted standards and not on a curve. Students are not in competition with each other for the highest score, but rather are striving to master the course content and meet or exceed state learning standards.

Below is the general time-frame we are pursuing:

2013-2014 School Year:

- Fully implement proficiency-based teaching and learning at all secondary schools
- Roll out of a new report card, progress reports, and PAL
- Continue parent and student focus groups at individual school sites

Throughout this year, schools will hold various parent meetings to communicate additional aspects of the changes we are making to the grading system. As things evolve, please continue to check our district website for the most up-to-date information. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's school or teacher in this change with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Phil Long, Superintendent