IMPLEMENTING STANDARDS-BASED GRADING AT ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF DELAWARE

by

Nidal Saleh Abuasi

An education leadership portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This Educational Leadership Portfolio (ELP) addresses efforts and activities aimed at implementing standards-based grading (SBG) at the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), a private co-ed elementary and middle school serving a diverse population of approximately 160 students. In the year 2018-2019, the school began efforts to transition to standards-based learning (SBL) through changes of curricula, delivering SBL professional development, introducing technology tools to support SBL, and communicating the change to stakeholders to secure their support. To continue with the transition, IAD began implementing SBG in grades 1-5 in 2019-2020.

In this ELP, I addressed the essential activities I headed as a school leader to implement SBG in three domains: professional development, technology use, and parent buy-in. I addressed the school's professional development activities' scope to build teacher capacity to implement SBG. Through a standards-focused professional development plan that combined the benefit of using outside experts, follow-up classroom activities, and teacher collaboration through our professional learning community, we improved teacher capacity to facilitate SBG implementation. I also addressed the strategies implemented to communicate the change to parents and stakeholders to elicit community buy-in through various information and interaction tools such as open houses, parent-teacher conferences, social media, the grade book, and the report card. Furthermore, I identified the technology systems and tools employed to create a technology environment supportive of student learning, assessment, and grading

coupled with training and ongoing technology support that enhanced teachers' leverage to SBG. As part of my ELP, I have developed 12 evidence-based artifacts to inform me as a school leader, support implementation in the three domains mentioned above, and evaluate progress in the first year of implementation.

SBL and SBG implementation is an ongoing process that will span the future life of IAD, and the activities addressed in my ELP constitute the beginning of that process. This ELP recommends planning for professional development, parent-buy in, and technology support as essential for implementing SBG. An integrated effort to encompass those three components will ensure the transition is seamless and student learning is uninterrupted. Building teacher capacity to implement SBG is essential. The change must be evidence-based using experts' help to establish schoolwide practices and dispel unfounded traditional practices and beliefs. Sustained efforts to keep parents informed and involved must be consistent, meaningful, and use various venues and school structures. The use of technology should be at the core of SBG. A student management system housing standards-based assessment, a grade book, and a report card is imperative. Sustained technology support and training on the use of technology is critical to seamless implementation.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

At the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), we have explored ways and means to improve student learning. The school's dearth of resources has not hindered efforts to raise the bar of achievement expectations for our children. Even though, as a private school, state law or district regulations cannot mandate teaching within the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) framework, our teachers and administrators are committed to providing our children with standards-based learning (SBL). Student mastery of the standards will be communicated clearly and accurately to all stakeholders through a standards-based approach to reporting and grading.

Standards-based grading (SBG) is essential to communicate student academic proficiency to all stakeholders accurately and fairly. Parents need to know how well their children perform to make informed decisions about interventions, enrichment, and school choice. Board members and administrators need to make informed decisions that involve planning and resource allocation that will affect our children's learning and growth. Teachers need to have accurate grades to inform the modification and improvement of their teaching strategies. Students also need to know and understand their grades accurately to set learning goals and assume ownership of their learning.

Throughout history, every major educational reform initiative has typically started with a clarification of standards and curriculum. Schools then move to the creation of appropriate assessments as evidence of the level of learning. Next, schools use data

from the assessments and focus on the quality of instruction to meet established goals and standards effectively. Only then do educators typically address grading practices and communicate the learning level to students and parents (Guskey & Brookhart, 2019). "We take grading on last and always with some reluctance because changing grading policies and practices means challenging some of education's longest-held traditions" (Guskey & Brookhart, 2019, p. 1).

IAD initiated SBL during the 2018-2019 schoolyear. The initiative involved curricula, instructional strategies, and assessment. The school previously used Pearson's Reading Street and Envision Mathematics for language arts and mathematics for eight years before introducing EL Education and Eureka Math. Both new curricula are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and structurally designed into modules and units to address the shifts and progressions called for by the standards.

As the school principal, I led the shift to the new curricula based on my desire and those of the school administration to move the school system to an SBL environment in support of the school vision, "to educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful and safe environment; providing rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens"("Vision | Islamic Academy of Delaware," 2019). At IAD, we realized that the Common Core State Standards raised the bar for all students to create better college and work outcomes and establish a common measure to evaluate all students.

The overriding goal to implement SBL has been evident in curriculum planning, teaching strategies, learning practices, student assessment, grading, and reporting. We understand the transition to SBL is a serious and challenging change that requires effort,

time, and resources. Extraordinary teamwork is necessary for success. An essential component of SBL is communicating a clear, accurate, and transparent message about student content and skills mastery of the standards to parents. SBG offers the most effective approach to communicate that message. IAD will gradually implement this grading with grades k-5 in the subjects of language arts and mathematics.

This ELP focuses on implementing SBG at IAD in the following three domains:

1. Building teacher capacity by providing appropriate professional development (PD) to teachers utilizing available resources
2. Securing stakeholder buy-in to counter challenges that may stem from concerns and objections by various segments of the stakeholder community
3. Using appropriate technology tools to facilitate learning, assessment, grading, and reporting to stakeholders

ELP Organization

I have organized this ELP into six chapters, and 12 evidence-based artifacts included in appendices A through N. Chapter 2 will address the organizational context of the ELP, my contextual role as a school leader, and the statement of the problem. Chapter 3 will address the improvement strategies introduced to implement SBG in three domains: professional development, parent-buy-in, and technology use. Chapter 4 will outline results from improvements strategies implemented and the survey conducted to measure teachers' SBG perceptions in light of the professional development activities conducted in the school. Chapter 5 will present my reflections on the strategies implemented and the artifacts I created for this portfolio. Finally, Chapter 6 includes

reflections on my development as a school leader as a result of the SBG implementation project.

As an essential component to this ELP, I created the 12 artifacts (Appendices A-L) to inform stakeholders and myself of SBG concepts and practices, plan for professional development, technology, communication, and track teacher and parent support of the SBG in the first year of implementation. I designed the artifacts to benefit all participants in SBG from one or more of the artifacts. Figure 1 illustrates how the 12 artifacts variably inform or benefit the stakeholders.

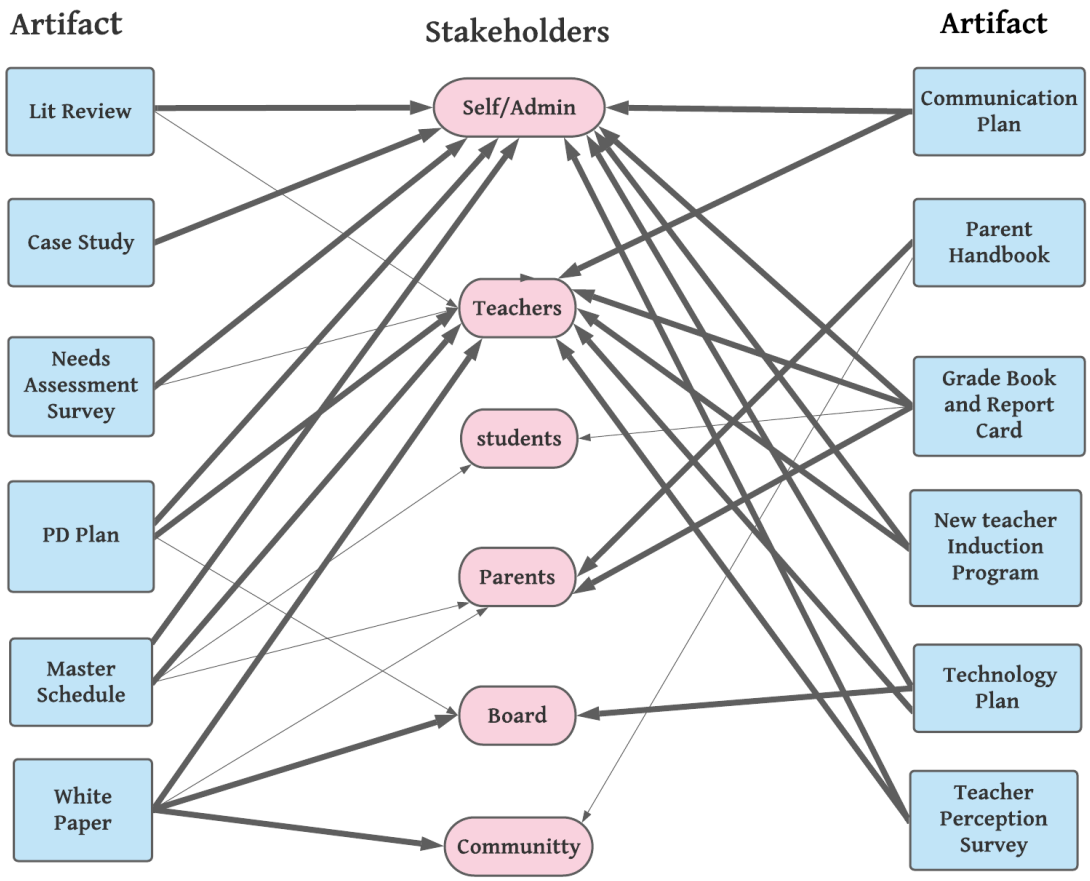

Figure 1-1 *SBG Implementation Artifacts*

Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Although the No Child Left Behind initiative did not directly address private school implementation of SBL, we, at IAD, understood the need for our students to resume learning in public schools without interruption when they transferred to other schools, progress to high schools, or head to college. We also decided to shift to SBL to conform with our school's vision, "to educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful and safe environment; providing rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens"("Vision | Islamic Academy of Delaware," 2019).

The shift to SBL was introduced with the literature-supported understanding that it is necessary "to ensure transparency in all elements of the teaching and learning process: curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting" (DeWitt, 2016). To implement SBL is to select or design curricula, instructional strategies, assessments, and grading practices aligned to the standards. These four elements underpin any discussion regarding rigor, college and career readiness, and global citizenship (De Witt, 2016).

IAD, however, wrestled with implementing SBL. Teachers expressed concerns regarding best classroom practices to address standards mastery. Classrooms, mostly teacher-centered, failed to implement collaborative learning effectively. Teacher feedback made this evident in a July 2019 survey. As Tables 2-1, 2, and 3 indicate, teachers lacked universal familiarity with the standards and many pedagogical aspects of

teaching and assessing the standards. For example, only 69% and 60% percent of the teachers demonstrated familiarity with mathematics and Language Arts standards, respectively (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1 *Familiarity with the Common Core State Standards*

Question	Unfamiliar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
Common Core State Standards in Mathematics	25%	6%	31%	38%
Common Core State Standards in Language Arts	27%	13%	47%	13%
Next Generation Science Standards	38%	19%	31%	13%
Delaware Social Studies Standards	40%	27%	27%	7%

Many teachers were unfamiliar with the knowledge and skills associated with implementing the standards, such as setting learning targets and proficiency rubrics and scales. See Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 *Familiarity with the Implementation Concepts*

Question	Unfamiliar	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
Unpacking the Common Core Standards	25%	25%	44%	6%
Prioritizing the Common Core Standards	19%	25%	44%	13%
Setting SBL targets	13%	25%	44%	19%
Proficiency learning scales	13%	31%	44%	13%
Summative assessment	13%	13%	44%	31%

Of equal concern was the lack of clarity regarding what factors deserved inclusion in a student's grade and how much weight each element should receive in the grade's construction (Table 2-3).

Table 2-3 *Teachers' Perception of Grade Components*

Which of the following, you agree, must be a component of a student's grade?	Percentage
Homework	40%
Class Participation	82%
Behavior	40%
Attendance	40%
Exit Tickets	35%
Benchmark exams	71%
Extra credit/Bonus	47%
Formative assessment	65%
Summative assessment	76%
Student portfolio	24%
Student projects	71%

Organizational Context

IAD is a faith-based community private school that serves students in grades PK-8. The school is registered with the Delaware Department of Education and reports enrollment and attendance to the State as mandated by the Delaware Title 14 education law. The school participates in the federal meal benefit program and the federally funded Title I, Title II, and Title III programs, which provide intervention services to at-risk students, PD, and technology, respectively.

Students commute to IAD from various cities in New Castle County and neighboring towns in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. The school community is diverse, with many families descending from countries in the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, north and west Africa, and the United States. Even though family members may speak more than half a dozen languages, all students are born in the United States and speak English as their first language. Table 2-4 depicts IAD student demographics and socio-economic status data.

Table 2-4 *Student Demographic and Socio-Economic Status Data at IAD*

Race/Ec. Status	Percent
White	44%
Black	21%
Asian	36%
Free Lunch?	52.48%
Reduced lunch	9.2%
Paid lunch	38.29%

Table 2-5 delineates IAD teachers by race.

Table 2-5 *Teacher Race at IAD*

Race	Percent
White	58%
Black	19%
Asian	23%

Approximately 80% of the school's revenue derives from student tuition and fees, which averages $4,150 per student. This amount contrasts with the State of Delaware public school per-student spending of $11,256 (Public Education Review, 2020). The remaining 20% of IAD revenue comes from donations and the school's annual fund-raising event.

Organizational Role

I have been IAD's principal since August 2011. IAD is under the authority of the Islamic Society of Delaware. An executive committee of the Society's board of directors hired me with the full board endorsing the hiring and the contract. Figure 2-1 illustrates the organizational structure of the IAD. The principal is a nonvoting member of the IAD Operations Committee (IADOC), the board's administrative entity to assist the principal in planning and executing major school decisions relevant to finance, accounting,

maintenance, procurement, and allocation of resources. The committee also serves as a layer of authority addressing employee complaints and grievances.

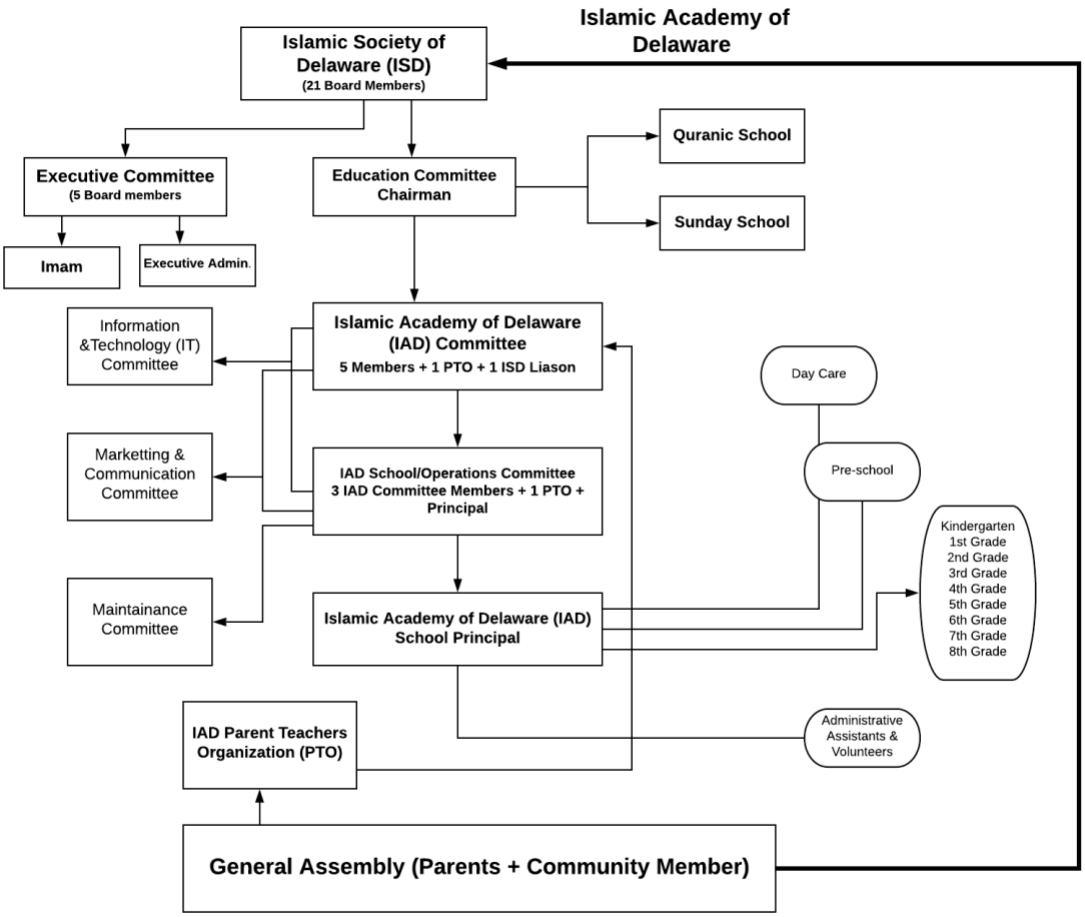

Figure 2-1 *IAD Organizational Structure*

As the principal, I am responsible for the duties and tasks of the school's chief executive officer in overseeing the administration and management of all academic aspects of school life and day-to-day operations. With lead teachers' assistance, I manage curriculum selection and implementation and supervision, and faculty evaluation. I was instrumental in drafting the school vision and mission, and I am a party to drawing school policies for endorsement by the IADOC. I serve on the Staff Selection Committee, the

School Budget and Finance Committee, and the School Expansion Committee. I also plan and execute communication with stakeholders and the external community on behalf of the school and represent the school in community events and state and local functions.

I initiated the shift to SBL by introducing new English language arts and mathematics curricula in 2018-2019. The new curricula required a change in instructional strategies and assessments. Since 2011, the school used Pearson's Reading Street and Envision Mathematics for language arts and mathematics for eight years before introducing EL Education and Eureka Math. To assist in selecting curricula, we considered comparative reports by Edreport.org, an independent nonprofit designed to improve K-12 education. Ed report awarded high ratings to the new curricula based on meeting the expectations for alignment to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Expeditionary Learning, 2016).

As the school principal, I assumed leadership for the shift to fulfill our school vision. We believe that the common core state standards "raise the bar" for all students to create better college and work outcomes through a common means by which all students could be measured (Gewertz, 2015).

As the leader, I had a unique role in facilitating the transition in planning and executing professional development. My role included content selection, the scope of teacher participation, venues, scheduling, negotiating, and signing contracts on behalf of the school with professional development vendors. I have been in a position that enabled me to use my leverage with stakeholders to communicate and educate about SBG and solicit teachers, parents, and students for opinions and feedback. I have access to data on subjects ranging from finance, assessment, grading, and reporting to school policy and

record keeping. The access, of course, is limited to furthering the welfare and advancement of student policy and is subject to laws and regulations protecting the rights and privacy of all school community constituents.

In addition to my capacity as a school principal, I also had the privilege of teaching math intermittently to middle-grade students. My function as a math teacher enabled me to stay close to student learning in the classroom. Teaching also helped me practice and promote newly learned instructional strategies and set examples for teachers in interactive modeling.

Problem Statement

Following the above-noted changes that the school initiated while recognizing SBL improvement as an ongoing process, IAD sought to achieve a strategic school improvement goal of implementing SBG over the next two school years (2019-2021).

SBG was necessary to ensure full implementation of SBL. In addition to facilitating learning, teachers needed to attend to the interconnected practices of assessing, grading, and reporting to the standards. If student learning strategies were to be standards-based, then designing standards-based formative and summative assessments and grading those assessments would ensure the full implementation of SBL. SBG would also lead to accurate reporting of student achievement to parents and stakeholders. As I learned from O'Conner, the primary purpose of grading is "communicating student achievement" (O'Conner, 2018, p. 19). O'Conner states that communication is most effective when it is clear and concise and that other purposes, such as administrative and instructional uses, are served well when communication is made clear.

Change to a standards-based approach to grading was needed to improve learning and prepare students for high school, college, and future employment. As Muñoz and Guskey (2015) indicate,

> if assessments are graded and reported the right way, they can be a powerful tool for student learning. Classroom assessment practices that inform instruction will be invaluable as teachers work to implement the CCSS, which are meant to prepare all students for college and career. (p. 67)

The Gap to Be Bridged

To borrow a phrase from Peters and Buckmiller (2014), our grades were broken. If the purpose of grading is to communicate fairly and accurately student mastery of the knowledge and skills taught in the classroom, our grading failed to serve that purpose. Change from the percent-points and single letter grading to standards-based grading (SBG) was needed to communicate to students, teachers, and parents an accurate assessment of what children knew and could do at each grade level.

"Grade-fog." IAD primarily used percent-point and single letter grading, which blended academic mastery with learning habits. The resulting "grade-fog" obscured the extent of student learning of the knowledge and skills the standards required. The extent of this obfuscated grading was evident in the grade books of all grade levels posted on the school's student information system and in the report cards distributed to parents. Teachers combined learning habits with learning assessments to create grades. The school grading policy mandated weightings for homework, class participation, quizzes, and benchmark exams (Table 2-6).

Table 2-6 *Student Grade Distribution*

Grade Component	Percentage of Grade
Homework	15%
Classwork	15%
Formative Assessment	30%
Benchmark Assessment	40%

Grade monetary system. Implicit in grade distribution were behaviors, projects, work ethic, neatness, handwriting, exit tickets, and bell work. All contributed to categories comprising the student's grade. Students and parents were accustomed to a culture of extra credit to boost grades. Grading mimicked a monetary system where almost every student's behavioral or academic activity contributed to their grade. Teachers graded homework, and teachers could assign a zero for missing homework assignments. Unless students had a valid excuse, they could not make up missing a test, and exams were rarely retaken. If the teacher granted a second opportunity to make up a test or an assignment, the student was penalized for lateness or retake.

Grade inflation. The inclusion of the learning habits and learning practices such as class participation and homework constituted a grade phase shift upwards, leading to grade inflation. For example, Table 2-7 shows the performance of students of grade 3 in reading and mathematics on the standardized Terra Nova Common Core test in May 2019 and the grades reported for the two subjects on the school report cards at the end of the school year. There is a moderate positive correlation $r = .57$ and a strong positive correlation $r = .78$ between the Terra Nova standardized scores and the report card grades in reading and math, respectively, indicating grade inflation. While nine of the fifteen students ranked below the 50th percentile in either of the two subjects on the TerraNova

test and were entitled to receive intervention as per district regulations, only two students, ID 9 and 13, scored failing aggregate subject grades and, therefore, deserved the services.

Table 2- 7 *Grade 3 TerraNova Percentiles Vs. Percent Grades on Report Cards*

TerraNova Percentile Ranks			Subject Percent Grade		
Student ID	Reading	Math	Student ID	Reading	Math
01	21	36	01	84	81
02	32	36	02	87	92
03	76	63	03	92	94
04	49	43	04	70	88
05	54	75	05	95	87
06	41	20	06	81	79
07	77	59	07	90	89
08	51	77	08	98	96
09	20	4	09	78	57
010	11	34	010	79	87
011	78	87	011	97	97
012	19	27	012	88	92
013	34	15	013	71	58
014	87	71	014	89	90
015	17	8	015	72	69
016	31	53	016	81	85

This disparity between percent grades and standardized tests was not limited to Grade 3 but spanned all grades as the school data indicate. Similar results emerged when comparing grade scores in the CCSS aligned Star Reading and Star Math assessments. Academic subjects lacking administered standardized assessments without any frame of reference to compare grades for accuracy made the need for the standards-based evaluation and grading even more striking.

A culture of competition. A culture of competitiveness between students and families prevailed within the school community. Parents and students strived to attain the top three grade-based school recognition awards described in Table 2-8.

Table 2-8 *Grade Requirement for the Top Three School Awards*

Award Category	Minimum GPA
Principal's Award	95-100%
Honor Roll	90-94%
Achievement Award	85-89%

Based on subject scores in Table 8, at least 11 students in grade 3 were entitled to receive any of the three top school awards even though their standardized test scores indicated low achievement. Parents and children who understood how the system worked could often navigate the system to ensure receipt of an award. Other families and their children were effectively shunned from the exercise of the award, leaving their children bitter and anxious. They were often informally labeled as low-achieving or failing children. As principal, I repeatedly witnessed the frustration and agony of children who missed the required score for an award by a point or two and were fearful or ashamed of bringing home the bad news to their parents.

The fierce competition was highly noticeable in grades 5 and 8, where students graduate from one school level to the next. Children would compete within a fraction of a point to win the valedictorian and salutatorian honorary positions, where the winners were celebrated and usually honored to address the school community. In a culture where students competed for grades and not for learning, there was little room for collaboration as the standards required.

Grading inconsistencies. The report card on Alma, our school student information system, contained a mixture of percent scores and letter grades for each subject. The report cards also included standards mastery indicators marked on a 0-4 scale. The teachers filled out these marks manually and subjectively. There was often a

disparity between the letter and percent grades and marks reported for the standards mastery indicators (Figure 2). The report card snapshot below indicates the student was an achiever who scored a calculated average of a B+ and A in writing and math, respectively. However, the standards indicators do not reflect that achievement level because the teacher's professional judgment indicates otherwise.

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ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF DELAWARE
2018- 2019 TRIMESTER 1 REPORT

CLASSES	T1	T2	T3	FINAL
WRITING GRADE 1	**B+**			
Writing Standards				
Write response to questions and details with support from provided text and visual sources	2			
Write narratives recounting two or more sequenced events use temporal words.	N/A			
Write informative text with a topic, facts and closure	2			
Participate in shared research and writing projects and use them to write sequence of instructions	N/A			
Use digital tools to produce and publish writing with support L+R	N/A			
MATHEMATICS GRADE 1	**A-**			
Mathematics: Operations and Algebraic Thinking				
Relate counting to addition and subtraction	2			
Solve word problems using addition and subtraction within 20	2			
Fluently add and subtract with 10	2			
Understand relationship between addition and subtraction	2			
Understand and apply properties of operations to addition and subtraction	2			

Figure 2-2 *Grade 1 IAD Report Card*

In general, grades allocated to students did not necessarily reflect student understanding or mastery of what they needed to know at their grade level to be ready for high school and, eventually, college. While not documented, anecdotes of students struggling with critical thinking rigor after they moved to high school were not uncommon.

Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Introduction

My ELP focuses on implementing SBG in my school to improve teaching and learning through a three-pronged approach: professional development, parent and community buy-in, and utilizing technology for performance assessment, grading, and reporting to stakeholders. I set goals for each prong and developed strategies and activities to achieve these goals in 2019-2020. Scholars of SBG and empirical studies recommend strategies and the emanating activities that address SBG practices and schoolwide implementation. I organized local strategies to address each of these areas and the various elements of the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) framework (Coherence Framework, 2011). In setting goals for selecting and implementing relevant strategies, I addressed securing stakeholder support, systems, and structures. I also outlined the resources required, primarily in technology, to set a path to transform the school's culture.

To better understand the problem and frame my implementation plan and strategies, I created 12 artifacts (Appendices A-L), informed by the literature about practices in successful schools and districts. These artifacts served me as a school leader at the helm of the change, teachers who constitute the learning operation's dynamo, and the students' parents, who will be the school's core beneficiaries. I designed these artifacts

to be readily available to the school's stakeholders through its core technology system and tools to facilitate learning, communication, and implementation of SBG.

Professional Development

As the literature suggests, change in any educational institution requires leaders and staff to transform roles and responsibilities that may require learning new concepts and skills. Professional development for all participants is crucial for the effective execution of these new roles. Guskey and Sparks (2000) indicate, "professional development is necessary for teachers and administrators at all levels so they can learn these roles and succeed in them" (p. 3). For implementing SBG, Westerberg (2016) stresses that teachers need time and training to develop and pilot instructional units, matching assessments, and scoring scales aligned with the CCSS. Berger et al. (2014), on the other hand, emphasized the role of the leader in making a case for SBG with teachers and providing them with professional development to build a deep teacher understanding of grade-level standards and a strong foundation in student-engaged practices. Leaders, Berger et al. (2014) noted, can also "support teachers with curriculum maps, a faculty grading guide, standard-based grading software, and communication with families and district and college officials" (p. 340).

Professional development, along with an SBG-aligned student information system and parent buy-in, are three of the five top strategies recommended for successful implementation by a recent study that examined 12 K-12 school principals representing 10,473 schools (Redmond, 2019). Hanover Research (2015), in a report that examined implementation practices by many U.S. districts and schools, also emphasized the need for introducing professional development to all district and school stakeholders early in

the SBG implementation process. Educating parents about SBG was evident in those schools that succeeded in gaining the support of parents, thus avoiding future conflicts with the most crucial segment of the stakeholder populations

Benefitting from the literature represented above, I created our school's professional development plan (Appendix A), outlining our professional development goals, strategies, and activities to facilitate SBG implementation.

Goals and Strategies for Professional Development

Goal 1. To develop a deep understanding of the concepts and practices of SBG, including standards-referencing of the grades, separating academic mastery from learning habits, providing effective formative feedback, and availing multiple opportunities for learning and assessment to the students.

Based on this goal, I expected the teachers to know, unpack, and prioritize the standards, set learning targets, develop standards-aligned assessments and performance rubrics, and follow SBG practices in grading their assessments, inserting the grades in the grade book, and reporting grades to parents.

Goal 2. To deepen teacher understanding of other SBL and grading related concepts such as "differential instruction, checking for understanding, and other components of a comprehensive students-engaged assessment system" (Berger et al., 2014, p. 340).

Strategies. Goals 1 and 2 guided our professional development strategies and follow-up activities. To achieve both goals, we implemented the following strategies:

Outside Experts (Vendors): IAD contracted experts who provided full-day on-site training sessions for one week in the summer of 2019 and on scheduled professional development days throughout the school year.

Classroom Walkthroughs. While classrooms were in session, experts and the school administration conducted classroom walkthroughs jointly, followed by debriefing and coaching sessions. The purpose of these walkthroughs was to provide practical advice to teachers based on observation of classroom practices. Visited teachers received formative walkthrough evaluations, and reflections on these reports were discussion topics in our PLC meetings.

Professional Learning Community (PLC). I led our professional learning community (PLC) to plan and deliver in-house professional development and learning opportunities, e.g., book studies. Outside experts, for example, EL Education instructional coaches, were also invited to join special PLC meetings to address critical unit planning and curriculum alignment.

Goal 3. To build teacher capacity to use technology platforms and tools to facilitate learning, assessment, grading, and reporting.

Strategies. This goal guided our efforts to utilize the services of our Technology Coordinator and lead teachers who provided:

In-House Training and Support. The Technology Coordinator trained teachers to use Alma, Google Classroom, Edulastic, and other tech tools. Teachers had access to our Technology Coordinator, and lead teachers served as a reference and were resources for teachers' inquiries, personal training, and troubleshooting.

Online Webinars. The school subscribed to live training webinars provided by Renaissance to train teachers to interpret Star Reading and Star Math assessment reports and plan for intervention and extension. Alma and Edulastic also offered our teachers similar live online training sessions.

To secure adequate time for our professional development activities, we designated days on our school calendar, biweekly faculty meetings to implement brief professional development sessions, summer orientation week, half-day sessions for selected teachers and grade levels to adequately secure substitute teachers. The school Master Schedule (Appendix B) allocated time for PLC meetings, teachers' collaboration, and teacher exchange of classroom visitations and walkthroughs.

Last, during my ELP Proposal defense, the ELP Committee suggested creating an artifact to capture the SBG recommended resources and professional development opportunities valuable for new members of the IAD staff to learn about SBG and the IAD approach, values, etc. To support our new teachers and meet our school needs, I adapted a new teacher school induction program (Appendix B) from the Delaware Department of Education Department (Delaware Department of Education, 2020, September 29). The program exposes the new teachers to the school's professional environment and the task and responsibilities expected of them during their early years of employment. The plan puts in the hands of new teachers human, technology, and logistical resources that facilitate their teaching mission. The program also assists new teachers in understanding and implementing SBG principles and practices at IAD. To help achieve the program's goals, the artifact referred to our PDP (Appendix A) as a reference for all educators. The program also established procedures and protocols for ongoing collaboration between

skilled teachers (mentors) and new teachers (mentees). The New Teacher Induction Plan will be used when we next change our teaching staff.

Parent Buy-in

Securing parent and community involvement is essential to implementing SBG. Berger et al. (2014) suggested that school leaders "provide a rationale for SBG to parents and students, explaining what is different, what's the same, and how the school will support every student to be successful" (p. 340). Westerberg (2016) also emphasizes ensuring parents' and the school boards' buy-in through professional development that will deepen their understanding of the "why" and "how" of implementing SBG.

At IAD, as explained in our Communication Plan (Appendix D), we prepared SBG key messages to permeate throughout our school community. Some of these messages were general and addressed concepts that all stakeholders needed to know. Some were specific to staff and parents and were task-oriented, relating what teachers and parents needed to do in their spheres of responsibilities. We needed to inform teachers of the school's response to their professional development needs. We also hoped to educate parents about what their children should learn at every grade level. The external community also needed to know about IAD embarking on a significant academic change that may affect the community's future.

Furthermore, we informed parents that implementing SBG was a process and not a single product or event. It will involve teachers, administrators, students, and parents at different stages in the process. We attempted to educate parents that SBG measures what a student should know and can do in each subject area at each grade level. We sent out the message that we were adopting SBG to assess their children's performance fairly and

accurately. The old grading system measured students against each other instead of communicating a clear picture of student mastery of the learned content. SBG aligns grading with the earlier steps we took to implement standards-based education. On many occasions, we explained the differences between SBG and traditional grading practices. In our meetings with parents, we presented our newly introduced grading scales and performance indicators that outlined what every child needed to know at each grade level (standards). Finally, we emphasized the importance of parent feedback in the process and our expected timeline for implementation. In the remainder of this section, I state the goals we set forth and the strategies we implemented to secure parent buy-in.

Goals and Strategies for Parent Buy-in

The goal I set for parent and community buy-in was as follows:

Goal. To secure parent and student buy-in and ownership of SBG by implementing a series of activities at the parents' and students' levels.

Strategies.

The Grade Book and Report Card. The grade book and report card, which were hosted on our school information system (SIS) and made accessible to teachers, parents, and students, constituted the core of parent-teacher communication. Both served as essential documents to communicate standards-based grade-level mastery to parents. The report card addressed process, growth, and academic mastery for all students. Learning habits were listed separately from academic content and skill mastery. It also provided meaningful feedback to students and parents. It contained a purpose statement, reflecting the school's purpose in grading and ostensibly placed it on the front page as suggested by

Guskey (2015). Appendix E exhibits the templates and the goals and rationale behind their composition.

Parent Handbook. The parent handbook (Appendix F) describes what SBG is and how it compares to more traditional education approaches, the teachers' grading guidelines, the new grading metric, and how to read the progress reports. The new Handbook eliminated the percent-based awards system to foster collaboration instead of competition. It also eliminated the valedictorian and salutatorian honorary positions for graduating students. Instead, we included an outline to celebrate growth and soft skills. The parent Handbook has a prominent link on the school website to allow for instant and ongoing access.

Open House and Curriculum Nights. IAD teachers held informational meetings to introduce parents to the new school year and curriculum procedures for success. Teachers introduced SBG to focus on what SBG is and "why" it was essential to implement in IAD. Teachers prepared concise slide presentations, responded to questions and concerns, and distributed SBG-related material.

Parent-Teacher Conferences. Teachers held individual meetings to discuss student progress and academic growth. Teachers went over the grades with parents assisting parents in interpreting content and elaborating on the feedback they marked in the report card. Teachers presented standards-based performance student work to parents to support and illustrate grading practices. Teachers handed out SBG-related brochures that explained the report card structure and responded to questions.

Graded Work, Tests, Assignments, Student Folder, and Agenda Books. Teachers kept students and parents updated on academic progress within the classroom throughout

a marking period. The standards-based grade book, assignments, and tests kept parents connected to grade expectations called for by the standards. Folders went home with students daily and weekly with practice assignments and formative feedback.

Teacher-Parent Communication Form. Teachers emailed the Weekly Teacher-Parent Communication Form every Monday, explaining curricular expectations for the week, including unit, lesson, scheduled assessments, and assignments. The form (Figure 1) served to standardize teacher-parent communication, especially for working parents who may be on the run or who may lack access to a personal computer.

Table 3-1 Teacher-Parent Weekly Communication Form Template

Teacher: Grade: Subject(s):
Week of ___ /___ to ___ /_____
Dear Parents,
These are our projected classroom learning activities for the week

Table 3-1 Teacher-Parent Weekly Communication Form Template

Mon		ELA	MATH	Social Studies	Science
	Topic/Unit/Module				
	Text Page(s)				
	Assignment				
	Notes:				
Tue					
	Topic/Unit/Module				
	Text Page(s)				
	Assignment				
	Notes:				
Wed					
	Topic/Unit/Module				
	Text Page(s)				
	Assignment:				
	Notes:				
Thu					
	Topic/Unit/Module				
	Text Page(s)				
	Assignment				
	Notes:				
Fri					
	Topic/Unit/Module				
	Text Page(s)				
	Assignment				
	Notes:				

Disclaimer: Please understand we may depart from the schedule above as your child's needs warrant.

Awards Night and Graduation Commencement Ceremony. The school informed parents that the traditional activities that celebrated academic mastery would be different. Awards emphasizing soft skills such as leadership and citizenry were replacing the graduating class valedictory and salutatory celebrations. The first end-of-year graduation

commencement ceremony after SBG implementation, which took place in June 2020, eliminated the selection of a valedictorian and a salutatorian for the graduating class.

Technology

Aligning a school's student information system (SIS) with SBG is an implementation strategy that received the highest number of recommendations by principals who successfully implemented SBG in their schools (Redmond, 2019). Principals who led the successful implementation emphasized the need for a school information system that houses an SBG grade book and report card to track and report student progress over the entire course of the school year and keep records of student assignments and summative assessments. The system should automatically transport assessment scores from the grade book to the report card (Redmond, 2019).

To facilitate SBG implementation, IAD placed before teachers a technology system comprised of a high-speed Wi-Fi network, a student information system, a learning management system (LMS), and various platforms and tools to assist in assessment, learning differentiation, and curriculum integration. The technology plan (Appendix G) accounts for the goals, strategies, and activities that support SBL and SBG at IAD.

Goals and Strategies for Utilizing Technology

The goals I set for utilizing technology were as follows:

Goal 1. To create a learning environment with effective technology resources for teachers and students to support standards-based education, grading, and reporting. This goal guided the strategies that worked collectively to establish a technology infrastructure to serve all stakeholders' needs.

Strategies. To address this goal, IAD purchased systems and tools to enrich and enhance teachers' and students' teaching and learning experiences and facilitate communication within the school community.

Wi-Fi Network. IAD built a modern Wi-Fi network to enable access to the internet in every school building room and local interconnectivity with devices on the network. Specially programmed routers secured the network for safe access to the internet. Teachers work through the Technology Coordinator to grant students access to applications and tools on the internet.

School Information System (SIS). IAD used Alma, an SIS, to store student personal data files, communicate with stakeholders via group emails, coordinate schoolwide email blasts and emergency phone messages. The system houses our standards-based grade book and report cards with controlled access to all stakeholders.

Learning Management System (LMS). IAD used Google Classroom to streamline assignments, boost collaboration, and foster communication between teachers and students. Google Classroom permitted teachers to create a distinct space for every class they taught, create an assignment, and provide specific instructions. Teachers made announcements, students responded to those announcements, and the teachers responded, creating a thread. The LMS enabled the entire class to have a conversation based on one announcement. A file, a YouTube video, or a link to an announcement are available for student viewing.

Student Assessment Platforms. IAD used Renaissance Star Reading and Math to assess student growth and mastery of skills and content. The platform generates class and individual reports that show student growth and guide instruction and grouping of

personalized learning, differentiation, and needed intervention. We also used Edulastic for formative, interim, and benchmark assessments. The platform provided instant classroom data to track student mastery, provide intervention, and avail students of multiple assessment opportunities.

Intervention, Extension, and Differentiation. For technology-based intervention, differentiation, and extension, IAD teachers used Prodigy and Freckle for gaming and IXL, Khan Academy, and Splash Learn for practice and fluency.

Goal 2. To provide teachers with the support and training necessary to integrate technology successfully with standards-based learning, grading, and reporting. This goal guided our school's need for professional development to enable teachers, especially the newly hired, to use the school's educational platforms effectively.

Strategies. To achieve this goal, IAD utilized our school Technology Coordinator and a lead teacher to communicate available learning opportunities, conduct professional development sessions and follow-ups, and provide technical support to teachers, as needed, throughout the school.

Online Professional Development Services. As an affordable strategy, the school utilized interactive online professional development services to enhance the fluent use of technology platforms for various needs and purposes. For example, Renaissance offered a 90-minute webinar to train teachers to interpret commonly used Star scores, review data from a universal screening to determine the implications for intervention and core instruction, explore options for using data to group students for instruction and intervention, and discuss how Star scores can support team data conversations and problem-solving activities (Appendix A).

In-House Training and Support. Teachers also required training in the use of Google Classroom to manage student learning. Our Technology Coordinator and lead teachers prepared in-service workshops and support as needed throughout the school year for teachers to create and manage classes, assignments, and grades online.

Goal 3. To support students and enhance their learning through access to technology tools and resources.

This goal guided the implementation of SBL through teacher employment of tools and instructional strategies to facilitate differentiation. For example, as a strategy, teachers designed and implemented technology integrated lessons in the classrooms. Parents were able to view these learning experiences via ClassDojo, Google Classroom, and emails. Another strategy to enhance learning was to introduce students to authentic resources on the internet that meet the standards-based curriculum's demands and provide opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate.

The school taught internet safety for grades K-8. Learning integrated age-appropriate tools and free online resources. For example, parents and teachers used Common Sense Media to review the content before students watched it. NetSmartz provided age-appropriate videos, activities, and other resources to teach children, parents, and educators how to be safer online. The tool enabled children to become more aware of potential online risks and empower them to help prevent victimization by providing lessons that teach key digital citizenship concepts.

Goal 4. To monitor student achievement and analyze student and school data through various tools to improve all students' teaching and learning outcomes.

This last goal guided the use of technology platforms to compile and analyze student data. Alma tracked our student achievement in the grade book and allowed the necessary analysis to facilitate remediation and enrichment efforts in the classroom. Renaissance compiled data and reports from Star Reading and Math assessments for teachers to use and analyze. Renaissance Early Literacy assessment also served to assess student achievement in preschool and KG. Edulastic allowed teachers to access student data from benchmark and teacher assembled assessments.

SBG is not an isolated change initiative in a school setting. The approach intertwines with other pedagogical strategies and learning activities in the classroom and at home. At IAD, we set goals, planned and executed strategies, and employed resources to prepare teachers, involve parents, and leverage a technology support system to assist in implementation. The artifacts I created articulated the goals and strategies we carried out in nearly every walk of life and involved all school community components. Some artifacts worked well, some worked better than others, and others may require improvisation or revision. In the next chapter, I will address the results we obtained from implementing professional development, parent buy-in, and technology strategies at IAD.

Chapter 4

RESULTS OF IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the results of my school improvement strategies in the three prongs of SBG implementation: professional development, parent buy-in, and technology. Over the past year, under my leadership, IAD has been mobilizing the school education operation to serve SBG. In classrooms, teachers transformed instruction and learning to serve the new grading approach. Teachers adapted their instruction to meet the standards in the daily lessons and unit planning. Teachers chose assessments to measure student learning within the context of the standards. They also translated student performance rubrics to grade students' assessments.

The school invested in technology platforms and tools to facilitate learning, assessment, and grading. The school's Technology Coordinator provided dedicated support in training, advising, and responding to teachers and parents regarding any tech-related inquiries. We also created and introduced a standards-based grade book and a standards-based report that teachers used throughout the school year to record grades and relate student performance to parents. IAD has informed parents on numerous occasions, collectively and individually, about the SBG initiative. Parents have had three end-of-trimester opportunities to receive and review their children's standards-based report cards and meet with teachers to discuss their children's performance.

Results From Professional Development Strategies

This section describes the results of our improvement strategies as it related to our staff's professional development. I described the goals and the strategies in detail in my PDP (Appendix A). The strategies under discussion span three areas: understanding the concepts and practices of the SBG, understanding SBL related concepts and classroom practices, and developing teacher capacity to use the school technology fluently. I will also address the results of a survey I created and administered in September 2020 to measure our teacher's perceptions of SBG. I will discuss the results related to our technology training and implementation activities under the section devoted to technology in this chapter. The activities covered SBG-related concepts such as unpacking the standards, prioritizing the standards, learning targets, proficiency scales, and rubrics. It also covered SBL concepts such as curriculum mapping, differentiated instruction, checking for understanding, collaborative learning, and useful feedback. Finally, I will report on the mastery of technology tools available for assessment, grading and reporting, and learning management.

To facilitate professional learning community (PLC) meetings, collaborative and individual planning, and interactive modeling, I prepared a Master Schedule Artifact that allocated sufficient time without interfering with student teaching time (Appendix B). The schedule used block scheduling, where teachers could implement collaborative learning strategies, provide for learning differentiation, and dig for a deeper understanding of the content.

I believe parents received the Master Schedule with appreciation and saw the schedule as a profound opportunity to boost SBL at IAD. The Master Schedule met the

learning and planning needs of students and teachers. For example, to provide sufficient time for enhanced instruction in keen interest areas, the math period-time was nearly doubled. The periods for core subjects (ELA and math) were combined in blocks to allow for more in-depth learning, collaborative tasks, and differentiated instruction. The school extended the school day by 15 minutes to allow for the extra learning time and reduced the period time for encore (elective) courses from 45 to 40 minutes. To maximize learning, core courses met in the morning when children were at their best state of readiness to receive instruction. To accommodate teachers' needs, the schedule carved out time for PLC meetings and arranged periods to allow for individual and collaborative planning.

The Survey of Teachers' Perceptions of Standards-Based Grading

A year after IAD embarked on transitioning to SBG, I needed to assess the implementation. I realized that our grade book and a report card had already been created and situated on our SIS. Teachers had begun to populate those two instruments with grades and performance marks for assignments, work habits, and social skills. It was unnecessary to inquire about the teachers' practices since the school policy and regulations mandated the Grade Book and Report Card, and precluded traditional grading practices such as letter grades, averaging, and combining mastery with work habits. A better approach to measuring teacher buy-in, understanding, and implementation of SBG was to survey the teachers' perceptions and knowledge of SBG relevant to four SBG underpinning principles:

- Grading must be goal-referenced.
- Academic mastery must be separated from growth and learning habits.
- Effective feedback must be provided before and after assessment.

- Multiple opportunities for assessment must be provided to all students.

Appendix H details the Teachers' Perceptions of SBG Survey I conducted in September 2020. In the following section, I will present a summary and a discussion of the results. I will further elaborate on the survey in my reflection on professional development in Chapter 5.

Survey's Goals and Strategies

To comprehend IAD teachers' understandings and sentiments toward SBG principles and practices, I conducted a teachers' perceptions survey after implementing many components of our professional development program described in Appendix A. After being closed for in-person learning due to the COVID -19 pandemic, we abandoned the planned professional development program in the third trimester of the school year.

Guskey and Brookhart (2019) report that recent research shows that positive teacher perceptions are essential for understanding grading practices and leading lasting and meaningful change. Understanding teacher perceptions towards grading can also be the first step before creating a unified vision of grades' purpose. As a school leader, I believed that teachers would be more inclined to implement SBG concepts if they believed in them. Conversely, if teachers had a poor understanding of those concepts, SBG implementation effectiveness would be undermined. More importantly, this survey results enabled me to address what went wrong and what steps to take to improve teacher understanding for the second year of SBG implementation.

The survey covered a range of teachers' perceptions of grading and grading practices. It aimed to inform teachers and decision-makers at IAD the extent to which the teachers' understanding and support of SBG had increased. It also aimed to shed light on

what went right and what required improvement in the school's efforts to build a shared understanding of SBG and obtain an indication, albeit indirect, of the extent to which teachers practiced SBG in their classrooms.

With this survey, I sought to obtain answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do IAD teachers understand that the purpose of grading is to report on student achievement and that grades should reference curriculum objectives or learning expectations (the standards)?
2. To what extent do IAD teachers understand the need to give students highly effective goal-reference feedback before assessing students for learning?
3. To what extent do IAD teachers understand that grades should be an accurate representation of student achievement and that non-achievement factors require separate reporting to permit valid interpretation of both activity areas.
4. To what extent do IAD teachers understand results from multiple assessments should be combined carefully and weighted to reflect accurately learning expectations and ensure that a grade correctly summarizes achievement?

Appendix F presents a full account of teacher responses to the survey. In the following section, I summarize and briefly discuss the results.

Survey Summary and Discussion

Standards-referenced grades: The majority of teachers agreed grading practices should reference the standards or learning goals (criterion-referenced). Still, they also believed grades should follow a bell-shaped/normal distribution curve. Some teachers, though a minority, expected grades to reflect student ranking in the classroom.

Teachers who believe that classroom grades should follow a bell/normal distribution curve implies adjusting grades when students perform poorly on a test. This traditional grading practice is inconsistent with SBG. Guskey (2015) explains that the standard bell-shaped curve describes the distribution of randomly occurring events when nothing intervenes. SBG, on the other hand, calls for continued intervention to improve learning until all students meet the learning targets of the standards. Students keep improving in an ongoing learning and assessment cycle until all achieve mastery so that no student will be left behind.

Formative Feedback: Almost all teachers agree or strongly agree they should respond to student work in a manner that conforms to the seven keys to formative feedback suggested in the literature. Some described their favorite strategies for providing feedback to students.

Wiggins (2012) explains that feedback should be goal-oriented, keeping the learning standards at the forefront of the discussion; actionable to inform the learner of the steps or actions he or she must accomplish next; personal in the sense that it connects with the learner as a person and makes him or her identify with the feedback; timely in the sense that the appropriate time is chosen as to when to give the feedback; user-friendly, avoiding language or jargon that is difficult for the learner to understand; ongoing in that it must be consistently flowing to correct and direct learning; and manageable by the learner considering the learner's age and the appropriate size and magnitude of the corrective feedback. Formative feedback should be available in many forms in the classroom and issued after every act of formative assessment. It should also be made available to parents and students in a designated space on the report card.

Elements represented in the grade: Most respondents believe that summative assessment measures cognitive achievement consistent with SBG. However, the majority also believe formative assessment should be included, and many, to lesser degrees, believe other academic enablers such as effort and group work should also be included.

In SBG, formative assessment is not graded. Its use is a tool to generate feedback and to direct or correct performance and learning. O'Conner (2011, 2018) emphasizes that formative assessments should remain ungraded to encourage students to focus on learning from their mistakes instead of suffering the disappointments of lowered grades. Grading that includes formative assessments reflects a judgment on student practice and not a verdict on the final product as a summative assessment provides. While the summative assessment is measurable and quantifiable, the formative assessment is corrective and may not be quantifiable. For example, a student's gesture of a thump-up or nodding his or her head to indicate agreement with a teacher's statement need not warrant a grade. A test, a project, or a presentation after a learning unit is measurable and qualifies as an assessment. Teachers at IAD must draw distinctions between formative and summative assessments and abandon the notion that any assessment constitutes a part of a student’s grade. As the University of Illinois assessment expert Bob Stake stated, "when the cook tastes the soup, it is formative; when the guests taste the soup, it is summative" (as cited in Hattie, 2015, October 27, p. 23). Both tests can be valuable and used for formative or summative interpretations. However, only summative assessments have substantive value and merit grading.

Guskey (2020) suggests practices that enable learning, such as homework, class participation, and effort, may reflect extended learning goals related to noncognitive social-

emotional learning skills such as collaboration, goal setting, perseverance, habits, or citizenship. He suggests that educators who emphasize learning enablers believe that academic mastery alone does not provide a complete picture of student performance and, therefore, grades should reflect not only final achievement results but also how students got there. Others stress that individual noncognitive skills are as essential as academic achievements to students' success in school and life. Indeed, such skills need to be considered in grading, so students and families recognize their value, but they must be reported separately from grades that report academic achievement.

Results from Multiple Assessments: Teachers believe all students should be allowed multiple opportunities to show mastery of the standards' content and skills. They also believe that students should practice skills or complete selected tasks before being reassessed for the same learning. In calculating the achievement grade for the standard after multiple assessments, most teachers are comfortable dropping the lowest and earliest grades since the later score typically represents the student's current achievement. The majority also seem satisfied with exercising professional judgment when determining students' grades.

Many teachers have indicated their agreement or strong agreement with two practices inconsistent with SBG: averaging scores and placing time limits on assessments. SBG does not permit arithmetic averaging of assessment scores. Marzano and Heflebower (2011) emphasize eliminating the omnibus grade based on average scores on classroom activity. Instead, they suggest scoring specific measurement topics and considering only the most recent score.

Depending on what the summative assessment is measuring, most of the time, the standard does not have a time limit expectation. Therefore, the teacher should not have explicit time limits on summative assessments. They may have time budgets for the assessment to maximize student motivation and brainpower within available class sessions, but the budget should be flexible to allow for their strengths and needs. Suppose students need more time or fail to make progress. In that case, the teacher must investigate the reason and respond to avoid a misconception that the time is open-ended. On the other hand, a summative assessment can occur whenever the student wishes after practice and relearning have been demonstrated.

O'Conner (2020) suggested strict time limits are appropriate only if speed is a condition of quality. The teacher has to be practical due to time constraints. Suppose speed is not a condition of quality. In that case, teachers may use their professional judgment to determine the amount of time most students need to finish the summative assessment without being pressured by the time allotted. Teachers may add and make available to all students one-third of the base-time as they see necessary, e.g., a 90-minute exam has an additional 30 minutes of flex time.

The data indicates professional development activities have sowed the seeds of a healthy discussion about SBG and made headway, especially in providing formative feedback and multiple assessment opportunities to students. This indicates the teachers believe in the continued cycle of learning until all students reach their learning goals. The open-ended questions confirm the attituded toward an ongoing process of learning and developing. However, the survey results are insufficiently robust. More remains to be accomplished in contributing to the discussions to change beliefs, resume activities aborted

due to COVID-19, tackle weaknesses such as connecting achievement to the learning targets, and settling what should count in the grade to ensure fairness. The discussion must move SBG implementation from mere compliance with the school to changing teacher perceptions and beliefs

Results of Parent Buy-in Strategies

It is challenging to measure parent reaction and sentiment to the implementation of SBG at IAD considering the recency of SBG's introduction, especially considering the circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school shifted to remote learning, and the community's attention focused on providing services and technology tools to provide opportunities for students to continue to learn. The focus of school surveys targeted parents' reactions to distance and hybrid learning modules and scenarios, and pandemic health and safety issues. In such circumstances, an objective evaluation of parents' feelings about SBG seemed trivial. Assessment and grading for accountability have taken a back seat in many schools as the focus shifted to ensuring teachers continued to connect with students to provide uninterrupted instruction.

Before COVID-19, we scheduled many professional encounters with parents to inform them about the SBG initiative and secure their support. I believe we were able to make breakthroughs in their support of the standards. The encounters were as follows:

Open House Meetings: These in-person meetings were held in September 2019 and virtually in September 2020. Teachers presented on SBL and SBG. I attended several of these sessions and often provided input to teachers and parents as needed. Parents were receptive to the information provided and to the responses to their inquiries and concerns. The concept of connecting assessment and grading to the standards appealed to many who

expressed that the initiative aligned our school with current education trends. Others appreciated that IAD was modernizing its curricula, assessment, and grading practices to ensure better preparation of their children to join quality high schools and colleges.

There were inquiries about student awards and whether all high schools that offered honors programs would recognize the new grading system. The teachers stressed the importance of fairness as a priority in communicating achievement to parents. Teachers also indicated that the school would celebrate other student accomplishments, such as leadership, citizenry, and community service. Students would also receive recognition for their collaborative accomplishments in working in team-based extracurricular activities such as the Science Olympiad, science fair projects, and spelling bees. The teachers stressed that the trend in schools nationwide was towards SBG and that high schools and colleges recognize SBG as indicative of student achievement.

Parent-Teacher Weekly Communication Form: This weekly communication was a very effective tool through which teachers communicated with parents regarding instructional plans for the week. Every Monday morning, teachers emailed this form to parents and copied the administration. With this one message, parents learned the unit and lessons the child will cover in the week ahead, upcoming assignment tasks, and any assessment their child may need to take. Table 4-1 shows a sample of a weekly math Teacher-Parent Communication Form parents received. The administration mandated the form as part of a teacher's responsibility to keep parents informed.

Table 4- 1 *Teacher-Parent Communication Form*

	Grade 5 Math
Topic/Unit/Module	Mid-Module Assessment Retake
Notes:	Students will either be retaking their mid-module assessment or working on a problem set.
Assigned Tasks	
Topic/Unit/Module	Module 1 Lesson 11
Notes:	Multiply a decimal fraction by single-digit whole numbers, relate to a written method through applying the area model and place value understanding, and explain the reasoning used.
Assigned Tasks	Lesson 11 homework (all questions) due on Wednesday
Topic/Unit/Module	Module 1 Lesson 12
Notes:	Multiply a decimal fraction by single-digit whole numbers, including using estimation to confirm the decimal point's placement.
Assigned Tasks	Lesson 12 homework (all questions) due on Thursday
Topic/Unit/Module	Module 1 Lesson 13
Notes:	Divide decimals by single-digit whole numbers involving easily identifiable multiples using place value understanding and a written method.
Assigned Tasks	Lesson 13 homework (questions: 1, 2a, 3b, 4, 6) due on Friday
Topic/Unit/Module	Module 1 Lesson 14
Notes:	Divide decimals with a remainder using place value understanding and relate to a written method.
Assigned Tasks	Lesson 14 homework (all questions) due on Monday

The Grade Book and Report Card: The grade book was made available via the Alma SIS to parents. Teachers inserted their assignments and grades regularly for parents to inspect and to encourage follow-up with teachers. Alma allows parents and students to view a student's final work product; parents may view the assignments completed, the marks the student received for multiple assessments for each standard, and the final grade assigned. Parents can only view the teacher's feedback when the teacher sends the assessment or the assignment as an email attachment to parents.

Parent-teacher conferences: IAD held the end of trimester parent-teacher conferences in December 2019 and March 2020 for all grades. In these conferences, parents and teachers shared and discussed the new SBG report card. Standard-based student performance was the subject of discussion. Teachers explained grading proficiency scales

to parents. Responding to a school survey, teachers reported that parents were mostly satisfied with the new report card and understood their children's performance description.

On the evenings of the days devoted to school parent-teacher conferences, I held general assembly meetings with parents and presented SBG as a new approach to grading, why we needed to change, and the steps implementing the approach. I responded, took parent's questions, and gave the floor to parents to comment.

The Parent Handbook. This tool only recently became available to parents and the general public on our school website recently. We have not yet tested parent acceptance or satisfaction with the Handbook. With time, I believe the Parent Handbook, which I prepared in a scholarly but parent-friendly language, will help parents and prospective teachers to understand the concepts, benefits, and practices of SBG.

Results of Technology Implementation

This section qualitatively describes the outcomes of the technology strategies implemented to meet our Technology Plan's goals: creating a technology-supported learning environment, providing technology training and technical support to teachers, facilitating student learning, and using assessment and data to monitor student achievement, modify instruction, and improve learning. The Technology Plan is available in Appendix G.

Technology-Enhanced Learning Environment

IAD has empowered our school community with systems and tools to enrich and enhance teaching and learning and facilitate communication within the internal school community and the broader external community.

Wi-Fi Network. The Wi-Fi network gave teachers easy access to the internet and printing for students, enabled teachers to share documents, and efficiently access education platforms and tools. The network operated flawlessly during the pandemic. Most teachers elected to launch their distance learning instruction from school premises for ease of use, convenience, and technical support.

Google Classroom. The platform served as our LMS for all grade levels and subjects. Teachers developed routine instructions for students to to access the platform using their school-generated IDs. Assignments and links to Google apps and third-party tools were easily accessible to students and students. Students could work offline assignments in their workbooks, take a snapshot of the work using and iPad or a phone, and upload via the Google Classroom app for the teachers to see. Teachers annotated student work with their feedback and uploaded the assignments for for students to see.

School Information System. Teachers recorded their student assignments, assessment scores in all subjects in the standards-based grade books and published the grades regularly for parents to see. Teachers also recorded end-of-trimester grades in the report card at the end of each trimester. Parents were issued log-in credentials to access the grade book and the report card to observe their children's growth and mastery of the standards. Figure 4-1 illustrates a typical standards-based grade book page for a fifth-grade student.

Grade 5 Student Name:	09/09	09/11	09/14	09/16	09/18	09/21	09/23	09/24	09/25	10/01	10/02	10/05	10/07	10/08	10/09	10
	Homework Module 1- Lesson 1 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 2 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 3 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 4 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 5 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 6 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 7 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 8 Homework	Summative Assessment Mid-Module 1 Assessment	Homework Module 1- Lesson 9 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 10 Homewo...	Summative Assessment Mid-Module 1 Assessment Re...	Homework Module 1- Lesson 11 Homework	Homework Module 1- Lesson 12 Homewo...	Homework Module 1- Lesson 13 Homewo...	Homework
Common Core State Standards - Mathematics - Measurement & Data - Convert like measurement units within a given measurement system.																
CCSS.Math.Content.5.MD.A.1 Convert among different-sized...				-					1 (1)			1 (1)				
Common Core State Standards - Mathematics - Number & Operations in Base Ten - Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths.																
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.B.5 Fluently multiply multi-digit...																
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.B.7 Add, subtract, multiply, and...										-	-			-	-	
Common Core State Standards - Mathematics - Number & Operations in Base Ten - Understand the place value system.																
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.A.1 Recognize that in a multi-digit...	-	-							1 (1)			2 (2)	-			
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.A.2 Explain patterns in the number...		-	-						2 (2)			2 (2)	-	-		
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.A.3 Read, write, and compare...				-												
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.A.3a Read and write decimals to...					-				2 (2)			3 (3)			-	
CCSS.Math.Content.5.NBT.A.3b Compare two decimals to						-			3 (3)			3 (3)				

Figure 4-1 *Grade 5 Standards-Based Grade Book Page*

CLASSES	T1	T2	T3
ELA			
Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details:			
I can quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	2		
I can determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.	3		
I can compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text	2		
Reading Literature: Craft and Structure:			
I can determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.			
I can describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.			
Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:			
I can analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a tex			
Reading Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details:			
I can quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	2		
I can determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.	3		

Figure 4-2 *Grade 5 Standards-Based Report Card*

Assessment Platforms. Teachers use our assessment platforms as follows:

The school administered Star Reading and Star Math assessment during the first week of every month. The tool provided several student assessments reports that enabled teachers to group students for more effective intervention and differentiation. Teachers had

access to their classrooms, and the administration had access to all individual students and classrooms in the building. The school administration used the assessment reports for schoolwide intervention needs. The reports also helped the administration make informed decisions regarding distributing monies under the federally funded Title I program, serving children at risk. Based on the assessment, IAD estimated one out of four students needed math intervention, and one out of three students required reading intervention. Figure 4-3 exhibits a typical Star Math assessment report used to assist in planning and intervention purposes on behalf of a fifth-grade student.

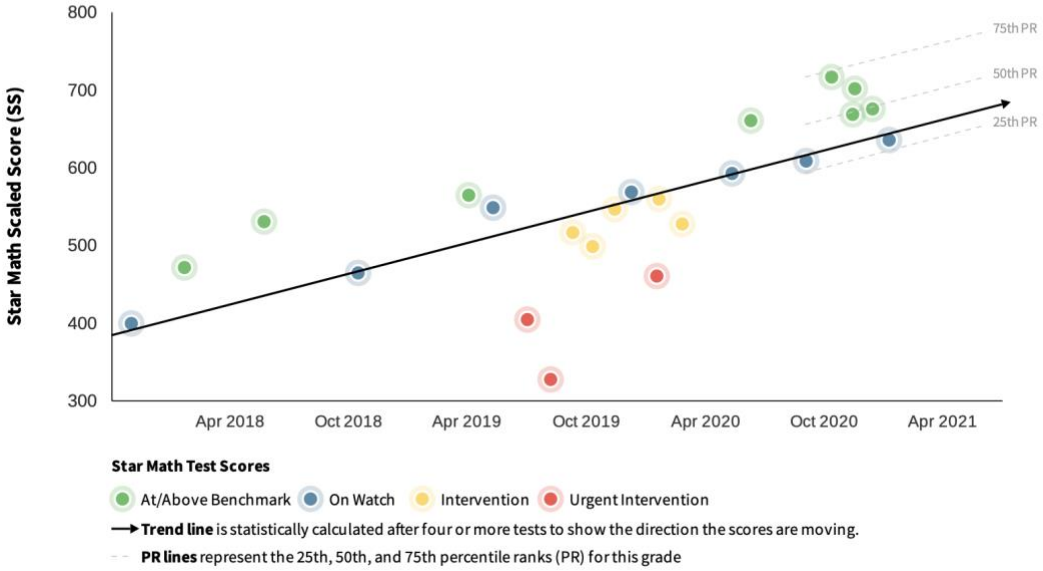

Figure 4-3 *Grade 5 Star Math Test Scores*

Teachers used Edulastic to assist in monitoring academic mastery and offer students multiple opportunities for assessment. Teachers reported satisfaction with several aspects of the platforms: Teachers praised Edulastic for being user-friendly, the ability to assign and monitor student progress through out assessments, and the instantaneous performance reports the system generates for every student. They could start and pause an assessment.

For example, if a student didn't complete an assessment and needed to continue later, the teacher could pause the test to be resumed later in class. Edulastic also allowed teachers to monitor students' progress during an assessment, including what questions they had answered. Such access was especially beneficial in responding to student assessment questions. Edulastic produces individual and class assessment reports that teachers found helpful for instructional planning. Figure 4-4 exhibits a typical classroom assessment report that shows students' mastery levels on each question relative to the standards assessed.

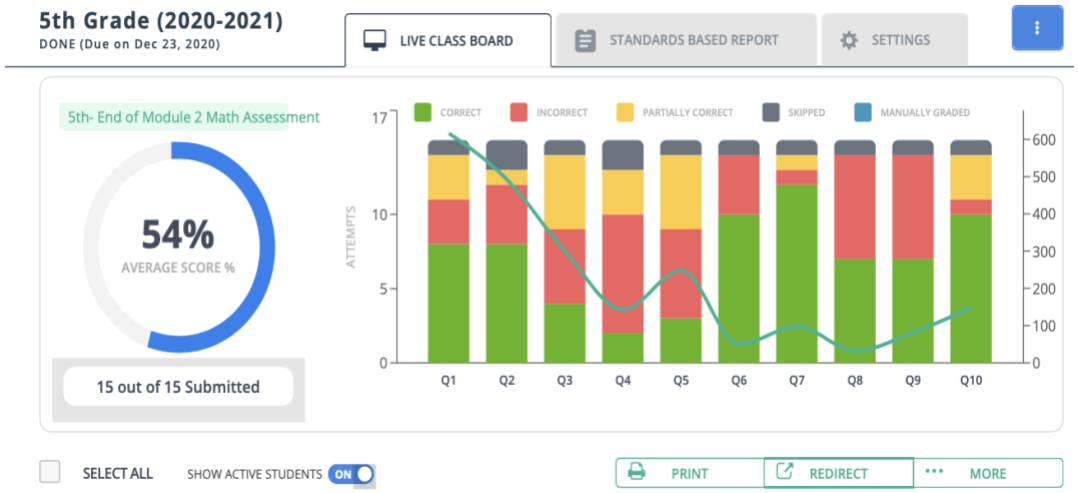

Figure 4-4 Grade 5 *Edulastic Classroom Report*

In reporting teacher use of the technology systems and tools at IAD, teachers indicated they needed support and training to reach sufficient confidence to use the technology for instruction, assessment, data analysis, and recordkeeping. In the latter half of the school year, teachers were overwhelmed as they scrambled to learn online instruction and to teach requisite technology-use skills to their children in all grades even

in the lower elementary school. There was little wonder that grade books were poorly populated, and student learning assessments were inadequate. As I keep stressing throughout this ELP, it was my responsibility as a school leader to balance core instruction and learning in the classroom against professional duties such as frequent assessment and record-keeping that could be delayed or staggered to permit time for appropriate planning decisions.

Teacher Training and Support

Ongoing Training: Technology training for teachers was adequate and went well.

Teachers benefitted from the interactive online professional development services to enhance the fluent use of technology platforms for various needs and purposes. We held the Renaissance online webinars as scheduled. Those sessions introduced teachers and staff to math and reading assessment reports and how to use them to plan for grouping and differentiated instruction.

Edulastic and Alma provided similar services. For example, IAD used Edulastic online training webinars to facilitate teacher use of the platform. Teachers learned to set-up classrooms, build assessments using provided assessment banks, and access instant assessment reports to inform instruction and intervention. Similarly, for Alma, through online webinars, teachers learned how to assign performance rubrics to each standard, enter assessment scores, assign grades, publish grades, transport grades to the grade book, leave appropriate feedback to students, and communicate with parents.

Teachers also learned how to use Google Classroom to manage student learning. Our Technology Coordinator and contributing lead teachers prepared in-service workshops and support as needed throughout the school year for teachers to create and manage classes,

assignments, and grades online. Teachers learned how to attach content materials to assignments, such as YouTube videos, Google Forms, and other items from Google Drive. Teachers were able to give direct, real-time feedback, use the class stream to post announcements, and engage students in question-driven discussions. Teachers also learned how to integrate technology into the curriculum with game-based learning tools for differentiated learning (e.g., Freckle and Prodigy).

Student Learning Opportunities

The emphasis in using technology for learning was to plan lessons, set objectives, select evidence-based instructional strategies, and choose appropriate technology tools to facilitate instruction. Based on this cycle of learning, teachers designed and implemented technology integrated lessons in the classrooms. Teachers shared the learning experience with parents via ClassDojo, Google Classroom, and emails.

As IAD shifted to distance learning due to COVID-19, the school used Zoom as the convening platform for distance learning. IAD's transition to hybrid learning never occurred due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic persistence in the school community. The school planned synchronous hybrid classroom learning that connected students at home and school by integrating the Zoom app, Swivel units, and iPads. This planning will prove useful when pandemic conditions improve, and students return to the school building. To enhance the children's learning experience with the standards, IAD subscribed to technology tools and resources that students can access in school and at home. For example, Accelerated Reader, IXL, Freckle, and Prodigy were some of the tools IAD students have used successfully before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers also taught online learning citizenry protocols such as arriving at the Zoom meetings on time, muting to filter out unnecessary background noise, appearing in full-face view before the camera, turning the cameras on while in class, raising hands to receive talking privileges, and breaking into rooms for collaborative activities. To facilitate learning and ensure child safety, the school loaned Chromebooks to families and generated student and employee email IDs to communicate within the school network. The school also controlled internet access on school-owned devices through network controls and filters.

Monitoring Student Achievement

The assessment platforms, Renaissance, Edulastic, and our SIS, Alma, provided ample information about student achievement. As mentioned earlier, teachers and the administration used this information to plan instruction and provide intervention. Teachers also used the information and student report cards to refer at-risk students to the local districts to receive federally funded Title I intervention services. The administration will use the information on student performance to assign classroom teachers for classes with prevalent needs. The data were used under the Child Find Act as a student evaluation component to identify special needs students. Unfortunately, the DRC Online Reporting System services, which we used to record and report the Terra Nova Common Core 3 assessment student aggregate and disaggregate performance, were suspended for 2019-2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 5

REFLECTION ON THE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Introduction

In this chapter, I will reflect on the three SBG implementation domains, professional development, parent buy-in, and technology. I will highlight what worked, what failed to come to fruition, and what should be modified or improved for better performance results as we move to the second year of implementation and beyond.

The COVID-19 Effect on SBG Implementation at IAD

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted school priorities and planning in districts and schools across the nation. It dictated a reexamination of goals, modification of strategies, and reallocation of resources, which affected staffing, technology, professional development, and communication. Most schools' shift to distance learning sent schools searching for technology-based alternatives to in-person learning and professional development. As reported by Guskey (2020), Solochek (2020), and Vegas and Winthrop (2020), the pandemic has influenced the paradigm of SBL and grading. Issues of equity and equal access to learning have become more vividly urgent than before. Scholars view SBG as part of the solution to equity and fair grading in the age of the pandemic and beyond (Guskey, 2020). SBL has assumed a new emphasis on prioritizing learning and changing the norms of instruction.

I must allude here to the likely enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on IAD in executing strategies to achieve our goals in each implementation prong. The school

closing at the end of the second trimester and the shift to remote learning compelled the school priorities to change. The school focused more on ensuring children continue to have access to learning while addressing their safety, health, and social and emotional needs. As a result, the momentum for SBG implementation stalled, and data collection needed to project the effectiveness and depth of SBG implementation became challenging.

My team and I planned and implemented professional development activities for teachers and administrators, evaluating appropriate content, process, and time. Our professional development activities ran as scheduled except for the third trimester of the school year. I believe this disruption of our PDP dampened our school's conversation and eroded teacher interest to pursue a deeper understanding of SBG practices and SBL related subjects. Teachers did not merely shift to online teaching; they spent valuable time learning best practices for online learning, such as sharing documents with elementary school children, receiving pdf documents from students, and annotating and returning documents with feedback. Teachers had to learn these skills and also teach them to elementary school children. That took substantial time away from focusing on SBL and SBG. Teachers did not abandon SBL and grading. Instead, teachers focused on students' urgent needs while doing their best to implement what they already learned instead of searching for new learning opportunities on SBL.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly every SBG implementation goal, strategy, and artifact I presented in this ELP. As I will refer to in this section, our PDP, Master Schedule, and Technology and Communication Plans have been affected or altered to reflect the post-COVID-19 realities.

Reflections on Professional Development Strategies

In hindsight, the PD needs assessment survey (Appendix I) was too limited in scope and content. It reflected the progression of my maturity as a student and a novice of SBG. I designed the study as part of my summer 2019 internship to learn what PD our teachers needed in the context of SBG. I could have created this survey more purposefully to learn more about our teachers' needs for the school year, their familiarity with SBG-related technology, and their beliefs and perceptions of SBG. That would have helped us focus more on professional development content and challenge traditional grading beliefs and practices more effectively. I could have made the survey a part of a pre-post study that would have examined our implementation strategies' effectiveness, especially our PD activities.

In contrast, the Teachers' Perceptions Survey conducted in 2020 proved valuable. Although many teachers in this survey reported some awareness and use of grading principles, others have shown support for a "hodgepodge" of grading practices or have expressed that they were unsure of where they stand regarding SBG principles. The grading practices they support are indicative of resistance to or poor understanding of SBG concepts and principles. It is interesting and noteworthy that many teachers held these perceptions even though our IAD electronic standards-based grade book and report card did not support traditional grading practices, indicating a divergence between teachers' perceptions and practices. Understanding the extent of this divergence should guide future planning to bridge the gap between perceptions and practices.

I believe the Teachers' Perception Survey confirms we have had some great conversations with our teachers; they understand best practices related to effective

formative feedback and reassessment. Teachers believe grades should reflect the tenets of SBG. However, the survey results do not demonstrate a robust understanding or support of many aspects of SBG. As a school leader, it is incumbent upon me to lead a discussion among teachers to see what went right, what went wrong, and where we need to improve. In doing so, I must reflect on our first year of implementation and explore possible ways to enhance and design our future professional development to reach a consensus in teachers' beliefs and practices. After all, SBG implementation should be an ongoing process. Brookhart (2011) suggests any grading reform effort should start by coming to a common understanding of the purpose of grading. If Brookhart (2011) is correct, perhaps there was insufficient understanding generated early in the process. If this was not the case, maybe the professional development program could have been designed differently based upon the literature. We may want to examine the extent to which our professional activities fared against "backward planning." Guskey (2014) suggests "backward planning" should be a vital component of the professional program where we must implement the following steps in order:

1. Consider the specific student learning outcomes we want to attain
2. Decide what instructional practices and policies are most likely to produce the student learning outcomes we want.
3. Put in place the organizational supports that are necessary to implement instructional practices well
4. Decide what teachers must know and be able to do to implement the new practices successfully

5. Decide what set of experiences will best enable participants to acquire the needed knowledge and skills. For example, Guskey (2014) suggests seminars and workshops can be a highly effective means of sharing information and expanding teachers' knowledge and skills, especially when paired with collaborative planning, structured opportunities for practice with feedback, and follow-up coaching.

Similarly, we may have to examine the extent of expectations that staff would put the ideas into practice (vs. read, discuss, and change beliefs before acting upon these new ideas) and the timing by which the administration of the survey followed the professional program. To this effect, Guskey (1985) suggests that teaching practices and learning benefits from those teaching practices are important influencing factors in changing teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and buy-in. Therefore, the change in beliefs is a consequence of proven results of practices. In other words, if staff perceptions do not differ much from what the literature suggests teachers "in general" have said previously, was there insufficient time for teachers to "see" positive results? Or, was the professional development not well designed to encourage movement towards the intended results (or perhaps a combination of one or more of these possibilities)?

Revisiting the conversation about SBG to change perceptions and challenge traditional beliefs is essential. Refining or redesigning our PDP structure to reflect Guskey's "backward planning" scheme may be key to building a consensus on SBG rather than mere compliance. More than half of our teachers have a good idea of what belongs in a student's grade (academics) and what does not (behavior). Their responses may not have been a knowledge issue as much as it was an issue of values, beliefs, and inertia. Starting

the grading conversation challenges teachers' beliefs about how students learn and who is responsible for ensuring their learning—letting go of using grades to encourage or discourage behavior can be difficult for teachers. Therefore, we need to continue having conversations around the grading philosophy with the teachers we know are holding on to that traditional grading paradigm.

Based on the survey findings, I believe future planning content goals should focus on areas where 30% or more of the teachers responded in a manner inconsistent with SBG. In establishing those goals for the year to come, we must take into consideration, in addition to the discussion above, the following focus points:

- Dispelling the Bell/Normal Curve Notion. Classroom grades should not follow the bell/normal curve, as 46% of the teachers believed. Support for grading the bell/normal curve notion is horrendous in 2020 and should be 0%.
- Enhancing the Belief That Students Should Receive High Grades for Meeting Objectives. The survey shows 57% of the respondents do not believe this should be the case. There may be a wording problem in the question, but this is a big problem if standards are objectives.
- Emphasizing the Concept That Group Work, Such as Group Projects and Presentations, Should not Count in the Student Grade. The support of 69% of the respondents to include groupwork calls for more professional development focus on this concept.
- Stressing the Rationalization of Excluding Learning Enablers from the Grades. Support for including effort (54% positive), student motivation (38% positive), class participation (46% positive), attendance (31% positive), and honesty

(31% positive) must be challenged. Effort can't be measured, so it cannot be graded. Student motivation (minority support) is still problematic. Class participation is giving students points for making the teacher's job easier and favors extroverts. Attendance must not count because grading is not about seat time. Honesty is a behavior that does not reflect mastery.

- Banning Extra Credit and Bonus Questions. Teachers' support for the practice (46% positive) of both extra credit and bonus questions requires schoolwide banishment.
- Clarifying the Case with the Time Limit on Assessment. Teachers (50% positive supportive) must not set time limit for completion of the assessment unless speed is a condition of quality on tests and exams.
- Dispelling Averaging Assessment Scores to Calculate Grades over a Period of Time. While 50% of the respondents support averaging, the practice is in direct conflict with SBG and the latest evidence of mastery. There is no need to drop a student's lowest results when assessing the same learning (57% positive) since SBG emphasizes the latest/more recent evidence.

Reflection on Parent Buy-in Strategies

Reasonably measuring parent reactions and sentiments to SBG at IAD was challenging. Its relatively brief introduction combined with circumstances involving the COVID-19 pandemic complicated the matter. The school shifted to remote learning, and the community's attention shifted to providing services and technology tools to make sure children continued to learn. School surveys sent to parents focused on measuring parents' reactions to distance and hybrid learning modules and scenarios and pandemic health and

safety issues. Assessment and grading for accountability appeared trivial, and the focus shifted to making sure teachers continued to connect with students to provide uninterrupted instruction.

I believe the open houses we conducted in September were successful. I had the opportunity to contribute to some of our teachers' presentations and to attend those meetings. Teachers of ELA and math explained how the new grading policy worked. They explained proficiency scales to parents and responded to parents' questions. Parents were receptive to the new grading approach, and some had anticipated the action since we had started the discussion about standards-based curriculum the year before.

The grade book and the report served as evidence the transition to SBG was real. Parents regularly examined their children's performance and progress. Students explained to their parents what each level of the proficiency scale meant and what they should do to progress to the next level. The grade book also served as a conversation starter in the classroom and frequent individualized parent-teacher meetings. The grade book illustrated the multiple opportunities a student may have received to show mastery of the standards.

The grade book went a step further in reporting academic grades separately from work habits and social skills, emphasizing a fundamental principle of SBG. Teachers had the opportunity to place their comments under each subject to record growth.

I was pleased by the magnitude of trust parents have shown to the school leadership in leading the change. In general, parents were receptive and appreciative of the school's investment in standards-based curricula, technology resources, and professional development. I had the perception that parents understood we, as school leadership, were committed to education improvement to make their children competitive with their future

peers in high school and college. Unfortunately, we could not hold our parent-teacher conferences at the end of the third trimester with the school closing. Also, we lost the end-of-year benchmark and the annual TerreNova assessments when it became clear that test administration logistics at IAD were insufficient to ensure validity. Besides, the message I sent to teachers and parents was to focus more on teaching and formative assessment (assessment for learning) and less on summative assessment (assessment of learning).

I created the plan (Appendix D) to communicate with parents and the community, utilizing the school website, social media, and our student information system. The plan described the message, the frequency, the tools, and the assigned parties to initiate communication. However, no one could have planned for the unexpected COVID-19-related events. School communication dealt almost exclusively with COVID-19 matters. Most daily email communication addressed using new technology tools, health and safety issues related to the pandemic, and school family protocols to continue learning during the pandemic. Still, the school implemented many strategies in the communication plan. The in-person open houses in 2019-2020 and the virtual open houses in 2020-2021 served to send out the message about our new system. The grade book and report card were accessible to parents on Alma, and the changes were a subject of discussion in parent-teacher conferences. Initially, we did not communicate a clear message about the purpose of assessment and grading during COVID-19. While the validity of the assessment may have been questionable, many students requiring intervention performed exceptionally well. Interventions were placed on hold until students could retake the assessment in-person or were in a position to use a variety of evaluation tools to assess their levels

accurately. The message sent to parents emphasized that the purpose of the assessment was not to promote students but to measure mastery and provide intervention.

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Parent-Teacher Communication Form proved to be the most valuable weekly communication tool with parents. The use of hardcopy textbooks, workbooks, and student folders was limited. Parents, however, needed to keep up with their children's learning progress. To access students' Google Classroom accounts, parents had to log in using their children's accounts to trace what the teacher and students were learning in the classrooms. To keep parents informed, teachers dispatched to parents and shared with the administration their brief instructional plans for the week, including possible assignments and assessments. Through these means, parents kept abreast of the progress of learning relevant to the curriculum taught.

While the Parent-Teacher Communication Form effectively established a permanent communication channel with parents, it posed a significant inconvenience and confusion to some parents, especially those with multiple siblings who would receive many teacher emails for each student and all subjects taught. Tracking student learning using the form required parents to sift the students’ inbox emails every time they needed to identify student assignments. The teachers often had to respond to parents' emails to clarify an assignment or reply to an inquiry. To improve communications, we are now looking for a learning management system (LMS) to host all needed learning information in one place so that parents and students could log in daily and more easily locate needed information.

Our communications efforts with parents reflected planning for 2019-2020. That planning mandated significant changes during the second half of the school year, especially after COVID-19. The plan for communication with parents must be updated

each year to reflect progress, new goals, and likely to keep pace with how parents and students consume digital information. The pandemic era's realities dictated that the school be more innovative than before in using technology to meet and communicate with parents regularly. I believe we can use our website and social media outlets more effectively to communicate curricular changes and provide informational SBG-related material. Zoom has been used primarily for classroom instruction. I believe monthly Zoom meetings with parents can help keep parents connected, enlist their support, and ensure their participation in their children's learning.

Reflection on Technology Strategies

When we began implementation, we set the goals and planned strategies and activities to meet those goals. In developing these goals, I considered the ISTE standards for educators, students, and administrators (ISTE, 2020). I also considered the U.S. Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan, which sets similar goals in the following domains (Education, 2017, January):

- Learning—Engaging and empowering learning through technology
- Teaching—Teaching with technology
- Leadership—Creating a culture and conditions for innovation and change
- Assessment—Measuring for learning
- Infrastructure—Enabling access and effective use

The technology artifact I created proved useful, especially after the school closings during the pandemic. All teachers and students required practice in using the technology platforms firsthand. For communication, Alma served well for daily communication with parents, especially as we transitioned back and forth between in-

person and remote learning for the early elementary grades. For learning, Google Classroom became the pivot of our learning management. Teachers created and posted assessments and assignments on Google Classroom. Students submitted their work using the app to take photos and upload their work for teachers to grade and receive feedback. Teachers also assessed students through third-party platforms such as Splash Learn.

For other assessments, teachers used Renaissance Star Reading and Star Math. Initially, these assessment results were inflated and did not reflect what we knew about children's achievement levels. Students, especially in lower elementary, who received their parents' assistance to use the technology did well in rates disproportional to their actual performance levels. To ensure integrity and, to some degree, the validity of the assessments, we explained to parents that the purpose of assessment during COVID-19 was not accountability. Teachers explained that the assessment was to inform parents and teachers regarding needed assistance to students through redirecting instructional strategies and grouping for differentiation and intervention. In some grades, teachers arranged for staggered in-person student assessments to ensure the integrity of the assessment.

COVID-19 disrupted nearly all walks of life in our school. However, our experience and benefits, as educators, from the use of technology, grew immensely. Teachers could use the technology to facilitate learning and grading, keep records, and communicate with parents. Not only that, but they were able to identify areas where the technology worked well and places where the technology fell short of meeting their needs. Based on teacher feedback, I describe below where the technology served us well and where we may need to explore alternatives.

Google Classroom. This platform has served our teachers and students well during the pandemic. Our children learned to access their accounts via their school generated IDs. Students learned quickly to respond to their assignments using Google Docs or through a third-party application. They also learned to upload photos of their assignments from a cell phone or iPad photo library to their Google Classroom account for teachers to view and provide feedback. Teachers annotated assignments and sent them back under the same tab/assignment on Google Classroom. The muting tool on Google Classroom served as a useful management tool. When a student chatted inappropriately with peers, teachers could temporarily mute the student until the behavior was corrected. While muted, a student could still submit assignments and participate in the classroom activities but could not chat with classmates.

The drawback of using Google Classroom was parents' inability to follow up with their children's daily assignments in each of their children's subjects. For parents to see what assignments their children may have for a particular calendar day, they had to follow a tedious process using their children's school IDs to access the classrooms daily. Parents had to email teachers to follow-up with their children since they could not communicate with the teacher on the platform. The teachers would email parents weekly Parent-Teacher communication forms every Monday morning.

Edulastic. Using certified standards-based assessments from the assessment bank was convenient on the Edulastic platform. Teachers could clone or edit questions to meet student's assessment needs. Teachers would easily rephrase a question or omit a part if the students haven't learned it yet. However, teachers identified two main drawbacks for Edulastic. First, Edulastic would not differentiate the mastery of multiple standards when

assessed by a single assessment question. When a question related to multiple standards, Edulastic would assign the same score to each standard regardless of each student's mastery. Therefore, teachers needed to adjust the appropriate grades manually for each standard and not rely on the platform to generate grades. This system shortfall became problematic for many of the questions in the mid-module and end-of-module math and ELA assessments. To alleviate this concern, I reminded teachers to use their professional judgment. Therefore, when Edulastic fails to distinguish between two performances on an assessment question, the teacher's professional judgment becomes critical, as O'Conner (2018) emphasizes.

The other drawback of Edulastic was its use of percentage points to score assessments and translate them into mastery of the standards. Students can see their percent scores next to their proficiency scale scores. Such a display was an ongoing concern since SBG intended to dismantle percent-point grading entirely from our grading practices.

Alma SIS. Teachers had a concern with calculating the grade when multiple assessments related to a particular standard. Typically, teachers should have the ability to choose the last score, the decaying average, or the mode of scores to determine the grade. However, Alma mandated the school administration to choose a single option at the beginning of the school year. Once made, no change was possible for the balance of the school year.

Recommendation for Technology

One lesson I learned from introducing new technology platforms and tools is the need for training and a product trial period before full implementation. As educators, we

are usually excited about having technology products for every condition the school may have. Is this what you mean (notice the additional "and" and semicolons): We have Alma SIS for student information, email communication with parents, the grade book, and the report card; Renaissance, Edulastic, and DRC for assessment; and Google Classroom for learning management. Juggling these different platforms is frustrating to teachers and parents.

My recommendation for the school and any other education entity is two-fold: First, consider an economically affordable integrated technology system where learning management, assessment, the grade book, and the report card are in one place and accessible to all stakeholders. IAD needs a platform where parents can log in anytime to view upcoming, due, and missing assessments for all subjects in one place. As illustrated in Figure 5-1, Edulastic lacks integration with Alma, Google Classroom, or Star Reading and Math. The assessment on Edulastic is not trackable anywhere (e.g., Alma) except on Edulastic. Teachers must copy the scores and manually insert them into Alma's grade book. This disconnect presents transparency and accountability concerns since the administration can only view Alma's scores at the receiving end. Teachers and parents must log in to Alma with their assigned accounts to access their children's progress. For Star Reading and Star Math, teachers must download the assessment reports from Renaissance and mail them to parents.

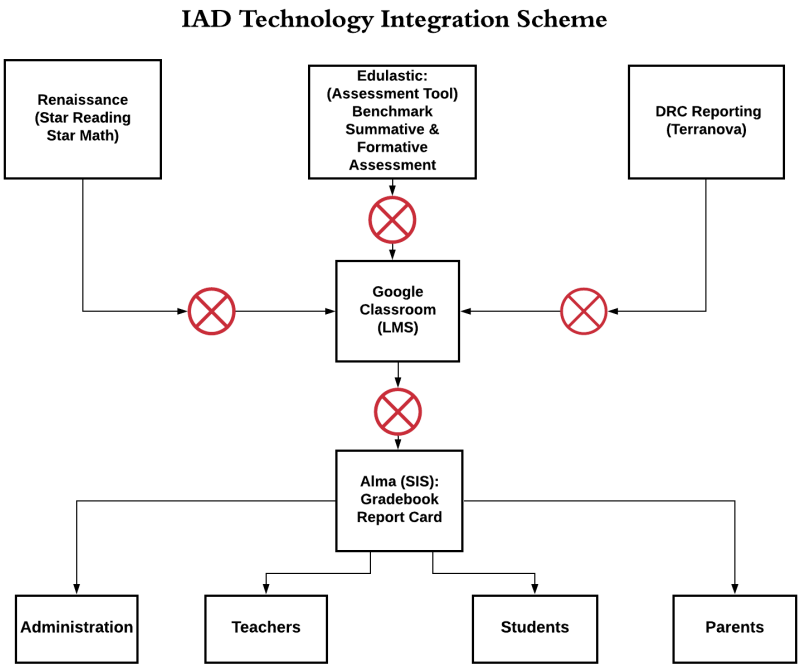

Figure 5- 1 *IAD Technology Integrated Scheme*

The presence of student performance data components across several platforms creates an impediment to the effective use of data to track student performance at the school level and make schoolwide improvement decisions. A platform that delivers all these services may save teachers and the administration time and effort they can spend on student learning. Of course, we did not anticipate integrating various platforms into one system as an urgent school need when planning our technology. Integration remains a critical consideration for future planning.

Second, invest in keeping on board a Technology Coordinator. Technology is critical in implementing change in schools. It requires informed decision making on product selection, piloting new products, and informed negotiation with product vendors to ensure learning time and financial resources do not become victims of trial-and-error implementation. Once introduced, technology products and systems require ongoing

training and support to staff, students, and parents. This is critical to ensure continued and systematic technology use to save direly needed learning time. The current pandemic crises have given IAD an edge, not only because we had systems and tools in place, but more importantly because we had round-the-clock technical support of a savvy Technology Coordinator who found answers to every challenge.

Lessons Learned and Next Implementation Steps

SBG is an ambitious endeavor in education reform. The evaluation approach transforms learning, assessment, and grading in the classroom and challenges traditional norms and widely held beliefs among stakeholders. The COVID-19 pandemic added new and unexpected challenges to IAD's implementation efforts, and, therefore, the transformation to SBG needed to be more flexible and adaptive. For the SBG approach to succeed, careful planning is necessary. Evaluation of current goals, structures, and systems are required. Technology needs to be revisited frequently and modified to meet the changing needs mandated by the pandemic and post-pandemic circumstances to enable teachers and the administration to navigate the implementation journey. Keeping parents and students abreast of all changes and modifications are necessary to preserve buy-in and involvement.

There are many lessons learned from our efforts to meet the past challenges and incorporate that knowledge in planning for the next implementation steps. First, the process will take years to become established. We are in the second year of implementation, and disruption of learning occurred at all levels. Some stakeholders may become frustrated at their need to ask too many questions and seek answers. The message I always sent out was, we are only starting, we are making mistakes, and we will continue

to learn for years to come until the SBG culture prevails in our school. Therefore, we should expect the SBG inititiative to set the school on a path towards acceptance of a constant process of iterative change and continuous improvement.

Second, one can never take support for granted; parents' and teachers' silence does not signal tacit approval or understanding. We have noted from the Teachers' Perceptions of SBG Survey that some teachers implemented SBG practices even though they may have disagreed or did not understand the practices.

Third, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed our efforts on many fronts in SBG implementation. On the positive side, the pandemic underlined our need to meet our children's emerging learning needs. The pandemic magnified inequity in schools nationwide and at IAD (Guskey, 2020). Many children lack robust internet connectivity or device access for online learning. Others may not have the needed school supplies at home. Still, others may be unable to receive adequate adult learning support at home. Under such circumstances, the valid assessment for accountability is fragile. The need to focus on learning became critical. IAD had a compelling need to focus on "assessment for learning" instead of "assessment of learning" and to deemphasize assessment for accountability in favor of assessment as a means of improving learning and instruction.

Fourth, COVID-19 unleashed a plethora of opportunities for technology use inside and outside the classroom. Precision in platform and tool selection is critical, and schools are awash in technology marketing promises and offers. Continuous evaluation of the technology system and tools is also essential. In-house tech-savvy personnel can shorten the time and save on the investment for the ultimate benefit of student learning.

The next steps for SBG implementation should consider these lessons and build on the recommendations listed earlier in Chapter 5. In brief, IAD should continue the conversation with the teachers and parents about SBG. New professional development activities should tackle the most serious and fundamental issues from the Teachers' Perception Survey. For example, the school must continue dismantling point accumulation practices such as the extra credit assignment packets and bonus questions. We live in the twenty-first century. IAD must continue to ban student ranking and have the school community focus, instead, on all students meeting the standards.

For continuing PD, I would recommend spending time having teachers master writing proficiency scales and linking them to (and creating) high-quality assessments. The earlier professional development activities enabled teachers to have “the big rocks"; now, teachers need to apply what they've learned. I would also recommend spending some time reviewing the scoring of assessments/activities and different ways of determining an overall grade.

Finally, for the new learning piece, I would recommend focusing on how do we "do" SBL in the classroom: unit planning, lesson planning, instructional strategies, etc. This focus will help put all of the pieces together. Heflebower et al.'s (2018) book "*A Teacher's Guide to Standards-Based Learning"* serves this purpose well, and our PLC can use the text as a book study.

Chapter 6

REFLECTION ON PERSONAL LEADERSHIP IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

SBG, from A-Z, was my self-initiated learning adventure. I started the journey with little conceptual knowledge about the subject but with many concerns and questions about our grading system's fairness and clarity. The first lead was provided to me by my spring 2019 internship instructor, Dr. Lykens, who provided the initial direction by suggesting the writings of SBG gurus such as O'Conner and Stiggens. Then, my summer 2019 internship mentor and Curriculum Advisor at Colonial School District, Dr. Nicholas Baker, offered me the opportunity to take a close look at his District's experience of transitioning from traditional grading to SBG. The rest was a knowledge expedition and a leadership development journey that enabled me to become the SBG scholar that I believe I am with the skills necessary to lead a transformational change such as standards-based education.

Improvement as an Informed Leader

The review of the literature (Appendix M) has served as a reference for my learning and growth as a leader on this issue and established the scientific rationale for my decision making in SBG related matters. It informed me of the best implementation practices that have been tried successfully by other learning environments. The literature in general defined SBG in terms of the benefits the approach may bring to learning and grading and compared and contrasted SBG with traditional grading practices. In this respect,

O'Conner's (2018) book, *How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards*, stands out as the most comprehensive and authoritative reference on the subject of SBG. The book explains almost any SBG-related concept. Two other empirical resources on SBG guided my school planning. The first was a Hanover Research (2015) investigative report on schools and school districts that implemented SBG successfully. By noting the standard prevailing practices in these learning environments, I identified strategies and structures needed to build within our school for successful implementation. For example, grading proficiency scales and district reassessment policies enabled me to be clear about introducing these to my school. The second influential work was Redmond's (2019) study, *California Expert Principals' Identification of the Best Strategies for the Implementation of a Transition From a Traditional Grading and Reporting System to a Standards-Based Grading and Reporting System.* The participating principals in the study shed light on five implementation strategies we used in our school. Specifically, the need for an integrated technology system as a strategy to support teacher assessment, grading, and reporting guided me to invest in similar technology to support our teachers. Guskey et al. (2011) and Guskey (2015) offered extraordinary insight into the report card and guided my decisions in the design, structure, and contents of our grade book and report card.

Improvement of Personal Skills

I was interested in fair assessment and grading long before I formally chose the subject as the core of my ELP. I believe in promoting education that reconciles academic achievement, student motivation, celebrating success, equity, and the child's social and emotional needs. I was always searching for a grading system that served the whole child without inexplicably leaning towards one aspect of child development and growth at the

expense of others. As a long-time school leader, I have always wrestled with finding a grading system that would fairly and accurately convey student achievement. I believe SBG has helped me find answers and solutions to many of the assessment and grading practices that I always thought were unproductive.

The traditional grading system was a source of anxiety, confusion, and inequity in learning settings in which I worked for many years. I had witnessed firsthand how traditional grading practices perpetuated a toxic culture of inequity, competitiveness, and apathy that may have exposed children to pressure, anxiety, fear, and intimidation. At times, traditional grading practices pitted children against children and parents against parents, teachers or even the school.

In my attempt to draw a balance between reporting academic mastery and acknowledging student effort, behavior, and work ethic, I followed common sense and professional instinct as an educator to mitigate the adverse effects of traditional grading practices and promote a wide array of child-growth values and needs. However, while compassionate and professionally inspired, my practices often fell short of being scholarly, evidence-based, or even consistent until I started reviewing the literature and listening to the gurus of SBG.

Following are examples of traditional grading practices that I encountered in my profession and how I dealt with them before I started my quest to understand and implement SBG.

Experience with Traditional Grading

Perpetuating inequity. In my capacity as a school leader, I have witnessed celebrations of success that gave misleading impressions about student achievement. I

have seen students competing to a fraction of a point to win the honor of giving the class valedictory or salutatory. In one case, parents called for an investigation and a recount of three-year's worth of grade records by an external auditor to verify the class valedictorian's selection. On award nights, those who, along with their parents, mastered the art of point accumulation sat in the front row, well-groomed, and ready to walk down that aisle to collect their numerous awards before a crowd of cheering parents and community dignitaries. To their credit, these were children who never missed a homework assignment, always turned in their extra-credit packets, and had parents who prepared them for every test, helped them with their projects, drove them to school, and picked them up, always on time.

Then there was the other side of traditional grading- not a good side, either. These children never showed up to award nights because they could not accumulate the points or may have accumulated enough only to receive third-degree or condolence awards for attendance or good behavior. These were the kids who usually went home to help their parents take care of their younger siblings, might not have the proper environment at home to study or do their homework, and had hard-working parents who could not spare the time, have the skill, or speak the language to help them understand math or science lessons. These were children who often missed school days or arrived late at school, only to receive grim looks from peers and teachers for disrupting the ongoing learning in the classroom.

Anxiety, pressure, intimidation, and fear. Some students were unable to please their parents with their grades, no matter how hard they tried. I had parents come to my office to question why their child had obtained a grade of 98% instead of 100%. I was

appalled by the attitude of that achieving child who took a backward stride from learning, quit doing his homework, and turned into a disruptive element in the classroom. Luckily, the teacher who discovered in his notebook the phrases "D is for death" and "F is for funeral" did not take the discovery lightly. When the teacher sought an explanation, the child, breaking into tears, explained that his dad threatened, "if I don't get the "Principal's Award" not to come home.

Often, "how is my child doing" means "how is my child doing compared to his peers" (Guskey, 2003). Kids joke about each other's class ranks. When a child with a low rank arrives home with a report card, parents quickly glimpse their child's grade and immediately jump into the most intimidating comments leaving an everlasting scar on the child. Often that rank label, assigned at the end of each trimester, is reinforced and becomes descriptive of the child one year after the other.

Mitigating the Problem Before and After SBG

To address many of these unfair traditional grading practices, I often resorted to common-sense solutions that I learned later were mostly in line with SBG. I championed a growth mindset to learning in my school by acknowledging failure as a step towards success, deemphasizing accumulation of points, offering multiple opportunities for learning, encouraging collaboration, and providing learning differentiation and intervention. I would often tell my students in Grade 8 math not to worry about failing because everyone will pass at the end of the year. I based that assurance on my belief that fear of failure, an external motivator, does not drive learning and that research has discredited grades as a means to motivate students to learn (Stan, 2012). To keep my promise, I never gave a failing grade to a student. I would only provide formative

feedback to improve student understanding. To ease student anxiety, I encouraged teachers to increase communication with parents to keep them informed about their children's progress and the interventions their children may have needed. I also urged teachers to be strategic and selective about homework assignments in terms of quality, child-need, duration and be especially sympathetic to children who may have difficult supportive conditions at home.

Although these efforts helped mitigate the adverse effects of a long-time culture of traditional learning and grading, applying these efforts was often inconsistent, vague, disarrayed, fragmented, and lacked cohesion. Ultimately, the helpful practices, in my opinion, were insufficient to irradicate the traditional beliefs and perceptions about grading in the minds of many teachers, students, and parents.

When I dug deeper into SBG, a clearer picture emerged regarding practices and strategies required to effect transformational change. I learned from Guskey (2015) that failure is not an option and that students go through a learning-assessing-feedback cycle until they master the concepts. Guskey and Bookhart (2019) made such thinking clear in their landmark quote, "grades do not reflect who you are as a learner, but where you are in your learning journey, and where is always temporary" (p. 46). I also learned from Guskey (2003) and Stiggens (2012) that all students must aspire to learn and undergo assessment until they all achieve one rank: meeting the learning goals by the end of each school year.

Before SBG, I told my students that homework was optional and should not prevent them from doing other important tasks, such as reading or playing their favorite sports. These other activities, I felt, were as important as homework. I also always

thought that a full-day work shift for children should not be followed by an evening shift that deprived them of the need to socialize with their family, play a sport, or read a favorite book. I made sure my students knew it was understandable not to know how to do their homework or turn in incomplete homework if they found it overly challenging. Together, in the classroom, we would work to understand the concepts that may have been unclear. This relaxed atmosphere enabled most of my students to hand in their homework and often with perfection. Many were honest to point out what they could or could not understand. Many were eager to impress me, as their teacher, with their excellent work. I came to discover that many of these kids have developed the joy of independent learning and growth. This comfortable and stress-free atmosphere always paid off in leading students to understand and succeed.

When I delved into the SBG literature, I was full of joy to understand the role of homework (Appendix M) in student learning and grading. Under the new approach, a homework assignment held importance, but it was for practice. Grading homework is unfair and is not consistent with equity. If a child already understands the subject, there is no need to assign the same task as other peers who may be struggling with the concept. The grade's reliability is questionable when parents assist their children in doing the homework and when students may copy the work from their peers. In the absence of teacher supervision, it is impossible to ascertain homework as a measure of student mastery of the concepts taught in the classroom (Marzano & Heflebower, 2011; O'Conner, 2011, 2018; Schimmer, 2016; Westerberg, 2016; Reeves, 2011; Guskey, 2015; Vatterott, 2011).

My understanding of SBG enabled me to be clear and consistent in advocating for the grading approach. In 2019-2020, we took concrete steps to dismantle a traditional grading culture and build a new one that promotes academic mastery, equity collaboration, and empathy. Students had to learn the new system. I instructed teachers to talk to students at their cognitive levels and explain to them the new norms. I held informal sessions with middle school students one class at a time. I could see the mixed feelings of excitement and dismay on their faces as we introduced the role of SBG-related concepts such as assessment, homework, and performance scales. "Oh, so we can take a test as many times as we can?" one student shouted. Another exclaimed, "So homework is optional? We don't have to do it?" and a third impressively expressed, "So to get 4, I must understand the concept as if I can teach it." These discussions and reactions formed the beginning of a new culture and set students on the path for a unique learning experience.

Not all children were happy about the change; some were disappointed by the awards' cancellation. The graduating eighth-grade students complained they would have a very dull graduation ceremony. We explained that we would arrange other forms of celebrations that would recognize their leadership qualities and soft skills. In the final analysis, we explained that the change is about learning, collaboration, empathy, and fairness.

A few years ago, I led my school community to carve "diversity" as the first word in our school vision, "To educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful, and safe environment; providing them with a rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens."

Since then, I have always asked myself if our assessment and grading system truly served the causes of equity and diversity. With the introduction of SBG, I believe we are addressing equity and putting our feet firmly on the path to an equitably served and diverse school community.

Improvement as an Organizational Leader

I benefitted from my summer 2019 internship activities in Colonial School District (CSD). I will focus on the learning experience gained as I explored the District's transition from a traditional learning and grading approach to SBL and grading (Appendix K). The activities put me in touch, firsthand, with those who served to plan curriculum units, rubrics, report cards, and communication efforts with parents and stakeholders. This reflection helped me draw parallels and inferences about what strategies and activities we can realistically adopt for IAD implementation and what implementation limitations and obstacles my school may encounter due to more limited resources.

During the summer of 2019 internship, I had the opportunity to learn how structure, human and time resources, culture, systems, and stakeholders worked together coherently to accomplish the District’s mission of transitioning from traditional to competency-based learning in conformity with the PELP framework (Framework, 2011).

The close observation and interaction informed me of the need for long-term planning, piloting as a strategy, gradual implementation, establishing a schoolwide structure where an inclusive planning and steering committee set goals, planned curriculum rubrics, designed assessments, and shared resources with local instructional coaches and teachers. A technology-based system housed learning management,

assessment, grading, and reporting accessible to all stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement was critical throughout the process in a wide array of District and school-level activities.

In comparing CSD's journey of implementing SBG to IAD's trip, I learned what works, what we need to do, and what limitations a small private school embarking on a similar journey may face. The structure CSD established connected many resources, addressed stakeholders, established effective systems, and built a districtwide culture conducive to effective implementation. Teachers played essential roles in producing and implementing mastery rubrics, and they provided continuous feedback to local and district coaches. They also played a crucial role in selling the SBG concept to parents and students. I have learned to take a close look at CSD’s teacher experience to make sure all teachers buy-in, participate in the building process, and serve as ambassadors of SBG learning to the community.

CSD used resources effectively to support implementation in all district schools. The Data Service Center platform for grading and reporting gave SBG implementation uniformity and consistency and instilled harmony and ownership in the district community. Using Schoology as an LMS to house learning resources and formative and summative assessments made teaching and learning management less stressful and allowed teachers to provide for learning differentiation. It also facilitated parent involvement in the learning process of their children.

The CSD structure model was ideal for a school district. Dedicated instructional coaches at the District and the local levels worked together to plan, pilot, and implement. At IAD, the privilege of using instructional coaches' services was nonexistent simply

because retaining instructional coaches as a layer for academic planning and counseling is not economically feasible. Planning started with the administration, and teachers participated in creating the grading rubrics, planning professional development, and implementing the classroom approach. This workload placed enormous constraints and burdens on the teachers' shoulders and elevated the level of anxiety in the face of accountability before parents and the administration. At IAD, teachers compensated for this structural deficiency by using outside expertise to receive specialized professional development to answer their questions and guide them on this journey.

Improvement as an Instructional Leader

As an aspiring scholar, I benefitted from establishing conversations and connecting with the gurus of the SBG approach, which enabled me to rise to the level of the scholarly discourse. Some of these interactions were through responses to questions that I posted on the SBL and Grading (SBLG) group page on Facebook. Others were in response to direct inquiries that I forwarded to scholars about our professional development activities. For example, Tom Schimmer shared advice about outcome expectations from his book's first four chapters. O'Conner delivered answers on the SBLG Facebook page to my inquiry about best practices to create a school Master Schedule, setting a time limit for assessment, and reporting homework in the grade book. Guskey explained to me in a Facebook page chat the difference between competency based-learning and standards-based learning. Matt Townsley referred me to articles, studies, and research papers that served my research and improved my thinking about best schoolwide implementation practices.

My interaction with the literature and SBG scholars enabled me to become the primary resource and reference for teachers in the building on the subject of SBG. Serving as a frame of reference for SBG in my school was evident in my email responses to the teachers' questions that often arose about what constitutes appropriate SBG practices. For example, when a teacher inquired about the grading proficiency scale and why we don't include a "Not at the Mastery" category to indicate a child has failed to meet the standard, my response was meant not to close a discussion but to provide reliable and scholarly information based on the literature. Figure 6-1 shows how I responded to that question.

Dear teacher,

The scale that we have is as follows:

STANDARDS-BASED PROFICIENCY SCALE

4: ADVANCED	The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the material presented within the standard by completing advanced applications of the material.
3: MEETS	The student demonstrates proficiency in the complex, targeted knowledge and skills for the standard.
2: APPROACHING	The student understands the foundational material of the standard but is still working on mastering the concepts and skills.
1: BEGINNING	The student can demonstrate an understanding of all of the foundational material of the standard with assistance from the teacher.
N/A: N/A	This standard was not assessed during this term.

Figure 6-1 *Standards-Based Proficiency Scale*

"Not at Mastery" is not distinct because it can refer to levels 1 and 2, or even N/A. The idea is to show how the child progresses in learning and not hint at passing or failing. The scale allows for collaborative goal setting between the student and the teacher for future learning. "Not at Mastery" does not help in that respect. "Not at Mastery" does not

answer the "then where exactly the child is." The scale above represents an adaptation of one from Marzano and O'Conner; other scholars also suggested similar scales. Some scholars have suggested two-level mastery ("Meet the Standards" or "Does not Meet the Standard"), but Marzano and O’Conner above refuted two-level scales as insufficient.

In response to their inquiries, I learned from scholars to direct teachers not to get bogged down in the details and instead focus on the main SBG principles. My directions guided teachers to set learning and grading about the standards, separate mastery from work habits, allow multiple assessment opportunities, and consider the most recent or frequent scores to grade a student. For more in-depth grading direction, I advised teachers to use their professional judgment. In my opinion, this approach helped build confidence and independent thinking in our teachers as they searched for answers without relying on ready-made solutions for every inquiry.

My lengthy and elaborate involvement has also sharpened my skills and knowledge as an instructional leader. I have become able to present and run active workshops on various aspects of SBG. My knowledge and skills often fared favorably to the presentations made by many of the outside experts we invited to deliver professional development activities at our school.

An example that may serve to illustrate my improved ability to steer a scholarly discussion about SBG was the Zoom school faculty discussion session hosted after I conducted our teacher's perceptions survey about SBG. The virtual, vibrant, and informal discussion focused on the results and where we stand as educators regarding SBG. With joy and confidence, I prompted participants to respond to short questions about SBG and what grades should include. I allowed the teachers to vent their feelings, beliefs,

convictions, and concerns. Some expressed their belief that class participation is essential and must count as part of the grade. A teacher agreed, inquiring, "how else do I distinguish between the kids who sit in my Zoom class, stare at the ceiling, say nothing in the classroom, and do not care to respond to my questions?" Another expressed, "I believe homework is very important and should count for least 10 % of the grade to make sure kids make some effort to learn."

Through successive short prompts and comments, to O'Conner's (2010) credit, I guided the teachers into reconsidering many of their beliefs. "Let's focus on the purpose for grading: is it to motivate, to change behavior, or to communicate to parents a clear and accurate message about what their child has learned in the classroom in a trimester or a year?" I asked the teachers. How important are grades to learning? Does increasing student anxiety about grades lead to improved learning? If homework is so important, which it is, why don't we report it to parents separately, so parents know how their child complied with the assignment? How do we know if the child did the homework without interference from grown-ups and without copying the answers from a friend?

Furthermore, I asked, "If effort, honesty, good behavior count in the grade, then how do we quantify those?" Moreover, doesn't a student double-dip if effort or good behavior count? The student gets points for behaving well and for the test result that is enabled by good behavior. For class participation, "are we not bribing the students with points for making our job easier as teachers?" "What if a student is an introvert who understands the concepts but is shy to speak out?" "What if the child is overly active but understands the work?" "Won't we be penalizing the student for his behavior with a grade that does not reflect the level of understanding of the concepts taught?"

With this and similar discussions, I have improved my leadership profile as a reference on SBG. I also believe that, by the time of writing this reflection, I have acquired an immense amount of knowledge of SBG that enables me to synthesize grading systems, evaluate grading practices and implementation models, and, more importantly, advise on norms and cultures that nourish the whole child.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

ARTIFACT 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Introduction

The goal of the common core state standards (CCSS) is to increase student achievement in K-12 education and prepare students to be college and career ready. PD is the key to make it happen (Jenkins and Agamba, 2013). This paper briefly describes the characteristics of effective PD as discussed in the literature and proposes a teacher PDP (PDP) taking these characteristics into consideration. As part of my ELP proposal for implementing standards-based grading (SBG) at the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), I created this PDP draft with the collaboration and assistance of my lead teachers. We recognize that a successful PDP needs to be driven by school needs, founded on research-based practices, and differentiated to meet various teacher needs. The plan suggests a process that includes on-site workshops followed by classroom walkthroughs and individualized coaching. The plan activities are facilitated by outside experts in targeted areas where expertise beyond the school is needed and in-house lead teachers in our professional learning community (PLC).

Purpose

Jenkins and Agamba (2013) stress that effective PD must be designed to support teachers, strengthen instructional practice, build collaborative partnerships, and deliver high-quality standards-based education for every child. Therefore, IAD's PDP aims to build teacher capacity by providing opportunities to teachers to deepen their knowledge of the standards and to build skills relevant to SBG practices. It also aims to improve teacher

knowledge and skills relevant to the technology tools used at IAD to implement SBL(SBL) and grading.

Furthermore, Westerberg (2016) stresses that implementing standards-based education is a process that will ensue for several years to complete and so is a sustainable and supportive PDP. Therefore, PD relevant to SBG at IAD must continue to improve implementation and to keep up with new trends and research in education. The activities described in this plan were started in the summer of 2019 and slated to continue for the rest of the year 2019-2020. Based on the evaluation of this plan, future PD activities will be planned and executed.

Desimone (2009), Bates and Morgan (2018), and Guskey and Yoon (2009) suggest research reflects a consensus about some of the characteristics of PD that are critical to increasing teacher knowledge and skills and improving their practice, and which hold promise for increasing student achievement. Features identified in the literature as crucial in the design and evaluation of teacher PD by Hawley & Valli, 1999; Kennedy, 1998; Wilson & Berne, 1999 (as cited in Desimone, 2009) were as follows:

Content focus. According to Desimone (2009), this is the most important feature and research suggests a strong correlation between activities that focus on subject matter content and how students learn that content with increases in teacher knowledge and skills, improvements in practice, and, to a more limited extent, increases in student achievement.

Active learning. This is linked to the effectiveness of PD. It can take many forms including observing an expert or being observed, followed by interactive feedback and discussions. It may involve reviewing and sharing students' work on the topic under discussion.

Coherence. This refers to how compatible the professional development is with teacher long-term held beliefs and convictions. It also refers to the consistency of school policies with what is taught in PD is another important aspect of coherence. Without coherence, there can be no effective PD.

Duration. PD activities need to be of sufficient duration for them to be effective. This includes how long the PD program will last over the course of a school year and how many hours of contact it will assume. According to Desimone (2009), research does not point to an exact "tipping point" for the duration but shows support for activities that are spread over a semester and include 20 hours or more of contact time.

Collective participation. This refers to the participation of teachers from the same school, grade, or department. Interaction and discourse can be a powerful form of teacher learning.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2005) reported similar design features with slight variations that were viewed by principals and teachers at the national level as very important. The six design and evaluation features identified in the literature and the National Center for Educational Statistics (2005) as important are shown in Table A-1.

As a school leader, I have taken note of these elements in the design of our PDP. The right column in Table 1 describes how I will use these elements.

Table A-1 Critical Features of Teacher PD

Hawley & Valli, 1999; Kennedy, 1998; Wilson & Berne, 1999 (as cited by Desimone, 2009).	NCES (2005).	IAD PDP
Content Focus: What teachers learn that can improve instructional practice and increase student achievement.	Focus on content and focus on methods: Subject matter content and/or teaching methods employed.	Content Focus-Driven (CCSS): Teachers "unpack" and "align" the CCSS based on lesson planning, classroom instruction, and assessment methods. They will also understand and be able to create proficiency scales and align assessments with the CCSS
Active Learning: Engagement in interactive activities that apply to instructional practice (e.g., observations, interactive feedback, discussion).	Active Learning Opportunities: Activities including observation, planning, practicing, and presenting.	Active Learning: Teachers engage in team-based, technology-supported learning that will apply to instructional practice (as opposed to "sit-and-get" instruction).
Duration: Length and time span of an activity, as well as contact.	Duration: Number of hours, weeks, or months of training.	Duration: Sessions will take place in the summer for 1 week followed by scheduled school days in the school year. Additional time will be allocated to class-walkthroughs and feedback. School Master schedule will accommodate PLC collaboration
Collective Participation: Participation on grade level, building, or school team.	Collective Participation: Peer collaboration focused on instructional practices.	Collective Participation: Teachers from all grades and subjects will interact both in content and grade-level in scheduled PLC meetings.
Coherence: Connection and continuity between existing or previous knowledge and new knowledge or teacher learning	Format: Activities integrated into daily instructional practice.	Coherence and Format: Coherence is achieved through re-checking of self-beliefs about instructional philosophy and strategies. Workshops, peer visitation, walk-throughs, and discussion should facilitate coherence
None is mentioned here.	Alignment: Alignment of PD with standards, other initiatives, professional goals of teachers, and assessments.	Alignment: All professional goals and activities at IAD are aligned to the school's initiative to implement CCSS-based education.

Note. Adapted from Jenkins, S., & Agamba, J. (2013). The missing link in the ccss initiative: PD for implementation.(common core state standards)(report). *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, 17*(2), 69

Needs-Based Assessment

This PDP is informed by the needs-based survey IAD conducted in July 2019 among teachers. It was evident teachers were split in terms of the extent of their familiarity with the CCSS (Figure A-1) and the level of mastery of related concepts such as unpacking and prioritizing the CCSS, standards-aligned learning targets, proficiency scales, and formative and summative assessment (Figure A-2).

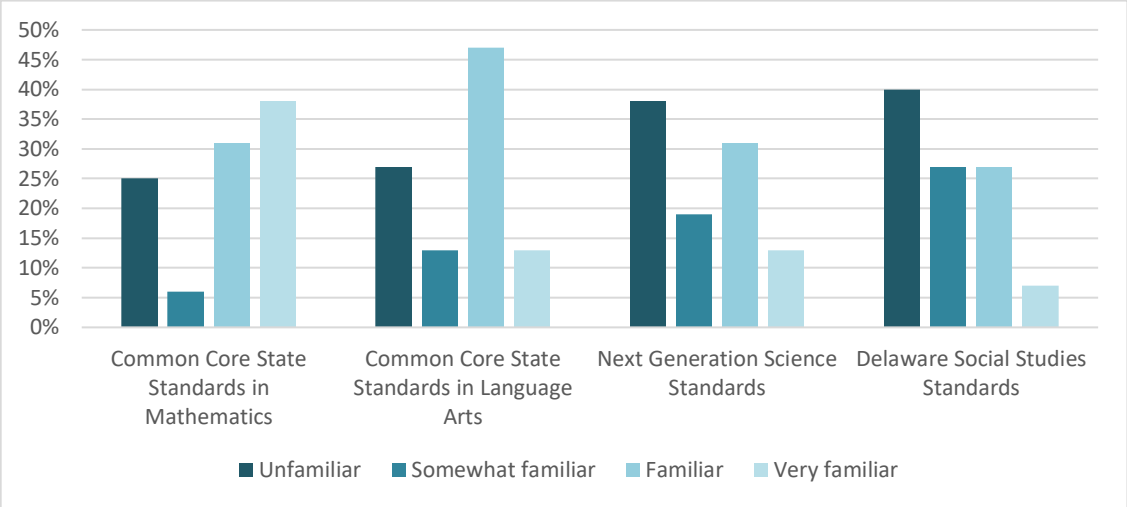

Figure A-1. *Teacher familiarity with CCSS*

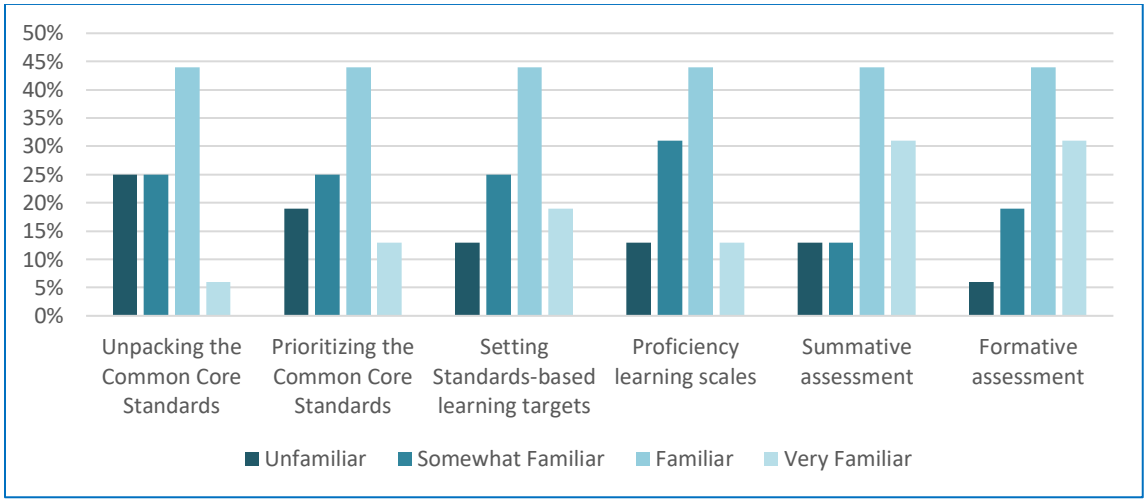

Figure A-2. *Teacher familiarity with CCSS related concepts*.

The survey also indicates many teachers were not clear about what a student's grade should include. Many believed behavior, attendance, and class participation should be part of the grade (Figure A-3). The results reflect teacher grading practices are a mixture of learning habits (class participation, attendance, and behavior), learning practices (homework, extra credit assignments, exit tickets, and formative assessment tasks), and summative assessment (benchmark exams, portfolios, and projects).

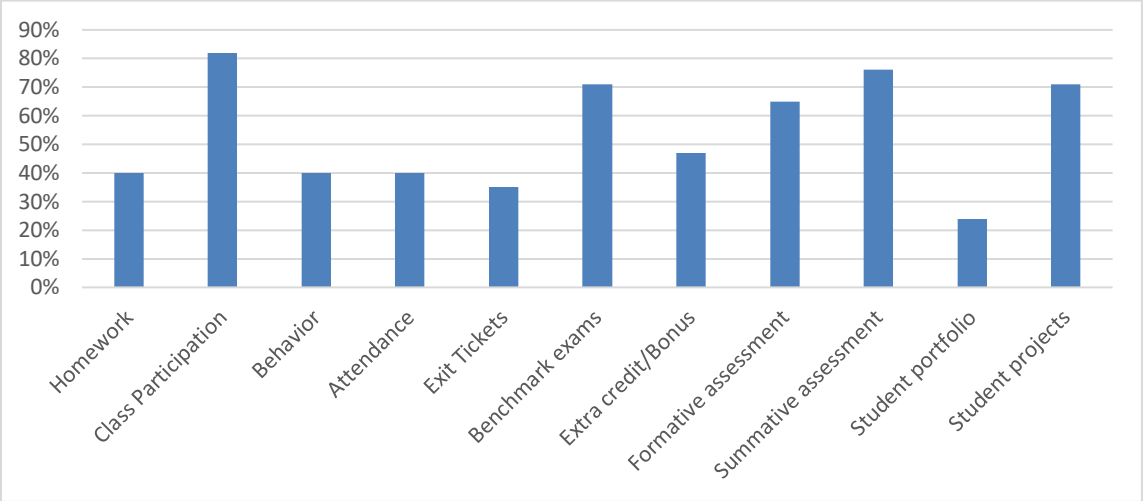

Figure A-3 *Teacher's perceptions of what counts in the grade.*

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Our PDP addresses those areas of deficiency in knowledge and skills demanded by the standards as well as technology tools that we introduced to facilitate SBG. For example, our student information system, Alma, hosts the standards-based grade book and the report card. Teachers must be fluent in populating those instruments with assignments, assessments, and grades. Teachers must also be familiar with the various assessment reports generated by the Star Reading and Star Math assessment platform to guide personalized learning goals and interventions for students. Renaissance, the host of those two standards-based assessments, provides online PD sessions to support teachers who need deep knowledge and skills.

Goals And Strategies

The following three goals will guide our PDP. These goals, the rationale, the implementation strategies, and follow up activities are augmented in a PDP matrix (Table E-2). Also identified in the matrix are the resources associated with each goal, implementation considerations, and my notes as a school leader on the plan implementation and attainment.

Goal 1

Teachers will have a deep understanding of the content and skills demanded by the CCSS. I expect teachers to know and be able to:

- Unpack the standards and set learning targets for each standard
- Prioritize and unpack the CCSS
- Understand proficiency scales
- Design or select CCSS-aligned formative and summative assessments
- Grade assessment based on mastery
- Give effective standards-referenced feedback
- Communicate grades to students and parents based on SBG grading practices

To meet this goal, IAD will use Marzano Resources modules of PD to implement SBG (Appendix E-1). These modules are designed to provide professional learning experiences closely aligned with the research and recommendations found in books that address standards-based education (Marzano Resources, 2020). The modules will walk teachers through thoughtful and practical implementation of each element of an effective SBG system while highlighting the potential pitfalls, opportunities, and challenges.

Goal 2

Teachers will develop a deep understanding of SBLG related concepts (e.g., unit planning, differentiating instruction, checking for understanding techniques, and collaborative learning strategies).

To meet this goal, IAD will use outside experts to facilitate teacher learning of standards-based instructional strategies in full-day sessions during the summer PD week and also during scheduled PD days throughout the school year. IAD will also use its professional learning community to collaborate with book studies and follow up with classroom walkthroughs, debriefing, and individualized coaching. Standards-based concepts are addressed thoroughly by O'Conner (2018), Heflebower et al (2018), and Schimmer et al (2018) which will serve as the reference and basis for our PLC activities.

To enhance teacher understanding and access to meeting goals 1 and 2, above, interested teachers, newly retained teachers, and teachers on leave will be rereferred to select online SBLG webinars that offer content referenced in scholarly written books. Appendix B exhibits typical free recorded PD webinars offered through Marzano Resources. These are accessible one-hour resources that offer the opportunity for teachers to learn the content and skills of SBG at their pace and at their time convenience.

Goals 3

To build teacher capacity to use technology platforms and tools needed to facilitate learning, assessment, grading, reporting, and communicating with parents. Teachers will be able to fluently navigate:

- Google Classroom to manage student learning.

- Alma SIS for using the grade book and the report card and communicating with parents.
- Star Reading and Star Math online assessments measure student growth and mastery of skills.
- Edulastic for benchmark and formative assessment and grading.
- Game-based learning tools for differentiated learning (e.g., Freckle and Prodigy)

To achieve this goal, IAD will utilize the services of our school technology coordinator and tech-savvy teachers to conduct PD sessions. Fortunately, technology platforms for various needs and purposes come with active online PD services to enhance the fluent use of those products. For example, Renaissance, the host of Star Reading and Star Math offers 90-minute live PD modules to train teachers to understand assessment reports and plan for grouping and differentiated instruction. Our technology coordinator and tech-savvy teachers will provide trouble-shooting services and support to teachers as needed throughout the school year.

IAD will provide training to teachers to use technology tools in the following domains:

1. School Information System (SIS)

Alma, our student information system, will house our standards-based grade book and report card. Teachers must be ready and able to use the platform fluently to assign learning tasks and enter grades, learning habits, and feedback to guide students and parents. With the shift to SBLG, PD sessions are needed to enable teachers, especially the newly hired, to use the platform effectively (Appendix C).

2. Learning Management System (LMS)

Google Classroom will serve as our learning management system (LMS). Our technology coordinator and tech-savvy teachers will prepare in-service workshops and support as needed throughout the school year for teachers to set up classes, add students to classes and courses, insert Google documents and videos, review assignments, grade and return completed work to students.

3. Assessment Platforms

a. Renaissance Star Reading and Math

IAD administers Renaissance Star Reading and Math assessments to measure student growth and mastery of standards-based skills and content. The platform generates class and individual reports that show student growth and guide instruction and grouping of students. Through Renaissance, IAD will conduct virtual learning professional sessions to ensure teacher mastery of data-driven planning and instruction (Appendix E-4).

b. Edulastic

IAD employs Edulastic online platform for formative, interim, and benchmark assessments. Edulastic provides instant classroom data that shows who's on track and who needs help so that they can take action and see growth. Teachers need to know how to set up classrooms, construct assessments using provided assessment banks, access instant assessment reports to inform instruction and intervention. Edulastic also provides online training webinars to facilitate teacher use of the platform.

4. Technology gaming and differentiation tools

IAD teachers use technology platforms to differentiate student learning, provide intervention and remediation, and avail enrichment opportunities to students. For example,

IAD uses prodigy and freckle for gaming and IXL for and Khan Academy for practice and fluency.

IAD PDP Matrix

The following PDP matrix addresses our PD goals, rationale, strategies, and follow-up activities to meet the needs of teachers at IAD.

Table A- 2 IAD PDP Matrix

Plan Begin/End Date: August 2019-June 2020

1. Professional Learning Goals

No.	Goal	Identified Group	Rationale/ Sources of Evidence
1	Teachers will develop a deep understanding of the CCSS. Teachers will know and be able to: ● Unpack and prioritize standards ● Create proficiency scales ● Use proficiency scales in the classroom (planning and instruction) ● Score and grade assessment based on proficiency scales ● Align formative and summative assessment with CCSS	All Teachers	The rationale for goals 1 and 2 is based on the needs-based survey I conducted in July 2019. In that survey, teachers expressed they were: ● Unfamiliar with the CCSS in ELA and mathematics ● Unfamiliar with related concepts such as unpacking and prioritizing the standards, aligning formative and summative assessments to the standards ● Unfamiliar with SBG practices
2	Teachers will develop a deep understanding of standards-based learning and grading related concepts (e.g., unit planning, differentiating instruction, checking for understanding techniques, and collaborative learning strategies, effective standards-based feedback).	All teachers	There is a need to include instructional strategies that support SBLG such as differentiating instruction, collaborative learning, and checking for understanding (Berger et al. (2014).

3	To build teacher capacity to use technology platforms and tools needed to facilitate learning, assessment, grading, and reporting Teachers will be able to fluently navigate: ● Google Classroom to manage student learning ● Alma, our school information system to use the grade book and the report card and to communicate with parents. ● Star Reading and Star Math online assessments to measure student growth and mastery of foundational skills. ● Edulastic for benchmark and formative assessments Grading ● Game-based learning tools (e.g., Freckle and Prodigy)	All Teachers	● Teachers need to be skillful in using available technology that houses the grade book, the report card to record and communicate grade to stakeholders. ● Teachers also need to be skillful in using assessment tools (e.g. Star Reading and Star Math) to measure student growth and mastery of the standards and to guide student learning improvement. ● Teachers need to manage instructional resources for differentiated instruction.

2. Professional Learning Strategies

PL. Goal No.	Strategies	Follow-up Activities (as appropriate)
1	● Outside experts (vendors) will provide on-site PD/training full-day sessions. ● Our professional learning community (PLC) will plan and deliver in-house PD and learning opportunities, e.g., book studies.	Walk-throughs and debriefing sessions. Outside experts will join select PLC meetings to address critical unit planning and curriculum alignment.
2	● Outside experts (vendors) will provide on-site PD/training full-day sessions. ● Use our professional learning community and lead teachers to plan and deliver in-house PD.	Walk-throughs and debriefing sessions. Outside experts will join select PLC meetings to address critical unit planning and curriculum alignment.

3	● Technology Coordinator and lead teachers will provide scheduled group and individual training sessions to teachers on the use of Alma, Google Classroom, Edulastic, and other tech tools. ● The school will utilize Renaissance-provided 90 min online interactive webinars to train teachers to interpret Star Reading and Star Math assessment reports and plan for intervention.	Technology coordinator and lead teachers will serve as a reference for inquiries, individual training, and troubleshooting for occurring issues.

3. Essential Resources

PL. Goal No.	Resources	Other Implementation Considerations
1	1. Outside Expert(s) 2. Time ● Summer PD/Orientation week ● Dedicated time for collaborative teams to refine aligned lessons and assessments. ● PLC meetings 3. Funding ● Federally mandated Title I and Title II Funds ● School funding for substitutes while teachers attend workshops	● I will direct teachers to collaboratively produce samples of their unpacked standards and target-based lesson plans. ● I will direct teachers to compile priority standards for their grade level. ● Teachers will be directed to exchange and critique standards-based lesson plans, assessment, and grading with colleagues.
2	1. Outside Expert(s) 2. Time ● PD/Orientation week ● Dedicated time for collaborative teams to refine aligned lessons and assessments. ● PLC meetings 3. Lead Teachers 4. Funding ● Federally mandated Title I and Title II Funds ● School funding for substitutes while teachers attend workshops.	● Examine the student grade books on Alma to monitor student progress. ●
3	1. Time ● PD/Orientation week 2. Lead Teacher	● Maintain open channels of communications to solicit feedback about the progress of the training.

	3. Technology Coordinator 4. Technology platforms: ● Alma school information system (SIS) will house our grade book and student report cards. ● Edulastic will serve as the summative and formative assessment platform ● Google Classroom will be used as our learning management system LMS ● Renaissance Star Reading, Star Math, and Accelerated Reader will assess student growth in reading and math and will enhance student reading skills. ● Prodigy and Freckle will help students in differentiation through gaming. 5. Funding ● School budget PD/Technology allocated funds ● Funding for substitutes while teachers attend workshops.	(e.g., surveys, conversations during faculty and PLC meetings). ● The availability of the technology coordinator to support teachers is very crucial. ● The principal will develop a tracking plan to monitor compliance. ● Possible intensive individualized interventions for struggling teachers.

4. Progress Summary

Pl. Goal No.	Notes on Plan Implementation	Notes on Plan Attainment
1	● The new teacher perception survey of grading practices shed light on the teachers' progress in understanding and implementing SBG. ● Based on the survey I will identify areas where more emphasis should be placed in future PD activities..	Through walkthroughs I conducted along with the instructional coach from El Education, we observed good teacher progress. However, there are still pockets and room for improvement in specific areas, which we will address at the school level in the next phase of our professional development.
2	● Vendor walkthrough indicates progress	Through walkthroughs I conducted along with the instructional coach from El Education, we observed good teacher progress. However, there are still pockets and room for improvement in specific areas, which we will address at the school level in the next phase of our professional development.

3	● Teachers have adapted to the use of the grade book and the report card on Alma. ● Teachers have concerns about the practicality of using Edulastic as a platform for ELA benchmark assessment. ● Teachers need more help and practice on interpreting assessment reports of Star Reading and Star Math.. ● Teachers continue to meet with the technology coordinator for troubleshooting and advice.	Through walkthroughs I conducted along with the instructional coach from El Education, we observed good teacher progress. However, there are still pockets and room for improvement in specific areas, which we will address at the school level in the next phase of our professional development.

Conclusion

Administrative support is very essential to the success of this PD. Principals are not necessarily experts in all fields. They need to work on their own PD. And collaborate with leaders and professionals to seek advice to improve their understanding and focus on topics relevant to their profession; such collaboration promotes a strong beginning to building a learning community of instructional leaders (Cross & Rice, 2000). Teachers receive valuable support from the active participation of the school leader as a learner. Such participation not only benefits in steering PD in the right direction but also lends moral support to the participants for it sends a sense of urgency to the learning community.

To that end, I will assume an active role in planning and participating in all PD activities with an eye on securing the needed resources for its successful implementation. These resources include funds, expert facilitators, technology tools, and devoted time. I have worked jointly with my lead teachers to identify these resources. We will designate time out of the teaching schedule to facilitate PLC meetings and inter-class teacher

visitations, utilize out biweekly staff meetings, and allocate PD days on our school calendar.

The school will rely on outside experts. Our PLC teachers, while informed and dedicated, exchange their expertise and insights in our PLC meetings to improve the knowledge and teaching practices of all teachers in the school. However, it is important for our teachers to pay attention to the use of research that produces results rather than draw on research about practices they already feel comfortable with (Guskey and Yoon, 2009).

IAD made available technology tools needed for our SBLG, including Alma for the grade book and report card, Google Classroom for learning management, Renaissance Star and Edulastic for assessment, and Prodigy and Freckle for gaming for learning. I realize these tools are probably not the best available for student learning purposes and new improved tools are introduced constantly to schools. Even shortly after we introduced our technology tools, we realized some of our needs may not be met as productively as we initially anticipated. I will continue to explore more productive tools that serve our SBG and while meeting the financial constraints of our school.

An Afternote

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the closing of the IAD building and compelled our student learning to go online. Our teachers have been grappling with integrating our technology tools with Zoom to provide synchronous learning. Most importantly, with COVID-19, our PD has been put on hold, and summative assessments and grading have been eliminated. Parents and teachers have expressed positive feelings about the online learning experience considering the abrupt change and the need to keep children on the learning track, but all stakeholders now face a complex double threat emanating from a

combination of the COVID-19 and the summer learning slides. Many needy students have lost their intervention and remediation support. At no time in our history do we remember losing track of where our children are in terms of their mastery or achievement. This where two organically connected school activities must be carefully planned and executed. The first is to assess every student at the start of the new school year to measure where every student stands relevant to the standards, and to plan instruction based on that assessment. Combining teacher professional judgment and standards-based assessment and grading is the way to accomplish that (O'Conner, 2018). With school districts in the State of Delaware unanimously starting the school year anew with remote learning, the challenges before all stakeholders persist and contingency planning must continue. This underscores our need to resume and improvise our PD activities. We have planned to resume our in-person on-site PD in the week of August 24, observing federal and state health regulations, and will adapt our activities as needed throughout the school year. Our search will continue for best practices in learning, assessment, and grading to improve student learning.

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Appendix A-1

Standards-Based Grading Modules

Topic	Description	Time (hrs.)	Learning Outcomes
Module 1: Introduction to SBG and proficiency scales	This module is an introduction to proficiency scales, aligned assessments, and standards-based grading practices. The "why" and "how" of SBG will be covered, with a focus on measurement topics, proficiency scales, aligned assessments, and shifts in grading practices. ● Research and theory ● Standards-Referenced versus Standards-Based Grading ● The use of proficiency scales as a way to align standards, instruction, assessment, grading, and reporting ● Translating research into classroom practice	6 hrs.	Teachers will understand standards-based grading practices based on four principles: 1. Criterion-referenced grading 2. Separating mastery from learning habits 3. Determining grades based on most recent or frequent performance 4. Communicating grades to stakeholders
Module 2: Creating Proficiency Scales	This module focuses on creating sets of proficiency scales for our school. The focus will be on: ● Structures and processes for prioritizing standards ● Structures and processes for writing proficiency scales ● Aligning teacher materials ● Dissemination of prioritized standards and proficiency scales	6 hrs.	Teachers will know and be able to: ● Unpack the CCSS ● Identify and prioritize the CCSS ● Set proficiency scales based on the standards ● Align teacher resources to the CCSS.

Module 3: Aligning Assessments	This module focuses on
	● Using proficiency scales to create aligned assessments
	● Guiding teachers through the process of matching existing assessment items to their proficiency scales, generating assessments (both common and formative), and scoring them using a standards-based approach.
	● Designing high quality, aligned assessments
	● Varying types of assessments:
	  ○ Obtrusive and unobtrusive assessments
	  ○ Student-generated assessments
	  ○ Student response types
	● Successfully scoring assessments
		6 hrs.	Teachers will know and be able to:
			● Design high quality aligned assessments.
			● Recognize, create and implement various forms of formative assessments
			● Score assessments based on standards-based mastery scales.

Module 4 – Feedback and Grading Practices	This module focuses on giving students specific feedback about their progress using proficiency scales and aligned assessments. Additionally, this module delves deeper into changes to grading practices that accompany a standards-based approach to reporting student achievement and progress. ● Tracking student progress and record-keeping ● Considerations for determining meaningful grades ○ Separating behaviors from academic performance ○ Re-teaching and retesting ○ Late work/using zeroes ○ Grading exceptional learners ● Converting scores to letter grades in case the school wishes to maintain using letter grades	6 hrs.	Teachers will know and be able to: ● Track and record student progress towards meeting learning targets ● Identify and use SBG grading practices to determine grades ● Convert scores to letter grades in case the school preserves letter grades

Figure 2. Standards-Based Grading Modules (Adapted from Marzano Resources. (2020). *PD services*. https://www.marzanoresources.com/professional-development/pd-services)

Appendix A-2

Standards-Based Grading Webinars

Topic	Description/Overview	Time (hrs.)
A Teacher's Guide to SBLWebinar	This is practical advice for adjusting to teaching, assessing, and grading in a standards-based classroom. Following a brief overview of why the change to standards-based helps both student and teacher, the presenter identifies the key adjustments teachers face as they work with standards. ● Explore the theories and benefits of a standards-based curriculum. ● Become familiar with several significant paradigm shifts that will help teachers make a strong transition to a standards-based classroom. ● Explore ways to shift teacher thinking about teaching and lesson plans to better understand content as a vehicle for the achievement of standards.	60 min
The Importance of Proficiency Scales in a Standards-Based Classroom	This webinar will overview multiple approaches to developing high-quality proficiency scales, as well as primary uses of proficiency scales in the classroom. Participants will gain an enhanced understanding of the power of using scales. Session outcomes include: ● Understanding what proficiency scales are and why they are important. ● Discovering multiple methods for developing proficiency scales. ● Examining primary uses of proficiency scales in the classroom.	60 min
Standards-Referenced Grading vs. Competency-Based Grading	● Robert J. Marzano compares and contrasts standards-based grading with competency-based grading. Teachers will: Learn the benefits and pitfalls of both approaches. Understand how both methods change the basic paradigm of traditional grading practices. ● Explore specific differences in how assessments are interpreted and used.	60 min
The New Art and Science of Classroom Assessment	This webinar focuses on presenting a new and innovative view regarding classroom assessments. Expected outcomes: ● Consider a new paradigm of classroom assessment. ● Discuss the difference between measurement and assessment. ● Understand how to create a curriculum that is assessment friendly. ● Consider how to use multiple assessments to better determine true indicators of knowledge. ● Learn about how technology can use assessment data to monitor and report on student progress.	60 min

Appendix A-3
Alma SIS- Grade Book and Report Card

Topic	Description	Learning Outcomes	Time (hrs.)
Introduction to Alma Student Information System (SIS). Utilizing Alma Standards-based Grade Book and Standards-based Report Card	This 1- hour session will introduce teachers to the web-based platform, the different modules available including, student profile, attendance, the student grade book, and the report card	Teachers should know and be able to: ● Keep records of formative assignments ● Insert and publish standards-based scores in the grade book ● Insert grades based on the reporting standards in the report cards ● Insert appropriate feedback on the report's cards	1 hr.

Figure IV. Alma SIS- Grade book and report card

Appendix A-4

Star Reading and Star Math Assessment

Topic	Description	Learning Outcomes	Time
Understanding Star 360 Assessment Data	After teachers have data from initial screening with Star assessments, the facilitator in this session will guide them in considering implications for core instruction, grouping students, and planning for intervention. The facilitator will demonstrate how various tools (such as the Instructional Planning Report, the Renaissance Planner, and the learning progressions) will support them in planning instruction based on the skills students are ready to learn.	Teachers will know and be able to: ● Interpret commonly used Star scores ● Review data from a universal screening to determine the implications for intervention and core instruction ● Explore options for using data to group students for instruction and intervention ● Discuss how Star scores can support team data conversations and problem-solving activities	90 min
Instructional Planning and Progress Monitoring with Star 360	After teachers have identified student needs using Star data, this session will focus on answering the critical "what's next" question. Activities will focus on the use of tools for grouping students, setting reasonable growth goals based on data, identifying skills, and associated resources for instructional planning and monitoring progress for students in the intervention.	Teachers will know and be able to: ● Review screening data to plan for intervention ● Identify factors that may contribute to student growth and achievement and actions to take to accelerate learning and growth ● Understand how to group and set goals for intervention ● Use the Renaissance Planner to identify the skills students are ready to learn and to facilitate instructional planning	90 min
Understanding Star Growth and Mastery Data	This session will focus on the powerful data about student achievement that is available as a result of additional screenings with Star. Participants will use Student Growth Percentiles to determine if instruction and intervention have resulted in an appropriate level of growth, and plan for adjustments as needed. They will also examine data on Mastery of state standards and associated skills.	● Categorize student achievement, growth, and expected growth, and gain insight via Student Growth Percentile ● Review how data from a variety of Renaissance solutions feed into an overall view of student progress on state standards ● Use dashboard data to monitor mastery of standards and related skills and move the needle toward mastery-based personalization of learning	90 min

Figure 3. Star Reading and Star Math assessment (Adapted from Renaissance. (2019, August 2). *Star assessments – Overview*. https://www.renaissance.com/products/star-assessments/)

Appendix B

ARTIFACT 2: NEW TEACHER SCHOOL INDUCTION PROGRAM

Introduction

Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD) is working diligently to implement standards-based grading (SBG) and has invested in human resources, structures, systems, and cultivating a supportive culture to make the implementation possible. As a school leader, in cooperation with my curriculum planning team, I have put together a PD program (PDP) (Appendix A) that sets goals, strategies, and activities needed to build teacher capacity to facilitate SBG at IAD. New teachers need to be informed consistently and trained to make their transition to the school culture and their participation in the SBG initiative seamless. The purpose of this school induction program (SIP) artifact is in line with that of the Delaware Department of Education Comprehensive Induction Program: "to provide educators with the support necessary to become familiar with school and district policies and procedures, hone their professional skills, help them evaluate and reflect upon their own professional performance, and develop an individualized growth plan to improve their effectiveness" (Delaware Department of Education, 2020, September 29). This purpose will be met with an eye and a focus on building new teacher capacity in understanding and implementing SBG principles and practices at IAD. To help achieve this purpose, this Artifact sets our PDP as a reference for all educators but will also set procedures and protocols for ongoing collaboration between skilled teachers(mentors) and new teachers (mentees).

The program presented here may not cover all domains of teacher professional responsibilities (e.g., emergency procedures, health, and safety issues), although, to cover

these domains, the program can be integrated into a broader schoolwide induction program. Nor is this program tied to any teacher certification, licensing, improvement in compensation, or employment status. Induction programs are known by states and districts as a vehicle for issuance of initial teacher license for new teachers or supplementary compensation and benefits for mentors—considerations beyond the scope of this paper.

This Artifact will address the following items:

- The difference between mentoring and induction program.
- The elements of an effective induction program.
- IAD SIP goals and activities
- IAD SIP monthly augmented matrix

In preparing this induction program, I benefited from the literature that addresses the importance of SIPs in improving teacher retention and building teacher efficacy. I also took note of the literature' view on what makes an induction program successful which, when taken into consideration, I believe will have a strong impact on our efforts to implement SBG.

The Difference Between Induction and Mentoring

The literature establishes a difference between induction and mentoring. Wong (2004) defines teacher induction as "the set of guidance, support, and education services that help teachers begin and navigate their first years of teaching" (p. 41). Wong (2004) suggests there are confusion and misuse of the words mentoring and induction.

The difference between induction and mentoring is evident in the duration, intensity, and scope of interaction between the mentor and the mentee. Induction is

systematic and may span several years until the new teacher gains the experience and skills necessary to navigate professional responsibilities seamlessly. Mentoring, on the other hand, is temporary and is intended to provide urgent and immediate coaching in responding to short-term challenges that may face the new teacher. Wang (2004) explains that, nonetheless, mentoring is an important integral part of induction and may be infused at various points in the early years of a teacher's career.

Table 1 below explains the difference between mentoring and induction.

Table B- 1 *Difference Between Mentoring and Induction*

Mentoring	**Comprehensive Induction**
● Focuses on survival and support	● Promotes career learning and PD
● Relies on a single mentor or shares a mentor with other teachers	● Provides multiple support people and administrators at the state, district, and school levels.
● Treats mentoring as an isolated phase	● Treats induction as part of a lifelong PD design
● Limited resources spent	● Investment in an extensive, comprehensive, and sustained induction program
● Reacts to whatever arises	● Acculturates a vision and aligns content to academic standards

Note. Reprinted from "*Induction Programs that Keep New Teachers Teaching and Improving*", by Wong, H., 2004, *NASSP Bulletin, 88 (638), 45.*

The Effective Induction Program for New Teachers

The literature addresses the importance of school-based new teacher induction programs, the factors that contribute to their success, and the role the school leader plays to support new teacher induction. Johnson and Kardos (2002), Wong (2004), Cherer (1999), and Bacon et al (2020) reveal the importance of site-based, ongoing, rich teacher induction in teacher retention and building teacher efficacy. Bacon et al (2020) suggest that if teachers have appropriate support and training, they become more confident in

their ability to positively impact student success. This, in turn, contributes to their likelihood of staying in the profession, thus increasing teacher retention rates. Bacon et al (2020) also suggest that quality programs for all beginning teachers are important, and research shows that beginning teachers who participate in induction programs are nearly twice as likely to stay in the profession as those who don't. Beginning teachers are typically expected to carry out the same tasks, in and out of the classroom, as more experienced teachers. As they do so, beginning teachers possess feelings of isolation and lack of support. These, as it happens, are major factors beginning teachers' decisions to leave the education profession.

Johnson and Kardos (2002) suggest that successful schools should have structures built in the school system to assist new teachers. For example, new teachers should be offered onsite professional development and access to skilled teachers to meet the daily challenges of addressing student behavior and parent communication. New teachers and experienced teachers alike should be able to exchange visitation to provide timely advice for lesson planning and deliver to ensure problems are encountered and resolved at an early stage of the new teacher's career path.

A school leader is a pivotal element in the success of an induction program. Johnson and Kardos (2002) stress that principals must be visibly engaged in both the daily life of the school and the professional work of the teachers. Principals should focus on the improvement of teaching and learning, visit classrooms, and provide feedback. They should also arrange school schedules so that expert teachers could teach model lessons or meet with new teachers one-on-one or in small groups. Principals should also foster a culture of professional learning and growth by providing advice and availing

professional development opportunities for teachers to attend inside and outside the school.

The literature addresses several components that need to be present in any successful induction program. Wong (2004) and Scherer (1999) agree an effective program should have the following:

- The school leader should begin with an initial 4 or 5 days of induction before school starts or as early as possible in the school year to identify key resourceful individuals to the new teachers and explain the kind of positive support these individuals will offer. One-on-one meetings with the skilled teacher who will serve as a mentor should be scheduled early in the school year.
- Offer a continuum of PD through systematic training over a period of 2 or 3 years. Sufficient time for PD and building professional relationships is crucial to address the new teacher's needs to fully understand the school's culture.
- Provide study groups in which new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community.
- Incorporate a strong sense of administrative support
- Integrate a mentoring component into the induction process
- Present a structure for modeling effective teaching during in-services and mentoring
- Provide opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms.

IAD School Induction Program

As a means of induction into the education profession, I have adapted the Delaware Department of Education's Comprehensive Induction Program to meet our school's needs and those of our new teachers and to formulate our SIP (Delaware Department of Education, 2020, September 29). I have made this choice for two reasons: First, some teachers seek employment opportunities interchangeably between IAD and the public-school system and may find it convenient to be familiar with similar induction programs. Second, both IAD and Delaware State adopt the Danielson Framework for Teaching which would add another layer of convenience and familiarity for the school and teachers who share an overlapping learning environment. However, I have taken into consideration the disparity between the State's plan and the one I have created for our teachers in terms of the size of the learning environment, the scope-and-content of the program, and the duration the new teachers will take to complete. IAD SIP takes into consideration the school's offering of a variety of ongoing learning opportunities for new staff including participation in the school's PD program (PDP) (Appendix A), participation in the school's professional learning community (PLC) team, and classroom visitations.

IAD SIP's goals and activities are anchored in the four teaching Domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching which IAD adopts as the teacher evaluation model. The framework includes four components (Danielson, 2007):

- Domain 1 – Planning and Preparation
- Domain 2 – Classroom Environment
- Domain 3 – Instruction
- Domain 4 – Professional Responsibilities

A monthly conversation focus for each of the four domains of the Teaching Framework is addressed along with appropriate activities that serve to meet the goals of SIP. For domains 1, 3, and 4, the conversation focus will be anchored in SBLG grading. For domain 2, however, the conversation will focus on the Responsive Classroom® strategies for the simple reason that IAD's vision and mission (Appendix B) are anchored in serving the whole child where academic achievement is paired with social and emotional learning. Conversation topics in "learning environment" will be supported by Responsive Classroom® literature as referred to in Table 2..

Each month, the conversation topic is linked to the Framework for Teaching with a broad range of literature-supported interactions in which the mentor and new teacher will participate as it relates to their work. While assessment of student learning is an integral part of teaching, grades and grading student work are not explicitly included in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Under "professional responsibilities," however, the framework emphasizes accurate records of student learning, including records of learning progress and assessment competition (Guskey and Brookhart, 2019). Also, formative and summative assessments are crucial ingredients of standards-based lesson planning and instruction. Therefore, grades are an expected and evaluated part of the teachers' work.

Goals of Induction Program

The following goals for the SIP are compatible with the school's PDP goals and will guide the activities of the mentor, new teacher, and the school administration. IAD SIP aims to:

1. "Establish a school-wide collaborative community of education practitioners that willingly and openly share resources, assistance, and ideas that increase the support provided to educators" (Delaware Department of Education, 2020, September 29).
2. Assist and enhance the new teacher ability to attend to their professional responsibilities.
3. Build and enhance new teacher's leadership qualities and capabilities.
4. Enhance new teachers' knowledge of the strategies related to the Common Core Content Standards (CCSS).
5. Assist new teachers in progress towards attainment of understanding SBG concepts and practices.
6. "Assist IAD in the development of "assessment literate" educators who can review student data and use that data to drive instruction in the classroom" (Delaware Department of Education, 2020, September 29).
7. Build reflective practitioners who review their present level of professional performance and use that data to set personal PD goals.
8. Assist the new teacher in accessing and utilizing school technology platforms and tools for integrating technology into learning and to facilitate assessment grading and reporting.

Key Strategies of SIP

The new teacher will attend to the following SIP tasks that are informed by the SIP goals as listed above:

- Work with an experienced mentor (Goals 1-6).
- Set professional educator goals (Goal 2).
- Complete activities toward meeting selected goals (Goal 2).
- Attend mandatory school induction meetings (Goal 1).
- Attend PLC meetings (Goal 1).
- Attend scheduled PD workshops (Goals 1-4).
- Submit required paperwork on time: goals, mid-term progress report, professional growth reflective essay, a log of contact hours with a mentor, and final progress checklist (Goal 6).
- Have scheduled conferences with the principal and mentor to review induction progress and receive recommendations (Goals 1, 2, 3).
- Mentoring logs are submitted each month for monitoring and review. A mentoring log (Appendix C) will be shared by the mentor and the new teacher in Google Docs and will be reviewed by the principal (Goals 1 and 3).

School Induction Program Phases

Initial Phase

During the school's summer week of orientation and PD, a mentor will help the new teacher to become familiar with the school's educational procedures, policies, and requirements. During this time, the mentor may assist the new teacher in:

- Becoming familiar with school policies and procedures pertinent to standards-based education.
- Securing materials such as supplies, curricular guides, and other resource materials.
- Confirming new teacher's access to the appropriate technology, books, and professional materials to support the implementation of standards-based education.
- Discussing specific guidelines, responsibilities, and events as set by the school calendar (e.g., assessment and grading guidelines, the grade book, and communication with parents).
- Other needs as identified by the new teacher or the school

Years One and Two

Years One and Two of SIP, as informed by Delaware Department of Education (2020), focus on classroom environment, lesson preparation and planning, instruction, and professional responsibilities. During Year One and Two, the mentor should support the new teacher's ability to establish an environment in which learning takes place, strengthen their ability to select and organize lesson content and student skills to be taught, and deliver content that engages students in the process of learning and involves them in decisions when possible. Mentors should also assist new teachers in establishing and enhancing patterns and tools of communication with parents and getting fully acquainted with standards-based assessment and grading practices.

Year One and Two: Summary Of Activities.

- Weekly face-to-face (virtual or in-person) conversations with the mentor (to provide real-time or near real-time support)
- Four observations/feedback cycles conducted by the mentor
- Observe skilled educators in practice four times (via videos, virtually, or in-person)
- Participate in all IAD professional learning workshops and scheduled activities.
- Participate in PLC meetings.
- Participate in all IAD professional learning workshops and scheduled activities.
- Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBL and grading (Appendix D and E).
- Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review.

(Adapted from Delaware Department of Education, 2020, 29).

Year Three

Year Three of SIP addresses lesson planning and preparation, instruction and student improvement. The purpose of this year is to develop "assessment literate" teachers who understand the value of formative and summative assessment data and know how to use that data to drive educational decisions within their classrooms.

The activities will be conducted in a PLC team. Members of the team will set their meeting dates, location, and times. During the meetings, the team members review the essence of SB assessment for (formative) and of (summative)

learning and discuss how the two play out in their classrooms to gain a better understanding of how to use data to make instructional decisions that best meet the needs of students. Teachers are required to implement several strategies and indicate the effectiveness of those strategies of student growth. (Delaware Department of Education, para 1-2).

The school will provide PLC team members with copies of the book, *" Standards-Based Learning in action: Moving from theory to practice"* by Schimmer et al. (2018) to be used by the PLC team for this year. Forms and resources related to this book are found here.

Year Three – Summary of Activities

- PLC team book study
- Review text chapters prior to PLC team meetings (4 required chapters)
- Implement strategies discussed during PLC team meetings
- Collect evidence to share at follow-up PLC team meeting
- Lead a minimum of one PLC team meeting
- Final reflection on Year 3

Year Four

The fourth and final year of SIP focuses on the new teacher being able to assess his/her development in content knowledge and pedagogical skills. The new teacher will first analyze his/her current development and then select an area for growth for the remainder of the year. This may include book studies, lesson study, action research, and other topics. The new teacher will submit your plan to the principal for review.

Year Four – Summary of Activities

- Conduct a self-analysis (pedagogical skills and content-related skills)
- Identify areas of strength and areas for growth (select at least one area for growth)
- Develop a Professional Learning Plan to address area for growth
- Implement the Professional Learning Plan (action research, individual book study, group book study, lesson study, college courses, or other professional learning as approved by the school and aligned with the educator's self-analysis).

School Monthly Induction Program Matrix (First Year)

Each month presents opportunities for a variety of mentor/new teacher conversations. The First Year Monthly Mentoring Matrix (Table 2) below provides suggested conversations that align with the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as the activities conducted monthly by the mentor and the new teacher. The matrix should be revisited annually to modify or create suitable conversations and activities for the subsequent three years. Suggested conversations and activities can be added or modifies as the mentor, new teacher, and the principal see appropriate.

Table B-2 *Standards-Based Induction Plan*

August	
Orientation & PD Week **Activities**	**Important Dates**
• Provide a welcome and orientation to new teachers. • Set expectations for the mentor-new teacher relationship. • Celebrate and recognize the importance of the mentor/new teacher relationship. • Share parent and student relationship-building suggestions. • Help new teachers identify priorities for PD. • Mentors and new teachers meet and become acquainted • Mentors and new teachers discuss PDP • Mentors and new teachers schedule meetings • Securing materials such as supplies, curricular guides, and other resource materials • Confirming new teacher's access to the appropriate technology, books, and professional materials to support the implementation of standards-based education. • Discussing specific guidelines, responsibilities, and events as set by the school calendar (e.g., assessment and grading guidelines, the grade book, and communication with parents). • Other needs as identified by the new teacher or the school	Aug 24-30

September		
Suggested Conversation Focus	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation: • What are the CCSS? • Depth of Knowledge (DOK) • Unpacking the Standards • Aligning Units to the Standards • "I-Can Statements" • Lesson plan– SBL targets **Classroom Environment:** • Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2014) • Rule Creation (Brady et al., 2011) • Behavioral Expectations **Instruction:** • Learning Targets in the classroom	• Mentor and new teachers develop a collegial relationship (continue to monitor progress) • New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support) • First new teacher observation of a mentor teaching session. • First mentor observation/feedback cycle • Participate in PLC meetings. • Participate in monthly PD day. • Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading.	Sep 28 PD day

● Formative Assessment (unobtrusive) ● Effective Feedback **Professional Responsibilities:** ● Delaware Framework for Teaching ● School Open House ● Parent-Teacher Communication Tools (School Assigned email; Alma Group Email; Alma Grade publishing) ● Parent-Teacher Interaction ● Using Alma for attendance and SBG grade book ● Reflection on September PD day	● Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	

October		
Activity/Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation**:** ● Formative assessment ● Grading formative assessment ● Collecting Evidence and Data ● Homework for Practice **Classroom Procedures:** ● **Interactive Modeling** **Instruction:** ● Renaissance Star Reading and Math reports ● Using assessment data and reports to inform instructional decisions **Professional Responsibilities:** ● Parent/Teacher Interaction and Communication ● Reflect on Oct PD day	● New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in-person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support) ● Second mentor observation/feedback cycle ● Second new teacher observation of skilled educator(s) in practice ● Participate in PLC meetings. ● Participate in monthly PD day. ● Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. ● Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	Oct 12 PD day

November	

Activity/Mentoring Conversation		Important Dates
Planning and Preparation**:** ● Summative Assessment ● Quality Assessment ● Benchmark/End of module assessment preparation ● Basic SBG principles of grading ● Components of the Grades ● Separation of work habits from content and skill mastery	● Mentor and new teacher meet attend November PD ● New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in-person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support) ● Mentor and new teacher discuss upcoming first parent-teacher conferences ● Third new teacher observation of a mentor teaching session. ● Third mentor observation/feedback cycle ● Participate in PLC meetings. ● Participate in monthly PD day. ● Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. ● Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	Nov 11 PD day Nov 20 (End of 1st Trimester)
Instruction: Formative Assessment		
Classroom Procedures: ● Logical Consequences		
Professional Responsibilities: ● Parent/Teacher Communication ● SBG Report Card preparation ● Reflect on Nov PD day		

December		
Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation: ● Reassessment ● Requesting reassessment ● Managing reassessment ● Grading Reassessment ● Computing grade from multiple reassessments	● New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and provide real-time support. ● Mentor and new teacher discuss and reflect on parent-teacher conferences	Dec 24-Jan 1 School Closed
Classroom Procedures: ● Positive Teacher Language (Denton, 2013).		

Professional Responsibilities: • Parent communication	• Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress. • Participate in PLC meetings. • Participate in monthly PD day. • Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. • Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review.	

January		
Activity/Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation: • Standards-Based Proficiency Scales • Using student-friendly language **Classroom Environment:** • Classroom Organization **Instruction:** • Using data to inform instructional decisions • Differentiation • Use of Technology Tools **Professional Responsibilities:** • Student growth objectives (SGO) review • PDP reflection • Teacher Evaluation Reflection	• New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in-person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support) • Fourth new teacher observation of a mentor teaching session. • Fourth mentor observation/feedback cycle • Participate in PLC meetings. • Participate in monthly PD day. • Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. • Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. • Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	

February		
Suggested Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation: • **Report Card**	• New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in-person) to	Feb 15 PD day

● **Teacher Comments** ● **Scores for Learning Habits** **Classroom Environment:** ● Collaborative Problem-Solving **Instruction:** ● Using data to inform instructional decisions **Professional Responsibilities:** ● Teacher Evaluation Reflection	address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support). ● Mentor and new teacher discuss upcoming second parent-teacher conferences ● Participate in PLC meetings. ● Participate in monthly PD day. ● Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. ● Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	Feb 26 (End of 2nd Trimester)

March		
Suggested Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation: **Classroom Environment:** ● **Working with Families** **Instruction:** ● Using data to inform instructional decisions **Professional Responsibilities:** ● Process for Teacher Annual Evaluation ● Benchmark assessment preparation	● New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in-person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support). ● Participate in PLC meetings. ● Participate in monthly PD day. ● Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. ● Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	Mar 26 PD day

April		
Suggested Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important**

		Dates
Planning and Preparation: **Classroom Environment:** ● Guided Discovery ● Academic Choice **Instruction:** ● Using data to inform instructional decisions **Professional Responsibilities:** ● Process for Teacher Annual Evaluation	● New teacher and mentor meet weekly (virtual or in-person) to address suggested monthly focus in the four domains of the Frame for Effective Teaching and to provide real-time support) ● Participate in PLC meetings. ● Participate in monthly PD day. ● Refer to suggested learning (reading or visual) resources on SBLG grading. ● Verify and submit monthly mentoring log for monitoring and review. ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress.	Apr 5-9 School Closed Apr 12 PD day

May		
Suggested Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Planning and Preparation: Classroom Environment ● Solving Thorney Behavior Problems (Crowe, 2009) **Instruction:** ● Using data to inform instructional decisions for the summer and for the new school **Professional Responsibilities:** ● End of the year procedures	● Finalize documentation log ● Check contents of beginning teacher's PD file ● Set PDP goals for next year ● Evaluate SIP ● Discuss end of year procedures ● Celebrate/recognized accomplishments	

June		
Suggested Mentoring Conversation	**Activities**	**Important Dates**
Professional Responsibilities: ● End of the year procedures ● Reflection	● **Mentor and new teacher will write and file their final reflections** ● Mentor and new teacher meet with the principal to discuss ongoing professional growth and progress	Jun 4 (End of 3rd Trimester**)**

Conclusion

The SBL and SBG programs introduced at IAD are ambitious and require investment and resources. Teachers are the most valuable resource a school could have to improve student learning. For teachers to provide high-quality instruction, they need to be continuously engaged in learning related to the core of education. Moreover, they need to keep updated with the new trends and technology in education such as SBL and SBG. New teachers are required to carry out on daily basis duties and tasks that are carried out by veteran teachers who have been in the teaching profession for many years. Unless these new teachers receive the proper training, they will fall into apprehension and isolation, perform poorly, and eventually leave the school or the teaching profession altogether. An effective induction program that caters to the new teacher learning needs will facilitate the school change and will keep teachers at our school for a long time.

Teachers do not grow or flourish professionally through self-isolation. Teachers grow through collaboration with peers who have just joined the ranks of teaching and through learning from the experiences veteran teachers have gone through over the years. This collaborative culture is the insurance that new teachers will grow and will be motivated to embrace a lifelong teaching career. This collaboration also benefits the experienced and skilled teachers in that it keeps them motivated and satisfied as they model their learning journey to the new teachers. If our school gears PD to both the ongoing induction of new teachers and the continual renewal of veteran teachers, we will have served all teachers well—thus enabling them to serve all their students well.

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Appendix B-1

Critical Features of IAD Teacher PDP

Plan Begin/End Date: August 2019-June 2020

5. Professional Learning Goals

No.	Goal	Identified Group	Rationale/ Sources of Evidence
1	Teachers will develop a deep understanding of the CCSS. Teachers will know and be able to: ● Unpack and prioritize standards ● Create proficiency scales ● Use proficiency scales in the classroom (planning and instruction) ● Score and grade assessment based on proficiency scales ● Align formative and summative assessment with CCSS	All Teachers	The rationale for goals 1 and 2 is based on the needs-based survey I conducted in July 2019. In that survey, teachers expressed they were: ● Unfamiliar with the CCSS in ELA and mathematics ● Unfamiliar with related concepts such as unpacking and prioritizing the standards, aligning formative and summative assessments to the standards ● Unfamiliar with SBG practices
2	Teachers will develop a deep understanding of SBLG grading related concepts (e.g., unit planning, differentiating instruction, checking for understanding techniques, and collaborative learning strategies, effective standards-based feedback).	All teachers	There is a need to include instructional strategies that support SBLG grading such as differentiating instruction, collaborative learning, and checking for understanding (Berger et al. (2014).
3	To build teacher capacity to use technology platforms and tools needed to facilitate	All Teachers	● Teachers need to be skillful in using available technology that houses the grade book, the report card to record and

	learning, assessment, grading, and reporting Teachers will be able to fluently navigate: ● Google Classroom to manage student learning ● Alma, our school information system to use the grade book and the report card and to communicate with parents. ● Star Reading and Star Math online assessments to measure student growth and mastery of foundational skills. ● Edulastic for benchmark and formative assessments. ● Game-based learning tools (e.g., Freckle and Prodigy)		communicate grade to stakeholders. ● Teachers also need to be skillful in using assessment tools (e.g. Star Reading and Star Math) to measure student growth and mastery of the standards and to guide student learning improvement. ● Teachers need to manage instructional resources for differentiated instruction.

6. Professional Learning Strategies

PL. Goal No.	Strategies	Follow-up Activities (as appropriate)
1	● Outside experts (vendors) will provide on-site PD/training full-day sessions. ● Our PLC will plan and deliver in-house PD and learning opportunities, e.g., book studies.	Walk-throughs and debriefing sessions. Outside experts will join select PLC meetings to address critical unit planning and curriculum alignment.
2	● Outside experts (vendors) will provide on-site PD/training full-day sessions. ● Use our PLC and lead teachers to plan and deliver in-house PD.	Walk-throughs and debriefing sessions. Outside experts will join select PLC meetings to address critical unit

		planning and curriculum alignment.
3	● Technology Coordinator and lead teachers will provide scheduled group and individual training sessions to teachers on the use of Alma, Google Classroom, Edulastic, and other tech tools. ● The school will utilize Renaissance-provided 90 min online interactive webinars to train teachers to interpret Star Reading and Star Math assessment reports and plan for intervention.	Technology coordinator and lead teachers will serve as a reference for inquiries, individual training, and troubleshooting for occurring issues.

7. Essential Resources

PL. Goal No.	Resources	Other Implementation Considerations
1	4. Outside Expert(s) 5. Time ● Summer PD/Orientation week ● Dedicated time for collaborative teams to refine aligned lessons and assessments. ● PLC meetings 6. Funding ● Federally mandated Title I and Title II Funds ● School funding for substitutes while teachers attend workshops	● I will direct teachers to collaboratively produce samples of their unpacked standards and target-based lesson plans. ● I will direct teachers to compile priority standards for their grade level. ● Teachers will be directed to exchange and critique standards-based lesson plans, assessment, and grading with colleagues.
2	5. Outside Expert(s) 6. Time ● PD/Orientation week ● Dedicated time for collaborative teams to refine aligned lessons and assessments. ● PLC meetings	● Examine the student grade books on Alma to monitor student progress

	7. Lead Teachers 8. Funding ● Federally mandated Title I and Title II Funds ● School funding for substitutes while teachers attend workshops.	
3	6. Time ● PD/Orientation week 7. Lead Teacher 8. Technology Coordinator 9. Technology platforms: ● Alma school information system (SIS) will house our grade book and student report cards. ● Edulastic will serve as the summative and formative assessment platform ● Google Classroom will be used as our learning management system LMS ● Renaissance Star Reading, Star Math, and Accelerated Reader will assess student growth in reading and math and will enhance student reading skills. ● Prodigy and Freckle will help students in differentiation through gaming. 10. Funding ● School budget PD/Technology allocated funds ● Funding for substitutes while teachers attend workshops.	● Maintain open channels of communications to solicit feedback about the progress of the training. (e.g., surveys, conversations during faculty and PLC meetings). ● The availability of the technology coordinator to support teachers is very crucial. ● The principal will develop a tracking plan to monitor compliance. ● Possible intensive individualized interventions for struggling teachers.

8. Progress Summary

Pl. Goal No.	Notes on Plan Implementation	Notes on Plan Attainment
1	● The new teacher perception survey of grading practices shed light on the teachers' progress in understanding and implementing SBG. ● Based on the survey I will identify areas where more emphasis should be placed in future PD activities..	Through walkthroughs I conducted along with the instructional coach from El Education, we observed good teacher progress. However, there are still pockets and room for improvement in specific areas, which we will address at the school level

		in the next phase of our professional development.
2	● Vendor walkthrough indicates progress	Through walkthroughs I conducted along with the instructional coach from El Education, we observed good teacher progress. However, there are still pockets and room for improvement in specific areas, which we will address at the school level in the next phase of our professional development.
3	● Teachers have adapted to the use of the grade book and report card on Alma. ● Teachers have concerns about the practicality of using Edulastic as a platform for ELA benchmark assessment. ● Teachers need more help and practice on interpreting assessment reports of Star Reading and Star Math.. ● Teachers continue to meet with the technology coordinator for troubleshooting and advice.	Through walkthroughs I conducted along with the instructional coach from El Education, we observed good teacher progress. However, there are still pockets and room for improvement in specific areas, which we will address at the school level in the next phase of our professional development.

Appendix B-2

IAD School Vision and Mission

Vision

To educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful, and safe environment; teaching them universal values, based on religion and cultural heritage; and providing them with rigorous academic engagement to enable them to become career ready and responsible leaders and citizens.

Mission

As a child-centered School, we:

- Are committed to educating our children in a safe environment that enables them to grow and learn.
- Look at each child individually to support the social, physical, intellectual, and emotional growth and well-being of all our students.
- Set high expectations for all students and high-quality learning experience.
- Offer students a relevant, challenging, integrative, and engaging curriculum.
- Use a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse needs and abilities of our students.
- Offer students experiences, which will prompt them to become more responsible for themselves as learners and citizens.
- Work to provide organizational structures that effectively support our commitment child-centered environment

Appendix B-3

School Induction Program

Mentor Log

Date	Name of Activity (Observation, Conference, Meeting Description, Etc.)	Time Involved

Appendix B-4

Standards-Based Grading Webinars

Topic	Description/Overview	Time (hrs.)
A Teacher's Guide to SBLWebinar	This is practical advice for adjusting to teaching, assessing, and grading in a standards-based classroom. Following a brief overview of why the change to standards-based helps both student and teacher, the presenter identifies the key adjustments teachers face as they work with standards. ● Explore the theories and benefits of a standards-based curriculum. ● Become familiar with several significant paradigm shifts that will help teachers make a strong transition to a standards-based classroom. ● Explore ways to shift teacher thinking about teaching and lesson plans to better understand content as a vehicle for the achievement of standards.	60 min
The Importance of Proficiency Scales in a Standards-Based Classroom	This webinar will overview multiple approaches to developing high-quality proficiency scales, as well as primary uses of proficiency scales in the classroom. Participants will gain an enhanced understanding of the power of using scales. Session outcomes include: ● Understanding what proficiency scales are and why they are important. ● Discovering multiple methods for developing proficiency scales. ● Examining primary uses of proficiency scales in the classroom.	60 min
Referenced Grading vs. Competency -Based Grading	● Robert J. Marzano compares and contrasts standards-based grading with competency-based grading. Teachers will: Learn the benefits and pitfalls of both approaches. Understand how both methods change the basic paradigm of traditional grading practices. ● Explore specific differences in how assessments are interpreted and used.	60 min
The New Art and Science of Classroom Assessment	This webinar focuses on presenting a new and innovative view regarding classroom assessments. Expected outcomes: ● Consider a new paradigm of classroom assessment. ● Discuss the difference between measurement and assessment. ● Understand how to create a curriculum that is assessment friendly. ● Consider how to use multiple assessments to better determine true indicators of knowledge.	60 min

	• Learn about how technology can use assessment data to monitor and report on student progress.	

Appendix B-5

Resources for New Teachers

The following is a variety of resources available to teachers, parents, and members of the community to learn about SBG. These resources will be available on our website at IADonline.org:

Reading

- ASCD: Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading
- ASCD: Effective Grading Practices
- Starting the Conversation about Grading
- Are Zeros fair? An Analysis of Grading Practices by James Cristea (2007, June). Cabrini College
- Grading Practices: The Third Rail" by Jeffery A. Erickson (2010)
- Grade Inflation: Killing the Kindness by Bryan Goodwin (2011). Educational Leadership
- Five Obstacles to Grading Reform by Guskey
- Grading Policies That Work Against Standards
- Zero Alternatives By Guskey
- Finding the Grading Compass by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Websites

- The site features brief, informative videos created by and for practitioners implementing SBG
- Rick.wormeli.com offers an extensive list of recommended written and video resources
- SBLG grading Facebook page
- SBLG grading Twitter hashtag:
  #sblchat

Appendix C

ARTIFACT 3: MASTER SCHEDULE

Introduction

As a school leader, I believe a school must provide teachers and students with appropriate organizational structures to support collaborative planning and learning. This is especially important to support our school's initiative to implement standards-based grading (SBG). The initiative requires teachers to develop a conceptual understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), effective strategies to teach the standards, and SBG practices. Teachers also need to know well how to use the technology platforms and tools the school has introduced to facilitate learning, assessment, grading, and reporting. One important structure that provides adequate time for professional learning communities (PLC) learning and collaboration is the school Master Schedule. Teachers need to meet within the school day to plan their lessons individually and collaboratively, exchange classroom visitations and observations, and explore student assessment data to set learning goals for students. A well-designed school Master Schedule also provides time for collaboration, deeper learning of the standards, and opportunities for intervention, extension, enrichment, and assessment.

This artifact presents a school Master Schedule that to be used by teachers, students, and the school administration to house the teaching and learning operation in our school. The overarching goal of this schedule is to maximize the engagement time in which students are involved in learning tasks and provide time for teachers to plan individually and collaboratively. The schedule also allows teachers to attend PLC

meetings and exchange classroom visitations and observations for mentoring, interactive modeling, and evaluation purposes.

Scheduling in the Literature

The Master Schedule is part of the school curriculum. It organizes the subjects taught, the daily and weekly time allocations for those subjects, and other related student and teacher activities that occur during the school day. Fioriello (2017) notes that the Master Schedule affects students, teachers, and parents who arrange for their children's commute to and from school and, therefore, proper care must be taken to structure the schedule in a manner that fulfills all needs and addresses all concerns of these stakeholders. However, the priority is always for maximizing student learning while providing all support needed to fulfill student social and emotional needs.

Several factors and considerations determine the structure of a school Master Schedule. McLeod et al. (2003) suggest that elementary school schedules are generally determined by three factors: the number of instructional minutes for each subject area as mandated by the district or state; special class schedules, such as music, art, physical education, and library; and the overall school schedule as dictated by bus schedules and lunchtimes.

Two models for allocating instructional time per teaching period are discussed by the literature: an hour period for each subject area, or one of the configurations of block scheduling (McLeod et al., 2003; Hackmann,1995; Hibbeln, 2020). The hour period schedule is based on one hour per day each academic year, or between 180 and 190 hours of classroom contact. An "hour" might be 60, 55, 50, 45, or 40 minutes, and the academic year might be 36, 37, 38, 39, or 40 weeks long. According to McLeod et al. (2003), the

hour-period schedule has been criticized because of its emphasis on time spent in courses and the instructional organization of discrete 40-plus-minute segments instead of the quality of learning accomplished. In the hour-period schedule, teachers have to teach many periods and create many lesson plans, affecting the quality of instructions they provide.

To enable teachers to deliver effective classroom instruction where children can engage in collaborative learning and highly demanding cognitive tasks, adequate learning time is needed. In this respect, block scheduling serves as a viable alternative to the traditional 60- minute schedule. McLeod et al. (2003) suggests the following variety of formats for block scheduling and indicates that, regardless of the structure, they all serve to avail direly needed time for deeper student learning:

- Four 90-minute blocks per day; school year divided into two semesters; formerly yearlong courses completed in one semester
- Alternate-day block schedule: six or eight courses spread out over two days; teachers meet with half of their students each day
- Two large blocks and three standard-sized blocks per day: year divided into 60-day trimesters with a different subject taught in the large blocks each trimester
- Some classes (e.g., band, typing, foreign language) taught daily, others in longer blocks on alternate days
- Six courses, each meeting in three single periods and one double period per week

- Seven courses, with teachers meeting with students three days out of four—twice in single periods, once in a double period (p. 23)

The time advantage inherent in the block schedule is crucial to standards-based learning. A frequent concern about mastery learning is that it requires time to implement or significant changes to the schedule. O'Conner (2018) and Guskey (2007) suggest, however, that only minor schedule changes are necessary to overcome hurdles associated with mastery learning instruction. In addition to the structured time block scheduling provides, schools have implemented a number of creative strategies:

- Allocating time specifically for enrichment and remediation through unconventional scheduling within the school day.
- Using time outside of the school day to provide support. For example, teachers may arrive early, stay late to work with students or dedicate "office hours" availability for assisting students.

The literature suggests two organizational structures to be considered when passing on the school schedule from one year to the next: "looping" and "vertical team". For elementary schools, Rasmussen (1998) suggests the use of looping for maximizing instructional time. In this approach, students remain with one teacher for two to three years- the teacher and the students get promoted together. Ramussen (1998) suggests that looping is very conducive to learning because teachers are familiar with their students. They do not need to set expectations or establish classroom rules since students have learned them from the year before. Looping, therefore, is effective in using time for promoting collaborative learning and tackling highly demanding cognitive tasks and skills.

McLeod et al. (2003) suggest that middle school "vertical teams" play a significant role in preserving time for effective learning. Subject teachers accompany their students as they advance through middle school, building on previously taught expectations. Teachers who are familiar with their students' abilities, weaknesses, and strengths can tailor instructions effectively since they do not have to spend time learning about students' gaps and habits. According to McLeod et al. (2003), the first day of school in a vertical team is a productive and comfortable day for both teachers and students as they return to a familiar environment.

Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD) Master Schedule

In the following section, I will address the goals our IAD Master Schedule will meet, the strategies employed to address these goals, and the steps taken to construct the Schedule. I will follow with a discussion of the final Master Schedule template products.

Master Schedule Goals and Strategies

The Master Schedule aims at achieving the following goals which are also shown along with the associated strategies in the IAD Scheduling Matrix (Table 1):

1. To provide consistency in the instructional day and in the implementation of the school curriculum.

Consistency is contingent upon making sure learning inside and outside the classroom takes place on regularly scheduled times and durations. Learning in classrooms is bound by classroom management expectations and adult-supervised transitions to ensure the safety of children. The Master Schedule provides that needed consistency. This goal informs implementation strategies that will lead to learning consistency such as breaking the school year into three 60-day trimesters and pacing curriculum modules to

fit per-trimester periods (Goal 1, Strategy 1). Determining the bell time, duration, frequency, and venue (Goal 1, Strategies 2-6) are also strategies that will ensure learning consistency.

2. To provide instructional time for the optimal delivery of the school curricula

This goal will guide the scheduling choices that optimize learning time taking into consideration the need for student collaboration and a deeper understanding of learning content and skills. Block scheduling where ELA and Math take 80 minutes in instruction time (double the time allocated to almost all other subjects) is a strategic step (Goal 2, Strategies 1-5) that ensures optimal instructional time for all subjects.

3. To provide time for intervention and enrichment programs within the school day that supports core instruction and accountability requirements.

Not all students are at the same level of achievement or abilities. Some may suffer because of the achievement gap with learning in the classroom, some may have a language barrier (ELL students), and others may have challenges with learning resources at home. IAD's mission is to serve all students. Those who need intervention are offered the opportunity to learn through a pull-out program where their knowledge and skills are honed with the guidance of a dedicated instructor. The Master Schedule points to those times in the day or week where that intervention service is offered (Goal 3, strategies 1 and 2). Table 3 shows an intervention schedule that is derived from the Master Schedule.

4. To provide time for peer observation, classroom visitation, individual and collaborative planning, and PLC meetings

Teachers need to plan collaboratively and individually. Teachers need to continue to improve their learning and connect to new instructional trends and strategies. New

teachers need to benefit from peer evaluation and exchanging classroom observations and visitations. The Master Schedule attends to these needs by dedicating PLC and collaborative time periods (Goal 4, Strategy 1-2) as shown in Tables 2.

Table C- 1 IAD *Master Scheduling Matrix*

Goal 1: To provide consistency in the instructional day and in the implementation of the school curriculum					
Strategies					
1. Break the school year three 60-day trimesters and pace curriculum modules to fit per-trimester periods.	2. Determine the time allotted for each school activity.	3. Determine the frequency each activity will meet	4. Establish bell time for every period and transition as follows: 8:30-9:10 9:10-9::15 9:15-9:55 9:55-10:00 10:00-10:40 10:40-10:45 10:45-11:20 11:20-12:00 12:00-12:40 12:40-12:45 12:45-1:25 1:25-1:30 1:30-2:10 2:10-2:15 2:15-2:55 2:55-3:30	5. Determine the location where each activity will take place	6. Determine the Staff member(s) who will supervise the activities

Goal 2: To protect instructional time for the optimal delivery of the school curricula			
Strategies			
1. Core subjects (Grade1-8): English Language Arts and Math meet daily in blocks of 80 minutes.	2. Encore subjects: (Grades1-8): Science, Social Studies, the Arabic Language, Religious Studies, Art, and Physical Education meet in 40-min blocks. The Arabic Language meets daily. Science, Social Studies, and Religious Studies meet four times a week, and Art and Physical	3. Arabic Language: Students across grades are grouped into three achievement levels, elementary, intermediate, and advanced.	4. Create a 5-min transition time between periods to reduce erosion of instruction time.

	Education meet once a week.		

Goal 3: To provide time for intervention and enrichment programs within the school day that supports core instruction and accountability requirements	
Strategies	
1. Intervention groups have a chance to meet twice a week for ELA and Math.	2. Create an intervention schedule to group students with matching needs to receive intervention

Goal 4:To provide time for peer observation, classroom visitation, individual and collaborative planning, and PLC meetings		
Strategies		
1. Common preparation periods allow teachers to plan individually and collaboratively	2. School breaks on Fridays at 1:25 pm. To allow PLC teams to meet for collaborative planning and PD.	3. Common Teaching Time

Master Scheduling Methodology

1. A scheduling committee comprised of two teachers and I creates the first Master Schedule draft which includes:
    - Time allocations for all subjects/grade levels including academic time
    - Necessary Foreign Language mastery level grouping
    - Teacher instructional assignments
    - The number and length of Intervention/Enrichment periods
    - Lunch/Recess.
    - Instruction venue
2. The draft is shared with all teachers and the IAD Operations Committee to voice concerns, special teacher accommodation, resolve scheduling conflicts, and provide suggestions for improvement.

3. Modifications are implemented based on input and feedback from staff and IAD Operations Committee.
4. A second draft is shared with teachers and the IAD Operations Committee for feedback and input.
5. The process is repeated until a consensus is reached.

Discussion of the Master Schedule

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced schools to adjust their scheduling considerations in response to health and safety concerns. The Year 2020-21 Master schedule under discussion (Table 2) is developed for remote and hybrid models of the school learning environment. A daily expanded version of this Master Schedule is shown in Appendix A. This Master Schedule is slightly different from the pre-COVID-19 Year 2019-20 schedule (Appendix C) which was designed for in-person school learning. The current Master Schedule is designed so that it can still be applicable, with minor adjustments, to suit complete in-person learning. For example, the schedule does not account for physical education or age-appropriate timing of lunch and recess as would be the case in normal circumstances. The schedule is also taking into consideration the remote and hybrid and models of learning by introducing 5-minute transitions between periods for kids to exit a class and log in to another without wasting learning time. While synchronous instruction is the norm under this schedule, teachers have the liberty to inject asynchronous sessions into the schedule or to group students in each grade level as they see beneficial to students in close consultation with the principal.

As a school leader, I have benefitted from the literature in designing the Master Schedule (Table C-2) and other supplementary schedules (e.g., the Intervention and the

Master Teacher Schedules). I realize the effect of block scheduling in transforming the classroom from a teacher-centered to a student-centered learning environment where students benefit from increased time for collaboration and creativity. I also realize that larger blocks of time allow for a more flexible classroom environment in which teachers can use more varied and interactive styles of teaching.

Table C-2 *IAD Block Schedule (Grades 1-8)*

IAD Block Schedule (Grades 1-8)

Year 2020-21

Pd.	Time	KG	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	Min
1	8:30-9:10	Br/Snack	Block 1	Block 1	Block 1	Block 1	Math	Math	Quran		40
	9:10-9::15	Morning Meeting					Transition				
2	9:15-9:55	ELA(90 min)	ELA (85 min)	ELA (85 min)	ELA (85 min)	ELA (85 min)	Quran		Block 1	Science	40
	9:55-10:00		Transition							Transition	
3	10:00-10:40		Block 2	Arabic Language	Quran		Math	Math	ELA (80 min)	Interven/Enrich	40
	10:40-10:45		Transition								
4	10:45-11:20	Math	Math (80 min)	Lunch	M	M	Interven/Enrich	Social Studies	Arabic Language		40
	11:20-12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Math Block 2 (80 min)	Lunch						
5	12:00-12:40	Recess/Bath R	Quran		Arabic Language		Block 1	Interven/Enrich	Block 2	Block 1	40
	12:40-12:45		Transision					Transision			
6	12:45-1:25	Arabic Language	Science	Science	M	M	ELA (80 min)	Science	Math (80 min)	ELA (80 min)	40
	1:25-1:30	Centers/SG Activities	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	
7	1:30-2:10		Social Studies	Quran	Interven/Enrich	Science	Arabic Language	Arabic Language	Science	Social Studies	40
	2:10-2:15		Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	
8	2:15-2:55	Packing and Dismissal	Arabic Language	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies	Science	Block 1 /ELA	Interven/Enrich	Block 2/Math	40
9	2:55-3:30		Interven/Enrich	Interven/Enrich	Social Studies	Interven/Enrich	Social Studies		Social Studies		40

PLC Meetings

At IAD, the school year is divided into 60-day trimesters with subjects taught in blocks each trimester throughout the year. In addition to the core subjects of ELA and Mathematics, students receive instruction in seven other encore subjects that include Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Physical Education, Art, Religious Studies, and Quran. English Language Arts and Mathematics receive the longest time (80min) per day, five days a week, while each of the other subjects receives 40 minutes daily with Art and Physical Education meet weekly. Kindergarten receives an age-appropriate time schedule with a focus on literacy and mathematics.

In Foreign Language (Arabic), children in Grades 1 and 2 are grouped into two upper and lower mastery levels and taught by two teachers. In Grades 3 to 8, each three vertically consecutive grades are grouped into three mastery levels, upper, intermediate, and elementary, and taught by three teachers. This arrangement currently holds for remote learning but will be modified for the in-person learning model should the COVI-19 health and safety conditions improve.

Common preparation time is available for teachers to meet together, plan for instruction, discuss assessment, and make data-driven decisions. The schedule allows PLC teams to meet every Friday from 1:30 to 3:30 PM to plan together, engage in study groups, or attend workshops and webinars. Table C-3 below shows the teacher assignment view of the Master Schedule where common preparation periods are evident for individual and collaborative planning.

Table C- 3 *IAD Teacher Schedule (All Subjects)*

	7:30	8:15	8:30	9:15	10:00	10:45	11:20	12:00	12:45	1:30	2:15	2:55
Teacher	Breakfast	Morning Assembly	1	2	3	4	Lunch	5	6	7	8	9
Teacher A			E G1	E G1	M G1	M G1		P P	S G1	SS G1	P P	P P
Teacher B			E G2	E G2	P P	M G2		M G2	S G2	P P	SS G2	P P
Teacher C			E G3	E G3	P P	M G3		P P	M G4	P P	SS G3	S G3
Teacher D			E G4	E G4	P P	P P		E G5	E G5	P P	E G6	E G6
Teacher E			M G5	P P	M G5	M G4		P P	M G4	S G4	S G5	P P
Teacher F			M G6	P P	M G6	P P		M G7	M G7	P P	M G8	M G8
Teacher G			P P	E G7	E G7	P P		E G8	E G8	SS G8	P P	SS G7
Teacher H			P P	S G8	M G6	P P		P P	S G6	S G7	P P	M G8
Teacher I			P P	P P	A G2	A 6,7		A 3,4	P P	A 5,6	A G1	I G2
Teacher J			Q 7,8	Q 6,7	Q 4,5	A 6,7		A 3,4	P P	A 5,6	P P	P P
Teacher K			P P	P P	A G2	A 6,7		A 3,4	P P	A 5,7	A G1	P P
Teacher L			Q 7,8	Q 6,7	Q 4,5	P P		Q G1	P P	Q G2	P P	I G2
Teacher M			Q 7,8	Q 6,7	Q 4,5							
Teacher N			P P	P P	I G8	I G5		I G6	P P	I G3	I G7	I G4

Key: (Each color code denotes a teacher)

G1: Grade 1	E: English Language Arts	TP: Teaching period
G2: Grade 2	M: Math	AA: Admin assignment
G3: Grade 3	S: Science	
G4: Grade 4	SS: Social Studies	
G5: Grade 5	A: Arabic Language	
G6: Grade 6	Q: Quran	
G7: Grade 7	I: Intervention	
G8: Grade 8	PP: Prep period	

Common preparation periods offer teachers time opportunities for independent and collaborative planning

Looping and vertical teaming are considered in the Master Schedule. Teachers in grades 1-5 move along with their students from one grade to the next, although this arrangement is usually subject to teacher retention and prior teaching experience of teachers in managing instruction in particular grade levels. Vertical teaming in grades 6-8 is common and is implemented from year to year in all subjects.

Intervention is provided through a pull-out program where students grouped based on needs and abilities receive instruction. IAD utilizes intervention services rendered under the federally funded Title I program by a private vendor through a consortium of school districts in New Castle County, De. These services offer ELL and low achieving

students in grades K-8 the necessary intervention needed to meet the standards. The intervention program is built on the premise that a compromise has to be considered by pulling students out of an encore subject period to build their skills and knowledge in core subjects they may need help with. Appendix B Table illustrates the extracted intervention schedule where students meet to receive help in Language Arts and Mathematics.

Conclusion

Hibbeln (2020) suggests that many factors should be considered when creating a master schedule, including the school vision, budgeting, staffing, and equity. The master schedule must be designed so that all these factors are integrated coherently to serve equitable education for the new school year and be flexible and adjustable to accommodate changes and needs from year to year. At IAD, the master schedule prioritizes teacher collaboration and PD. Time, an important resource, is allotted for individual and group learning. This is quite important considering the fact that teachers will carry the burden of implementing schoolwide SBLG practices. The change is essentially a team project that requires time for learning, exchanging ideas, and planning. The schedule also provides time distribution that enhances student collaboration to learn the standards at a pace commensurate with student's abilities and readiness. Traditional 40-minute periods may not enable students to attain a deeper understanding of meanings called for by the CCSS. The schedule prioritizes intervention for students who may have learning barriers or falling short of grade-level learning expectations. For now, these students are pulled out of classes, resulting in compromised learning in encore subjects that needs to be made up at home or through secondary intervention by teachers. As

O’Conner (2018) reports, the ideal scheduling practice for intervention should provide for dedicated focused learning periods where no learning is compromised, and students are leveled into intervention, expansion, and enrichment groups to meet their learning needs. This should be the next step in improving scheduling at IAD.

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Appendix C-1

IAD Master Schedule (Grades K-8)

Year 2020-2021

IAD Master Schedule (Grades 1-8)

Year 2020-21

		KG					G1					G2					G3					G4					G5					G6					G7					G8					Min
Pd.	Time	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	
1	8:30-9:10	Br/Snack					E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	40
	9:10-9::15	Morning Meeting					Transision																																								
2	9:15-9:55						E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	E	E	E	E	E	S	S	S	S	S	40
	9:55-10:00						Transision																																								
3	10:00-10:40	ELA (90 min)					M	M	M	M	M	A	A	A	A	A	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	I	I	I	I	I	40
	10:40-10:45						Transision																																								
4	10:45-11:20	Math					M	M	M	M	M	Lunch					M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	I	I	I	I	I	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	40
	11:20-12:00	Lunch					Lunch					M	M	M	M	M	Lunch																														
5	12:00-12:40	Recess/Bath R					Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	M	M	M	M	M	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	E	E	E	E	E	I	I	I	I	I	M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	40
	12:40-12:45						Transision																																								
6	12:45-1:25	Arabic Language					S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	S	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	40
	1:25-1:30						Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition										
7	1:30-2:10	Centers/SG Activities					SS	SS	SS	SS	P	Q	Q	Q	Q	P	I	I	I	I	P	S	S	S	S	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	S	S	S	S	P	SS	SS	SS	SS	P	40
	2:10-2:15						Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	
8	2:15-2:55	Packing and Dismissal					A	A	A	A	C	SS	SS	SS	SS	C	S	S	S	S	C	SS	SS	SS	SS	C	S	S	S	S	C	E	E	E	E	C	I	I	I	I	C	M	M	M	M	C	40
9	2:55-3:30						I	I	I	I		I	I	I	I		SS	SS	SS	SS		I	I	I	I		SS	SS	SS	SS		E	E	E	E		SS	SS	SS	SS		M	M	M	M		40
																																															360

Key: (Each color code denotes a teacher)

G1: Grade 1	E: English Language Arts
G2: Grade 2	M: Math
G3: Grade 3	S: Science
G4: Grade 4	SS: Social Studies
G5: Grade 5	A: Arabic Language
G6: Grade 6	Q: Quran
G7: Grade 7	I: Intervention

Appendix C-2

IAD Intervention Schedule (Grade 1-8)

IAD Intervension Schedule (Grades 1-8)

Year 2020-21

		KG	G1					G2					G3					G4					G5					G6					G7					G8					Min
Pd.	Time	M T W T F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	
1	8:30-9:10	Br/Snack																																									40
	9:10-9::15	Morning Meeting	Transision																																								
2	9:15-9:55	ELA (90 min)																										E	M	E	M		E	M	E	M							40
	9:55-10:00		Transision																																								
3	10:00-10:40																	E	M	E	M		E	M	E	M												E	M	E	M		40
	10:40-10:45		Transision																																								
4	10:45-11:20	Math						Lunch															E	M	E	M																	40
	11:20-12:00	Lunch	Lunch										Lunch																														
5	12:00-12:40	Recess/Bath R	E	M	E	M																						E	M	E	M												40
	12:40-12:45		Transision																																								
6	12:45-1:25	Arabic Language																																									40
	1:25-1:30	Centers/SG Activities	Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition					Transition										
7	1:30-2:10		E	M	E	M	P	E	M	E	M	P	E	M	E	M	P					P					P					P					P	E	M	E	M	P	40
	2:10-2:15		Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	Transition				L	
8	2:15-2:55	Packing and Dismissal					C	E	M	E	M	C					C	E	M	E	M	C					C					C	E	M	E	M	C					C	40
9	2:55-3:30		E	M	E	M		E	M	E	M		E	M	E	M		E	M	E	M		E	M	E	M								E	M	E	M							40
																																											360

Key: (Each color code denotes a teacher)

G1: Grade 1	E: English Language Arts
G2: Grade 2	M: Math
G3: Grade 3	S: Science
G4: Grade 4	SS: Social Studies
G5: Grade 5	A: Arabic Language
G6: Grade 6	Q: Quran
G7: Grade 7	I: Intervention

Appendix C-3

IAD Master Schedule 2019-2020 (G 1-8)

Islamic Avademy of Delaware

Master Schedule 2019-2020

	KG					G1					G2					G3					G4					G5					G6					G7					G8					
	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	
7:45-8:15	Breakfast																																													7:45-8:15
8:15-8:30	Morning Assembly																																													8:15-8:30
8:30-9:10						E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	S	S	S	S	S	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	8:30-9:10
9:10-9:50	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	I	⚽	I	I	I	L	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	M	M	9:10-9:50
9:50-10:30						M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	E	E	E	E	E	M	M	M	M	M	9:50-10:30
10:30-11:10						Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	A	A	A	A	A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	M	M	M	M	M	I	⚽	I	I	I	10:30-11:10
11:10-11:50	Lunch + Recess																									M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	M	M	M	M	M	E	E	E	E	E	11:10-11:50
11:50-12:30						M	M	M	M	M	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Lunch + Recess																				11:50-12:30
12:30 1:10						S	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	M	M	S	S	S	S	S	I	⚽	I		I	Q	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	S	S	S	S	S	C	C	C	C	C	12:30 1:10
1:10-1:30	A/I	A/I	A/I	A/I	A/	Salah																																								1:10-1:30
1:30-2:10						A	A	A	A	P	S	S	S	S	S	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	M	M	M	M	M	I	⚽	I	I	I	SS	SS	SS	SS	S	1:30-2:10
2:10-2:50						I	⚽	I	I	I	I	I		⚽	I	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	S	SS	SS	S		I	⚽		I	I	M	M	M	M	M	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	S	S	S	S	S	2:10-2:50
2:50 3:30						SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	I	I	⚽	I	I	S	SS	SS	S	SS	S	S	S	S	S	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	2:50 3:30

Teacher Schedule 2019-2020

		8:30	9:10	9:50	10:30	11:10	11:50	12:30	1:10	1:30	2:10	2:50
Teacher 1	FT	E1	E1	M1		L	M1	S1	P	A		SS1
Teacher 2	FT	E2	E2	M2	PP	AA	L	M2	P	S2	PP	SS2
Teacher 3	FT	E3	E3	M3	M3	AA	L	S3	P	PP	SS3	PP
Teacher 4	FT	E4	E4	M4	M4	AA	L	PP	P	Q8,4	S4	SS4
Teacher 5	FT	E5	E5	PP	E6	E6	AA	L	P	SS5	PP	SS6
Teacher 6	FT		E7	E7		E8	L	E8	P	SS8	SS7	PP
Teacher 7	FT	S6	PP	PP	M5	M5	AA	S7	L P	PP	S8	S5
Teacher 8	FT	PP	M8	M8	M7	M7	AA	L	P	M6	M6	PP
Teacher 9	PT				A2					A1		
Teacher 10	PT	Q7,8	QKG	Q5,6								
Teacher 11	FT				A2	L	A3,4	A5,6	AK		I2	A7,8
Teacher 12	FT		APK4			L	A3,4	A5,6		A1	I1	A7,8
Teacher13	FT	Q7,8	PP	Q5,6	PP	PP	A3,4	L	P	Q3,4	PP	Q7,8
Teacger 14			I6		I8		L	I4		I7	I5	I3
Teacher 15	PT	Q,7,8		Q5,6	Q1		Q2					
Teacher 16	FT	E	E		M	M	S			SS		

KEY:

- A: Arabic Language
- E: English Language Arts
- M: Math
- S: Science
- SS: Social Studies
- I: Islamic Studies
- Q: Quran
- AA: Administrative Assignment
- PP: Planning Period
- L: Lunch

G1-8: Grades 1-8

⚽ : Physical Education

Each Teacher is designated a color for ease of vidualization

80 min ELA and Math class sessions scheduled back to back to allow time for collaborative learning, critical thinking, and to address the essential and support standards

Schedule allows time for teacher collaboration and PLC meetings to discuss SBL and SBG and to allow for intervention to boost student learning

Daily time instruction increased by 15 minutes to accommodate 80 minutes of math instruction daily

Appendix D

ARTIFACT 4: COMMUNICATION PLAN

Introduction

Islamic Academy of Delaware is a community-based institution. For school programs to be successful, we need parents and community members to support us. Such support is more likely if we establish a collaborative relationship with our constituents—and effective communication is the key to building such a relationship. As a school leader, I aim to see that my school provides timely and relevant information to our school community. In light of the school's efforts to implement standards-based grading (SBG) as an integral component of SBL, I have created this communication plan to promote stakeholder awareness and buy-in to the concepts underpinning SBG and our school's efforts to make SBG a seamless system. This communication plan is in fulfillment of our school vision, "to educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful, and safe environment; to provide rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens." I believe that our vision and, consequently, our efforts will not be fully realized unless the three stakeholder components of our school, parents, students, and staff, share a common understanding of the tasks ahead and work together as a team to meet all possible implementation challenges.

I understand that effective communication during the transition to SBG is one of the primary responsibilities of a school leader (Heflebower et al., 2018). Hanover Research (2013) suggests that good communication is one of the most significant features

of a good implementation process, and Westerberg (2016) suggests that community engagement and involvement are important to the success and sustainability of the SBG initiative. Above all, schools should be proactive, transparent, and engage with parents and other stakeholders to show them how the new approach will help their children achieve greater success and prepare them to compete in today's marketplace (Hanover Research, 2013).

This communication plan will introduce the following items:

1. Purpose of the communication plan
2. Communication considerations
3. Target audience and key messages
4. A communication matrix that will describe the strategies and relevant implementation variables such as audience, persons in charge, and time constraints.
5. Freely accessible resources on SBG for all stakeholders.

This artifact aims at establishing effective communication channels with IAD stakeholders to promote the school implementation of standards-based education. This purpose will inform specific goals that I will align with practical strategies to implement. The focus will be on SBL and SBG. This communication plan will serve as the blueprint for IAD administration, IAD Communication Committee (IADCC), and staff to guide activities aimed at informing and engaging all stakeholders in SBG implementation. IAD administration, IADCC, and staff may revisit this plan frequently to revise and suggest improvement to further enhance the quality and reach of the message. This

communication plan is purposeful in that it maximizes the chances that stakeholders will support the change.

Communication Considerations

Heflebower et al. (2018) argue that when developing a communication plan, leaders should consider how many people will hear, see, or read each message. They must also customize each message for the target stakeholder group to ensure that each group has multiple opportunities to learn about standard-based grading. To accomplish this, Heflebower et al. (2018) suggest leaders should begin with the following two aspects of communication which will also guide my plan:

1. Clearly defined goals and deserved outcomes
2. Understandings of contextual challenges, allies, and resources

Communication Goals

The following goals will guide our communication plan matrix (Tables I-2 to 5):

Goal 1: To collaborate with all stakeholders to strengthen support for and confidence in IAD's SBL and SBG initiatives. This goal guides the collaboration strategies among teachers, parents, and the IAD Operations Committee (IADOC) which serves as the governing board of the school. For example, collaboration between teachers and parents will be evident in parent-teacher conferences (Table I-3 Strategy B), collaboration among staff will be evident in the professional learning community (PLC) and staff meetings (Table I-4 Strategies E and F), and collaboration between the IADCC and IADOC will be evident in the regularly scheduled joint meetings (Table I-4 Strategy H). Through these meetings, strategic messages will permeate the discussion, influence support, and secure resources.

Goal 2: To build effective staff communication practices that will improve knowledge about and support for the school's SBL and SBG initiatives. This goal guides communication strategies between the administration and teachers, among teachers, and between teachers and parents. For example, the weekly principal's email (Table I-4 Strategy B) and the weekly teacher-parent email blast (Table I-3 Strategy G) are two effective strategies that inform stakeholders and send messages about frequent activities, events, and weekly lesson planning overviews and directives. The teacher handbook and the white paper on SBG (Table I-4 Strategies C and D) are examples of communication tools that will serve as permanent references and be available to stakeholders to guide understanding and implementation.

Goal 3: To communicate strategic messaging and content regarding SBL and SBG in fulfillment of the school vision to "provide rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens." Strategic messages will permeate the school website, the Facebook page and Twitter handle, school flyers and brochures the parent handbook. The principal-parent monthly meeting, the annual report, the climate survey (Table I-5 Strategies G, H, and I), will consistently address SBG expectations and serve to communicate implementation progress and challenges of key SBG issues to stakeholders.

Goal 4: To provide online tools that empower teachers, parents, and students to understand and interact with IAD regarding SBL and SBG. This goal will guide technology resource selection, budgeting, procurement, and training. For example, (Table D-3 Strategy D) highlights the use of our student information system, Alma, to communicate with parents through the publishing of grades and report cards and

disseminating individual email messages and assignments to parents and students. Our IAD website (Table D-5 Strategy B) is another vehicle that will host resources and messages for parents and the general public. The school's Facebook page and Twitter handle (Table D-5 Strategies B and C) will promote school events and refer stakeholder groups to resources. Effective utilization of our Technology Coordinator in tool maintenance and training of teachers and parents will add value and make the tools we use very productive.

Achieving those goals will be manifested in stakeholders' understanding of the following basic principles:

1. Grades must have meaning. Parents will understand that the grading system will be based on clear learning targets as derived from the standards. Student performance will be assessed, graded, and reported to reflect mastery of those learning targets.
2. Parents will understand that teachers will provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding based on the given feedback. In other words, students will be permitted to continue to learn until they can demonstrate they have learned the standards.
3. Parents will understand that grades communicate their children's understanding of the standards or learning objectives without mixing the other variables such as effort, good behavior, or rate of progress (Beatty, 2013).

Contextual Challenges, Allies, And Resources

As indicated earlier, Heflebower et al. (2018) argue that understandings of contextual challenges, allies, and resources will help in customizing messages so that

stakeholder groups receive multiple appropriate opportunities to learn about SBG. I believe these understandings will also determine how to overcome these challenges, address stakeholder sensitivities and concerns, and introduce procure resources that will make communication with stakeholders effectively. Therefore, it is important as a school leader that I situate this plan in those understandings.

Contextual understanding. Parents have a stake in understanding SBG to interpret their children's grade books and report cards when it is published by the school. I expect parents to support SBG once they understand its benefits and the urgency in transitioning from a broken grading system to one that is transparent, accurate, and helpful in preparing their children for the next grade level and beyond (DeWitt, 2016). Understanding SBG will move parents and students to support the system and to be involved in spreading out the word about this major school change.

I also expect parents to be informed that this process will cover grades K-5 in the subjects of ELA and mathematics. Teachers of other grades and subjects are also encouraged to pursue practices that support SBG. Implementation will expand to other subjects and also to the middle school in the next phase and, therefore, stakeholder buy-in now will prove to be very instrumental in the future and will make the transition to SBG seamless and smooth.

Through this communication plan, the administration will share with staff and parents that SBG efforts fit into the bigger picture of change in our school. Since the academic year 2018-2019, the school has initiated efforts to transition to SBL through changes of curricula, delivering SBL PD, introducing technology tools to meet the needs of SBL. Parents have been kept abreast of these developments and activities. To fully

implement SBL in our school, we need to move on with implementing SBG and reporting.

An important point I plan to get across to stakeholders is that implementing SBL and SBG is an ongoing process that will continue at IAD for years to come, and, therefore, communication will also continue, to prevent any setbacks and to overcome current or future challenges. The activities addressed here should only constitute the beginning of that process. As we move from one school year to the next, new teachers and staff members may be retained and communication channels and resources must adapt and remain open.

Allies. Thus far, I believe teachers, parents, and students are in favor of SBG. Teachers have actively attended PD activities in the summer of 2019 and during the current school year. They have also actively participated in professional learning community (PLC) meetings and have actively participated in the SBL and grading Facebook page. Their buy-in is reflected in their daily lesson planning, their weekly communication with parents, and their attendance to assessment and grading practices in the classrooms and the report cards.

Parents have been exposed to SBG through open houses in the fall of 2019, parent-teacher conferences, town hall meetings, the student grade book, and the early drafts of the student report cards. My anecdotal takeaway from teacher perception of parent approval in the aftermath of two major parent-teacher conference events is that parents, in general, are in favor of SBG. There are no pockets of resistance to SBG, but a substantial number of parents indicated in those conferences they needed more explanation of the content standards as they appeared in the report card. Students too

have been also exposed to SBG through daily classroom instruction that affixes daily "I-can" statements derived from learning targets on the classroom whiteboards and students have articulated their understanding of those targets daily. Teachers also posted visuals illustrating the grading scale and student expectations on the walls in all classrooms.

Technology Resources. IAD has invested in resources that will work well to facilitate communication with all stakeholders. IADCC, comprised of the principal, a technology coordinator, a teacher who serves on the parent-teacher association, and an IAD Operations Committee member, oversees the school technology resources. The school building is served by a modern wi-fi network that supports teachers and the administration. All teachers have daily access to computers and smartphones. Students in all grades have in-school one-to-one access to Chromebooks. The school is served by the web-based school information system (SIS), Alma, that allows for group and mass emails and phone blasts. Teachers also utilize Class Dojo to relay messages and even portraits to parents. IAD also has an active Facebook page and a newly built website, although it is still in need of content improvement. IAD has also access to publishing content on ISD Connect, the community's weekly electronic newsletter that reaches to the external community.

Target Audience and Key Messages

This communication plan will address the following audiences:

- Parents
- Students
- Staff
- IAD Operations Committee

- External Community

Key Messages

SBG key messages will permeate out our communication (Table D-1). Some will be general to the general community supporting the school. Those will address concepts that all stakeholders need to know. Some are specific to staff and parents and are task-oriented in that they relate to what teachers and parents need to do in their domains of responsibilities. For example, teachers need to be informed about the school's response to their PD needs, parents need to know what their children should learn at every grade level, and the external community needs to know IAD is embarking on a major academic change that will benefit future students of IAD.

Table D-1 *Key Message to Stakeholders*

General	Parents	Students	Teachers	IADOC	External Community
Meeting the IAD goal of SBG is a process; it is not a single product nor a single event.	How SBG differs from traditional grading.	The standards tell what you need to know and be able to do in your grade level by the end of the year.	Understanding of grading scale and performance indicators.	SBG implementation requires admin support.	IAD is living to its vision of providing a safe learning environment where children respect each other and collaborate to learn a rigorous curriculum. SBLG grading school is emerging.
Our SBG implementation will involve teachers, principals, students, parents at	Grading scales and performance descriptions.	If you don't meet a standard today let's learn some more until we meet it another day.	Understanding our PD needs and what will be offered regarding SBG.	SBG implementation requires technology resources.	IAD is embarking on a major academic change that will benefit future

different stages in the process.					students of IAD.
SBG measures what a student should know and be able to do in each subject area at each grade level.	What my child needs to know at each grade level (standards).	Collaborate with your classmates but do not compete.	What are standards-based report cards, teacher guidelines, and grade books?	SBG requires financing the IAD PD program.	IAD is an agent of innovation and modernity that parallels good schools in Delaware State.
We are adopting SBG to truly assess individual student work. The current grading system measures students against each other and does not convey a clear picture of student mastery of the standards.	How parent feedback is included in the process.	Ask for chances to practice for understanding and not for bonus/extra credit for more points.	What are examples of best practices?	Equity in access to resources is key to SBG implementation.	IAD prepares children for higher grades, high school, and college.
SBG will align grading with SBL and assessment	Timeline for implementation	Homework is a practice that will help you learn more		IAD budget will address financial and logistical needs of SBG implementation	

IAD Communication Plan Matrix

The following IAD school communication plan matrices address academic communication with parents, communication within the school staff, and communication between the school and stakeholders.

Table D-2 *Proposed Communication Domains at IAD*

Academic Communication	Staff Communication	School-Wide Communication
- Open house/ curriculum nights teacher notes in - Parent-Teacher conferences - Student progress reports & report cards - Graded work, tests, and assignments sent home Alma SIS Report - Class Dojo - Teacher messages in student's folder/agenda curriculum night - Teacher-parent communication (email blast)	- Monthly staff calendar - Monday morning mail - Teacher handbook - White paper - Staff meetings - PLC meetings - SBLG grading Facebook community - IADOC/IADCC	- ISD Connect - School website - School Facebook & Twitter - School-wide flyers/brochures and other materials - Parent handbook - Admin & teacher phone calls/emails - Principal-parent monthly meeting - Annual report - Climate survey - Graduation Commencement Ceremony - PTO meetings

Table D-3 *Academic Communication*

Academic Communication					
Strategy	Purpose	Persons Responsible	Audience	Timeline/Date	Status
A. Open House/ Curriculum Nights	Informational meetings to introduce parents to a new school year and curriculum procedures for success. SBG is introduced with a focus on what SBG is and "why" it is essential to implement	Admin. &Teachers	Parents	September /Annually	Completed Sep 12 & 19, 2019

	in IAD. Teachers will prepare concise PPT presentations and respond to questions and concerns. SBG related material will be distributed				
B. Parent-Teacher Conferences	Individual meetings to discuss student progress and academic growth. Teachers will go over the grades with parents assisting parents in interpreting content and elaborating on their feedback. Teachers will present standards-based performance artifacts to parents to support grading practices. Teachers will hand out SBG related brochures and will explain the report card structure	Teachers	Parents and students	Three times per year, every 60 school days	Completed Dec. 5, 2019 & Mar 7, 2020

	and respond to questions.				
C. Student Progress Reports & Report Cards	The high-stake highly anticipated report card is the most important tool of communication between parents and teachers. The document demonstrates key SBG principles in communicating grades to parents. It constitutes the core of the discussion between parents and teachers during parent-teacher conferences	Teachers	Parents and students	Three times per year, every 60 school days	Published Dec. 5, 2019 & Mar 7, 2020
D. Graded work, tests, and assignments sent home via Alma SIS	Keep students and parents updated on academic progress within the classroom over the course of a marking period. The standards-based gradebook, assignments, and tests keep parents	Teachers	Parents and students	Ongoing Update grades in Alma Gradebook weekly	Ongoing

	connected to grade expectations called for by the standards.				
E. Class Dojo	Teachers will use Class Dojo to communicate daily with news about the classroom to parents. Through this online tool teachers can send emails to parents about their child as well.	Teachers	Parents	Daily	Ongoing
F. Teacher messages in student's folder/agenda	Folders will go home with students daily/weekly with practice assignments and feedback to give standard-based feedback.	Teachers	Parents	Daily/Weekly	Ongoing
G. Teacher-Parent Communication (email blast)	Weekly teacher email blast goes to parents explaining curricular expectations for the week including unit, lesson, and assignments.	Teachers	Parents	Weekly	Ongoing

Table D-4

Staff Communication

Staff Communication					
Strategy	Purpose	Persons Responsible	Audience	Timeline	Status
A. Monthly Staff Calendar		Admin	Teachers	Monthly	Ongoing
B. Principal's Weekly Email	In addition to weekly events, tips, resources, and prompts regarding SBL and SBG will be directed to staff.	Admin	Teachers	Weekly	Started
C. Teacher Handbook	SBG grading policy will be included. Regulations for celebrating student accomplishments will also be included.	Admin	Teachers	Annually	Nearly Completed
D. White Paper	Will inform teachers about SBG concepts, the rationale for implementation, and the strategies the school will employ	Admin	Teachers	Will be made available and distributed as needed.	Completed Mar 2020
E. Staff meetings	Open communication with staff regarding SBG implementation news, updates, PD, and school calendar. SBG and assessment	Admin	Teachers	Biweekly	Ongoing

	issues are addressed				
F. PLC meetings (Professional Learning Communities)	Teachers meet regularly to plan units, set targets, unpack standers, and discuss assessment and grading.	Admin., teachers	Admin., teachers, and students	Weekly	Ongoing
G. SBLG Grading Facebook Community	SBG scholars and educators share resources, respond to inquiries, and address current news and events relevant to SBG	Page admin.	Admin and teachers	Ongoing	Ongoing
H. IADOC/IADCC Meetings	To discuss resource procurement, SBG related expenses, and technology platforms and improvement	Principal +IADCC	Admin and teachers	Monthly	Ongoing

Table D-5

School-Wide Communication

School-Wide Communication					
Strategy	Purpose	Persons Responsible	Audience	Timeline	Status
A. ISD Connect	This community email blast will inform the community of community and school events, announcements, and any messages the school wishers	Admin	Teachers, parents, and external community	Weekly	Ongoing

	to disseminate to the community.				
B. School Website	IAD website will keep current and vital school information on SBG updated on the website. SBG material will include coverage of basic SBG concepts, resources, FAQ's, and sample student report cards.	Admin, technology coordinator, and Teachers	Teachers, students, parents, external community	Ongoing	Established
C. School Facebook & Twitter	Keep community abreast of school events, e.g., classroom activities, PD schedule, and announcements.	Admin and assigned staff	Parents, students, teachers, and external community	Ongoing	Established
D. School-Wide Flyers/Brochures and Other Materials	These will contain basic SBG concepts, practices, and frequently asked questions	Admin	Students and parents	As needed	Started
E. Parent Handbook	In addition to other school important policies and procedures, the parent handbook describes what SBG is and how it compares to the traditional approach, the teachers'	Admin and Teachers	Teachers, students, and parents	Annually	Started

	grading guidelines, the new grading metric, and how to read the progress reports. A link to the parent handbook on the website will give instant and ongoing access to the community.				
F. Admin & Teacher Phone Calls & Emails	Communicate with parents on urgent matters or matters that require more personal interaction	Admin	Parents	As needed in a timely	Ongoing
G. Principal-Parent Monthly Meeting	Interested parties meet with the principal to discuss school-wide events/updates	PTO Board	Parents, students, teachers, and external communit y	Monthl y	
H. Annual Report	The principal prepares and distributes the state-of the-school annual report describing school goals, accomplishment s, current and future plans. SBG initiative progress is reported.	The Principal	Parents, students, teachers, IADOPS, and external communit y	Annuall y	June 2019 and June 2020
I. Climate Survey	The school administration surveys teacher and parent	The Principal	Parents, students, teachers, and	Annuall y	June 2019 And June 2020

	sentiment regarding various aspects of school life. SBG will take a share in the survey. The results are shared with the community.		external community		
J. Graduation Commencement Ceremony	The principal and select staff will address the school community regarding accomplishments and major initiatives including SBG.	The Principal and Staff	Parents, students, teachers, and external community	Annually	June 2019 And June 2020
K. PTO Meetings		PTO Board	Parents, teachers	Monthly	Needs to begin

Resources For Stakeholders

The following is a variety of resources available to teachers, parents, and members of the community who wish to learn about SBG. These resources will be available on our website at IADonline.org:

Reading

- ASCD: Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading
- ASCD: Effective Grading Practices
- Starting the Conversation about Grading
- Are Zeros fair? An Analysis of Grading Practices by James Cristea (2007, June). Cabrini College
- Grading Practices: The Third Rail" by Jeffery A. Erickson (2010)
- Grade Inflation: Killing the Kindness by Bryan Goodwin (2011). Educational Leadership
- Five Obstacles to Grading Reform by Guskey
- Grading Policies That Work Against Standards
- Zero Alternatives By Guskey
- Finding the Grading Compass by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Websites

- The site features brief, informative videos created by and for practitioners implementing SBG
- Rick.wormeli.com offers an extensive list of recommended written and video resources
- SBLG grading Facebook page
- SBLG grading Twitter hashtag:
  #sblchat

Conclusion

Through efficient and productive communications with all stakeholders, IAD will be known for providing a quality education for all students and for being a leader in introducing innovative initiatives such as SBL and SBG. This communication plan invests in a variety of communication tools that should fit into the interests and time schedules of all stakeholders. I believe, though, for this plan to succeed, we must pursue two-way communications with all stakeholders, providing quality information about our efforts while also inviting stakeholders to participate and give feedback to the administration and staff. Listening to our staff and community will continuously improve our communications efforts.

I believe that meeting with stakeholders in person can be the most helpful approach to communicating the goals and structure of SBG. It offers administrators and staff an opportunity to present physical examples of students' successful, quality work. They can reassure concerned adults and answer questions in a personalized manner (Hanover Research, 2013).

I also believe reading and interpreting new student report cards is one of the more significant adjustments students and parents will have to make, and it is important to communicate the changes and their rationale. Strategies such as posting or linking to research on SBG, providing explicit outlines of grade-level standards, offering translations into foreign languages, and providing a discussion board or contact information are used in varying degrees by different schools and districts to provide more information and opportunities for discussion.

This plan is an outline of IAD communications efforts in 2019-2020. Should the school's needs change significantly during this period, this plan will be altered. This plan will be updated each year to reflect progress and new goals. I believe that these efforts will help IAD students be known for their educational excellence, ability to navigate learning into future grades and college, and will help our staff be knowledgeable ambassadors for the school, communicating the change initiative to the community.

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Appendix E

ARTIFACT 5: SBG GRADE BOOK AND REPORT CARD

Introduction

Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD) is moving actively to implement standards-based grading (SBG). The focus in the first phase of implementation is on grades K-5 in the subjects of mathematics and English language arts. To reflect that, the report card and grade book presented in this artifact are designed to communicate mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in K-5 in those two subjects where SBLG assessment have been initiated.

The purpose of this artifact is to introduce to parents and students the new report card and grade book as two highly useful tools for communicating student growth, grades, and work habits. These two instruments will form the core basis for grade reporting to parents in addition to frequent progress reports, shared student portfolios, parent-teacher conferences, and parent-teacher email communication. The report cards and grade books are designed to bring parents up to date with their children's achievement and learning progress in school. Teachers will use the grade book and report card to insert grades based on their SBG practices and publish those grades on the school information system for parents and students to see.

Design of the IAD Report Card

For report cards to provide effective communication to parents and students, they need to provide information on student achievement of specific learning goals and have an expanded format with information about student behaviors, learning skills, and work habits. This theme is echoed through much of the literature about SBG. Schimmer et al. (

2018), Guskey (2010), Guskey et al. (2011), and Heflebower et al. (2014) agree that quality and effective standards-based report cards should:

- Have a clear purpose statement
- Report process, progress, and products separately
- Accurately communicate strengths and areas needing more attention
- Be detailed but digestible

Further, Schimmer et al. (2018), Guskey et al. (2011), and O'Conner (2018) define the three equally important sides of summative assessment that contribute to painting a complete picture of where students are in their growth and development. These are:

Product: This refers to academic performance as demanded by the standards.

Process: This refers to non-academic conditions and associated with work habits, study skills, responsibility, and behavior. It also refers to the level of consistency and quality of the learning/work habits.

Growth: This refers to academic improvement and describes learning gain.

In the following section, I will address the report card I have designed for IAD taking into consideration these three components. I will also address other components such as the purpose statement of the report card and proficiency scales. Reference to supporting literature and best design practices will precede the discussion on each component of the report card.

Components of The Report Card

IAD proposed report card consists of the following components:

1. Student personal information

2. The purpose statement of the report card
3. Reporting standards
4. Teacher comments
5. Work habits
6. Standards-based proficiency scale
7. Work habits and social development scale

1. Student Personal Information

A report card should provide the opportunity to meet legal requirements such as providing information on attendance, tardiness, promotion status, and signatures (O'Conner, 2018). The first page of the IAD report card includes the student's photograph, name, address, grade level, attendance, and tardiness, along with information about the school and a statement of the report card's purpose (Appendix H-1). Personal information is populated automatically into the report card from our school information system database. To protect student privacy, no other personal information is placed on the report card

2. The Purpose Statement

When designing an SBG system, it is important to consider the purpose of the report card and how best to convey achievement results (Heflebower et al., 2014; Guskey and Bailey, 2010; Guskey, 2015; O'Conner, 2018; Schimmer, 2018). Effective standards-based reporting begins with clarity of purpose because it will drive both process and product. Clarity of the purpose of the report card will drive the three components of the report card, namely, growth, achievement, and student attributes (Schimmer et al., 2018).

Guskey (2015) identifies three questions that need to be answered in defining the purpose of grades on the report card:

1. What information would be communicated in the report card?
2. Who is the primary audience for the information?
3. What is the intended goal of communication or how should the information be used?

Report cards communicate what students learn and can do, how well they did those things, and whether or not that level of performance is in line with expectations set for this level at this time in the school year. The key goal for the report card is to communicate key information to facilitate improvement in student learning. Guskey and Bailey (2010) also suggest that the purpose statement should be reported in the report card and spelled out in bold print in a special box on the front of the card.

At IAD, the report card contains the following statement placed in a box on the first page (Appendix E-1):

> *Respected Parents and Guardians,*
>
> *The purpose of this report card is to communicate with parents and students about the achievement of specific learning goals. It identifies students' levels of performance with regard to those goals, areas of strength, and areas where additional time and effort are needed (Guskey and Bailey, 2010). Please examine the report card closely, have a dialogue about the content with your child, and together, set goals for improvement. Share the outcome of your discussion with your child's teacher to guide your child for the best improvement strategies.*

We, at IAD, hope we can work as a team to make sure your child excels in learning and their learning habits.

3. Reporting Standards (Product)

This refers to academic performance as demanded by the standards. Schimmer et al. (2018) explain that schools use one of three options in reporting the standards in a report card, based on the grade level and the suitability for teachers and parents. They may report on:

1. The "domains" and " or "strands" of the standards under which CCSS are grouped.
2. All content standards
3. The priority standards only.

Guskey et al. (2011) suggest including only the standard domains and strands. These brief titles representing the strands or domains under which all learning standards are listed. Teachers will teach and grade to the learning standards as expected for every grade and record their summative assessment in their grade book. The reporting, however, will be condensed on the report card to reflect performance on the strands or domains. If parents wish to learn more details, the teacher can always refer them to the grade book. This is to make grading meaningful to teachers and parents and not overwhelming. For teachers, this format eases the burden on grading and reporting, and, for parents, the reported standards do not turn into a lengthy document that is difficult to understand.

Schimmer et al. (2018) suggest that in middle schools, it is common to report on the strands but at the elementary level, however, it is more common to report on each standard. Reporting only on the domain is vague and may not tell much about the student

performance. Some schools choose to report on focus or priority standards which are viewed as the most critical standards to report on. Priority standards are " carefully selected subset of the total list of the grade-specific standards within each content area that students must know and be able to do by the end of the school year, so they are prepared for the next grade (Ainsworth, 2013, p. xv).

At IAD, we decided to use priority standards for grades K-5. To prioritize the standards, we followed the criteria suggested by Ainsworth (2013) for prioritizing the standards. The prioritization process relies upon effective collaboration between and among teachers across all grades. A team of teachers identified through an in-depth discussion of those standards that met the following specific selection criteria:

- ***Endurance*** (lasting beyond one grade or course; concepts and skills needed in life). Will proficiency of this standard provide students with the knowledge and skills that will be of value beyond the present? For example, proficiency in reading informational texts and being able to write effectively for a variety of purposes will endure throughout a student's academic career and work life.
- ***Leverage*** (crossover application *within* the content area and to other content areas, i.e., interdisciplinary connections). For example, proficiency in creating and interpreting graphs, diagrams, and charts and then being able to make accurate inferences from them will help students in math, science, social studies, language arts, and other areas. The ability to write an analytical summary or a persuasive essay will similarly help students in any academic discipline.

- ***Readiness for the next level of learning*** (prerequisite concepts and skills students need to enter a new grade level or course of study). Will proficiency of this standard provide students with the essential knowledge and skills that are necessary for future success?
- ***External Exams***–the concepts and skills that students are most likely to encounter on annual standardized tests, college entrance exams, and occupational competency exams students will need to prepare for. (Ainsworth, 2013, pp. 25-27).

Since IAD as a private school is not a participant in standardized state tests, the consideration for external exams as a determining factor in prioritizing the standards is not considered. The identified priority standards were compiled in a list that was shared by the team to review multiple times for editing. Noting that O'Conner (2018) and Schimmer recommend changing the official standards language into parent and student-friendly language for ease of use, the team then translated the priority standards to simple "I can" statements as shown in the report card in Appendix A. Furthermore, since the standards differ from one grade to the other, each grade will have its distinct report card.

Reporting standards for other subjects should be developed through a similar process, based on the standard set forth by leading national organizations. For example, for science, teachers will implement the Next Generation Science Standards, and for social studies and foreign language, the teacher will implement the Delaware State Standards. Appendix E shows six content standards under the domain, "Numbers and Operations" in Base Ten for grade1 (Appendix E1). (Appendix E2) shows those being

reduced to five standards written as “I can” statements with much of the details eliminated.

4. Teacher Comments

Schimmer (2016) suggests that assessing growth measures a student against him or herself. While this is different from academic achievement, it can be an equally important aspect of summative assessment especially for those students who are not yet proficient and those with special needs or circumstances. Students can make tremendous progress without reaching proficiency. Therefore, without formal assessment, acknowledgment, and reporting of growth, teachers lose a very real opportunity to contribute to the students’ continued engagement and confidence.

To report student growth, teachers will place their feedback comments in the empty space provided after the reporting standards for each subject. O’Conner (2018) indicates a report card should give teachers the opportunity to write an anecdotal summary comment on each student’s strength, growth, areas for improvement, and next steps. Guskey et al. (2011) recommend for teachers to place two types of comments. The first is general to all students and describes what the students have been doing in the marking period, and the second is specific to the student based on the student’s record and describes what the student should do to move forward in the learning.

Our IAD report card offers the opportunity for the teacher to give feedback and report on growth in every subject in the space provided (Appendix E-1).

5. Work Habits (Process)

One of the equally important signs of grading and reporting is verifying student’s attributes or process goals that specify the degree to which students are meeting their

behavioral goals. Teaching the students essential life skills and reporting on those skills will serve them as adults and directly affect their learning (Schimmer et al., 2018). If the goal is to improve student attributes and characteristics proactively, then those attributes and characters must be described with clarity and specificity. For that to be accomplished, work habits and academic mastery of the standards must be reported separately so that neither component of the student's accomplishments is distorted by the other.

In our IAD report card (Appendix E-1), I have included a separate section for work habits and social development. This section needs to appear once on the report card for elementary grades since classrooms are run by homeroom teachers who teach all core subjects. In middle and high school report cards, however, it is expected that the work habits and social development section will need to be available after each subject to enable all teachers to give their feedback.

6. Standards-Based Proficiency Scale

To make classroom assessments more comparable, Marzano ad Heflebower (2011), Westerberg (2016), O'Conner (2018), and many other scholars suggest the use of proficiency scales that define both the topic and the level of complexity being measured. The left-hand side of the scale contains a generic form of the scale which quantifies student understanding along a continuum that goes from a lack of understanding of the most basic concepts to understanding complex content. The score of 3.0 on a scale of 1-4 contains the target instructional goal for the standard that every student is expected to meet in that grade level.

Based on the guidance from the literature, I have included a standards-based proficiency scale for teachers to use in grading students for the mastery of the standards (Appendix H-1).

7. Work Habits And Social Development Scale

As I indicated earlier, the literature suggests academic mastery and learning enables be assessed and reported separately, which calls for creating separate and different performance indicators for each category. For example, Hanover Research (2015) lists work habits and social development scales used by school districts that implemented SBG successfully. Guskey et al. (2011) suggest a model in which learning/work habits and assumes a scale of +++, ++, and + representing consistently and accurately, often and fairly, and rarely and poorly, respectively. O'Conner (2018) also presents several scale models for work habits.

For the purpose of our IAD reporting on work habits, I included a 1-3 scale where 1,2, and 3 indicate the student is demonstrating the work habit rarely, sometimes, or consistently, respectively, and where X denotes the habit is not observed at all (Appendix E-1).

Design of The Grade Book

In a standards-based environment, assessment results recorded grade books should describe students' performance based on clearly defined rubrics with a limited number of proficiency levels (Westerberg, 2016; O'Conner, 2018; Schimmer, 2018). Scores are recorded as four, three, two, or one indicating advanced, meeting, approaching, or beginning performance by the student (Schimmer et al., 2018). When the assessment measures multiple standards, then multiple grades based on each of those

standards should be recorded in the grade book (Brookhart, 2017). In other words, instead of recording a single grade for a total assessment, teachers should record multiple grades, each grade based on how well students perform on the aspect of the assessment related to that specific standard. In scoring student's mathematics assessments, for example, teachers may record separate scores or grades for basic computational skills, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving.

Because SBG is concerned with student mastery of standards, only the most recent assessment score would be in the report card (O'Conner, 2018). This because how will students write at the end of the grading period is more important than how well they wrote at the beginning, and later evidence of improved content understanding is more important than early evidence. Appendix E-3 exhibits two figures that illustrate our grade book from the perspectives of an individual student and the whole class.

Conclusion

A report card is an important tool of communication between teachers and parents. Parents wait anxiously for the day they are informed about their children's performance over an entire marking period. Parents are often immersed in the duties and responsibilities of life and may not be able to follow up with their children's daily performance. They often hope the report card will give them a comprehensive statement regarding their children's growth that will make up for any lapses in communication between them and the school. While it is imperative to keep the line of communication between teachers and parents on a timely basis, the report card stands as the tool upon major decisions are made by both parties such as intervention and redirection of classroom instruction or even promotion to the next grade level.

That report card I have created is meant to communicate a clear and well-balanced picture of student achievement to parents that is tightly connected to the CCSS. We have introduced a course of reporting where priority standards are reported in the report card. This to make sure essential details are included in the report without the unnecessary listing of dozens of the standards. Parents will have the opportunity to dive in more frequently and deeply to learn about their children's performance by examining their children's grade book which will cover all the standards taught in that period. The report card has also been designed to address student accomplishments in growth and learning skills. Teachers have been given space for advice and feedback for every subject taught. This an area where teachers can give their professional qualitative advice to parents as to where their child stands and what they should do to move forward.

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Appendix E-1
Grade 1 Report Card

Islamic Academy of Delaware

Newark, De. 19713

Student:
Grade: 1

Attendance	T1	T2	T3	Total
Present				
Absent				
Late				
Total Days				

Respected Parents and Guardians,
The purpose of this report card is to communicate with parents and students about the achievement of specific learning goals. It identifies students' levels of performance with regard to those goals, areas of strength, and areas where additional time and effort are needed.
Please examine the report card closely, have a dialogue about the content with your child, and together, set goals for improvement. Share the outcome of your discussion with your child's teacher to guide your child for the best improvement strategies.
We, at IAD, hope we can work as a team to make sure your child excels in learning and in their learning habits.

English Language Arts	T1	T2	T3
Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details			
I can ask and answer questions about key details in a text.			
I can retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.			
Reading Literature: Craft and Structure			
I can explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.			
Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:			
I can compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.			
Reading Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details:			
I can ask and answer questions about key details in a text.			
I can Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.			
Reading Fluency: Print Concepts:			
I can demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.			
I can demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).			
Reading Fluency: Phonics and Word Recognition:			
I know and can apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.			
Reading Fluency: Fluency and Accuracy			

I can read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.			
Writing: Text Types and Purposes			
I can write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.			
I can write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.			
I can write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.			
Writing: Comprehension and Collaboration			
I can participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.			
I can ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.			
Writing: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas			
I can produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation. (See grade 1 Language standards 1 and 3 on page 26 for specific expectations.)			
Language Arts: Conventions of Standard English			
I can demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.			
I can demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.			
Language Arts: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use			
I can determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 1 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.			
I can demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings with help.			
I can use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., I named my hamster Nibblet because she nibbles too much because she likes that).			
Homework Completion			

Teacher Comments:

Mathematics	T1	T2	T3
Operations & Algebraic Thinking			
I can use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems.			
I can apply properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract.			
I can add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10			
I can determine the unknown whole number in an addition or subtraction equation relating three whole numbers.			
Number & Operations in Base Ten			
I can count to 120, starting at any number less than 120. In this range, I can read and write numerals and represent a number of objects with a written numeral.			

I can understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones.			
I can compare two two-digit numbers based on meanings of the tens and ones digits, recording the results of comparisons with the symbols >, =, and <.			
I can add within 100, including adding a two-digit number and a one-digit number, and adding a two-digit number and a multiple of 10.			
I can subtract multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 from multiples of 10 in the range 10-90.			
Measurement & Data			
I can express the length of an object as a whole number of length units, by laying multiple copies of a shorter object (the length unit) end to end.			
I can tell and write time in hours and half-hours using analog and digital clocks.			
I can organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories.			
Geometry			
I can compose two-dimensional shapes or three-dimensional shapes to create a composite shape and compose new shapes from the composite shape.			
I can partition circles and rectangles into two and four equal shares and describe the shares using the words halves, fourths, and quarters.			
Homework			

Teacher Comments:

WORK HABITS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	T1	T2	T3
Accepts Responsibility for Actions			
Conversation and behavior are focused and on task			
Follows Directions			
Follows and Classroom Rules			
Responds Appropriately to Adults and Students			
Solve Problems in Positive Ways			
Works Cooperatively			

PARTICIPATION	T1	T2	T3
Engages in Classroom Activity			
Seeks Assistance when Needed			

COMPLETES ASSIGNMENTS	T1	T2	T3
Quality Work			

STANDARDS-BASED PROFICIENCY SCALE

4: ADVANCED	The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the material presented within the standard by completing advanced applications of the material.
3: MEETS	The student demonstrates proficiency on the complex, targeted knowledge and skills for the standard.

2: APPROACHING	The student understands the foundational material of the standard but is still working to master application of the concepts and skills.
1: BEGINNING	The student is able to demonstrate an understanding of all of the foundational material of the standard with assistance from the teacher.
N/A: N/A	This standard was not assessed during this term.

WORK HABITS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

X: NOT OBSERVED	Behavior was not observed.
1: RARELY DEMONSTRATED	The student's behavior exhibits limited growth towards mastery of the behavior.
2: SOMETIMES DEMONSTRATED	The student's behavior exhibits approaching age- level mastery of the behavior.
3: CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED	The student's behavior exhibits age-level mastery.

Appendix E-2-1

Grade 1 Numbers in Base Ten Standards

CC.1.NBT.1 Extend the counting sequence. Count to 120, starting at any number less than 120. In this range, read and write numerals and represent a number of objects with a written numeral.
CC.1.NBT.2 Understand place value. Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones. Understand the following as special cases: -- a. 10 can be thought of as a bundle of ten ones — called a "ten." -- b. The numbers from 11 to 19 are composed of a ten and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine ones. -- c. The numbers 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 refer to one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine tens (and 0 ones).
CC.1.NBT.3 Understand place value. Compare two two-digit numbers based on meanings of the tens and ones digits, recording the results of comparisons with the symbols >, =, and <.
CC.1.NBT.4 Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract. Add within 100, including adding a two-digit number and a one-digit number, and adding a two-digit number and a multiple of 10, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction; relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used. Understand that in adding two-digit numbers, one adds tens and tens, ones and ones; and sometimes it is necessary to compose a ten.
CC.1.NBT.5 Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract. Given a two-digit number, mentally find 10 more or 10 less than the number, without having to count; explain the reasoning used.
CC.1.NBT.6 Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract. Subtract multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 from multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 (positive or zero differences), using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction; relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used.

Appendix E-2-2

Grade 1 Number And Operation in Base Ten "I Can" Statements of Priority Standards

I can count to 120, starting at any number less than 120. In this range, I can read and write numerals and represent a number of objects with a written numeral.
I can understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones.
I can compare two two-digit numbers based on meanings of the tens and ones digits, recording the results of comparisons with the symbols >, =, and <.
I can add within 100, including adding a two-digit number and a one-digit number, and adding a two-digit number and a multiple of 10.
I can subtract multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 from multiples of 10 in the range 10-90.

Appendix E-3

Date:										
Student Name:	Classwork Print alphabets (lower case)	Classwork Print Alphabets in order (upper case)	Classwork Jack and Dad Pack (comprehension)	Classwork Draw and write about your tool	Test spelling test 1	Classwork Story chart	Test My Magnificent Thing Notebook	Test print alphabets a-z, A-Z	Test Writing events, characters, settings	Mastery Level
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Language										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1a Print all upper- and lowercase letters.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.2d Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).										
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Reading: Foundational Skills										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.3b Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.										
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Reading: Literature										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3 Describe										

characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.										
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Writing										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.6 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.										

Targets	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Student F	Student G	Student H	Student I	Student J
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Language										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1a Print all upper- and lowercase letters.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.2d Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).										
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Reading: Foundational Skills										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.3b Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.										
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Reading: Literature										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.										
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Writing										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.										
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.6 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.										

Appendix F

ARTIFACT 6: HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

Introduction

Our children's learning is the ultimate goal at the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD). Providing learning opportunities for our children to grow and be ready to meet the challenges of the future is our mission. Through rigorous curricula that encompass the shifts demanded by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), we hope to prepare our children to meet those challenges. The shifts in English language arts call for regular practice with complex text, grounding reading, writing, and speaking in evidence from the text, both literary and informational, and build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction. The shifts in mathematics call for greater focus on fewer topics, coherence of topics across grades, and rigorous and equal understanding of concepts. Procedural skills and fluency. To meet the standards, IAD introduced new standards-based textbooks, adjusted teaching, and learning practices, and provided PD programs to build teacher capacity to implement standards-based education.

Assessment, grading, and communicating our students' learning in reference to the CCSS is an essential step the school has undertaken. In the year 2019-2020, IAD started the shift from traditional percent-point grading to standards-based grading (SBG). The shift encompassed the creation of standards-based assessments, rubrics, proficiency scales, grade books, and report cards. This handbook is intended to inform parents about the SBG approach and the tools IAD has created to implement the approach including the grade book and the report card.

The handbook as an artifact is informed by my other Educational Leadership Portfolio (ELP) artifacts (e.g., the literature review, the grade book and report card, the technology plan, and the communication plan). In this artifact, however, I do not intend to cover other items normally included in parent handbooks such as student admission and tuition policies, code of conduct, school uniform policy, etc. Specifically, this artifact aims to educate parents by communicating mainly the following concepts:

1. CCSS as a concept
2. Standards-Based Learning
3. SBG as a concept
4. How SBG works
5. The benefits of SBG
6. How SBG compares to traditional grading
7. Multiple opportunities for assessment
8. The standards-based grade book
9. The standards-based report card
10. Celebrating student achievement and success

I have used question format for the titles of this handbook because of its simplicity, popularity, and appeal to the general public. Saucon Valley School District (n.d.) served as a reference for some of the questions I used in in this handbook. I have also listed the references I used by topic at the end of the handbook to keep the content reader-friendly and facilitate further exploration of SBG to the reader. Interested parents and guardians will be referred to other resources and references to further their knowledge and understanding of the concepts presented in this handbook and other related concepts.

Considering the prevalent circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and our school's desire to move to a paperless administrative and communication environment, I have published this parent handbook as an interactive webpage at https://www.iadonline.org/parent-handbook. This will also facilitate any changes or modifications to the content and the resources included in the handbook. In addition to an introductory letter-to-parents. The handbook includes several informative embedded video resources on SBG. Parents will be referred to the handbook as a resource in social media and during virtual school-parent meetings. With this and other tools the school made available to parents, I hope we can gain parent support and involvement in making SBG implementation a productive and beneficial school initiative.

What Are CCSS?

The common core state standards are learning goals that states adopted for students in each grade level to achieve by the end of the school year. The standards are created to prepare students to be ready for college and the job market after college. The standards are not a curriculum, nor do they dictate what curriculum in each subject should be taught in each district or school. Teachers plan their instructions using the curriculum adopted in their districts or schools to meet the standards. Even though the standards are rigorous, they are achievable at each grade level for all students who experience standards-based learning in their classrooms (Saucon Valley School District, n.d.).

How Does Learning Take Place in a SBL Classroom?

In a standards-based classroom, teachers reference all activities to the standards. Teachers set standards-based daily learning targets and plan their lessons to meet those targets. Classroom activities and homework assignments are designed and implemented

to meet the standards. Teacher check for student understanding and provide feedback to the students based on the standards. At certain points in time, such as when students complete a unit of instruction, teacher assess students to check for their mastery of the standards taught in that unit with assessments designed to address the standards. sAt the end of each marking period or trimester, teachers report to parents their students' levels of mastery of the standards. The discussion that ensue between teachers and parents, especially during parent-teacher conferences, are centered on their students' performance and achievement relevant to the standards.

What is Standards-Based Grading?

Standards-based grading (SBG) is a system of assessment and reporting that describes student progress relative to the standards. In the SBG approach, grading procedures are related to learning goals. These goals are split and assessed on a 1-4 cognitive level scale. Students achieve mastery of the standard and are said to meet the standard if they perform at level 3, also known as the target level. Grades are based on evidence of achievement (Saucon Valley School District, n.d.). Effort, participation, attitude, and other behaviors are not evidence of achievement and should be reported separately. For example, students are not penalized by lowering their grades for cheating or poor attendance. Also, since meeting the learning target is the responsibility of the individual student, students are assessed individually, grades are based on individual achievement, and students do not receive a grade for work done within a group.

In SBG, homework and formative assessment are used for student practice and to provide feedback on formative performance using words, rubrics, or checklists and, therefore, are not graded. Only information from a variety of summative assessments is

included in grades. Teachers provide multiple opportunities for assessment and based on these assessments they determine the grades, keep records on their grade book, and update their records accordingly.

Students may participate in their learning by getting involved in the assessment and grading throughout the teaching/learning process. Teachers ensure that students understand how their achievement is assessed and their grades are determined. They involve students in the assessment process, self-assessment, reflection, and goal setting, and in communicating about their achievement and progress. IAD teachers will refer to the eight essential guidelines described by the literature for SBG as shown in Appendix J-1.

Why SBG?

Many scholars, such as O'Conner (2018) and Schimmer et al (2018), explain that the primary goal of the grades for any student is to communicate to parents clearly their children's level of mastery of the standards. Therefore, teachers must communicate to parents whether their students mastered the content and skills taught by the standards, approached mastery of the content and skills, or achieved an advanced level of mastery of the standards to apply the content in real life. Communicating students' mastery level to parents opens opportunities for working collaboratively to design for further enrichment to the advanced students and provide corrective learning experiences for those who are struggling. Furthermore, in SBG, teachers do not confuse mastery of the standards with learning and work habits such as good behavior and attendance. While learning and working habits are essential, they are reported and addressed separately to give parents a clear idea about how and where to help the students. Finally, SBG is a necessary and logical

step to ensure full implementation of standards-based learning. In addition to facilitating learning, teachers need to assess, grade, and report based on the standards.

SBG has a direct impact on student achievement and teaching and learning practices. To teachers utilizing SBG, planning, instruction, and assessment are more purposeful and more conducive to student needs while enhancing student growth mind-set and ownership. SBG is a very beneficial reform because it makes teaching and learning more focused, effective, and enjoyable.

At IAD, the change to SBG comes from the belief that our previous report card and reporting system did not fully communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do as set forth in the state and national standards. This new grading and reporting system will benefit students, teachers, and families. It will allow students to be more aware of what is expected of them. It will provide families with a more detailed outline of the expectations in each of the major academic areas. Parents' understanding of what is expected of their children and how well they are progressing towards the goals at their grade level is very important and SBG will assist in this endeavor.

What is the Difference Between SBG And Traditional Grading?

In the SBG system, the achievement is tied to the standards and is based on the principle that grades should be accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning. The goal of grading is to focus on student mastery of the learning objectives rather than accumulating points. Therefore, evidence of mastery only will count towards the grades. Student practice, learning habits, and the learning process only will not contribute to the grade. In addition to developing assessments, teachers can create reassessments to allow

students to retake examinations to demonstrate improved mastery of a subject (Saucon Valley School District, n.d.).

Within standards-based classrooms, student performance improves continuously. Progress is monitored through observation, work products, and assessments including, but not limited to, portfolios, unit tests, discussions, projects, presentations, and daily work. Teachers measure learning against standards and then use these measures to guide and direct subsequent instruction. This on-going cycle of teaching and assessing allows students to move along a natural continuum of learning including challenges or additional supports.

In the traditional grading system, on the other hand, students acquire points for various activities, assignments, and behaviors, which accrue throughout a grading period. In traditional grading, the teacher adds up the points and assigns a letter grade. A variation of this theme is to keep track of percentage scores across various categories of performance and behavior and then translate the average percentage score into a letter grade or simply report the average percentage.

A thorough comparison between SBG and the traditional percent-point and letter grading approach is shown in Appendix J-2.

How Will IAD Provide Multiple Assessment Opportunities to Students?

IAD recommends that the steps be followed collaboratively by teachers, parents, and students to reassess students who may have failed to meet the learning targets required by any standard. The following plan, informed by Hanover Research (2015), may be used:

- The teacher, parent, and the student will collaborate to complete a copy of the school's reassessment agreement (Appendix C). The teacher will guide the parent and student to complete the "Outcomes to Reassess" section to choose what outcomes the student will be reassessed on and the levels of reassessment.
- The parents and the student collaboratively complete the "Preparation Information" by picking a few activities to help the student relearn the material. The teacher arranges a meeting with the student to discuss the agreement.
- The teacher may require specific activities to prepare for the reassessment, such as completing missing assignments. Teachers must have evidence that students have completed these assignments
- The teacher and student will decide when, where, and how the learner will be reassessed in the "Reassessment Information" section.
- Once the student has completed all of the relearning activities, he or she will show the necessary evidence to the teacher and sign the "Reassessment Approval" section of the agreement.
- The teacher can reassess the student according to the conditions in the "Reassessment Information" section. (P. 15)

What do the Grade Book and Report Card Look Like?

Student assessment results are recorded in grade books and describe student performance based on clearly defined rubrics. Parents will have instant access to their children's published grades and can monitor their children's progress, growth, and

homework assignment submission. Teachers are required to publish grades on a timely basis to ensure parents are informed and able to share their feedback with their children and with the teacher. Achievement marks are reported on a 4-point scale and are not equated to letter grades. Scores are recorded as four, three, two, or one indicating advanced, meeting, approaching, or beginning performance by the student as defined by the proficiency scale shown in Table F-1.

Table F- 1 Standards-based proficiency scale

4: Advanced	The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the material presented within the standard by completing advanced applications of the material.
3: Meets	The student demonstrates proficiency in the complex, targeted knowledge and skills for the standard.
2: Approaching	The student understands the foundational material of the standard but is still working to master the application of the concepts and skills.
1: Beginning	The student is able to demonstrate an understanding of all of the foundational material of the standard with assistance from the teacher.
N/A: N/A	This standard was not assessed during this term.

Grades are not derived from averaging scores throughout the trimester or year but reflect the level of knowledge and skills at that point in time. If the assessment measures multiple standards, multiple grades based on each of those standards are recorded in the grade book. In other words, instead of recording a single grade for a total assessment, teachers record multiple grades, each grade based on how well students perform on the aspect of the assessment related to that specific standard. In scoring student's English Language Arts assessments, for example, teachers may record separate scores or grades for command of the "conventions of standard English grammar" and "print of all upper-and lowercase letters" (Table F-2). The most recent score will be recorded as the student mastery level for the assessed standard and will be transferred as the final on the report card.

Table F-2. *IAD grade book: grade-level 1individual student view*

Student Name:	Classwork Print alphabets (lower case)	Classwork Print Alphabets in order (upper case)	Test 1	Classwork Jack and Dad Pack (comprehension)	Test 2 spelling test	Classwork Story chart	Test 3 My Magnificent Thing Notebook	Mastery Level
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Language								
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.			1		2		2	2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1a Print all upper- and lowercase letters.			2		2		3	3

Table F-3 illustrates the IAD grade book view of an entire class of grade 2 student performance on grade-level standards. The teacher will be able to examine how the entire class is performing on each of the assessed standards and modify instruction accordingly.

Table F- 3 IAD grade book: grad-level 1 classroom view

Targets	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D
Common Core State Standards - English Language Arts Standards - Language				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1a Print all upper-and lowercase letters.				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.2d Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words.				

In the report card, grades indicate knowledge and skills on specific standards covered during that trimester rather than a single grade for each content area (Table J-4). In the lower elementary grades, the standards are rewritten as “I can” parent and student-friendly statements.

Table F- 4 Standards-based report card

English Language Arts	T1	T2	T3
Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details			
I can ask and answer questions about key details in a text.			
I can retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate an understanding of their central message or lesson.			
Language Arts: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use			
I can use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.			
Homework Completion			
Teacher Comments:			

Homework is considered as an opportunity for parents and teachers to identify strengths and continue to improve upon weaknesses. The function of homework is to provide practice in skill areas, but homework will not be calculated as part of the final grade. Rather, homework will be populated separately after the grades for each subject. Teacher comments for every subject follow the homework and describe qualitatively what the student has accomplished in the current trimester and what goals the student should move on to accomplish in the next trimester.

Work habits, social development, class participation, and assignment completion are listed separately (Table F-5).

Table F- 5 *IAD report card: Work habits and social development*

WORK HABITS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	T1	T2	T3
Accepts responsibility for actions			
Conversation and behavior are focused and on task			
Follows directions			
Follows and classroom rules			
Responds appropriately to adults and students			
Solve problems in positive ways			
Works cooperatively			

PARTICIPATION	T1	T2	T3
Engages in classroom activity			
Seeks assistance when needed			

COMPLETES ASSIGNMENTS	T1	T2	T3
Quality work			

To report on work habits, the report card includes a 1-3 scale where 1, 2, and 3 indicate the student is demonstrating the work habit rarely, sometimes, or consistently, respectively, and where X denotes the habit is not observed at all (Table F-6).

Table F- 6 *Work habits and social development*

X: Not observed	Behavior was not observed.
1: Rarely demonstrated	The student's behavior exhibits limited growth towards mastery of the behavior.
2: Sometimes demonstrated	The student's behavior exhibits approaching age- level mastery of the behavior.
3: Consistently demonstrated	The student's behavior exhibits age-level mastery.

How Often Will Parents Receive the Report Card?

Reports cards will be completed at the end of each trimester. Once completed by teachers, the report cards will be published for parents to access through their login accounts on our School Information System, Alma. A copy of the report card will also be mailed before parent-teacher conferences are convened at the end of each trimester.

How Will the School Celebrate Student Accomplishments?

IAD aims at fostering a healthy learning environment amongst all students through collaborative learning and nonconsequential competitions. These competitions encourage teamwork but have no bearing on student grade status. IAD believes that student internal motivation is essential to improving student learning and that grades, as an external motivator, counterproductive to student learning, students should collaborate and not compete for learning, and celebrating student success should reflect their collaboration. The following are two of the structures for celebrations of learning:

1. Classroom or grade-level-based celebrations of learning at the conclusion of a unit, learning expedition, or long-term project: This type of celebration of learning might feature the final product or performance created by students and would be presented to an audience that is connected to the work. Students in a classroom may celebrate crossing a reading milestone or accomplishing a100 days of learning.
2. School-wide celebrations of learning: celebrations of learning can occur at designated times in the year and showcase work across multiple grade-levels and disciplines. Often a common thread ties together the work of students at all grade levels. The spelling bee, the science fair, and the Science Olympiad are examples of school-wide nonconsequential competitions.

What Does Each Level in a Grading Scale Mean?

Level 1 refers to the student's beginning stage of learning. The student knows very little about the content and skills called for by the standard. The student may need help to develop the cognitive level of the standard. Level 2 indicates the student is

moving towards and approaching the cognitive level required by the standards. At this level, the student knows the standard's foundational requirement but needs to develop a conceptual understanding of the standard. Level 3 refers to meeting the cognitive target of the standard. The student at this level know the content and the skills demanded by the standard. At level 4, the student can take the standard's scope and skills to a higher understanding level. The student can apply the content and skills in life situations inside or outside the classroom.

How are the Grading Scale Levels Related to Traditional Grades?

Saucon Valley School District (n.d.) states that there is no direct correspondence between the four grading scale and percent point or letter grades. A traditional letter grade is accomplished by combining many mastery and non-mastery-related variables. These may include, in addition to tests, graded homework assignments, points for class participation and good behavior, and attendance. Therefore, an "A" in the traditional grading system does not necessarily reflect master of the standards or the contents taught. In SBG, mastery of the content and skills is achieved at Level 3 when the student demonstrates a mastery pattern on summative assessments only.

How Does a Student Demonstrate Growth Over the School Year?

Teachers set learning targets and benchmarks for each standard for students to learn by the end of each trimester. Meeting these targets each trimester indicates the student is heading in the right direction towards meeting the standard by the end of the year. Students should be consistent in meeting the standards for a school year. The standards increase in the content demand from one trimester to the next, and students should keep up with the standards' increased complexity. A student's performance on a

particular standard may decrease from one trimester to the next, depending on many factors such as good instructional strategies, student attendance, and punctuality (Saucon Valley School District, n.d.). Guskey and Bookhart (2019) explain, and parents need to understand, that "grades do not reflect who you are as a learner, but where you are in your learning journey–and where is always temporary" (p. 46). Given the availability of the right learning enabling variables, student growth should increase and so should the mastery level of the standard.

How Do Students of Different Abilities Learn in the Classroom?

Differentiation in the classroom is key to student learning. Students who do not achieve mastery of the standards are offered corrective instructions at the school and may be pulled out from other elective subjects to receive additional support through a more individualized environment (Saucon Valley School District, n.d.). These are the students who would typically perform at levels 1 and 2, and the intervention goal is to bring them up to meet the learning standards at level 3. These students may need extra help because of language learner needs, poor learning enablers, or special needs. Students who master the subjects after instruction are offered highly cognitive enrichment activities that may involve collaborative work on tasks, projects, or technology. These are the students who have mastered the standards taught at level 3 and, through such enrichment, aspire to achieve mastery level 4.

What Other Resources Can Parents Refer to?

The following is a variety of resources available to teachers, parents, and members of the community who wish to learn about SBG. These resources will be available on our website at IADonline.org:

Reading

- ASCD: Seven Reasons for SBG
- ASCD: Effective Grading Practices
- Starting the Conversation about Grading
- Are Zeros fair? An Analysis of Grading Practices by James Cristea (2007, June). Cabrini College
- Grading Practices: The Third Rail" by Jeffery A. Erickson (2010)
- Grade Inflation: Killing the Kindness by Bryan Goodwin (2011). Educational Leadership
- Five Obstacles to Grading Reform by Guskey
- Grading Policies That Work Against Standards
- Zero Alternatives By Guskey
- Finding the Grading Compass by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Websites

- The site features brief, informative videos created by and for practitioners implementing SBG
- Rick.wormeli.com offers an extensive list of recommended written and video resources
- SBLG grading Facebook page
- SBLG grading Twitter hashtag:
- #sblchat

Conclusion

Parents are key partners in the education of their children. At IAD, we make families welcome, value their contributions and backgrounds, and engage them actively in the life of the school. As a school leader, I recognize that families care about their children's education, bring strengths, and add value to the community. I realize that a school should communicate with families regularly and respectfully and provide multiple ways to contribute to the academic and social life of the school. I also know a school must encourage families to be strong partners in their children's learning. This document was created to facilitate these goals, improve understanding of standards-based education, and encourage parent participation and involvement in their children's education. I expect to receive frequent questions and concerns from parents after they read this handbook.

IAD teachers and I will respond to these questions in person as they come in. More structured responses will be provided in back-to-school sessions, parent-teacher association meetings, or open houses during the year. Focus groups comprised of parents, teachers, and students will be planned to determine ways to improve descriptions of the new grading system, clear up misconceptions, and develop buy-in strategies for the adoption and implementation of this system.

References

To prepare this handbook I used the following resources which interested parents may refer to for further learning.

CCSS as a Concept

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Appendix F-1

Eight Guidelines for Grading

1. Relate grading procedures to learning goals (i.e., standards)

I. Use learning goals (standards or some clustering of standards [e.g., domains, strands]) as basis for grade determination and grade reporting.

b. Use assessment methods as the subset, not the set (i.e., standards, learning results, expectations, outcomes).

2. Use clearly described criterion-referenced performance standards.

II. The meaning of grades (letters or numbers) should come from clear descriptions of a limited number of levels.

b. If they hit the goal, they get the grade (i.e., no bell curve)!

3. Limit the valued attributes included in grades to individual achievement.

III. Grades should be based on achievement (i.e., demonstration of the knowledge and skill components of the standards). Effort, participation, attitude, and other behaviors should be reported separately.

b. Grades should be based on individual achievement.

4. Sample student performance—do not include all scores in grades.

IV. Do not include formative assessment in grades—provide feedback on formative performance using words, rubrics, or checklists, not scores.

b. Include information primarily from a variety of summative assessments in grades.

5. Grade in pencil—keep records so they can be updated easily.

V. Use the most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration for the more recent evidence.

b. Provide several assessment opportunities (varying in method and number).

6. Determine, don't just calculate, grades.

VI. Crunch numbers carefully—if at all.

b. Think "body of evidence" and professional judgment.

7. Use quality assessment(s), and properly record evidence of achievement.

VII. Meet standards for accurate assessment: clear targets, clear purpose, and sound design (which requires that assessments be well written, use appropriate target–method match, use appropriate sampling, and avoid bias and distortion).

b. Record and maintain evidence of achievement (e.g., tracking sheets, spreadsheets, grade books— hard copy and/or electronic—portfolios—hard copy and electronic).

8. Discuss and involve students in assessment, including grading, throughout the teaching/learning process.

VIII. Ensure (age appropriately) that students understand how their achievement will be assessed and how their grades will be determined.

b. Involve students in the assessment process, in self-assessment, reflection and goal setting, and in communicating about their achievement and progress.

Note. These guidelines have been reprinted from "*How to Grade for Learning*", by O'Conner, K., 2018, p. 307, Corwin Press

Appendix F-2

Standards Bases Grading Vs. Traditional Grading

	Traditional Systems	Standards-Based System
1	• Based on assessment methods. • One grade per subject	• Based on learning goals/standards. • One grade for each learning goal • Subject grades only if required
2	• Often norm-referenced or a mix of norm and criterion-referenced • Percentage system (101 levels) • Criteria often unclear or assumed to be known	Criterion-referenced standards Proficiency-based (limited number of levels, usually two to five) Publicly published criteria/targets
3	• Uncertain mix of achievement, attitude, effort, and behavior. • Penalties and extra credit used include group scores	• Achievement only. • No penalties or bonuses • Individual evidence only
4	• Everything scored included, regardless of purpose • Homework major factor	• Summative assessments only • Homework rarely included
5	• Everything scored included, regardless of when • Multiple assessments recorded as average, not best	• More recent evidence emphasized • Reassessment without penalty
6	• The mean is the measure • Grades "calculated"	• Metrics, including median and mode, used sparingly • Grades "determined" using professional judgment
7	• Varied quality of assessments • Some evidence only in teachers' heads	• Quality assessments only • Data carefully recorded
8	• Teacher decides and announces	• All aspects discussed with and understood by students

Note. Reprinted from "*How to Grade for Learning*", by O'Conner, K., 2018, p. 307, Corwin Press.

Appendix F-3

Reassessment Agreement

Name:_____ Grade:_____ Hour:-

Outcome to Reassess (to be completed by the parent/student)

I would like (my child) to be reassessed on the following outcomes at the indicated levels. (Circle all that applies).

_____	2.0	3.0	4
_____	2.0	3.0	4
_____	2.0	3.0	4

Preparation Information (to be completed by the parent/student with teacher input)

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

Date	Activity*	Evidence of

*Use the list of ideas on the back of this page if necessary. Your teacher may require specific

Reassessment Information (to be completed by the parent/student and teacher together)

Date: Time: Location:

Reassessment Method(to be determined by the teacher)

- Written response
- Verbal assessment
- Revised form
- Same form
- Other (specify)

Student Signature Teacher Signature Da

Reassessment Approval

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

Student Signature Teacher Signature Date

Reassessment Gridlines

- 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 reassessment will be allowed during the final week or the trimester.
- 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

Reassessment study activities

Select from the activities below to complete the "Preparation Information" section of the reassessment agreement. You can also check with your teacher to see if there are any particular activities that are recommended. If you need any additional explanation or information about any of these ideas, please see your teacher.

Sample Activities	**Possible Evidence of Completion**
Complete missing assignments	Completed assignments
Make flashcards	Completed flashcards
Create a practice assessment	Completed practice assessment with answer key
Tutoring with a teacher	Signed note documenting tutoring time
Study your notes-30 minutes minimum	Study log
Complete internet activities provided by your teacher	Screenshots showing completion
Design a review game	Completed game
Make a poster explaining a topic or process	Completed poster
Create a web diagram	Completed diagram
Write a summary for each of the individual topics and the rubric	Completed summaries
Complete review exercises in the textbook	Completed exercises

Other activities provided by your teacher:

Additional notes

Note: Adapted from Excelsior Springs School District. (n.d.). *Reassessment agreement*. https://excelsiorshs.ss9.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_663537/File/About%20Our%20School/Building%20Initiatives/Standards-Based%20Learning/SBG%20Reassessment%20Agreement.pdf

Appendix G

ARTIFACT 7: SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Introduction

As a school leader, I believe technology at IAD will enhance student learning, improve the efficiency and productivity of educators, and facilitate communication among educators, parents, and students. Therefore, I took the initiative to prepare this draft technology plan to serve as a reference and a blueprint for IAD administration, IAD Technology Committee, and teachers of all grades. It will be available for review, feedback, and contribution from all stakeholders. Volunteer parents from the IT industry are expected to contribute to providing technology network infrastructure, building an effective school website, and suggesting and evaluating technology products the school may wish to purchase.

As preliminary work, I formed an IAD technology committee (IADTC) comprised of myself, the school's Technology Coordinator, a lead teacher, and two IAD Operations Committee members who are also parents with expertise in information technology and web developing. A current inventory of technology hardware, software, web-based platforms and tools, and end-user devices has been prepared with anticipated items to be added as needed (Appendix A). This technology plan was shared via google docs with members of the IADTC and members' feedback was taken into consideration before arriving at the final draft.

For this plan to succeed, IAD must have adequately trained staff and must also enlist the help of volunteers from the local community for infrastructure, network, hardware/software support, and technical assistance. The IAD Technology Coordinator

will serve as the pivotal element in training staff, providing back up support, and augmenting the work of volunteers to ensure coherence in task distribution and efficient management of training and service. This is to ensure the continuity of digital tools and service as well as the protection against improper use of the technology or any malicious cyber threats to the school.

This plan is organized in the following sections:

- Technology to support standards-based grading as addressed by the literature
- Goals and strategies of the technology plan to serve each of the following domains:
    - The learning environment
    - Building teacher capacity
    - Improving student engagement
    - Performance data to improve learning
    - Evaluating technology tools and implementation
    - Maintaining a safe environment for learning for all
- A technology plan matrix to connect all technology plan elements together.

Technology to Support Standards-Based Grading

Technology affects both educators and students and leads to improved student learning in an SBL environment. With the advancement of technology in all walks of life, there is a need not only to focus on the content but also on the process of learning (O'Conner, 2018). O'Conner (2018) and Westerberg (2016) suggest educators and students can reap the benefits of technology in teaching, learning, assessment,

reassessment, grading, and reporting of student progress. Educators are constantly developing new ways to support and enhance learning through technology, including collaborative digital environments. Educators now have the power to collaborate and develop assessment practices that are consistent within schools, districts, and states. Technology can help facilitate the reteaching and reassessment processes. For example, teachers can use applications to record their voices, capture images from devices, and import documents to create tutorials that students can access in the classroom or at home to prepare for reassessment. Students have the ability to complete work in a digital space and have it assessed remotely, and teachers can have the ability to digitally insert hand-written, textual, audio, and video feedback; provide grading; or extract data from either a diagnosis, formative or summative assessment. These digital collaborative spaces also lend themselves to the inclusion of students when developing clear targets in level or age-appropriate language that can be easily shared with administrators and parents.

Through school and district-wide technology systems, implementation of SBG becomes more attainable and efficient when those systems execute functions that are aligned to the standards. Redmond (2019) found that aligning the SIS with standards-SBG to be one of the top five implementation strategies viewed by a panel of principals representing 10,473 K-12 public schools. To achieve that alignment, he suggests four mandatory functions an SIS must have:

(a) an option to use standards-based report cards,

(b) ability to indicate what standards each assessment aligns with,

(c) ability to synthesize a grade on the standards-based report card based on assessment results placed in the grade book, and

(d) ability to show student growth from formative and summative assessments (p. 72).

As a school leader, I understand the potential benefits technology may bring to IAD as evident by the literature, and, with the collaboration of IADTC, I sought to introduce systems and tools to our school to facilitate the implementation of SBG. Following the advice of Redmond (2019), IAD has recently moved to align its SIS, Alma, with SBG. The system houses a standards-based grade book and report card. The grade book allows teachers to record assessment scores based on clearly designed proficiency scales. Scores are recorded as four, three, two, or one indicating advanced, meeting, approaching, or beginning performance by the student. Because SBG is concerned with student mastery of standards, only the most recent mastery score counts towards the grade for the assessed standard. Parents, teachers, and students can access the grade book to monitor student progress. However, to date, Alma does not support the automatic transporting of the grades from the grade book to the report cart. Rather, teachers have to transport the grades manually from the grade book to the report card.

Redmond (2019) suggests that districts and schools should develop teacher guidelines to help teachers use the SIS for grade inputting and align grading with the standards. Training tips and resources for teachers should also be included in these guidelines. This technology plan introduces strategies to make sure teachers understand and can follow these guidelines.

Goals And Strategies of Technology Plan

In this section, I will address the goals of the technology plan and briefly refer to the strategies that will be used to implement each goal. In setting these goals, I have taken

into consideration the ISTE standards for educators, students, and administrators (ISTE, 2020). I have also considered the US Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan which sets similar goals in the following domains (Education, 2017, January):

- Learning—Engaging and empowering learning through technology
- Teaching—Teaching with technology
- Leadership—Creating a culture and conditions for innovation and change
- Assessment—Measuring for learning
- Infrastructure—Enabling access and effective use

The goals, the rationale for each goal, and the strategies I suggest for the implementation of each goal are augmented in the technology plan matrix in Table G-1.

Goal 1: IAD will create a learning environment with effective technology resources for teachers and students to support standards-based education, grading, and reporting.

This goal guides the strategies that work collectively to establish a technology infrastructure to serve the needs of all stakeholders. For this, IAD has invested in systems and tools to enrich and enhance the teaching and learning experiences of teachers and students and facilitate communication within the internal school community and between the internal and external school communities. Examples for these tools are (Table G-1, Strategies 1-1.5):

5. A modern Wi-Fi information technology network that enables access to the internet in every room of the school building.

6. A school information system (SIS). IAD uses Alma to keep student personal data files, communicate with stakeholders, and house our standards-based grade books and report cards.
7. A learning management system (LMS). IAD uses Google Classrooms to streamline assignments, boost collaboration, and foster communication.
8. Assessment platforms as follows:
    c. Renaissance Star Reading and Math to assess student growth and mastery of skills and content. The platform generates class and individual reports that show student growth and guide instruction and grouping of personalized learning, differentiation, and intervention.
    d. Edulastic for formative, interim, and benchmark assessments. The platform provides instant classroom data to track student mastery, provide intervention, and avail multiple assessment opportunities to students.
    e. Terra Nova Common Core3 assessment (K-8) which is scored by an external vendor with assessment reports published on the DRC Online Reporting System with access to teachers and parents.
9. Technology gaming and differentiation tools. IAD teachers use technology platforms to differentiate student learning, provide intervention and remediation, and avail enrichment opportunities to students. For example, IAD uses prodigy and freckle for gaming and IXL and Khan Academy for practice and fluency.

Goal 2: IAD will provide support and training necessary for teachers to successfully integrate technology with SBLGR.

This goal is guided by the ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers and the Delaware Technology Education Standards Table G-1, Strategy 2.1). IAD refers to these standards in developing professional learning experiences for teachers. This goal guides our school's need for PD to enable teachers, especially the newly hired, to use the school's educational platforms effectively. To achieve this goal, IAD will utilize the services of our school Technology Coordinator and a lead teacher to avail learning opportunities, conduct PD sessions and follow-ups, and provide technical support to teachers as needed throughout the school.

As an affordable strategy, the school will also utilize interactive online PD services to enhance the fluent use of technology platforms for various needs and purposes (Table G-1, Strategy 2.4). For example, Renaissance, the host of Star Reading and Math, offers 90-minute live PD modules to train teachers to understand assessment reports and plan for grouping and differentiated instruction. Through Renaissance, IAD will provide virtual learning professional sessions to ensure teacher mastery of data-driven planning and instruction. Similar services are provided by Edulastic and Alma (Table G-1, Strategies 3.2). For example, Edulastic provides online training webinars to facilitate teacher use of the platform. Teachers need to know how to set up classrooms, build assessments using provided assessment banks, access instant assessment reports to inform instruction and intervention. Similarly, for Alma, through online webinars, teachers learn how to assign learning tasks to each standard, enter assessment scores, assign grades, publish grades, transport grades to the grade book, leave appropriate feedback to students, communicate with parents.

Teachers also need to be trained to use Google Classroom to manage student learning. Our technology coordinator and lead teachers will prepare in-service workshops and support as needed throughout the school year for teachers to create and manage classes, assignments, and grades online. Teachers will learn how to add materials to assignments, such as YouTube videos, a Google Forms survey, and other items from Google Drive. Teachers will also be trained to give direct, real-time feedback, use the class stream to post announcements, and engage students in question-driven discussions. Teachers will also learn how to integrate technology into the curriculum with game-based learning tools for differentiated learning (e.g., Freckle and Prodigy).

Goal 3: IAD will support students and enhance their learning through access to technology tools and resources. This goal will guide the implementation of SBL through teacher employment of tools and instructional strategies to facilitate differentiation.. For example, as a strategy, teachers will design and implement technology integrated lessons in the classrooms. The learning experience may be shared with parents via ClassDojo, Google Classroom, and emails (Table G-1, Strategy 3.2).

As was the case after IAD shifted to distance learning due to COVID-19, the school will use Zoom as the convening platform for distance learning. When the school transitions to hybrid learning, synchronous classroom learning will connect students at home and at school through the integration of Zoom app, Swivel units, and iPads (Table G-1, Strategy 3.4). To enhance the children's learning experience with the standards, IAD subscribed to technology tools and resources that students can access in school and at home. For example, Accelerated Reader, IXL, Freckle, and Prodigy are some of the tools

IAD students have been successfully using before and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Table G-1, Strategy 3.5).

The school will also teach internet safety for grades K-8. Age-appropriate tools and online free resources will be integrated into the learning. For example, Parents and teachers may use Common Sense Media to review what kids want to watch before they watch it. NetSmartz provides age-appropriate videos, activities, and other resources to help teach children, parents, and educators how to be safer online. This enables children to become more aware of potential online risks and empowering them to help prevent victimization by making safer lessons that teach key digital citizenship concepts (Table G-1, Strategy 3.6).

Goal 4: IAD will monitor student achievement and analyze student and school data through various tools to improve teaching and learning outcomes for all students.

This goal guides the use of three tools to compile and analyze student data (Table G-1, Strategies 1-4):

1. Alma as a strategy to track student achievement and allow the analysis necessary to differentiate instruction to better meet student learning needs.
2. Renaissance compiles data and reports for Star Reading and Math assessment and assessment data are used to analyze reading and math skills.
3. Renaissance Early Literacy assessment to assess student achievement in preschool and KG. Teachers have access to reports for individual students and classrooms.
4. DRC Online Reporting System to record and report Terra Nova Common Core 3 student aggregate and disaggregate performance.

Goal 5: IAD will assess the use of the technology resources implemented in the school.

This goal guides the use of the principal and IADTC to (Table G-1, Strategies 5.1-3):

1. Assess the use of technology in instructional strategies.
2. Review the technology plan annually to monitor implementation efficiency and to suggest revisions, upgrades, and replacement of tools and resources as needed. IADC will track the status of the goals and note that in its reviews and updates.
3. Review, suggest, inform stakeholders, and secure appropriate school endorsements for any updates of the school acceptable use policy to keep up with changes in technology and assure compliance.

Goal 6: IAD will provide a safe and secure learning environment to meet the school's vision to "educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful, and safe environment."

This goal will guide the strategies necessary to keep the school as a safe environment for students and staff while using technology and during their daily presence on the school premises. For example, the use of security cameras to provide real-time views of the IAD building inside and outside is provided throughout the school year (Table G-1, Strategy 6.1). School digital and electronic data are crucial to the operations of any school. To secure these files, data storage and backup always take place in the cloud associated with the application platform (Table G-1, Strategy 6.2). To maintain the integrity of files, systems, networks, and resources, IAD will have a protocol for securing these systems and devices with anti-virus and anti-spyware (Table G-1, Strategy 6.3).

Password protocol is employed to grant access to maintain data security (Table G-1, Strategy 6.4).

IAD Technology Plan Matrix

The following technology plan matrix addresses our goals, rationale, strategies, and technology funding considerations to directly or indirectly meet IAD's needs for the implementation of standards-based education. This technology plan matrix contains examples and resource materials that are provided for our planning committee and teachers' convenience. The inclusion of any material is not intended to endorse any products or services.

Table G-1 *IAD technology plan to support standards-based education*

Environment					
Goal 1: IAD will create a learning environment with effective technology resources for teachers, parents, and students to support standards-based education, grading, reporting, and communication.					
Rationale: Access to technology resources is necessary to ensure that all students have the resources needed to gain 21st Century skills as called for by the CCSS. Technology should support SBL and grading and encourage new and innovative learning practices to meet the standards.					
	Strategy	Measure	Timeline	Status	Funding
1.1	• A modern Wi-Fi information technology network that enables access to the internet in every room of the school building is installed. • Filtering decisions are made by the technology director, principal, and the IADOPS.	• The Technology Coordinator works with IADTC to maintain the network. • The Technology Coordinator programs filtering	The network was installed in 2012 and updated in spring 2019. Filtering started in 2012 and is updated regularly.	Current Current	Local Local

		through the network router to exclude undesired material for the entire school community.			
1.2	• IAD uses Alma as its SIS to keep student personal data files, communicate with stakeholders, and house standards-based gradebooks and report cards.	The Technology Coordinator manages Alma, maintains the student database, and implements any content change requested by the administration.	Gradebooks and report cards on Alma were converted from traditional grading to standards-based grading in the fall of 2019.	Current	Local
1.3	• IAD uses Google Classrooms as its LMS to streamline assignments, boost collaboration, and foster communication.	The Technology coordinator assigned school Gmail addresses to employees and students to access classrooms and assignments.	Google was introduced to teachers, students, and parents as an LMS system in August 2019	Current	Free
1.4	• IAD uses the following assessment platforms: ○ Renaissance Star Reading and Math to assess student growth and	○ The Technology Coordinator will assign classes and student enrollment	Renaissance Sar Reading and Math services were introduced to IAD in the year 2017-2018. Aggregate	Current	Local

	mastery of skills and content. The platform generates class and individual reports that show student growth and guide instruction and grouping of personalized learning, differentiation, and intervention. ○ Edulastic for formative, interim, and benchmark assessments. The platform provides instant classroom data to track student mastery, provide intervention, and avail multiple assessment opportunities to students.	data. Teachers will administer the assessments, retrieve assessment reports, revise instruction accordingly, and share reports with parents and students. ○ Edulastic enterprise account was purchased and classes with students were uploaded in the fall of 2019 ○ Assessment will be scored by an external vendor and assessment reports will be posted on the DRC Online reporting system.	and disaggregate data are maintained on the vendor's platform. ○ Edulastic is in use since September 2019. Aggregate and disaggregate data are maintained on the vendor's platform. DRC Online Reporting System has been in use since 2012. Aggregate and disaggregate data are maintained on the vendor's platform.	Current DRC Online Reporting system was interrupted in March 2020 due to COVID-19. It will resume in May 2021.	Local Local

	○ DRC Online Reporting System to record and report Terra Nova Common Core 3 student performance.				
1.5	• IAD teachers use technology gaming tools and platforms to differentiate student learning, provide intervention and remediation, and avail enrichment opportunities to students. For example, IAD uses prodigy and freckle for gaming and IXL and Khan Academy for practice and fluency.	• School-wide access to selected platforms, tools, and applications will be identified by the Technology Committee and purchased.	Many tools have been purchased (e.g., prodigy, Freckle, IXL, Khan Academy) or have been in use freely.	Apps and tools for differentiation have been made available since September 2019	Local
1.6	IAD continues the development of its website. The websites will include 1. calendars and events 2. policies and procedures 3. links to teachers and other topics as needs arise 4. resources for teachers and	• IAD website content is built using WIX. • School stakeholders and the community provide feedback on the website. The	The new website was launched in summer 2018.	Current	Local

	parents to enhance the implementation of SBLG grading	Technology Coordinator maintains the site.			
1.7	• The school maintains Chromebook cabinets in three classrooms that serve as hubs for all students in the building. • Teachers Have access to laptops and/or workstations	• The Chromebook to student ratio is 1:1. • Teacher to laptop ratio is 1:1	IAD is implementing a 3-5-year rotation cycle for replacing computers and technology equipment. Damaged devices and equipment will be replaced when necessary.	Current	Local
1.8	• IADTC provides technical support so technology resources are reliable and available to educators and students. • IADTC provides training to all teachers and school personnel. • IAD Technology coordinator serves as the first step in technical support issues.	The technology department will maintain the services of a dedicated Technology coordinator. 2 part-time technology integration support teachers and 2 on-demand volunteers from IAD OC members.	The Technology Coordinator is fully dedicated to maintaining all school Chromebooks and laptops, will provide technical advice for teachers, and will provide training as needed.	Training is current, has been in place, and is in coherence with the overall school PD plan	Local
1.9	• IAD uses an integrated technology system via SIS generated emails utilizing a rich database of school community	Students are provided with Parents can: - Apply for admission of their	• Email service is maintained through Alma. • Alma informati	Current Current	Local

	contact information • Communication can be conducted through: - phone - individual, group, and school-wide email - Smartphone apps (e.g., Telegram and WhatsApp) - ClassDojo - social media, and - IAD website • The staff has access to telephones in the administration office to communicate with parents and students. • Emergency contacts are made electronically using Alma email and phone blasts, website news flash, and social media. • Internal emergency notification utilizes Telegram and WhatsApp group text messaging.	children, online. - Fill out meal benefit forms for the national breakfast and lunch program. - Pay school-related fees online. - Community members can apply for employment opportunities online. • Social Media accounts have been established for IAD. The school also has a Twitter account • Telephone service is available through Verizon. • Student emergency contact information is available through Alma SIS.	on base is updated regularly, and information shared as needed. • Alma logins and passwords are provided to parents through an email activation link. • Alma has been System been in place since 2012	Current Current	

		• A three-member immediate response team comprised of the principal, an administrative assistant, and a lead teacher, has access to important information in case of an emergency.			
1.10	• Subscriptions and fee schedules to all technology platforms and software used are maintained by the technology coordinator. • Software for education and administrative needs is purchased as needed after the approval pre-approved by the IADOC.	The Technology Coordinator maintains records of purchase, operation licenses, and updates and renewal schedules.	The software inventory is maintained by the technology coordinator	Current	Local
1.11	Improved teaching and learning occur through laptops, Chromebooks, projectors, document cameras, internet access for all machines, software to support learning, and other hardware needs	Sufficient technology is provided by the school. Chromebooks and laptops are made available on a 1 to 1 basis for students and teachers in the	Equipment inventory, loan agreements, and deice maintenance are by the technology coordinator.	Current	Local

	demonstrated by the teacher. Each classroom has a projector, a doc cam, an LCD, an audio system, and access to 1:1 laptops and Chromebooks.	building. During online distance learning, devices will be loaned to students and teachers to take home.			

Professional Development

Goal 2: To provide teachers with the support and training necessary to integrate technology successfully with standards-based learning, grading, and reporting.

PD is necessary to ensure teachers are aware of the use of technology platforms and tools that facilitate the implementation of their instructional strategies. They also need to building their capacity in employing technology to serve their SBG in the classroom.

	Strategy	Measure	Timeline	Status	Funding
2.1	• The school adopts the ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers and the Delaware Technology Education Standards. IAD refers to these standards in developing technology professional learning experiences for teachers. • Technology standards will be used as a guide for providing PD opportunities in the school. • Technology standards will also be used as guidelines for the	• ISTE Standards and the Delaware Technology Education Standards have been shared with teachers. • Information sessions for teachers will be arranged for teachers by the Technology Coordinator.	ISTE Standards and the Delaware Technology Education Standards will be shared with teachers. IAD will be looking closely at how the ISTE standards and the Delaware Technology Standards Education can best be referenced into the School Technology Plan and will review that that for implementation in the year 2020-2021.	Planned for 2020-2021	Local

	following areas of technology: 1. Technology Systems 2. Computational Thinking 3. Information Literacy 4. Computing in Society 5. Digital Citizenship				
2.2	• Professional development for teachers will identify technology integration opportunities and instructional strategies to enhance the student learning experience and motivate students in the classroom. • Teachers will be requested to complete selected integrated technology lessons with students annually.	Technology integration in standards-based lesson plans created by the teachers is documented as part of the evaluation process. Technology is included in curriculum and lesson planning.	Technology is included in curriculum planning for the school. Documentation occurs through the observation process.	Current	Local
2.3	IAD will utilize the services of our school Technology Coordinator and lead teachers to avail learning opportunities, conduct PD sessions, follow-ups, and provide technical support to teachers as needed throughout the school.	Technology PD activities will be integrated coherently with the standards-based PD for the school	Technology PD sessions started in summer 2019 and will continue throughout the year 2020-2021 as part of the SBG PDP	Ongoing	Local

2.4	• Through Renaissance, IAD will provide virtual learning professional sessions to ensure teacher mastery of data-driven planning and instruction. • Edulastic provides online training webinars to facilitate teacher use of the platform. Teachers need to know how to set up classrooms, build assessments using provided assessment banks, and access instant assessment reports, to inform instruction and intervention. • Alma, through online webinars, teachers learn how to assign learning tasks to each standard, enter assessment scores, assign grades, publish grades, transport grades to the gradebook, leave appropriate feedback to students, communicate with parents. • Our technology coordinator and	• Three online interactive Renaissance sessions will be contracted annually for teachers. • Technology Coordinator provides training sessions as needed by teachers. • Training sessions to use Alma are part of the overall teacher professional program and are provided as needed. • Training sessions are part of the overall teacher professional program and are provided as needed.	Implementation started summer ’19. • Training sessions started in fall’2019. • Training sessions started in fall’2019. • Training sessions started in fall’2019. • Training sessions started in fall’2019. • Training sessions started in fall’2019.	Current Current Current Current Current	Local

	lead teachers will prepare in-service workshops and support as needed throughout the school year for teachers to create and manage classes, assignments, and grades online. • Teachers will learn how to add materials to assignments, such as YouTube videos, a Google Forms survey, and other items from Google Drive. Teachers will also be trained to give direct, real-time feedback, use the class stream to post announcements, and engage students in question-driven discussions. • Teachers will also learn how to integrate technology into the curriculum with game-based learning tools for differentiated learning (e.g., Freckle and Prodigy)	• Training sessions are part of the overall teacher professiona l program and are provided as needed. • Training sessions are part of the overall teacher professiona l program and are provided as needed			

2.5	• IAD will increase the analysis of data gathered by the school to be used in planning for the future. • Alma stores data compiled from multiple sources. • Training in the use of the data will be available. IAD instructional coaches work closely with classroom teachers.	Training sessions assist staff in data analysis of results obtained from Star Reading and Math assessments and the Terranova test. Training will enable teachers to interpret assessment reports and plan for differentiation or intervention.	Training sessions are scheduled and offered as part of the school development plan.	Current	Local

Student Learning and Engagement

Goal 3: To support students and enhance their learning through access to technology tools and resources.					
Rationale: Through the use of technology, new opportunities will be open for students to discover, collaborate, communicate, and meet the developing demands of a rigorous curriculum and 21-century skills.					
	Strategy	Measure	Timeline	Status	Funding
3.1	ISTE standards will be implemented into IAD Technology Plan beginning in 2019-2020.	Eighth-grade students attain a minimum of competency in technology. Standards are benchmarked K- 8.		Current	Local
3.2	• Educators implement SBL opportunities to differentiate learning in manners and strategies that attend to their abilities, needs, various learning styles.	Student-created technology samples will be shared through ClassDojo in grades K-4. Beginning in grade five students will save their information in	IAD will subscribe to Discovery Education. Students will have access to Khan Academy and YouTube.	Current	Local

	• Technology integrated lessons created by students K-4 will be shared with students and their parents in a timely manner through ClassDojo, Google Classroom, and emails. • In grades 3-8, students are issued their school email accounts and will access google classroom collaborate with each other, access links to teacher-provided links, and submit assignments for teacher feedback.	their student account or to their OneDrive. In grades 6-8, students will be using their OneDrive for files.			
3.3	• Teachers will introduce students to authentic resources on the internet that meet the standards-based curriculum's demands and provide opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate.	ISTE Standards are referenced to determine appropriate skills and learning needs at each grade level. Lessons using technology will be included in teacher lesson plans. Teachers' use of technology in their classrooms will be evident through	Documentation is evident in the evaluations and reviews performed by the principal.	Current	Local

		administration evaluation.			
3.4	The school will use distance learning through Zoom/Swivel/iPad integration to ensure that students continue to learn the standards.	A Swivel unit with an iPad and three microphones will be stationed in each classroom to allow for synchronous hybrid learning.	One set of Swivel-iPad system has been piloted in the school during our PD sessions.	14 units will be deployed by the time the school transfers back to a synchronous hybrid learning model	Local
3.5	Students use age-appropriate software and technology programs to enhance standards-based learning. • Accelerated Reader • Microsoft Office • Keyboarding Without Tears • IXL • Freckle • Prodigy	Students use a variety of tools such as Accelerated Reader, Kami, Typing.com, Brain Pop, Prodigy, Moby Max, Apple Journey, Splash Math, Apple Journey, and Pear Deck to enhance their learning through practice and formative assessment.	Age-appropriate software is available in the school building.	Current	Local

3.6	• Internet safety
	  ○ Common Sense Media: Parents review for what your kids want to watch before they watch it.
	  ○ NSTeens.org: A platform
		• The Technology Coordinator will identify and purchase software programs for keyboarding.	This strategy is highly needed especially when students are learning remotely more often than before the COVID-19 pandemic. IAD will gradually implement	Not started yet.	Local

	that educates , parents, and educators on how to be safer online through videos and tutorials. • Keyboarding by gaming • Digital Citizenship course for grades K-8. • Microsoft Teams provides a tool for teachers to connect students to collaborate on content, work in teams, and share ideas.	• Microsoft Teams will be piloted for student use in fall'2020.	the strategy in the year 2020-2021.		

Data And Assessment for Learning

Goal 4: IAD will use data systems that monitor student achievement and analyze student and school data in order to improve teaching and learning outcomes for all students.

Rationale: To benefit student learning, teachers and administrators must be able to collect and interpret data to inform student goal setting, differentiation, and intervention. Teachers should be able to benefit from assessment data compiled on Alma SIS, Renaissaince Star Reading and Math, and Edulastic to plan instructions to serve all students

	Strategy	Measure	Timeline	Status	Funding
4.1	IAD will employ assessment platforms will be integrated to form a rich data source for teachers to use for planning instruction and intervention.	Alma, Renaissaince, and Edulastic are used for tracking student and class achievement. Parents and students have access to	• Alma is upgraded as needed. Parent and student logins and passwords are provided annually.	Current	Local

		student grades online.			
4.2	• Renaissance assessment data is used to analyze reading and math skills (Grades K-8).	• Renaissance Star is used in grades K-8 • Data is used by teachers when working with students.	• Progress monitoring occurs on a regular and scheduled basis.	Current	Local
4.3	• Renaissance Early Literacy assessment to assess student achievement in preschool and KG.	• Renaissance Early Literacy is used for Preschool and KG	Renaissance Star	Current	Local
4.4	• DRC Online Reporting System to record and report Terra Nova Common Core 3 student Aggregate and disaggregate performance.				

Evaluation

Goal 5: IAD will assess the use and value of the technology resources, including end devices, productivity software, educational tools, and web-based platforms.

Rationale: IAD is of limited resources with a limited budget devoted to technology. There is a compelling need to monitor the productivity and effective use of all technology resources.

	Strategy	Measure	Timeline	Status	Funding
5.1	The use of technology in instructional strategies is assessed by the technology committee.	Through the Marzano Model of Instruction teachers and administration is keenly aware of educational practices and technology	Marzano evaluation tools will demonstrate instructional growth through the evaluation process.	Current	

		used in the classroom. This is documented as part of the evaluation process.			
5.2	IADTC will create a school acceptable use policy (AUP) is to keep track of technology use and practices in the school and to monitor compliance with IAD vision and goals.	Update annually. Staff signs policy and updates. Students and parents review and sign annually.	The AUP will continue to be reviewed and evaluated.	Current	Local
5.3	IAD will review its technology plan periodically and will recommend changes based on its findings.	IAD technology plan will be reviewed and updated by the IADTC periodically and recommendations will be forwarded to the IADOC for execution.	Annual review from the IADTC is to be included in the principal's annual report to the IADOC for execution before the start of the new school year.	Current	

Safe Environment

Goal 6:To meet the school's vision to "educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful, and safe environment," IAD will provide a safe and secure learning environment.					
Rationale: Driven by events in schools across the nation providing a secure learning environment to where students feel safe is essential to today's society.					
	Strategy	Measure	Timeline	Status	Funding
6.1	The use of a surveillance security system to provide real-time monitoring of IAD building inside and out shall be	LTS surveillance security system (Console, cameras and monitoring software) will	Cameras are installed on the premises. Monitoring software is currently in use.	Current	Local

	provided throughout the school year	be strategically placed in the building and student participation areas.			
6.2	School digital and electronic data are crucial to the operations of any district. To secure these files backup occurs in the cloud of the application in use.	All data is stored in the cloud	Backup occurs on a regular scheduled basis on-site. Off-site backup is scheduled to be set up within the next budget cycle.	Current	Local
6.3	To maintain the integrity of files, systems, networks, and resources, it is crucial to have a plan for securing these systems and devices with anti-virus and anti-spyware.	IAD TC scans machines each summer to bring them current and to eliminate any problems. Software is installed to maintain the integrity of the systems. The school technology coordinator programs web-access privileges for all school users to coinsure adherence to conform to school vision and policy.	An annual review is done each summer.	Current	Local
6.4	Password protocol is important to maintain a secure system where all school logins are	The school has set a password protocol to maintain the	The protocol is reviewed by key stakeholders	Current	Local

	kept at the securest level possible.	security of the system.	yearly. Technology staff put in place password change required by staff when computers are turned in for summer updates and at the start of the second semester.		

Conclusion

IAD has recently experienced many transformational changes. Math and language arts have been changed to address the Common Core State Standards. Student learning and grading have changed to meet the standards. With the pervasive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and the shift of districts and schools to distance learning, the use of educational technology in schools to support SBL has become more necessary than ever before. Skills as elementary as keyboarding, document sharing, navigating the web, and email communication have become daily practices that serve the education and contribute to learning for students even at the elementary school level. Access to learning tools and applications have become part of the daily lessons of teachers as they guide students in engaging learning experiences. Tracking student learning growth through electronic data collection and monitoring as students learned from has become very essential to guide instruction and provide intervention. The competitive market is now bombarded by an enormous volume of educational tools, systems, and solutions by

technology vendors aiming at securing their shares of the district and school business and prolonged loyalty. Therefore, a technology plan to meet all these challenges is necessary to secure effective products within available school funding.

Technology planning is not quick or simple. In order to make informed decisions, we need to seek access to the expertise of technology professionals. We also need guidance just to manage the planning process. Fortunately, volunteer experts in the field of information and educational technology are available in our school community. Many of these experts are parents and school board members who are eager to contribute their expertise towards the learning of their children. As a school leader, I put together this plan in part based on their input and advice. With the collaboration of the IAD technology coordinator, lead teachers, and members of the IAD Operations Committee, this technology plan will serve as a starting point and will be revised periodically as we assess the systems, tools, and practices currently used or being introduced to service our children. In a world where technology changes and evolves constantly, our technology plan must be responsive and adaptive to meet the ever evolving of our children's needs.

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Appendix G-1

IAD Technology Inventory

	Item	Quantity (Current)	Quantity (Needed)	Total
1.	Routers/ with speed	1	0	1
2.	Boosters	2	2	4
3.	LCD's	20	0	20
4.	Projectors,	4	0	4
5.	Document Cameras	15	0	15
6.	Chromebooks for students	68	82	150
7.	Laptops	135	35	150
8.	iPads	1	14	15
9.	Swivel Devices	1	14	15
10.	Telephones	2	0	2
11.	Workstations (Servers)	3	0	3
12.	Software with a license (e.g. Microsoft 360, Quicken Books, etc.)	3	2	3
13.	Web-based platforms(Alma, Renaissance, Google Classroom, Edulastic, Prodigy, Freckle, Quicken books, Zoom, etc.)	Alma, Renaissance, Google Classroom, Prodigy, Freckle, Free Zoom, Website host, Website application	Paid Account for Zoom	
14.	Security Cameras	17	0	17

Appendix H

ARTIFACT 8: A SURVEY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS-BASED GRADING

Introduction

Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD) has introduced new curricula in English Language Arts and mathematics that received high ratings by educators for its alignment with the common core state standards (Expeditionary Learning, 2016). The school is wrestling with aligning its assessment and grading practices with the CCSS and has been investing in technology and PD (PD) activities to facilitate assessment and grading practices and build teacher capacity a part of the new initiative. The school is constantly vetting its grading practices to make sure coherence between curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, grading, and reporting is achieved.

This survey is an attempt to measure teachers' perceptions of standards-based grading (SBG) at Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD). Guskey and Brookhart (2019) explain that teacher perceptions denote the range of teacher thinking about grading and grading practices and they suggest that perceptions include "beliefs, attitudes, and understanding, ranging from awareness and recognition to deeper meaning—and can be characterized by having value and even emotional components"(p. 85). Guskey and Brookhart (2019) indicate that while research shows teacher perceptions are very important in understanding their grading practices there are few studies that focus on teacher perceptions of grading.Understanding teacher perceptions towards grading can also be the first step prior to creating a unified vision of the purpose of grades.

As a school leader, I believe teachers would be more inclined to implement SBG concepts if they believed in them. Conversely, if teachers have a poor understanding of those concepts, I would cast doubt about the effectiveness of SBG implementation and, more importantly, I will need to address what went wrong and what steps should be taken to improve teacher understanding. Measuring teacher perception as an approach for inquiry makes more sense than asking teachers to report on their practices. There may exist the tendency of the respondents to report acquiescently with the statements of the questions to assure compliance and avert judgment for lack of implementation. Besides, following school guidelines to grade and report achievement does not necessarily indicate a good understanding of SBG concepts.

As Guskey and Brookhart (2019) suggest, when survey participants are asked to report their practices, it is very difficult to conclude their practices accurately. Therefore, the results I report in this study address perceptions directly, which may indicate their practices. This survey is intended to:

1. inform teachers and decision-makers at IAD about the extent to which SBG as a concept and a set of practices has proliferated in the thinking of teachers.
2. shed light on what went right and what needs improvement in the school's efforts to build a common understanding of SBG.
3. get an indication, albeit indirect, of the extent to which teachers practice SBG in their classrooms.

With this survey, I hope to obtain answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do IAD teachers understand that the purpose of grading to communicate student achievement in reference to the standards taught in each classroom.
2. To what extent do IAD teachers understand the need to give students highly effective goal-reference feedback before and after assessing students for learning?
3. To what extent do IAD teachers understand grades should be an accurate representation of student achievement, and, therefore, non-achievement factors should be reported separately to permit valid interpretation by stakeholders?
4. To what extent do IAD teachers understand that grades should be calculated to reflect students' most recent achievement and that students must be provided multiple opportunities and forms to exhibit their mastery of the standards.

These questions define the framework I present in the next section which governs the scope and content of the survey instrument. Classroom specialists such as O'Conner (2018), Tierney (2011), and Beatty (2013) have used the first three components of this framework to base their classroom evaluation rubrics or school and districtwide SBG teacher perceptions surveys upon. I have added the effectiveness of feedback as the fourth component of the framework to highlight feedback as an essential grading-related practice in the classroom. O'Conner (2018) indicates that at least 12 meta-analyses including 196 studies reported a positive influence of feedback on student achievement with an average effect size of 0.79. This average effect size places feedback among the top 5 to 10 highest influences on student achievement.

Framework

The survey is framed around the following principles underpinning SBG.

1. The purpose of grading is to report on student achievement. Grades should be referenced to the standards.
2. Effective goal-reference formative feedback as needed should be given to students before and after students are assessed for learning.
3. A grade should be an accurate representation of achievement. Non-achievement factors should be reported separately to permit valid interpretation by stakeholders.
4. Results from multiple assessments should reflect the most recent performance with professional judgment taken into account.

Methodology

This survey was administered through Qualtrics, an online survey platform, in a duration of two weeks (September 14-28). The respondents in this survey represent IAD full-time teachers who attended the school PD program in the school year 2019-2020. I sent an invitation-to-participate and a link to the survey via email to all participants. It was indicated to the recipients of the invitation that their participation is voluntary and is not associated with any form of penalty or compensation except for the potential benefit the survey may bring to the school in terms of planning and development of strategies and programs. A second and a third reminder were sent via email to all participants.

This survey is relevant to IAD implementation of SBG, but it is not intended as a pre-post-survey. Rather, it aims at measuring teacher perception about SBG acceptable

practices with the assumption that if teachers have the correct understanding of SBG, they will practice the approach which will reflect on the school-wide grading practices.

Data Sources And Analysis

The survey focused specifically on a sample of teachers (n =15) who taught grades K-8 English Language Arts, mathematics, and other subjects in the classrooms of IAD. Their teaching experience at the time the survey was conducted ranged from 3 to 20 years. They responded to this survey which contained a total of 32 items (Likert-type) and 4 open-ended questions (Appendix L-1). To analyze the data, I used descriptive statistics to calculate the frequencies in percentage points of the respondents' degrees of agreement or disagreement (Likert-type) with the statement of each question. To get a clear understanding of teachers' perception trends, I used the sum of the frequencies of the respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement of each question. As for the open-ended responses, I used color coding (Appendix L-2-1 and L-2-2) to identify the teachers' sentiments or understandings of the four SBG principles outlined in the survey's framework.

Educational Context

A standards-based grade book and report card were introduced for application at IAD in the year 2019-20 as part of the shift from traditional grading to SBG. Teachers were requested to grade student assessments using standards-based proficiency scales and to record the grades in the grade book and the report card. Parents were given access to view their children's grades in the grade book throughout the year and the report cards were printed and distributed to parents at the end of the first and second trimesters.

Before this survey was conducted the following events have been taking place at IAD until they were interrupted on March 16, 2020, by the COVID-19 pandemic that forced our school to shift to distance learning:

1. Teachers administered and graded standards-based assessments to students and reported grades on the newly developed and introduced grade book and report cards.
2. Teachers participated in PD activities aimed at improving their knowledge and skills in SBLG grading.
3. Teachers participated in PD activities aimed at improving teacher use of the newly introduced assessment and grading platforms.

Results

The results are presented in four sections that look at indications in the teachers' responses about the extent to which they follow the four grading principles. For the reason of clarity, in all of the figures used to represent the result, I have designated practices consistent with SBG in green and those inconsistent with SBG practices in red.

A Frame of Reference for Grading

When the purpose of grading is to report on student achievement, grades should be referenced to the learning expectations (criterion-referenced). To understand the extent to which teachers perceive this principle, the responses in Table L-1/Figure L-1 were used.

A majority of respondents (64.28 %) agreed or strongly agreed that the grades should indicate the degree to which students achieve the learning expectations. However, only 42% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed their students should receive high

grades if they met the learning objectives. These results suggest that the principle of criterion-referenced grading is present among teachers but is in need of further discussion and development in the school.

Equally concerning is the percentage of the participants who agree or strongly agree that classroom grades should follow the bell curve (46.15 %) and, to a lesser degree, those who believe grades should indicate the student's ranking in relation to peers (28.57 %). Also concerning is the substantial minority of respondents (7.17%-23.08%) who indicated they were "not sure" where they stood on any of the four questions related to the frame of reference for grading.

Table H- 1. *Participants' Responses Relating to Frame of Reference*

#	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	A student's grades should indicate the degree of student achievement.	14.29%	7.14%	14.29%	35.71 %	28.57%
2	Classroom grades should follow the bell/normal curve.	7.69%	23.08%	23.08%	46.15 %	0.00%
3	Classroom grades should reflect student ranking.	28.57%	35.71%	7.14%	28.57 %	0.00%
4	Students should receive high grades for meeting objectives.	7.14%	21.43%	28.57%	28.57 %	14.29%

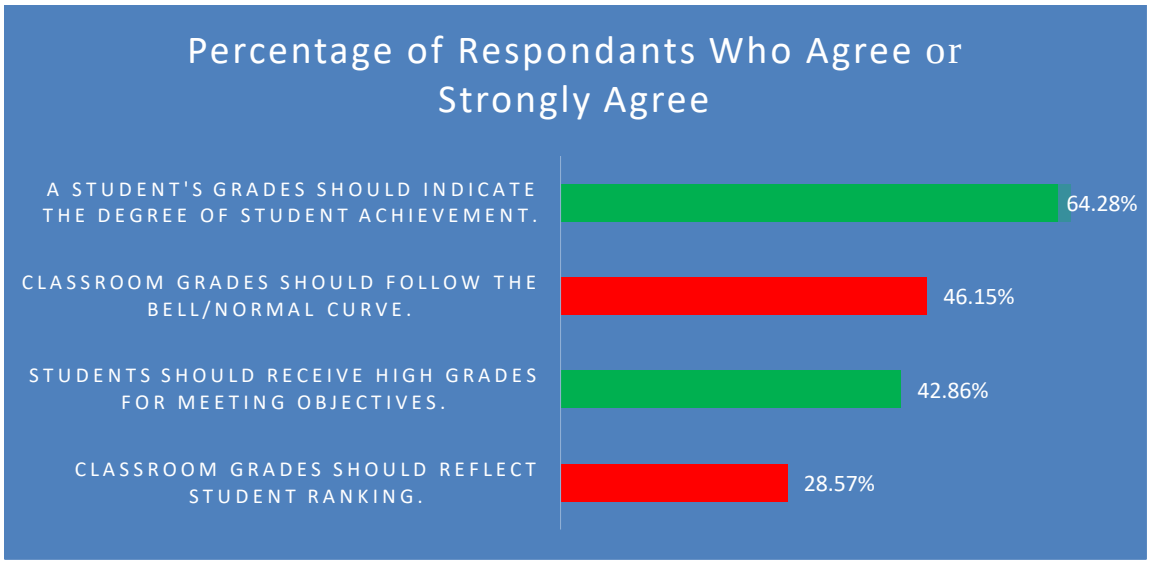

Figure H-1. *Participants' Responses Relating to The Framework Questions*

Standards-Based Feedback to Students

There is a fairly high percentage of teachers who understand the characteristics of effective standards-based feedback (Table L-2/Figure L-2). Most teachers agreed feedback should be goal-referenced (92.85%), user-friendly (92.31%), timely (92.31%), manageable (84.62%), actionable (84.61%), and personal (83.33%).The open-ended answers to the question on the elements of effective feedback corroborate the quantitative data beyond doubt. Some teachers (3) believed one-to-one conferences with the student receiving the feedback was important and effective. One teacher stated, "One-on-one conferences work best for me as I can focus on the selected target/ topic according to the individual differences/ levels of learning". Another expressed " I think one-to-one conference with students after summative assessment and written formative feedback that includes positives and improvement areas on exit tickets can improve student learning". Other teachers expressed their belief feedback should be timely and take many forms. One teacher expressed that "feedback should be educative in nature. Feedback should be

given in a timely manner. Feedback can be given verbally, non-verbally, or in written form". Others stressed referencing formative feedback to the learning goals. A teacher said, "…if the student has specific errors, point them out towards [in reference to] their goal, whether it is [via] the proficiency scale or the learning target".

Table H-2. *Participants' Responses Related to Key Essentials of Standards-Based Feedback to Students*

#	Variable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Goal-referenced	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	35.71%	57.14%
2	Actionable	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	38.46%	46.15%
3	Personal	0.00%	8.33%	8.33%	50.00%	33.33%
4	Timely	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	38.46%	53.85%
5	User-friendly	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	23.08%	69.23%
6	Manageable	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	53.85%	30.77%

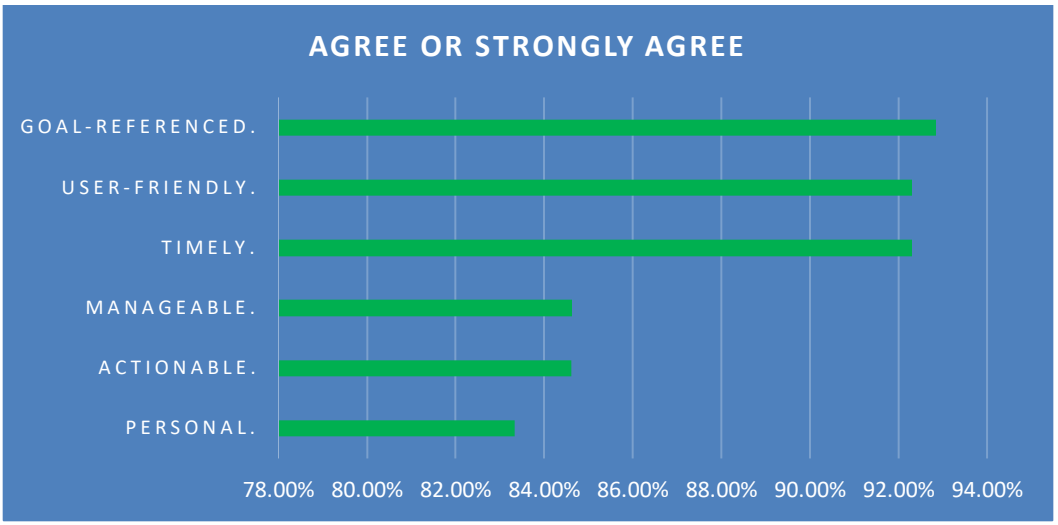

Figure H- 2. *Key Essentials of Standards-Based Feedback to Students*

Elements Represented in Grades

A fair grade should be an accurate representation of achievement. Non-achievement factors should be reported separately to permit valid interpretation by stakeholders. The survey responses relating to the elements that should count in grades are shown in Table L-3/Figure L-3.

A fairly high number of respondents (84.62 %) believe summative assessments should be included in the grades a practice consistent with SBG as suggested by the literature on SBG. However, a high number of teachers (76.92 %) also believe that formative assessment should be included in the grade which is inconsistent with SBG. There is also confusion about the inclusion of group work such as group projects and presentations in the grade. Contrary to sound SBG practices, a high number of respondents (69.23%) believe group work should be included in the grade while 15% of the respondents are not sure if group work should or should not be included. Only 15.38% disagree with including group work in the grade. There seems to be a lack of distinction between a grade given to a group on a project or a presentation that may be

summative in nature with the grade an individual in the group deserves for mastery of the concepts presented. A group work grade may not accurately represent the level of understanding of each member of the group and, therefore is not justifiable as an accurate and fair indication of individual mastery level.

Student effort is another variable that causes concern as to whether the respondents have a clear understanding of SBG practices. More than one-half (53.85 %) of the teachers expressed that effort should be included in the grade. O'Connor (2011) indicates clearly that effort cannot be measured and, while correlated with achievement, it may not necessarily reflect student mastery of the content and the skills in the standards.

There are also teachers, though in the minority, who believe other work habits or social skills should be included in the grade. Examples include class participation (46.16%), extra credit/bonus questions in assessments (46.15 %), student motivation (38.46%), homework (30.76%), attitude (30.77 %), attendance (30.77%), honesty (30.77 %), and punctuality (23.07 %). Although these numbers represent a minority among teachers, the numbers are substantial and warrant further discussion among teachers to reach a good understanding of SBG.

Table H- 3. *Respondents perceptions about what counts in student grades*

#	Variable	I am not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Groupwork such as group projects and presentations	0.00%	15.38%	15.38%	61.54%	7.69%
2	Homework	23.08%	38.46%	7.69%	15.38%	15.38%
3	Attitude	30.77%	23.08%	15.38%	30.77%	0.00%
4	Effort	15.38%	15.38%	15.38%	30.77%	23.08%
5	Student motivation	15.38%	23.08%	23.08%	15.38%	23.08%
6	Class participation	15.38%	30.77%	7.69%	23.08%	23.08%
7	Summative assessment	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	30.77%	53.85%
8	Formative assessment	7.69%	7.69%	7.69%	38.46%	38.46%
9	Extra credit/Bonus questions	23.08%	23.08%	7.69%	38.46%	7.69%
10	Attendance	30.77%	30.77%	7.69%	23.08%	7.69%
11	Punctuality	30.77%	23.08%	23.08%	7.69%	15.38%
12	Honesty	30.77%	23.08%	15.38%	7.69%	23.08%

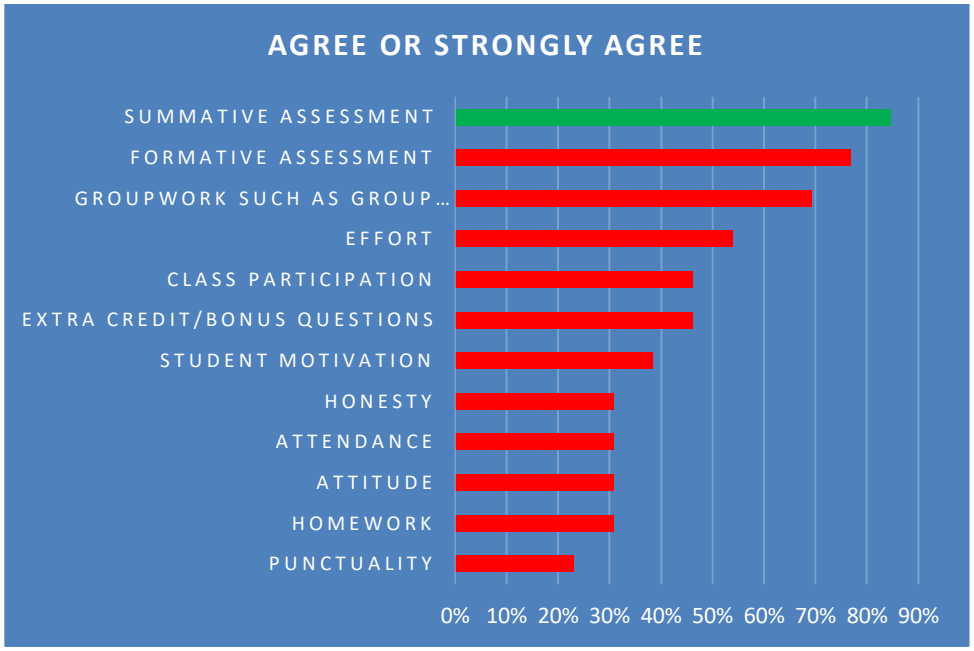

Figure H-3. *Respondents Perceptions About What Counts in Student Grades*

It should be noted that the teachers have painted a clear picture in their seven reported open-ended responses regarding what they believed are fair grading practices. I believe that the open-ended responses do not contradict the quantitative data. Rather, given the opportunity to articulate their beliefs, the teachers clarified with examples where they stood on what makes a grade fair. On the one hand, none of the teachers indicated that the inclusion of practice, learning habits, and/or social skills in the grade is a fair grading practice. One respondent indicated clearly that "homework, classwork, and behavior should not be part of the grade". On the other hand, respondents elaborated on what they believe were fair grading practices by referring to practices associated with SBG. These practices include aligning assessment to the learning goals or the standards, using proficiency scales to grade, and involving students in the assessment process. For example, one respondent indicated that " the learning goals and targets should be clearly identified and conveyed to students and the lesson aim to achieve the learning targets. The assessment must also assess whether the student has achieved the learning target. For this to happen, the assessments should be created first. The lessons also adhere to the learning targets to make the assessment and grading fair." Another respondent also commented that "I try very hard to make students accountable for their own learning. We start at unpacking the standards, to understand what it takes to get to mastery, then [provide] opportunities for reflection. I also have open discussions for students to provide feedback to me as well. This year we began using proficiency scales and they are proving to be useful as well as fair." A third respondent echoed that teachers should "make the students in charge of their learning. Provide proficiency scales to the students [and] checklists and allow students to follow their progress."

Combining Assessment Results for Grades

Results from multiple assessments should be combined carefully, with weighting that reflects the learning expectations, to ensure that the grade accurately summarizes achievement. To understand the extent to which teachers follow this principle, I looked at items related to the process of calculating grades (Table H-4/Figure H-4).

Table H-4 *Responses About Teacher Role in Multiple Assessment Opportunities*

#	Variable	I am not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	provide multiple opportunities for assessment to all students.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	83.33%
2	involve parents in the reassessment process.	8.33%	0.00%	16.67%	50.00%	25.00%
3	request the student to complete activities that would help him/ her relearn the material before reassessing.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	41.67%	58.33%
4	provide multiple versions /forms of the standards-based assessment.	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	50.00%	41.67%
5	place a time limit on assessment.	8.33%	8.33%	33.33%	41.67%	8.33%
6	include only the latest results of multiple assessment opportunities.	8.33%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	16.67%
7	average assessment scores to calculate grades over a period of time.	8.33%	25.00%	16.67%	41.67%	8.33%
8	use their professional judgment in grading.	16.67%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	8.33%
9	drop a student's lowest results when assessing the same learning.	16.67%	8.33%	16.67%	41.67%	16.67%
10	drop a student's earliest results when assessing the same learning.	16.67%	8.33%	25.00%	41.67%	8.33%

Respondents' perceptions seem to be aligned with acceptable SBG practices. All respondents believe they should provide multiple opportunities of assessment to all

students (100 %), students should be required to complete activities that would help them relearn the material before reassessing (100 %), and students should be provided with different versions /forms of the standards-based assessment (91.67 %).

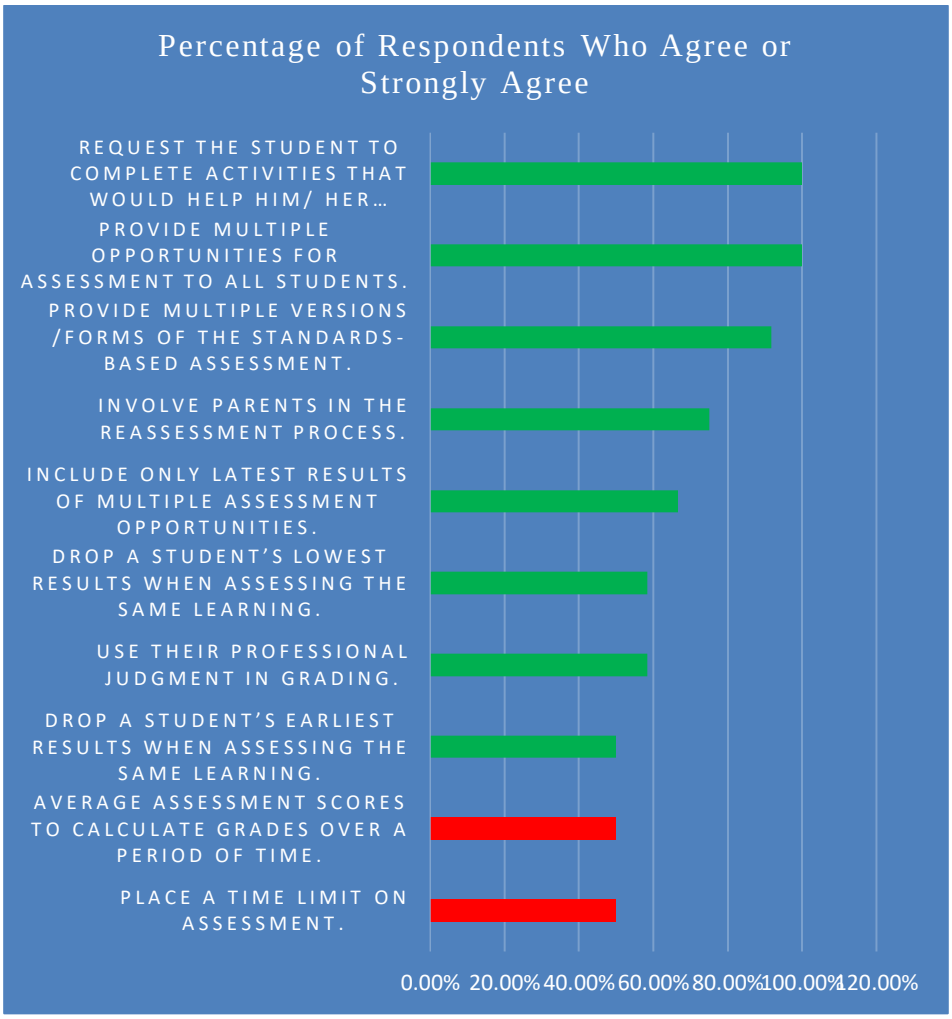

Figure H-4 *Participants' Responses About Teacher Role in Multiple Assessment Opportunities*

Practice and relevant reviewing are suggested by the literature before students can be reassessed for the same learning. The open-ended responses related to the questions on reassessment and the involvement of parents in the process corroborate the quantitative data. All seven respondents to the open-ended-response questions indicated students

should perform some form of practice before being assessed for the same learning standard. For example, one respondent indicated that “ the student must complete the revising or practice/activities to earn the opportunity to take the reassessment.” Another respondent said that the student “should complete remediation work and complete it by the given deadline before they can take a reassessment”.

Three-quarters (75%) of the respondents believe parents should be involved in the reassessment process of their children. The involvement of parents was highlighted in the teachers’ open-ended responses. Parents need to be aware of the reassessment process to support their children in intervention as one respondent suggested. One respondent suggested that teachers may enable students to play an active role in involving parents by having students explain the proficiency scales to parents and by helping students understand what opportunities they have to relearn/reassess. Students will then be able to inform parents of their learning.

The majority of the respondents believe they should include only the latest results of multiple assessment opportunities (66.67%), use their professional judgment in grading (58.34 %), drop a student’s lowest results when assessing the same learning (58.34 %), and drop a student’s earliest results when assessing the same learning (50 %). These are practices consistent with standards-based grading.

Two other practices, however, averaging assessment scores to calculate grades and setting a time limit when assessing students, which are inconsistent with SBG, received agreement or strong agreement from a substantial percentage of teachers. Many respondents (50 %) believe assessment scores should be averaged to calculate grades over a period of time and an equal percentage believe in placing a time limit on

assessment. Averaging grades does not acknowledge student progress towards mastery of the standards. Placing a time limit on assessment does not acknowledge the fact that students may have different expressive abilities and time requirements to exhibit mastery. Therefore, the time limit is irrelevant and may be counterproductive when assessing students for mastery of the content or the skills.

Summary and Discussion

As a school leader, since the beginning of the SBG initiative, I have sought to provide opportunities to inform and educate IAD teachers and myself about the principles and practices of SBG and to enlist their buy-in as partners in this critically important initiative. Tierney et al. (2011) suggest that principles should guide the process teachers use to determine students' final grades. Although many teachers in this sample reported at least some awareness and use of grading principles, others have shown support for a "hodgepodge" of grading practices or have expressed that they were unsure of where they stand regarding SBG principles. The perceptions of the grading practices they support suggest that the underlying principles are not well-developed in their minds. It is interesting and noteworthy that many teachers hold these perceptions in spite of the fact that our IAD electronic standards-based grade book and report card do not support traditional grading practices which may indicate a divergence between teachers' perceptions and practices. Understanding the extent of this divergence should guide future planning to bridge the gap between perceptions and practices.

In the following section, I present a summary and a discussion of the extent to which teachers' perceptions are in agreement with the principles of SBG.

Standards-referenced grades*:* The majority of teachers agreed grading practices should be referenced to the standards or learning goals (criterion-referenced) but they also considered grades should follow a bell-shaped/normal distribution curve. Some teachers, though a minority, expected grades to reflect student ranking in the classroom.

Teachers believe they should use a curve to adjust student grades when students perform poorly on a test, a traditional grading practice inconsistent with SBG. Guskey (2015) explains that the normal bell-shaped curve describes the distribution of randomly occurring events when nothing intervenes. SBG, on the other hand, calls for continued intervention and learning until all students meet the learning targets of the standards. In an ongoing cycle of learning and assessment, students keep improving until they all achieve mastery and no students will be left behind.

Formative Feedback: Almost all teachers agree or strongly agree they should provide students with formative feedback that conforms to the seven keys to effective feedback as suggested by the literature, and some described their favorite strategies for providing their feedback to students.

Wiggins (2012) explains that feedback should be goal-oriented, keeping the learning standards at the forefront of the discussion; actionable to inform the learner of the steps or actions he or she must do next; personal in the sense that it connects with the learner as a person and makes him or her identify with the feedback; timely in the sense that the appropriate time is chosen as to when to give the feedback; user-friendly avoiding language or jargon that is difficult for the learner to understand; ongoing in that it must be consistently flowing to correct and direct learning; and manageable by the learner considering the learner's age and the appropriate size and magnitude of the

corrective feedback. Formative feedback should be available in many forms in the classroom after every act of formative assessment. It should also be provided to parents and students in a designated space on the report card.

Elements represented in the grade: Most respondents believe that summative assessment measures cognitive achievement which is consistent with SBG. However, the majority also believe formative assessment should be included and many, to lesser degrees, believe other academic enablers such as effort and group work should also be included.

In SBG, formative assessment is not graded. Rather, it used to generate feedback to direct or correct performance and learning. O'Conner (2011, 2018) emphasizes that formative assessments should not be graded because students should concentrate on learning from their mistakes instead of suffering the disappointments of lowered grades. Grading a formative assessment reflects a judgment on student practice and not a verdict on the final product as a summative assessment does. While the summative assessment is measurable and quantifiable, the formative assessment is corrective in nature and may or may not be quantifiable. For example, a student gesture of a thump up or nodding his or her head to indicate agreement with a teacher's statement may not warrant a grade while a test, a project, or presentation at the conclusion of a learning unit is measurable and qualifies as an assessment. Teachers at IAD need to draw the distinction between formative and summative assessments and abandon the notion that if it is an assessment then it must be graded. As the University of Illinois assessment expert Bob Stake stated, "when the cook tastes the soup, it is formative; when the guests taste the soup, it is summative" (as cited in Hattie, 2015, October 27, p. 23). Both tests can be valuable and

used for formative or summative interpretations. However, only summative assessments should be graded.

Furthermore, Guskey (2020) suggests practices that may enable learning, such as homework, class participation, and effort, may reflect extended learning goals related to noncognitive social-emotional learning skills such as collaboration, goal setting, perseverance, habits of mind, or citizenship. Guskey (2020) suggests that educators who emphasize learning enablers believe that academic mastery alone does not provide a complete picture of student performance. They believe grades should reflect not only final achievement results but also how students got there. Others stress that certain noncognitive skills are just as important as academic achievement to students' success in school and life. Such skills need to be considered in grading, so students and families recognize their value.

Results from Multiple Assessments: Teachers believe grades should be calculated in ways consistent with SBG. They believe all students should be provided multiple opportunities to show mastery of the content and skills of the standards. They also believe that students should be requested to practice skills or complete selected tasks before they are reassessed for the same learning. In terms of calculating the achievement grade for the standard after multiple assessments, the majority of the teachers are comfortable with dropping the lowest and earliest grades since the later score typically represents the achievement of the student. The majority also seem comfortable with exercising professional judgment when determining the grade of the students.

Many teachers, however, have indicated their agreement or strong agreement with two practices that are inconsistent with SBG: Averaging scores and placing time limits on

assessments. Arithmetic averaging of assessment scores is abandoned in SBG. Marzano and Heflebower (2011) emphasize getting rid of the omnibus grade that includes the averaging of scores on everything that takes place in the classroom and, instead, to score specific measurement topics, giving consideration only to the most recent score rather than averaging all scores.

Depending on what the summative assessment is measuring, most of the time the standard does not have a time limit expectation. Therefore, the teacher should not have explicit time limits on summative assessments. They may have time budgets for the assessment to take to maximize student motivation and brainpower within available class sessions, but the budget should be flexible to allow for the strengths and needs of the students. If students need more time or not making progress, I investigate why and respond appropriately so that there is not the misconception that the time is open-ended and the summative can be done whenever.

O'Conner (2020) suggested strict time limits are appropriate only if speed is a condition of quality. The teacher has to be practical due to time constraints. If speed is not a condition of quality, teachers may use their professional judgment to determine the amount of time most students need to finish the summative assessment without feeling pressured by the time allotted. They may add and make available to all students one-third of the base time as they see necessary, e.g., a 90-minute exam has an additional 30 minutes of flex time.

Implications and Recommendations

The survey results do not show a robust understanding or support of many aspects of SBG. As a school leader, it is incumbent upon me to lead a discussion among teachers

to see what went right, what went wrong, and where we need to improve. In doing so, I must reflect on our first year of implementation and explore possible ways for improvement and for designing our future PD to arrive at a consensus in beliefs and practices among teachers. After all, SBG implementation should be an ongoing process. Brookhart (2011) suggests any grading reform effort ought to start with coming to a common understanding of the purpose of grading. If this was the case, perhaps there was not enough understanding generated early in the process. If this was not the case, perhaps the PD program could have been designed differently based upon the literature. We may want to examine the extent to which our PD activities fared against "backward planning". Guskey (2014) suggests "backward planning" should be a strong component of the PD program where we must implement the following steps in order:

1. consider the specific student learning outcomes we want to attain.
2. decide what instructional practices and policies are most likely to produce the student learning outcomes we want.
3. put in place the organizational supports that are necessary to implement instructional practices well.
4. decide what teachers must know and be able to do to successfully implement the new practices
5. decide what set of experiences will best enable participants to acquire the needed knowledge and skills. For example, Guskey (2014) suggests seminars and workshops can be a highly effective means of sharing information and expanding teaches' knowledge and skills, especially when paired with collaborative

planning, structured opportunities for practice with feedback, and follow-up coaching.

Similarly, we may have to examine the extent to which the staff was expected to put the ideas into practice (vs. read, discuss, and change beliefs before acting upon these new ideas) and the timing in which this survey was administered following the professional program. To this effect, Guskey (1985) suggests that teaching practices and learning benefits from those teaching practices are important influencing factors in changing teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and buy-in. Therefore, the change in beliefs is a consequence of proven results of practices. In other words, if these staff perceptions do not differ much from what the literature suggests teachers "in general" have said previously, was there not enough time for teachers to "see" the positive results needed to change their beliefs or was the PD not well designed to reach the intended results (or perhaps a combination of one or more of these possibilities)?

Conclusion

This survey focused on teachers' perceptions' about SBG practices in a standards-based educational system. For students' grades to accurately reflect student achievement, teachers need a better understanding of essential SBG principles and practices. Teachers would benefit from a meaningful discussion focused on the conceptual distinction between grading practices in a standards-based classroom and those performed in a traditional classroom setting. In a standards-based classroom, all students will be led to learn the standards. Their assessment and grading should reflect learning in reference to the standards. When students lag in the learning, needed intervention should be introduced to guild students in meeting the learning target. The cycle of learning-

assessment-grading-feedback (readjusted)-reassessment must continue until no child is left behind. This is unlike practices in the traditional classroom where students are destined to land on a normal distribution curve with moving student ranks that depend on a “hodgepodge” of assessments and practices. An ongoing discussion of the conceptual reasoning for the separation of academic achievement from learning habits as discussed by the scholars of SBG must ensue to make sure not only teachers comply with grading practices but also firmly believe in their merit, benefits, and value to student learning. Based on the results of this survey, a revisit of the effectiveness of our implementation in the first year is warranted. An examination and adjustment of our PD content focus, activities, and resources is needed to align staff thinking with SBG and to keep implementation on track.

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Appendix H-1

Teachers' Perceptions of Standards-Based Grading

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the Islamic Academy of Delaware's teachers' perceptions of SBG(SBG) to plan and provide future professional learning. The survey will also provide information about the effectiveness of our school's efforts in the implementation of SBG. The results will also be included in my Educational Leadership Portfolio as part of the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous, and all results will be summarized without reference to individual participants. If you have any questions about this process or would like to inquire about participants, please contact Nidal Abuasi at nidalabu@udel.edu or the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at 302.831.2137. By clicking forward into the survey, you are agreeing to participate.

IX. Academic Criterion-Referenced Mastery

Q1 Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
A student's grades should indicate the degree of student achievement.	○	○	○	○	○
Classroom grades should follow the bell/normal curve.	○	○	○	○	○
Classroom grades should reflect student ranking.	○	○	○	○	○
Students should receive high grades for meeting objectives.	○	○	○	○	○

X. Elements of Effective Feedback

Q2 Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. Feedback to students should be…

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Goal-referenced	○	○	○	○	○
Actionable	○	○	○	○	○
Personal	○	○	○	○	○
Timely	○	○	○	○	○
User-friendly	○	○	○	○	○
Manageable	○	○	○	○	○

Q3 What feedback strategies do you suggest teachers should use to improve student learning?

_____

XI. Elements to Count in the Student's Grades

Q4 Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following items regarding what counts in
student grades.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Groupwork such as group projects and presentations	○	○	○	○	○
Homework	○	○	○	○	○
Attitude	○	○	○	○	○
Effort	○	○	○	○	○
Student motivation	○	○	○	○	○
Class participation	○	○	○	○	○
Summative assessment	○	○	○	○	○
Formative assessment	○	○	○	○	○
Extra credit/Bonus questions	○	○	○	○	○
Attendance	○	○	○	○	○
Punctuality	○	○	○	○	○
Honesty	○	○	○	○	○

Q5 How do you establish fair grading practices in your classroom?

XII. Grades Reflecting Current Levels of Achievement

Q6 Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about teachers' role in assessment. Teachers should...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
provide multiple opportunities for assessment to all students.	○	○	○	○	○
involve parents in the reassessment process.	○	○	○	○	○
request the student to complete activities that would help him/ her relearn the material before reassessing.	○	○	○	○	○
provide multiple versions /forms of the standards-based assessment.	○	○	○	○	○
place a time limit on assessment.	○	○	○	○	○
include only latest results of multiple assessment opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○
average assessment scores to calculate grades over a period of time.	○	○	○	○	○

use their professional judgment in grading.	○	○	○	○	○
drop a student's lowest results when assessing the same learning.	○	○	○	○	○
drop a student's earliest results when assessing the same learning.	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 What process should a teacher have in place before a student can be granted the opportunity to take a reassessment?

Q8 How should a teacher involve parents in the reassessment

Appendix H-2

Table H-2-1

Open-Ended Coding Themes

Color Theme	Theme
Blue	Goal-Reference
Purple	Components of The Grade
Yellow	Multiple Reassessment Opportunities
Green	Feedback

Table H-2-2

Open-Ended Analysis of Responses

Feedback	**Goal referenced**	**Components of the Grade**	Multiple Reassessment Opportunities	**Feedback**

Q3 – What feedback strategies do you suggest teachers should use to improve student learning?				
I think one-to-one conference with students after summative assessment and written formative feedback that includes positives and improvement areas on exit tickets can improve student learning.				One-to-one conference
One-on-one conference works best for me as I can focus on the selected target/ topic according to the individual differences/ levels of learning .	focus on the selected target/ topic			focus on the selected target/ topic
Weekly or Bi-weekly check ins with students.				Weekly/Biweekly
personal/individual conference, group conference, reflection, challenged activities, motivation				Personal/individual Conference
Feedback should be educative in nature. Feedback should be given in a timely manner. Feedback can be given verbally, non-verbally, or in written form.				Timely manner
Provide feedback that assists understanding. Therefore, if the student has specific errors, point them out towards their goal, whether it is the proficiency scale	point them out towards their goal			that assists understanding

(assessment) or the learning target (assignment)				
Fair Grading	**Blue/Goal referenced**	**Components of the Grade**	**Reassessment**	**Feedback**
Q5 – How do you establish fair grading practices in your classroom?				
The learning goals and targets should be clearly identified and conveyed to students and the lesson aim to achieve the learning targets. The assessment must also assess whether the student has achieved the learning target. For this to happen, the assessments should be created first. The lessons also adhere to the learning targets to make the assessment and grading fair. Homework, classwork and behavior should also not be part of grade.	Goals and targets should be clearly identified	homework, classwork and behavior should also not be part of grade.		
Based upon students' ability to reach the goal set for each unit/chapter	goal set for each unit/chapter	reach the goal set for each unit/chapter		
Standard based summative and formative assessments, using proficiency scales to grade.	Standard based summarize and formative assessments using proficiency scales to grade.	Standard based summative		
n/a				

individual practice/ work, group practice/ work, formative/ summative observation/ assessments, More than three summative assessments.			More than three summative assessments.	
Teacher search for fair and accurate grading. Establish clear criteria for graded work. Grade students as individuals.		Establish clear criteria for graded work Grade students as individuals.		
I try very hard to make students accountable for their own learning. We start at unpacking the standards, to understanding what it takes to get to mastery, then opportunities for reflection. I also have open discussions for students to provide feedback to me as well. This year we began using proficiency scales and they are proving to be useful as well as fair.	At unpacking the standards/ proficiency scales	proficiency scales		to provide feedback
Make the students in charge of their learning. Provide proficiency scales to the students/checklists and allow students to follow their progress.	Provide proficiency scales	Provide proficiency scales		
Reassessment				
Q7 – What process should a teacher have in place before a student can be granted the opportunity to take a reassessment?				

Provide [practice] opportunities, time, material, coaching, independent learning, monitor progress.			Provide [practice] opportunities,	
The student must go back and review and show their knowledge by completing the summative assessment again.			Review and show their knowledge	
The student must complete the revising or practice/activities to earn the opportunity to take the reassessment.			Revising or practice/activities	
Teachers should provide opportunities for students to review material prior to reassessment			opportunities for students to review material	
Students need to complete an assignment or task before given the opportunity to take a reassessment.			Complete an assignment or task	
Should complete remediation work and complete it by the given deadline before they can take a reassessment.			Complete remediation work deadline	
A process to relearn/reinforce material prior to reassessment.			Process to relearn/reinforce material	
Parent Involvement				
Q8 – How should a teacher involve parents in the reassessment process?				
By sharing the assessment with parents and discussing their children's strengths and weaknesses. It's			Sharing the assessment keep the parents in the picture	

important to keep the parents in the picture about the remediation work provided and how students will complete it. Most of it would be done at home so parents involvement becomes crucial.			about the remediation	
To encourage parents to review with the student at home			To encourage parents to review	
The parents should request for a reassessment and/ or take the responsibility to get the revising or practice work done. It's hard to get the younger students be self-motivated to retake the assessments or revise the standards			take the responsibility to get the revising or practice work done	
By keeping the parent aware of what's going on by using various methods of contact.			Keeping the parent aware	
Help them practice.			Help them practice.	
Explain to the family that the purpose of an assessment is to identify a child's [Mastery] abilities in everyday activities, to make decisions about a child's eligibility for intervention services, to develop an individual plan for the child and family, or to monitor child progress.			Explain to the family that the purpose of an assessment: intervention	
Teachers should have students explain the proficiency scales to parents and then teachers should help			Explain the proficiency scales to Students	

students understand what opportunities students will have in the future to relearn/reassess. As a result, students will be able to inform parents of their learning.			students will be able to inform parents	
Keep them informed about the process				
Parents should receive progress updates when their child is struggling or surpasses a milestone.			Progress updates	

Appendix I

ARTIFACT 9: PD NEED ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Introduction

Teachers are at the core of implementing major changes relevant to student learning. Before the introduction of standards-based grading (SBG) to the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), it is important to measure teacher capacity and readiness for the implementation. Teacher understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the relevant concepts and skills such as the "why", the "what", and the "how" SBG is implemented, is essential to successful implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to measure the degree of teacher knowledge of these essential concepts to provide appropriate support to increase the teacher's ability to teach and grade to the standards.

To be informed as a school leader and to better understand the teachers' views on the common core state standards (CCSS), I invited the teachers to participate in an online survey in July 2019. The survey explored the teachers' scope of training and familiarity with the CCSS which, in turn, shed light on their readiness to teach and grade to the standards. The information gathered will help guide our efforts in planning meaningful PD activities.

The Goal

The goal of the survey was to assess the teacher's readiness and attitudes towards SBG. Specifically, we wanted to have an understanding of teachers' familiarity with SBG practices, familiarity with the CCSS and related concepts, PD and training they may have experienced, and their perception of the resources they may need to support implementation. Westerberg (2016), Berger et al. (2014), Redmond (2019), and Hanover Research (2015) suggest exposing teachers to a deep understanding of the standards and standards-related practices as a significant early step in the implementation of SBG. They also suggest allocating needed time for teacher development, collaboration, and reflection. Therefore, the survey was intended to capture teacher perception of what teachers already know about the standards and the resources available, and what they need to learn and have towards the implementation of SBG.

Methods

The survey was opened on July 10 and July 22 of 2019 through Qualtrics, a free web-based survey administration platform. All 26 IAD teachers received an email and a link to respond to the survey and results were compiled automatically on Qualtrics. Three reminders were sent to teachers via email to encourage participation. To capture various dimensions of school readiness to implement SBG, multiple-choice, and nominal Likert scale-based questions were used in the survey, in addition to one open-ended question. Likert scale questions serve to capture a spectrum of responses to a question thus illustrating how varied the responses are.

The survey consisted of twelve questions, ten of which were multiple-choice questions and two were extended response questions. Some of the Likert scale multiple-

choice questions were in matrix form containing 4-11 questions in each matrix (Appendix A). Some questions were adapted to meet our IAD needs from a national survey conducted by the Education Week Research Center in 2013 to measure teacher sentiments towards the implementation of SBL(Education Week Research Center, 2014).

The respondents were 18 teachers from all grade levels and subjects at IAD. However, the majority of the respondents were teachers of general education and math. Less than one-third of the teachers were assigned to foreign language instruction, religious studies, or the arts. The respondents had various levels of teacher experience (Table D-1) with the majority having at least two years of experience.

Table I-1. *Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience*

How long have you been teaching?	Percentage
0-1 year	18%
2-5 years	47%
More than 5 years	35%

Results

The survey results were indicative of the scope of teacher familiarity with the CCSS and SBG practices, PD activities they experienced, and the resources they believed they needed to transition to SBG.

Familiarity with the CCSS

Teachers were split in terms of the extent of their familiarity with the CCSS (Table I-2) and the level of mastery of related concepts such as unpacking and prioritizing the CCSS, standards-aligned learning targets, proficiency scales, and formative and summative assessment (Table I-3).

Table I- 2. *Teacher Familiarity with the Common Core State Standards*

Question	Unfamiliar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
Common Core State Standards in Mathematics	25%	6%	31%	38%
Common Core State Standards in Language Arts	27%	13%	47%	13%
Next Generation Science Standards	38%	19%	31%	13%
Delaware Social Studies Standards	40%	27%	27%	7%

Table I-3. *Teacher Familiarity with the Following Concepts*

Question	Unfamiliar	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
Unpacking the Common Core Standards	25%	25%	44%	6%
Prioritizing the Common Core Standards	19%	25%	44%	13%
Setting SBL targets	13%	25%	44%	19%
Proficiency learning scales	13%	31%	44%	13%
Summative assessment	13%	13%	44%	31%
Formative assessment	6%	19%	44%	31%

Familiarity with Standards-Based Grading Practices.

Teachers were not clear about what a student's grade should include. Many believed behavior, attendance, and class participation should be part of the grade (Table

D-4). The results reflect teacher grading practices are a mixture of learning habits (class participation, attendance, and behavior), learning practices (homework, extra credit assignments, exit tickets, and formative assessment tasks), and summative assessment (benchmark exams, portfolios, and projects).

Table I-4. *Teachers' Perception of Grade Components*

Which of the following you agree must be a component of a student's grade?	Percentage
Homework	40%
Class Participation	82%
Behavior	40%
Attendance	40%
Exit Tickets	35%
Benchmark exams	71%
Extra credit/Bonus	47%
Formative assessment	65%
Summative assessment	76%
Student portfolio	24%
Student projects	71%

Professional Development Experiences

The survey also indicates that 81% of the teachers received training pertinent to the standards in the past with various lengths of exposure (Table I-5). However, even though 86% of the teachers received at least two days of training relevant to the CCSS, 33% were either unsure of the quality of the training or believed such training was not of high quality (Table I-6).

Table I-5 *Time spent on CCSS Professional Development*

Approximately how much time have you spent in training or PD for the Common Core State Standards?	Percentage
Less than one day	14%
One Day	0%
2-3 days	36%
4-5 days	7%
More than five days	43%

Table I- 6. *Sufficiency of Past CCSS Professional Development*

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? My training for the Common Core State Standards has been of high-quality	Percentage
Strongly agree	20%
Somewhat agree	47%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%
Somewhat disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	0%

In terms of the schoolwide readiness for implementing standards-based learning, assessment, grading, and reporting, more teachers believed the school is ready to implement SBL(40%) than those who believed the school was ready to implement standards-based assessment, grading, and reporting (27% in each case) (Table I-7). This probably reflects the fact that the standards-aligned curricula for language arts and math had already been introduced for learning in the year before conducting the survey and,

therefore, teachers felt comfortable teaching the curricula albeit with challenges in aligning assessment and grading to the standards.

Table I-7. School's Readiness to Implement the CCSS

Question: The school's readiness to implement items below (5 is most)	5	4	3	2	1
Standards-based learning	20%	20%	47%	13%	0%
Standards-based assessment	20%	7%	60%	7%	7%
Standards-based grading	20%	7%	47%	20%	7%
Standards-based reporting (report cards)	20%	7%	47%	20%	7%

Resources Needed for SBG Implementation

Teachers expressed their wish list regarding the allocation of time, resources, and relevant practices for CCSS implementation (Table I-8). Access to Common Core instructional resources and collaboration between colleagues received the highest demand from teachers followed by the need for planning time, perceptions about change teaching practices, and expectations of students. Table D-8 also indicates that only a small percentage of teachers indicated they needed increased time for planning, teaching, and collaboration as one would expect when change is introduced. This may be indicative of a more serious issue, namely, that many teachers probably were unaware of exactly how much time would need to be invested for implementation.

Table I-8. *Needed Resources to Prepare for CCSS Implementation*

Which of the following would help you feel better prepared to teach the Common Core State Standards? Check all that applies.	Percentage
More information about how the Common State Standards will change my instructional practice	15%
More information about how the Common Core State Standards will change my expectation of students	15%
Access to curricular resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards	22%
More planning time	15%
More teaching time	13%
More collaboration time with colleagues	20%

Four teachers responded to the open-ended request for suggestions (Table I-9). Teachers could not rate the school readiness for implementing SBG, they understood the CCSS were new concepts to them and required new activities that they needed to be trained to teach. The response from teacher # 3 was particularly alarming. It indicated the respondent felt external help from experts is needed, a clear feeling that in-house training by local teachers would not be as productive. The comment also was a cry for placing all needed resources in the hands of teachers before implementation starts.

Table I-9. *Teacher's Responses to Open-Ended Question*

Teacher #1	"As I have come across with the state standards only during this academic year, I can't rate the school's readiness in the implementation."
Teacher #2	"I think teachers should be prepared for different activities for the lessons because the students need to learn and think in different ways."
Teacher # 3	"We need a detailed workshop from experts to learn how to apply/implement standard- based learning, assessments, and reporting before school starts. We need all the required resources to implement this new concept.
Teacher # 4	"The common core state standards for social studies is very vague...would help if someone could narrow them down."

The responses to the extended question were a few and may not be conclusive in measuring teacher sentiment or needs. Nonetheless, the extended responses indicate the following themes:

1. Teachers were not sure if the school was ready for implementation.
2. Teachers needed to alter their teaching strategies.
3. Detailed training from experts was needed.
4. The standards for social studies needed clarification.

In general, the survey indicates teachers were not exposed to time-sufficient training and PD relevant to SBG, they were not sure the school is ready to implement SBG, and they were unfamiliar with many of the terms and processes pertinent to SBG. The survey also indicates teachers lacked training in setting learning targets and developing rubrics for mastery learning of the standards. The training they received pertinent to SBG was insufficient or of poor quality.

Implications and Limitations

This survey was an assessment of the needs sought before implementing standards-based grading. It still serves to guide our efforts to plan our PD. PD is needed to develop deep meanings of the standards. It is also needed to design instructional activities aligned to the standards, standards-based formative and summative assessment, and standards-based grading.

The study has three implications:

1. IAD has significant PD needs that should be planned over an extended period to ensure preparation for SBLG.
2. Resources, especially time, need to be invested and critically allocated to deliver quality PD. CCSS relevant resources have to be made available to teachers for reference and use in the classroom.

3. The survey indicates a need for using the expertise of outside professionals in delivering professional development.

Conclusion

PD is probably the most important activity that may affect teacher capacity building and the quality of student learning. The survey was very helpful in assessing the teachers' readiness and attitudes towards SBG. We now have a better understanding of teachers' familiarity with the CCSS and SBG practices. We also have a better idea of the professional needs of teachers and the level of support they need in terms of time and resources to build their capacity. I believe the survey should have addressed the teachers' perception of their morale and attitudes towards the shift to SBG. It should have also addressed their perception of student and parent sentiment. These two aspects would have helped in the design of relevant professional development.

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References

Education Week Research Center. (2014). *From adoption to practice: Findings from a national survey of teachers*. https://www.edweek.org/media/ewrc_teacherscommoncore_2014.pdf

Hanover Research. (2015). *Best practices for standards-based grading*. Retrieved from https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Best-Practices-for-Standards-Based-Grading.pdf

Westerberg, T. R. (2016). *Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading: What to Stop, What to Start, and Why It Matters*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Appendix I-1

Survey Instrument

Teachers' Survey of Preparedness to Implement the Common Core State Standards at IAD

Q1 What grade level(s) do you teach? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Preschool
- ☐ K-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-8

Q2 How long have you been teaching?

- ○ 0-1 year
- ○ 2-5 years
- ○ More than 5 years

Q3 Which of the following best describes your current teaching assignment? Check all that apply.

- ☐ General Education (all subjects)
- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ Science
- ☐ English Language Arts
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Other

Q4 Which of the following you agree must be a component of a student's grade?

- ☐ Homework
- ☐ Class Participation
- ☐ Behavior
- ☐ Attendance
- ☐ Exit Tickets
- ☐ Benchmark exams
- ☐ Extra credit/Bonus
- ☐ Formative assessment
- ☐ Summative assessment
- ☐ Student portfolio
- ☐ Student projects

Q5 Please rate your overall familiarity with the Common Core State Standards?

	Unfamiliar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
Common Core State Standards in Mathematics	○	○	○	○
Common Core State Standards in Language Arts	○	○	○	○
Next Generation Science Standards	○	○	○	○
Delaware Social Studies Standards	○	○	○	○

Q6 Describe your familiarity with the following concepts:

	Unfamiliar	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
Unpacking the Common Core Standards	○	○	○	○
Prioritizing the Common Core Standards	○	○	○	○
Setting SBL targets	○	○	○	○
Proficiency learning scales	○	○	○	○
Summative assessment	○	○	○	○
Formative assessment	○	○	○	○

Q7 Have you received any PD or training related to the Common Core State Standards?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q8 Approximately how much time have you spent in training or PD for the Common Core State Standards?

- ○ Less than one day
- ○ One Day
- ○ 2-3 days
- ○ 4-5 days
- ○ More than five days

Q9 To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
Overall, my training for the Common Core State Standards have been of high quality

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

Q10 On a 5 -point scale (5 is most ready) how do you rate the school's readiness to implement the following?

	5	4	3	2	1
SBL	○	○	○	○	○
Standards-based assessment	○	○	○	○	○
Standards-based grading	○	○	○	○	○
Standards-based reporting (report cards)	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 Which of the following would help you feel better prepared to teach the Common Core State Standards? Check all that apply.

- ☐ More information about how the Common State Standards will change my instructional practice
- ☐ More information about how the Common Core State Standards will change my expectations of students
- ☐ Access to curricular resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards
- ☐ More planning time
- ☐ More teaching time
- ☐ More collaboration time with colleagues

Q12 Please use the space below to indicate any suggestions or thoughts you may have regarding standards-based learning, assessment, grading, and reporting.

Appendix J

ARTIFACT 10: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

At the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), we have been exploring ways and means to improve our student learning. The lack of resources in our school has not hindered our efforts to raise the bar of achievement expectations for our children. Even though we are not mandated as a private school by state law or district regulations to teach the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), our teachers and administrators are committed to avail to our children SBL with the understanding that student mastery of the standards will be communicated clearly and accurately to all stakeholders through a standards-based system of grading and reporting.

As the school leader who is spearheading the change, I believe that grounding the transition from traditional grading practices to standards-based grading (SBG) in research and scholarly literature will enable me to understand well the theory and concepts underpinning SBG and will help me in making sound decisions regarding best implementation practices and strategies. The purpose of this literature review artifact, therefore, is to improve my knowledge, as a school leader working on the implementation of SBG in a private elementary school setting, of the theoretical foundations of SBG, the benefits that can be reaped from its implementation, and the best strategies for its implementation.

To serve this purpose, this synthesis of the literature will focus on SBG practices in the classroom and the implementation strategies of SBG at the school level. Within the context of SBG practices, I will address the purpose of grading, the difference between

SBG and traditional grading practices, acceptable and incompatible practices, and the benefits that can be reaped from SBG. In addressing the implementation of SBG, I will cover the strategies employed, including PD, parent buy-in, technology support, and grade book and student report cards. I will also address the role of the school leader in SBG implementation, factors that shape implementation, and the challenges facing implementation.

Research and Reference Collection Methodology

The research content for this review of literature is driven by the purpose for which it was created. My school is taking a major strategic step in moving to implement SBG. This is a relatively new trend in public education which is a fact that guided the timeframe of my research of the literature. In my collection and referencing of resources, I focused on the following domains of resources:

1. Books authored by notable scholars on SBG who have written extensively on the subject and who are still actively leading the movement to implement SBLG. These include O'Conner, Guskey, Marzano, Reeves, Wormeli, and others.
2. Scholarly articles that were written by many of the scholars above in non-peer-reviewed journals on the subject of SBG or other relevant subjects.
3. Empirical studies presented in peer-reviewed journals
4. Doctoral dissertations depicting empirical research.
5. Reports created by research institutions

SBG Grading Practices

The Purpose of Grades

The overarching purpose of grading according to many scholars seems to be communicating student achievement to stakeholders. O'Conner (2018) explains that grades can serve many purposes. They can be used for instruction, communication with stakeholders, administrative purposes, and guidance. O'Conner (2018), however, voices his objection to employing all these purposes when grading and reporting and suggests that "communication is the primary purpose that fits with what grades are- symbols that summarize achievement over a period of time" (p. 19). Muñoz and Guskey (2015) indicate that the purpose of grading is to describe how well students have achieved the learning objectives or goals established for a class or course of study

Austin and McCain (1992) reported their findings of a survey of 292 school districts concerning the purpose of grading to be:

- To report student achievement
- To measure student academic growth
- To assist teachers in planning for instruction
- To evaluate school programs used to promote learning for planning purposes.
- To assist in student motivation for learning
- To help teachers affecting student behavior management
- To reward students for their achievements

Guskey (2105) notes that teachers, in general, agree all these proposes are essential. However, teachers do not seem to agree on a single purpose as the most important, nor do they agree on ranking these purposes in the order of priority. The result

is they end up achieving none very well and no single reporting instrument can serve all these purposes altogether (Austin & McCann, 1992). Guskey (2015) suggests that stakeholders in any school should come to a consensus as to what purpose of grading they should have to design the appropriate reporting tools to report grading.

Standards Bases Grading vs. Traditional Grading

The literature provides many definitions to SBG that share a common theme, namely, that grading should measure what students should know and be able to do at each grade level in reference to the learning standards. For example, Heflebower, Hoegh, Warrick, Hoback, and McInteer (2014) define SBG as "a system of assessing and reporting that describes student progress relative to standards" (p. 3). O'Conner (2018) defines SBG as "grading that accurately portrays student proficiency/mastery" (p. 26). Beatty (2013) defines SBG as "an approach to assessment and reporting in which scores are attached to the specific learning objectives of a course, rather than to assignments or tests" (p. 1). This last definition is broad in the sense that it is connected to the objectives of any course of learning and not necessarily the k-12 standards, but it also spells out the roles of tests and scores as tools to measure mastery of the objectives. Since student mastery of the learning objectives changes over time, the scores to measure mastery will also change over time as well.

In the SBG system, the achievement is tied to the standards and is based on the principle that grades should be accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning (Guskey, 2011; Muñoz & Guskey, 2015; O'Connor, 2018; Reeves, 2011). The goal of grading is to focus on student mastery of the learning objectives rather than accumulating points (Zimmerman, 2017). Therefore, evidence of mastery only will count

towards the grades. Student practice, learning habits, and the learning process will not contribute to the grade.

The traditional grading system, on the other hand, is defined as one where "students acquire points for various activities, assignments, and behaviors, which accrue throughout a grading period" (Marzano & Heflebower, 2011, p. 34). In traditional grading, the teacher adds up the points and assigns a letter grade. A variation of this theme is to keep track of percentage scores across various categories of performance and behavior and then translate the average percentage score into a letter grade or simply report the average percentage.

Hanover Research (2015) draws a contrast between SBG and traditional grading in terms of the functionality of both systems.

The report explains that SBG offers students multiple opportunities of learning the standards, followed by formative feedback, corrective learning, and assessment. This cycle repeats until the students master the curriculum. This contrasts with traditional learning environments in which limited learning opportunities and assessments are offered. Academic mastery indicators and scores are mixed with other mastery enablers such as attendance and good behavior.

The visual below Table J-1 (O'Conner, 2018, p.307), illustrates the difference between SBG and traditional grading.

Table J- 1. *Standards Bases Grading Vs. Traditional Grading*

	Traditional Systems	Standards-Based System
1	● Based on assessment methods. ● One grade per subject	● Based on learning goals/standards. ● One grade for each learning goal ● Subject grades only if required
2	● Often norm-referenced or a mix of norm and criterion-referenced ● Percentage system (101 levels) ● Criteria often unclear or assumed to be known	Criterion-referenced standards Proficiency-based (limited number of levels, usually two to five) Publicly published criteria/targets
3	● Uncertain mix of achievement, attitude, effort, and behavior. ● Penalties and extra credit used include group scores	● Achievement only. ● No penalties or bonuses ● Individual evidence only
4	● Everything scored included, regardless of purpose ● Homework major factor	● Summative assessments only ● Homework rarely included
5	● Everything scored included, regardless of when ● Multiple assessments recorded as average, not best	● More recent evidence emphasized ● Reassessment without penalty
6	● The mean is the measure ● Grades "calculated"	● Metrics, including median and mode, used sparingly ● Grades "determined" using professional judgment
7	● Varied quality of assessments ● Some evidence only in teachers' heads	● Quality assessments only ● Data carefully recorded
8	● Teacher decides and announces	● All aspects discussed with and understood by students

Note. Reprinted from "*How to Grade for Learning*", by O'Conner, K., 2018, p. 307, Corwin Press.

As can be understood from Table B-1, SBG is based upon three principles (Marzano and Heflebower, 2011; Townsley and Buckmiller, 2016; Beatty, 2013). First, grades must have meaning. In traditional grading, teachers typically merge scores from major exams, compositions, quizzes, projects, and reports, along with evidence from homework, punctuality in turning in assignments, class participation, work habits, and

effort. The result often is a grade that is impossible to interpret accurately or meaningfully (Muñoz and Guskey, 2015). Second, teachers must provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding based on the given feedback. In other words, students should be permitted to continue to learn until they can demonstrate they have learned the standards. Third, grades should communicate their understanding of the standards or learning objectives without mixing the other variables such as effort, good behavior, or rate of progress (Beatty, 2013).

Acceptable Practices Called for by SBG

Formative and summative assessments. SBG practices hinge on the understanding of formative and summative assessment. Harlen and James (1997) and Schimmer, Hillman, and Stalets (2018) distinguish between the two. Formative assessment is knowing about students' existing ideas and skills, and recognizing the point reached in development and the necessary next steps to take. Formative assessment, therefore, is essentially feedback both to the teacher and to the student about present understanding and skill development to determine the way forward. It is used while instruction is occurring.

On the other hand, summative assessment has a quite different purpose, which is to describe learning achieved at a certain time report to parents, other teachers, the students themselves, and, in many cases, to other interested parties such as school boards. It has an important role in the overall educational progress of students but not in day-to-day teaching as does formative assessment (Harlen & James, 1997). Typically, summative assessment is employed at the end of an instructional episode. The purpose of

summative assessment is to make an overall judgment in a specific area of learning at a specific moment in time (Schimmer, Hillman, and Stalets, 2018).

The balance between the formative and summative purposes of assessment is similar to the relationship between practice and games. Typically, players are not judged for practice since this is a repeated process involving continuous corrective feedback and leading to the game. Likewise, students must not be judged or graded for practice. It is only when they finally play the game that their performance is judged and recorded. Therefore, the literature on SBG agrees that summative assessment constitutes the core of the grade, and formative assessment should not be included in the grade (Reeves, 2011; Guskey and Bailey, 2001; Schimmer et al., 2018; O'Conner, 2018; Marzano, 2013). Fisher, Frey, and Pumpain (2011) explain, "when practice work is part of the overall grade, students don't get valuable glimpses into the understanding. Instead, students do whatever it takes to submit the work correctly the first time, even if it means copying from a peer" (p. 47).

Summative assessment should be credible and designed to meet the cognitive levels demanded by the standards. To assure mastery of the standards, Lalley & Gentile (2009) suggest that the summative assessments and subsequent grading must employ standards-based multiple and parallel forms of criterion-referenced tests, with corrective exercises and retesting as needed. This will demonstrate the knowledge of the content and the mastery of the skills for the learning targets associated with the standards.

Formative feedback. Formative feedback is defined as "information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behavior for the purpose of improving learning" (Shute, 2008, p. 153). Almost everything teachers do

in responding to assessment can be classified as formative feedback. Black & Wiliam (1998) caution against classroom practices where "the giving of marks and the grading function are overemphasized, while the giving of useful advice and the learning function are underemphasized" (p. 142). Schimmer et al. (2018) suggest that formative assessment identifies the gap while formative feedback provides the next steps for closing the gap.

In SBG, formative assessment is not graded. Rather, it used to generate feedback to direct or correct performance and learning. Wiggins (2012) explains must be *goal-oriented*, keeping the learning standards at the forefront of the discussion; *actionable* to inform the learner of the steps or actions he or she must do next; *personal* in the sense that it connects with the learner as a person and makes him or her identify with the feedback; *timely* in the sense that the appropriate time is chosen as to when to give the feedback; *user-friendly* avoiding language or jargon that is difficult for the learner to understand; *ongoing* in that it must be consistently flowing to correct and direct learning; and *manageable* by the learner considering the learner's age and the appropriate size and magnitude of the corrective feedback.

Formative feedback should be available in many forms in the classroom after every act of formative assessment. It should also be provided to parents and students in a designated space on the report card. However, feedback must be positive in content and tone. Negative feedback approaches in which students are compared with one another, the prime purpose of which is to invoke student competition instead of personal improvement, must be abandoned. Negative feedback will only have the effect of making the "low-achieving" children feel they lack the ability and will never be able to learn (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Retakes and makeup tests. To improve student learning, students are granted the opportunity to retake tests they have failed or missed. Wormeli (2011) argues that "our mission is to teach so that students learn, and we shouldn't let their immaturity dictate their destiny" (p. 26). The way to prepare students for their adult life is to allow them to redo assignments and assessments. Irresponsible, forgetful, and inattentive students need us to be in their face more not less. Marzano and Heflebower (2011) recommend that "as the school year progresses, teachers should allow students to upgrade their scores from previous grading periods. Giving students second chances to demonstrate their understanding of particular concepts can help them achieve subject mastery (Deddeh, Main, & Fulkerson, 2010).

However, retakes must be administered appropriately to prevent the waste of time or the unnecessary increase in teacher load. Some school districts have adopted exam retake policies to regulate and encourage responsible retakes of exams (Fisher et al., 2011). These policies involve signed agreements with parents and sufficient time and practice assignments before a makeup assessment is administered. For example, Hanover Research (2015) cites a sample of a five-step process for creating individualized reassessment plans as indicated in Figure J-1.

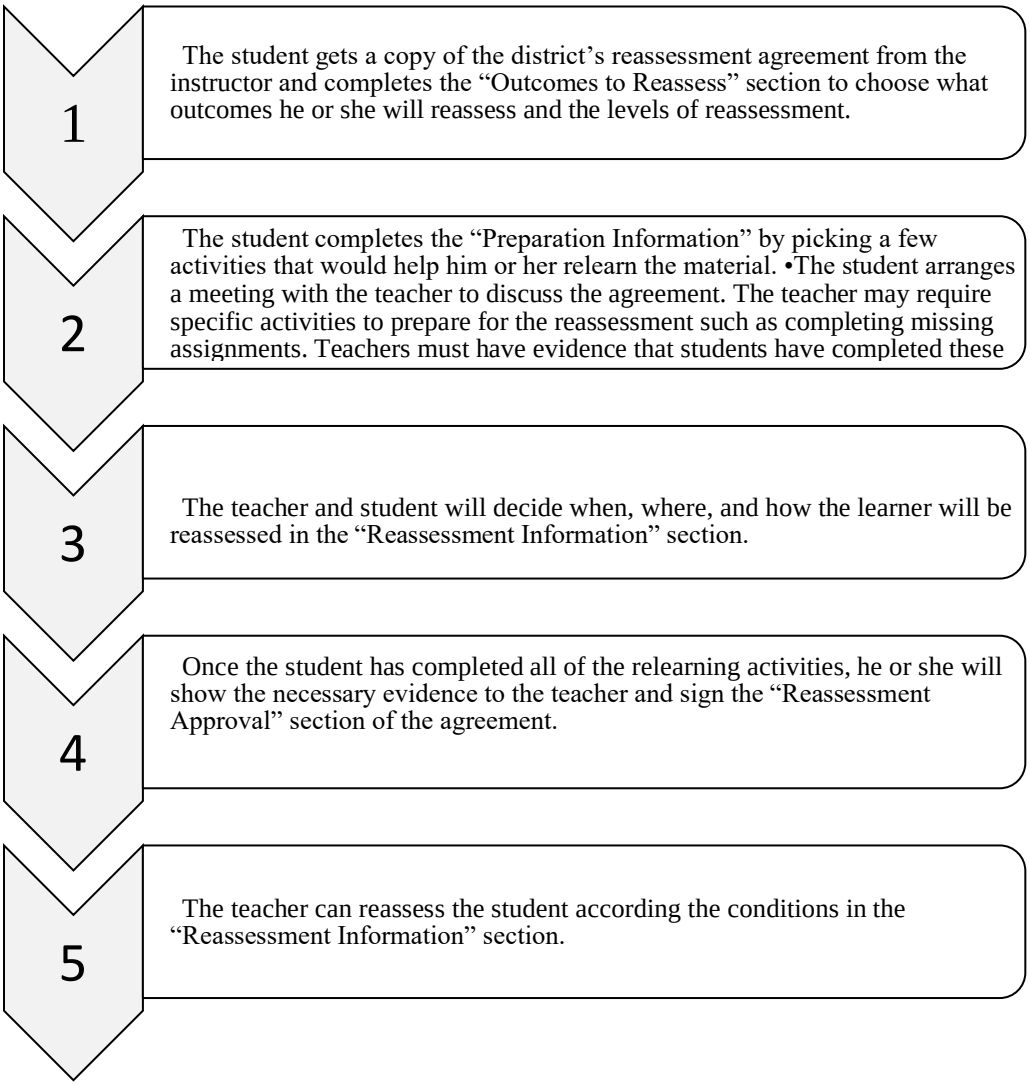

Figure J- 1. Retake policy and procedures.

Adapted from Best practices for standards-based grading. Hanover Research, 2015. https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Best-Practices-for-Standards-Based-Grading.pdf

Practices that are Incompatible with SBG

Percentage-grades. In SBG, grades must not be based on points and percentages (O'Conner, 2018; Reeves, 2011). Guskey (2013) argues that percentage calculation is unfair since the percent scale with a 60% passing score is skewed and gives a higher

probability for student's failure. He argues that "despite their popularity, percentage grades are difficult to defend from a procedural, practical, or ethical perspective" (p. 72). . Teachers who use percentage grades typically set the minimum passing grade at 60 or 65. The result is a scale that identifies 60 or more distinct levels of failure and only 40 levels of success. In other words, nearly two-thirds of the percentage grading scale describes levels of failure. The subjectivity stems from the fact that no clear meaning is drawn to the distinction between failing with 50% and failing with 20%, for example.

The unreliability of percentage grades was evident as early as 1912 in a research study by Starch and Elliot (1912) that involved 147 English teachers who were given two papers to grade. The ranges of their percentage grades were 64 and 98 on the first and 50 to 97 on the second. The wide ranges of grades were attributed to teachers' variable focus on elements of writing. To counter the claim that grading an English essay was subjective by nature, Starch and Elliot (1913) gave a geometry paper to 128 teachers and the scores showed a greater variation with a range between 28 and 95. The study notes that some teachers gave partial credits for partially correct work and others looked only for the correct answers.

It is worth noting that in the Starch and Elliot studies teachers were not given specific rubrics for grading. However, even in the presence of rubrics, with 100 different possible marks to assign, grading will be likely to vary and thus be inaccurate. The research of Starch and Elliot (1912) was replicated a century later by Brimi (2011) who examined the reliability of the grading by English teachers in a single school district. While the grading method was left up to the teacher's discretion in the Starch and Elliott studies without any grading rubrics or any specific performance indicators to use, the

ninety high school teachers graded the same student paper following PD sessions in which they were trained to use NWREL's "6+1 Traits of Writing". The participants were instructed to construct a 100-point rubric, assigning point values to each trait. To examine how reliable grades were, data were analyzed for the reported scores on a 100-point scale. The scores ranged from 50-96 for 73 participants. Guskey (2015) suggests that the variability indicates that even if one accepts the notion that there are 100 distinct performance levels as percentage scoring implies, well-trained teachers cannot distinguish accurately between those percent levels.

Homework inclusion. There seems to be a consensus among proponents of SBG not to include homework in the grade. Westerberg (2016) suggests the reliability of the grade is questionable when parents assist their children in doing the homework and when students may copy the work from their peers. In the absence of teacher supervision, it is quite impossible to ascertain homework as a measure of student mastery of the concepts taught in the classroom. In SBG, homework is viewed and treated as practice and, therefore, should not be included in the grade (Marzano, 2011; O'Conner, 2011, 2018; Schimmer, 2016; Westerberg, 2016; Reeves, 2011; Guskey, 2015; Vatterott, 2011). O'Conner (2011) notes that counting homework in the grades makes it effectively summative, not formative. That may affect struggling students negatively because they may develop lasting misunderstandings that will be difficult to fix and may also discourage them from doing their homework.

Vatterott (2011) notices that "defense of grading homework is particularly troublesome because it reveals problems inherent in the bigger grading scheme" (p. 61). If the grades are averaged, high scores for homework completion tend to mask poor

performance on other measures. Also, when homework is counted in a student's grade, practice and checking for understanding (formative assessments) are mixed with actual demonstrations of learning (summative assessments) and produce a murky picture of progress (Vatterott, 2011).

Arithmetic averaging. Arithmetic averaging of assessment scores is abandoned in SBG. Marzano recommends getting rid of the omnibus grade that includes the averaging of scores on everything that takes place in the classroom and, instead, to score specific measurement topics (Marzano & Heflebower, 2011). Consideration should be given to the most recent score rather than averaging all scores. For example, a student who scores a 1 on a 1-4 scale at the beginning of a marking period and a 2.5 at the end of the same marking period should have a grade of 2.5 since the later grade shows the most recent measurement of the student mastery of the standard as figure J-2 shows.

Measurement Topics	Score	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0
Number Systems	2.5								
Estimation and Mental Computation	1.5								
Ratio/Proportion/Percent	3.5								
Patterns	2.0								
Equations	2.5								
Data Analysis	1.0								

Figure J- 2 *Considering the Most Recent Grade*.

(From Marzano, R. F., & Heflebower, T. (2011). *Grades that show what students know*. Educational Leadership.

Grading to the curve. Teaching and assessment, therefore, must benefit all children (Lalley & Gentile, 2009). Guskey (2011, 2015), and O'Connor (2011) caution against using a curve to adjust student grades, a practice usually conducted when students perform poorly on a test. Guskey (2015) explains that the normal bell-shaped curve describes the distribution of randomly occurring events when nothing intervenes. To illustrate this point, he brings up the example of experimenting with crop yield in agriculture where we would expect the results to resemble a normal curve. It is expected that in the absence of fertilizers, some fields will produce a high yield, some will produce average yield, and some will produce low yield. However, when the fertilizer is applied as an intervention, it is expected that all fields will produce high yield, otherwise, we may have to examine if the fertilizer used is effective. Teaching is a similar intervention. We teach to make all students meet the learning targets. When some do not meet the standards, we intervene to make sure they are at grade level and we will not be content until every student is at the high end of learning.

O'Conner (2011) reiterates the same point by explaining that we should acknowledge that all students may get an A or an F and we should not interfere to preserve the student rankings or to make sure the scores are normally distributed. We should acknowledge and celebrate achievement when all students meet the targets and receive an A, and we should intervene when all students do not meet the targets and receive an A.

Student behavior, class participation, and effort. O'Conner (2018) suggests student behavior, class participation, and effort are important student attributes that are conducive to learning but should not be included in arriving at the grade because "they

are difficult to define, even more difficult to measure, and easy for students to manipulate" (p. 105). Children who exhibit bad behavior or who may be characterized as overactive may master the skills and know the content to be learned in their grade level. Including their behavior in the grade distorts the message to be learned about their mastery. Conversely, children who are well behaved and who may exert acceptable effort may not necessarily master the skill learned or meet the standards. To credit these children for their behavior or effort distorts our understanding of their level of mastery. Furthermore, O'Conner (2018) argues that to include class participation in the grade, is to reward or penalize the student twice, once for behavior and once for achievement, since good behavior is presumably correlated to achievement. Also, some students may know the standards but may not feel inclined to participate. Some may be introverts who are not expressive of their thoughts or ideas but master the standard or concept learned. Therefore, including behavior, effort, or participation in the grade is unfair.

The Benefits of SBG

The literature notes the benefits of SBG in improving student learning and promoting change in schools. SBG is a necessary and logical step to ensure full implementation of standards-based learning. In addition to facilitating learning, teachers need to attend to the inseparable practices of assessing, grading, and reporting to the standards. If student learning strategies are based on the standards, then designing standards-based formative and summative assessments and grading assessments contribute to the full implementation of standards-based learning.

Scriffiny (2008) suggests seven reasons for adopting SBG in schools. The approach lends meaning to grades. People are used to norms and practices they feel comfortable with

and SBG prompts schools and teachers to examine or even challenge those practices. SBG puts valves and checks on grading, thus ensuring accountability. It reduces paperwork and helps adjust instructions. The approach teaches the school community what quality looks like. Finally, SBG may serve as a launchpad to other reforms in schools and districts.

Transparency and clarity in learning, assessing, grading, and reporting is a core benefit of SBG. According to DeWitt (2016), transparency is needed in teaching, assessments, grading, and reporting. Clarity is also needed in conveying the description of student achievement. One would consider as laughable the idea of giving a single number to describe various aspects of a human physical condition such as weight, height, diet, and exercise. Yet, this is similar to what teachers do daily when they mix various measures of student achievement into a single number or grade (DeWitt, 2016, October 14).

SBG has a direct impact on student achievement. In a study conducted over two years in 11 at-risk schools in Kentucky, Pollio and Hochbein (2015) and Hochbein and Pollio (2016) reported that compared to traditional grading, there was a stronger correlation between SBG and standardized test scores. Students who had SBG practiced in their classrooms received A and B scores and performed higher on state tests. Also, the number of those who passed the state exam was doubled, with average scores exceeding the state average. This stronger correlation was also evident among minority and economically disadvantaged students.

Not only does SBG have a positive effect on student achievement, but it has an impact on teaching and learning practices. Knight and Cooper (2019) noted that among high school teachers utilizing SBG, planning, instruction, and assessment become more

meaningful and led to satisfaction as teachers found themselves more able to help students grow and develop growth mindsets. Teaching and learning became more purposeful to both teachers and students.

Implementation of SBG

In the following section, I will focus on successful strategies for the implementation of SBG that have been suggested by the literature. Some have been suggested by authors and scholars in recently published books and some have been reported in studies that covered implementation in schools and districts. I will also address in the same section the factors contributing to successful implementation, the role of the school leader, and the challenges to successful SBG implementation.

Strategies for Implementing SBG

The literature addresses SBG's best implementation practices in districts and schools. For example, Westerberg (2016), Berger et al. (2014), and Heflebower et al. (2014) suggest a multi-year plan for implementation. Hanover Research (2015) and Redmond (2019) describe successful district and school implementation practices. Townsley (2014) and Brookhart (2011) report their successful personal involvement and experiences in implementing SBG at the district and school levels The literature suggests strategies for implementation with an emphasis on the importance of PD, stakeholder buy-in, the use of technology to implement and support SBG, and the creation of a standards-based grade book and a report card to report grades to students and parents. These strategies are not exhaustive of the literature and may be subject to contextual limitations and adaptations when extended to a private school setting such as mine.

A four-year plan is suggested by many scholars with variations in the details. Westerberg (2016), Berger et al. (2014), and Heflebower et al. (2014) suggest a gradual plan that prioritizes strategies to be carried out at the district or school levels. Hanover Research (2015) produces a descriptive report that surveys successful strategies implemented by districts and schools. And, finally, Redmond (2015) reports the outcomes of his study in a study he conducted in California with the participation of an expert panel of K-12 principals. For this study, a sample of 14 public school principals who spearheaded their school's efforts to implement SBG responded to questions about SBG's best implementation strategies. The study represents a population of 10,473 K-12 public schools.

A four-year plan. Westerberg (2016), Berger et al. (2014), and Heflebower et al. (2014) suggest a sequence of strategies from the moment a district or school chooses to move in the direction of SBG until full implementation. They stress the on-going nature of implementation as a process and the importance of collaboration among stakeholders at all stages of implementation. Highlighted in this four-year plan is the need for meaningful and continuous PD and the need for communicating with parents to secure buy-in.

Laying the groundwork. Berger et al. (2014) and Westerberg (2016) suggest starting first by focusing on inquiry and communication. This is a stage where the school's transition team researches the literature for best practices, merits, and benefits of SBG. Berger et al. (2014) suggest laying the groundwork by facilitating faculty member conversations about the Common Core State Standards since teachers need to understand the standards deeply before they attempt to teach or assess students.

During this stage, the school leader needs to create a sense of urgency, build a case, and establish a vision for changing the approach to grading. The focus must be on why the change is needed and why the current traditional approach to grading is not conducive to learning. This is also the stage where the leading team establishes a timeline and clear steps towards implementation and decides whether implementation will be from top to bottom or from the ground up (Berger et al., 2014). Heflebower et al. (2014) suggest that, in conjunction with curriculum planning that involves prioritizing the standards and developing proficiency scales, school leaders should draft a communication plan. This plan, to be used when the school becomes ready to announce the transition, will utilize current communication resources to reach out to stakeholders

Capacity building. In the second stage, the school should focus on the capacity building of teachers and administrators through PD and training on the tenets of standards-based education (Westerberg, 2016; Berger et al. 2014). Heflebower et al. (2014) also suggest creating a PDP for teachers and allocating time to facilitate opportunities to get supportive collegial feedback on learning targets and assessment plans. Other types of PD to support SBG such as differentiated instruction, checking for understanding techniques, and student-engaged assessment, need to be included in the PDP activities. This PD program should be designed to create an environment of support and healthy accountability for new teachers. It must also ensure that teachers are using the grading approaches described in the faculty grading guide consistently.

Creating structures and policies. In the third stage, schools should work to develop standards-based education units of instruction, align instructional materials, and develop core believes (Westerberg, 2016). Structures and policies for SBG are created to

address policies that may include preparing a faculty grading guide, a common grade book, a report card, templates for learning targets, and assessment plans. Plans for communication with parents and structures for student intervention and support, aligned with the standards, are also created in this stage (Berger et al. 2014). Heflebower & Hoegh (2014) suggest that schools should encourage small-group experimentation to improve teacher grading practices before implementation. Book studies to keep teachers and administrators abreast about recent research and relevant information should be organized. Conducting visits to other schools that implemented SBG successfully can give teachers and leaders a clear vision as to what to expect when they start their implementation.

Implementation. And finally, implementation will take place. This is the stage where implementation is announced, and report cards are introduced. Training for teachers, formative assessment activities, the school communication plan, monitoring of implementation, and providing ongoing support will become an ongoing process (Westerberg, 2016). Berger et al. (2014) identify benchmarks that teachers and school leaders can expect at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced phases of implementing SBG and suggests a rubric can be created to guide the evaluation of the gradual implementation.

Successful district and school experiences. Redmond (2019) and Hanover Research (2015) address successful experiences that have taken place in districts and schools. Similar to the four-year plan described above, these experiences highlight the use of PD, parent buy-in, and the use of technology as important strategies for implementing SBG in schools and districts. However, no suggestions of a gradual process

or a sequence of steps are made. Redmond (2019) identifies successfully implemented strategies, ranks them in terms of importance, describes the methods, processes, and contents utilized for implementation. Hanover Research (2015), on the other hand, examines successful implementation in districts and schools and cites samples of exemplary practices.

In his study, Redmond (2019) found that the five most important strategies for transitioning from traditional grading to SBG as ranked by the experts were:

1. "align student information system with standards-based grading;
2. teachers lead the planning and implementing of standards-based grading and reporting;
3. PD for teachers.
4. educate parents on standards-based grading and reporting, and
5. coaching from peers and experts." (p. 71)

The strategies that have been successfully implemented in districts and schools as reported by Hanover Research (2015), on the other hand, without ranking, were:

1. "Establishing evaluation standards
2. Establishing learning targets
3. Developing and selecting assessments
4. Developing reassessments
5. Assess late submission of student work
6. Promoting stakeholder buy-in and engagement" (Hanover Research, 2015, p. 8).

While both studies stress the importance and the need for PD and stakeholder buy-in as strategies, the use of technology and support software was ranked as the most important in Redmond (2019) but, on the other hand, was not mentioned in the Hanover research report. One reason for that maybe the recent advent of technology platforms in support of SBG.

PD. Strategies 2,3, and 5, mentioned as high ranking in Redmond (2019), are different manifestations of PD. To support SBG implementation, the panel of principals suggested many conventional formats for PD. The panel viewed monthly staff meetings, designating school calendar days for training, arranging for half-day PD events, and utilizing training days before and at the end of the school year when classes are not convening to build teacher capacity. Similar practices were implemented in successful school districts (Hanover, 2015). For example, a school district considered hiring outside consultants to train all teachers involved in the transition's early stages. In the early stages of implementation, teachers learned the basic concepts of SBG, the rationale for shifting from traditional grading to SBG, and the research and literature to support SBG. Such training was followed up throughout the implementation processes with additional training sessions, leading to successful implementation.

It is noteworthy that the literature on effective PDP planning corroborates what many schools and districts have chosen to do to implement SBG. Guskey & Yoon (2009) indicated that successful PD efforts relied on outside experts to bring new ideas founded in the research. The outside experts were often authors of the literature or participants in education research who presented their experience and findings directly to the teachers they were training. Guskey & Yoon (2009) note that when decisions about PD were

primarily school-based, “school staff members paid lip service to the use of research” and “were more interested in designs that drew on research about practices that they already felt were ‘good’ than in designs that were producing results” (p. 496).

Time allocated to PD is a crucial factor to success. Guskey & Yoon (2009) explain that time must be well organized and structured to focus on content or pedagogy or both. Time must also be devoted to included significant amounts of structured and sustained follow-up after the main PD activities.

Parent buy-in. Process and content are addressed when planning for parent buy-in (Redmond, 2019; Hanover Research, 2015).

Redmond (2019) suggests utilizing conventional parent gatherings such as parent-school nights, parent-teacher organization meetings, and Title 1 parent meetings to communicate the message about SBG. He also offers sending home flyers and newsletters with SBG content and news and posting them on its web page. Teachers may also utilize communication tools they usually use in their classrooms, such as Class Dojo and e-mails. In terms of the message content, Redmond (2019) suggests that various SBG concepts, practices, the rationale for the change be disseminated to parents. Finally, Redmon (2019) emphasizes the need to educate parents on how to read and interpret the various components of the new standards-based report card. Similarly, Hanover Research (2015) suggests that, in the early stages of implementation, districts should disseminate to parents written guides explaining the basic tenets of SBG and providing samples of typical graded student work to visualize the new grading practices.

To assure parents, the school team must establish channels to address parent concerns. (Hanover Research, 2015) also recommends that districts provide parents with

information about the grading system as early as possible. In addition to discussing the system with parents and students the year before implementation, districts should address this issue in back-to-school sessions, parent-teacher association meetings, or open houses during the year of implementation.

Districts can also host focus groups for parents, teachers, and students to determine ways to improve descriptions of the new grading system, clear up misconceptions, and develop buy-in strategies for the adoption of this system. This strategy is especially effective for honors students and their parents who are concerned that the process may affect GPAs and potential scholarship opportunities. Incorporating unions and their leaders at the beginning of the implementation stages of the adoption of the process can also strengthen buy-in from teachers, students, and parents.

Use of technology to support standards-based grading. Redmond (2019) stressed that what he descrided as "the mandatory functions" of the (SIS) should be aligned to SBG. To achieve that alignment, four mandatory functions a student information system must have:

(a) an option to use standards-based report cards,

(b) ability to indicate what standards each assessment aligns with,

(c) ability to synthesize a grade on the standards-based report card based on assessment results placed in the grade book, and

(d) the ability to show student growth from formative and summative assessments (P. 72).

Redmond (2019) also emphasized the need for teachers to have handy guidelines that illustrate how to post assignments, input grades, and track student progress in the grade book on the SIS.

The SBG grade book and report card. Recording, maintaining, and presenting evidence of achievement in a grade book and a report card is very important to communicate grades to stakeholders properly. O'Conner (2018) and Guskey, Swan, & Jung (2011) suggest similar models of the teacher grade book and report card, where the structure reflects the classroom and school grading practices. Both agree the report card should be elaborative but not to the extent that it burdens teachers and parents. Both stress the importance of feedback and of reporting achievement grades separately from the learning habits and process.

O'Conner (2018) suggests that for every student, the grade book should contain the list of all essential (prioritized) learning standards against the summative assessments administered for each standard. A score on a 1-4 scale is suggested to be used. Formative assessments may be listed selectively and checked but must not be assigned grades.

O'Conner (2018) suggests that the report card, on the other hand, provide information on student achievement of specific learning goals and have an expanded format with information about behaviors, learning skills, and work habits. Report cards should allow teachers to write an anecdotal summary comment on each student's strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps. However, he suggests that two sides of letter-size are a sufficient maximum for a report card so that parents will not be overwhelmed. This size also is sufficient to ensure teachers will not be overburdened

with grading and reporting which may make them unable to teach in the weeks before report cards are due.

Guskey et al. (2011) suggest the standards-based report card should include only four to six reported standards per subject. Only reporting standards will appear on the report card. These are brief titles representing the strands or domains under which all learning standards are listed. Teachers will teach and grade to the learning standards as expected for every grade and record their summative assessment in their grade book. The reporting, however, will be condensed on the report card to reflect performance on the strands or domains. If parents wish to dive for details the teacher can always refer them to the grade book. Again, as is the case with the model suggested by O'Conner (2018), this is to make grading meaningful to teachers and parents and not overwhelming. For teachers, this format eases the burden on grading and reporting and for parents, the reported standards do not turn into a lengthy document that is difficult to understand.

Guskey et al. (2011), as is the case with O'Conner, suggests the report card for the elementary school level contains content, process, and progress. The content refers to academic performance and assumes a 4-6 scale associated with a grade comment ranging from "struggling" to "exemplary". The process refers to a level of consistency and quality of the learning/work habits and assumes a scale of +++, ++, and + representing consistently and accurately, often and fairly, and rarely and poorly, respectively. Learning habits should be reported for each subject since children may behave differently in different classes.

Guskey et al. (2011) suggest every subject should include two types of feedback comments. The first is common to all students and describes in detail what the students

have learned in the reporting period and the other describes suggestions for student improvement. Furthermore, the purpose of grading and a statement about the intentions and use of the report card should be placed on the first page of the report card.

Factors Impacting Successful Implementation of SBG

In this section, I will address factors in the district and school settings that may contribute to a successful implementation of SBG. Finally, I will address some challenges that serve as barriers that may face SBG implementation.

The role of the school leader. The literature highlights the role the school leader in lending support to his or her team and in communicating a coherent message to stakeholders. Setting the tone for change and communicating that change to all segments of the school community is at the core of the leader's role. Berger et al. (2014) suggest that "of all the students engaged assessment practices, standards-based grading is perhaps the most complex" (p. 338). Successful implementation requires strong coordination and communication. The school leader has the duty and responsibility to formulate the message and make the case for SBG and to support the teachers by providing meaningful and adequate PD. Teachers may need to change their perceptions about grading. A better understanding of the essential principles of grading is needed for grades to accurately reflect students' achievement (Tierney, Simon, and Charland, 2011). Teacher training to develop deeper meanings of grade-level standards and learning targets as the foundation for classroom instruction must receive priority in the leader's efforts to plan and implement SBG. Also, leaders can support teachers with curriculum maps, a faculty grading guide, standards-based grading software, and communication with families and district and college officials were appropriate. Leaders will also need to set up systems

and structures for academic support and remediation to address student needs (Berger et al., 2014).

Cross & Rice (2000) suggest that the instructional leader in a standards-based school needs to attend to four elements of effective standards-based instructional leadership: vision and commitment, high expectations and trust, effective communication, and the courage to seek assistance. Principals need to have a personal vision for the school that is focused on high student achievement. They need to share their vision of academic success for the school in terms that parents, teachers, and students can understand. The vision must permeate every aspect of the school so that it can be said that the principal demonstrates a commitment to the vision and is relentless in preparing students to read and reason and discover the satisfaction of learning. The effective school leader should be able to transfer his high expectations of student achievements to teachers by making sure they understand the academic and performance standards as attainable goals that, in turn, set high expectations of student learning. Cross & Rice (2000) also suggest that high expectations cannot be met without an atmosphere of trust without which the school will not be able to enhance motivation for all to work together to meet those expectations.

As effective communicators, school leaders make a difference in student achievement by focusing attention on student learning and motivating the staff to do the same. Communication is most effective when it takes place in the field where teaching and learning occurs. Therefore, the school leader can communicate best when he or she spends much of the working time in classrooms talking to teachers and students and ensuring that standards are reflected in teaching and learning.

Finally, principals are not necessarily experts in all fields. They need to work on their own PD. When the need arises, they need to collaborate with leaders and professionals to seek advice to improve their understanding and focus on topics relevant to their profession; such collaboration promotes a strong beginning to building a learning community of progressive instructional leaders (Cross & Rice, 2000).

Other factors and contributing to successful implementation. Bay, Rey, & Reys, (1999) address common critical factors that contribute to the effectiveness of teachers in implementing a standards-based mathematics curriculum in their classrooms. Working under a project with more than 100 middle school teachers in 23 school districts to implement four newly introduced standards-based mathematics curricula, researchers were able to collect teacher reflections on what they believed was working well in implementing standards in mathematics and arrived at 10 common factors (Bay et al., 1999). Some of these factors serve as strategies that may lead to successful implementation. Awareness of these factors and the development of ways to address them will increase the likelihood of success. These factors may serve well to assist in implementing any major standards-based change initiative in districts and schools and may well help in SBG implementation. These factors are:

1. Administrator support. This support of standards-based curricula took many different forms such as accepting higher noise levels in mathematics classrooms as students engaged in cooperative learning, obtaining resources such as manipulatives and calculators, and giving teachers time to attend workshops and collaborate.

2. Opportunities to study. Training sessions on each aspect of the curricula were held. In those sessions, teachers worked collaboratively to align instructional planning to the standards. Without time to learn and collaborate, teachers would not have become confident in their ability to implement the new curricula.
3. Sampling the curricula. This refers to piloting as many parts of the curricula as possible. Piloting allowed teachers to test the waters of standards-based reforms before they were fully implemented.
4. Daily planning. Teachers had to reflect seriously on the pacing of units because students were exposed to new materials and often tasks performed in the classroom required more time than originally planned for.
5. Interaction with experts. Teachers requested to hear from experts such as national leaders and authors of a given curriculum. They also welcomed experienced teachers to share their experiences.
6. Collaboration with colleagues. This was evident in planning together, trying out new materials in their classrooms, and in sharing experiences and success stories.
7. Incorporating new assessments. Teachers found that they had to invest a great deal of time in just becoming familiar with the new forms of assessment. They had to learn how to use a scoring guide to grade a project and needed more time to evaluate student work since the new projects and journal writings were new phenomena to teachers and students.

8. Communicating with parents. Many teachers reported that they spent a lot of time educating parents and responding to their concerns. Their firsthand experiences at the meetings with parents helped parents better understand and appreciate just what standards-based mathematics is all about.
9. Helping students adjust. For most students, mathematics was synonymous with computation. Therefore, when students were placed in problem-solving situations that required them to read and write as well as think mathematically, they may not have felt they were doing mathematics at all. It took time for students to realize that these standards-based mathematics curricula included a great deal of mathematics in addition to computation.
10. Planning for the transition. School administrators made time available for meeting with elementary and secondary mathematics teachers to discuss plans for articulation across the grades with the ultimate goal of a smooth transition from middle school to high school mathematics.

Challenges to SBG implementation. Peters & Buckmiller (2014) and Guskey & Jung (2006) address challenges and barriers to implementing SBG. School leaders should foresee and be able to confront those barriers with thoughtful, well-reasoned, and practical strategies. Peters & Buckmiller (2014) studied three cases of school SBG implementation in which barriers to successful implementation surfaced. These barriers were reported by the school leaders and the teams who led the change. The first was the problem with student information and grading systems. A grading software and related online student information system have not yet sufficiently evolved to accommodate SBG. The software issue is addressed by Guskey (2015) from a different perspective.

With the predominance of percentage grading software, many parents and students who are accustomed to percentage grades assume software calculations are infallible and more precise than teacher professional judgment and therefore, are more reliable. However, reporting by the school leaders at the time of these studies is probably outdated with the development of many online grading and reporting platforms that serve SBG.

The second barrier described by Peters & Buckmiller (2014) was parents and community members who care much about having their children meet college admission requirements of high GPA's but do not realize it is more important to prepare their children well to get through college. These parents support their children by advocating for graded homework, extra credit and bonus points on tests, points for attendance and behavior. The third barrier is the tradition of grading and fear of the unknown. Resistance to standards-based grading appears to be related to long-standing cultural familiarity with traditional grading and parent's affinity to awards such as honor rolls and valedictorians. Finally, there is the fear of an implementation dip. This is associated with the newly developed misconceptions about SBG practices. For example, students and parents tend to perceive a diminished role of the homework because it is not included in the grade and is treated as a formative practice. Also, there is the assumption that resubmission of work and exam retakes constitute an overburden on teachers' shoulders.

To address these barriers, Peters and Buckmiller (2014) suggest leaders and leading teachers should strive to create a place for safe and honest conversations about their beliefs. They must also work to build a sense of urgency and mission around the essential objectives of education. Similarly, Guskey & Jung (2006) emphasize that challenges to SBG implementation can be resolved by always clarifying the purpose of

grading and the need for fairness and equity especially in the contexts of children of special needs and those of low social and economic status.

Conclusion

As noted above, the literature describes the concepts and the implementation experiences relevant to a trend in education that is gaining momentum in public districts and schools. As a school leader, I learned what grading practices should be implemented and what practices should be excluded in the classroom and at the organization level. To communicate a clear message to parents about student mastery in a standards-based classroom, grading and reporting must separate learning habits and processes from mastery of the standards.

Certainly, implementing SBG is a major incremental shift that requires multi-year planning and may not be done in a short time. Plans for implementation must include supporting teachers through an elaborate PD program that addresses standards-based learning, formative and summative assessment, and SBG. Support is also needed through equipping teachers with the necessary tools of technology to facilitate learning in the classroom and to assess and grade for learning. No implementation will succeed unless the stakeholders are involved in the process. Communication with parents and the recruitment of parents as active partners are indispensable strategies to achieve that. Involving students of all ages in learning about SBG will ensure that implementation will address their worries and concerns and will motivate them for learning. As a school leader, I learned how important it is for me and my team to remain focused on the standards as we teach, identify instructional goals, design activities, articulate feedback, verify that learning has occurred, and report to parents about proficiency.

Public schools and districts have tremendous resources in terms of curriculum and PD, availability of assessment and grading platforms, and, most importantly, expert educators who can plan, lead, and coach teachers towards successful implementation. However, I have not been able to come across literature that addressed implementation in a private school setting where resources of all types are meager or even unavailable. This puts an added burden on the school leader to utilize whatever resources are available at the school building to implement the strategies recommended by the literature. The implementation experience in a private school setting may be more daunting and difficult to accomplish. Nonetheless, maintaining the status quo of outdated and ineffective learning and grading practices is not an option and I, as a school leader, carry an important role to lead to make the essential change.

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Appendix K

ARTIFACT 11: MBL AT CSD-CASE STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on my summer 2019 internship activities in Colonial School District (CSD) and the learning experience I gained as I explored the transition of the school district from a traditional learning and grading approach to SBLG The activities put me at first hand with those who served to plan curriculum units, rubrics, report cards, and communication efforts with parents and stakeholders. This reflection will serve me well in drawing parallels and inferences about what strategies and activities can realistically be transcribed for implementation at my school, Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), and what implementation limitations and obstacles my school may encounter due to lack of resources.

Introduction

In the summer of 2019, I had the privilege of working under the mentorship of the Colonial School District Curriculum Supervisor, Dr. Nickolas Baker, to fulfill the internship requirement for the graduate course, EDUC 8080. The internship was also in the context of leading IAD into a similar successful transition from traditional learning and grading to SBLG. The activities I was involved in can be divided into three domains:

1. Interacting with the mentor, Dr. Nicholas Baker, Colonial School District instructional coaches, Colonial School District principals, a Data Service Center official, and Colonial School District teachers
2. IAD PLC meetings

3. Review of the literature on SBLG
4. Attending webinars to learn about SBG and to explore various SIS and LMS platforms

Process, Methods, and Procedures

The goal for the internship activities was to capture a full view of strategies, structures, and systems that CSD put together to serve the shift to SBLG, coupled with an understanding of the historical discussion that preceded that shift. I believe achieving this goal served me well to build a case study that will prove to be useful to my SBLG grading implementation project at IAD. The arrangements to interact with many of the educators were made by the mentor. I typically prepared and forwarded arrays of concerns and inquiries regarding CSD implementation of SBLG to my mentor who, in turn, forwarded these to the participants in preparation for our meetings. No formal structure was followed in the discussions with the participants and many follow up questions were dictated by the flow of the discussion to capture various aspects of SBL implementation. All interactions except one were conducted in the presence of the mentor who often participated in facilitating and guiding the discussion. My interaction with the official from the Data Service Center (DSC) was conducted on the vendor's premises, and the use of the center's technology platform to process grading and reporting was explained.

Connection to CSD's Vision and Mission

CSD's implementation of SBL is a natural fulfillment of its vision which addresses long-term goals in five domains (Handbook, n.d.). These domains are:

1. Safety, care, and supportive environment

2. Quality instruction focused on rigor
3. Differentiated PD and growth
4. An environment of innovation, inspiration, and pride
5. Technology-based learning experiences and content

These goals in the district's vision are translated into a mission of quest for excellence by promoting collaboration among all stakeholders and by "creating a supportive and positive learning environment in which every member is engaged, inspired, challenged and driven by integrity and a desire to create a better future" (Handbook, n.d.). The Common Core State Standards are rapidly permeating education in districts and schools across the nation and rigor is the salient theme introduced by the standards. It is, therefore, no wonder that the CSD community made a strategic decision to invest in standards-based learning. With the transition efforts underway to align instructions districtwide to meet the CCSS, CSD is diligently fulfilling its mission and rising to the expectations of its vision.

History

Colonial School District has effectively planned, implemented, and communicated a district-wide mastery-based approach to learning. After years of discussion that involved educators at the district and school levels, a structure was created to plan and oversee effective implementation**.** A District Steering Committee of teachers and coaches was formed in January 2015 with the understanding that SBL is a focus on learning rather than grading. In other words, grading is conducted to learn and to communicate achievement to stakeholders. The overarching goal was to promote SBL in terms of student growth towards the end of year benchmarks. The committee reviewed

many standards-based mastery rubrics including those of the Delaware Department of Education, and various rubrics created by districts throughout the country, e.g., Elk Grove School District in southern Sacramento County, California.

The Committee set learning goals in CSD schools that consisted of the following:

- aligning teaching and learning to the Common Core State Standards and evidence of proficiency
- communicating grade level expectations
- locating areas of strengths and weaknesses in student performance
- assessing for learning, not of learning

The committee also realized the need for tools and resources for effective implementation:

- a new report card system
- rubric creation
- various PD days
- a gradual implementation that starts with a District K-2 pilot in the year 2016- 1017
- Development of progress book

The committee created a four-year plan (Figure C-1) to spell out a gradual process that started with creating rubrics and MBL docs, followed by PD, piloting, leading to full implementation.

K-2	3	4	5
SY 16-17: PD and practice/piloting	SY 16-17: Work on rubrics and MBL docs	Sy 16-17: Work on rubrics and MBL docs	Sy 16-17: Work on rubrics and MBL docs
Sy 17-18 and beyond: full implementation	Sy 17-18: PD and pilot	Sy 17-18: Pd and Work on MBL docs	Sy 17-18: PD and work on MBL docs

	SY 18-19 and beyond: Full implementation	SY 18-19: PD and pilot	SY 18-19: PD and work on MBL docs
		SY 19-20 and beyond: Full implementation	SY 19-20: PD and pilot
			SY 20-21 and beyond: Full implementation

Figure K- 1. *Colonial School District 4-Year Implementation Plan*

CSD Structure and Systems

The implementation of MBL is executed coherently between professionals at the district level and school levels (Figure C-2). A District Steering Committee headed by the assistant superintendent directs the curriculum planning committee which consists of instructional coaches and curriculum supervisors. Instructional coaches plan units of instruction aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The instructional coaches also design the pacing of their units and develop rubrics of mastery for these units. The instructional coaches create benchmark assessments for every unit to be administered at the completion of instruction by the teachers in all elementary schools.

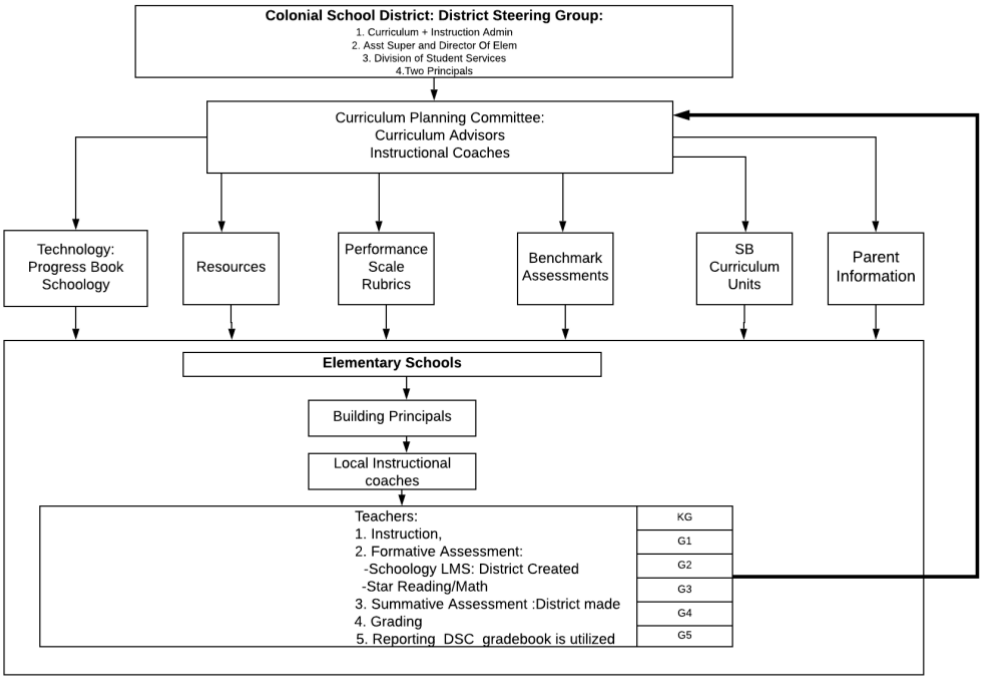


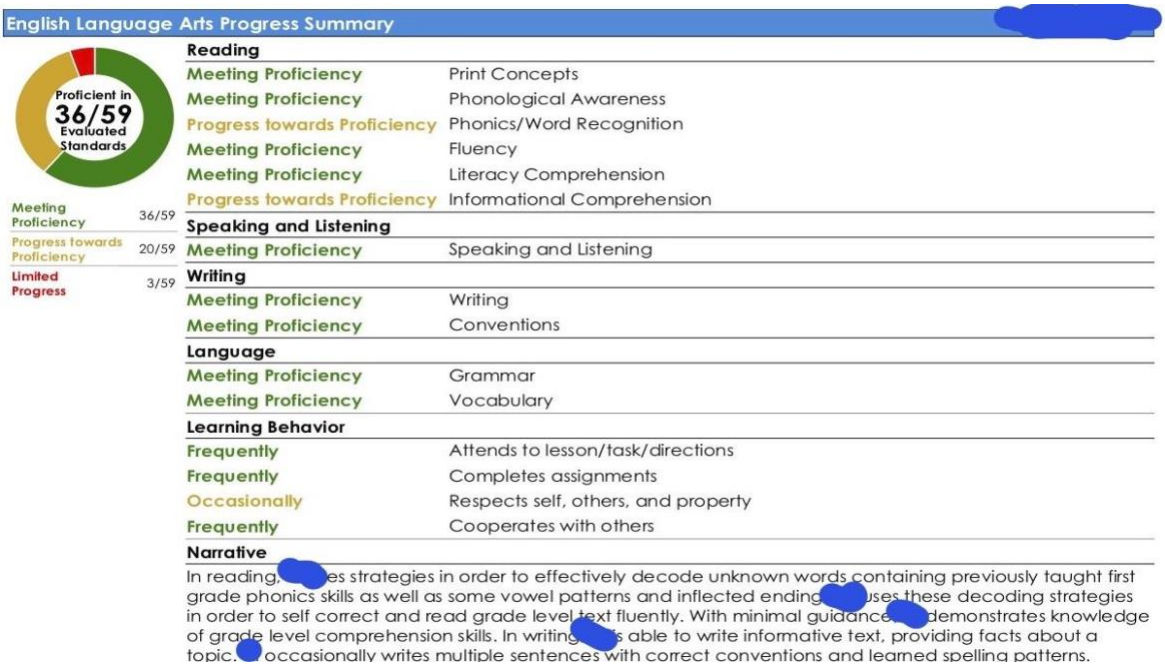
Figure K- 2 Colonial School District Schematic MBL Implementation Structure

The district supports the teachers in the classrooms in several ways. Instructional coaches create resources of instruction and formative assessment to be accessed by teachers via the learning management system, Schoology. They also provide district-wide PD tailored to enhance teachers' skills in implementing mastery-based learning in the classroom. District instructional coaches also consult with local instructional coaches to address any concerns or to respond to feedback from teachers in the classroom (Figure K-2).

Grading and Reporting

CSD uses a four-level proficiency scale, beginning, progressing, proficient, and beyond to score students' assessments and measure their mastery of the standards. Teachers use the Data Service Center's platform to input grades in their progress books. A color-coded standards mastery report card is generated with red, yellow, and green

assigned to “limited progress”, “progressing”, and “proficient”, respectively. The color green is also assigned to mastery “beyond” the learning target (Figure C-3).



English Language Arts Progress Summary

Meeting Proficiency	36/59
Progress towards Proficiency	20/59
Limited Progress	3/59

Reading	
Meeting Proficiency	Print Concepts
Meeting Proficiency	Phonological Awareness
Progress towards Proficiency	Phonics/Word Recognition
Meeting Proficiency	Fluency
Meeting Proficiency	Literacy Comprehension
Progress towards Proficiency	Informational Comprehension
Speaking and Listening	
Meeting Proficiency	Speaking and Listening
Writing	
Meeting Proficiency	Writing
Meeting Proficiency	Conventions
Language	
Meeting Proficiency	Grammar
Meeting Proficiency	Vocabulary
Learning Behavior	
Frequently	Attends to lesson/task/directions
Frequently	Completes assignments
Occasionally	Respects self, others, and property
Frequently	Cooperates with others

Narrative

In reading, es strategies in order to effectively decode unknown words containing previously taught first grade phonics skills as well as some vowel patterns and inflected ending uses these decoding strategies in order to self correct and read grade level text fluently. With minimal guidance demonstrates knowledge of grade level comprehension skills. In writing s able to write informative text, providing facts about a topic. occasionally writes multiple sentences with correct conventions and learned spelling patterns.

Figure K- 3 *CSD Sample Elementary School Progress Summary*

CSD Stakeholders

Parents

CSD makes a concerted effort to involve and educate stakeholders about the implementation of MBL. This involvement takes many forms and shapes. CSD schools engage parents in the discussion through workshops and presentations on MBL. Appropriate family-friendly material on MBL is made available to parents. CSD website is appropriately invested in communicating the message. Carefully designed video clips introduce parents to MBL. Family-friendly literature and infographics engage the visitors to the website in CSD’s efforts to implement MBL. A contact number and the email address of the curriculum supervisor are made available on the website. The literature

explains the shifts from grading to learning and from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset.

Union Leadership

CSD Steering Committee met with union leadership early in the transition to get their initial feedback. An agreement led to the creation of the teacher teams involved in creating rubrics, assessments, etc. The union leadership's position was that, as long as teachers were involved in the process and professional learning occurred around the standards, rubrics, and so on, then the union was supportive. CSD also ensured there was piloting the progress book application as well to address any implementation obstacles. Teachers' involvement in the development and feedback along the way ensured union concerns—if any—were met and supported.

Board of Education

The board policy was initially updated around grading. Then, the board had time to review and vote on it. A short presentation was offered to the board on the change as well. The board's approval of the policy around grading constituted the green light given to the district to proceed with implementing standards-based learning, assessment, and grading.

Reflection on CSD Implementation

In comparing CSD's journey of implementing SBG to the expected journey of IAD, I learned what works, what needs to be done, and what limitations a small private school embarking on a similar journey may face. But I also benefited from my examination of the literature to make suggestions for my school and to suggest some improvement ideas for IAD and for CSD. Such observations may help improve the

implementation of SBLG but these are my own interpretations, commensurate with my learning growth and reviewing of the literature, and it should not be construed as an expert opinion.

The structure CSD established connects many resources, addresses stakeholders, establishes effective systems, and builds a districtwide culture conducive to effective implementation. Teachers play important roles in producing and implementing mastery rubrics and they are able to give feedback continuously to local coaches and district coaches. They also play an important role in selling the SBG concept to parents and students. IAD should take a close look at CSD teacher experience to make sure all teachers buy-in, participate in the building process, and serve as ambassadors of SBG learning to the community.

CSD uses resources effectively to support implementation in all district schools. The use of the DSC platform for grading and reporting gives SBG implementation uniformity and constancy and instills harmony and a sense of ownership in the district community. Also, the use of Schoology as a learning management system to house learning resources and formative and summative assessments makes teaching and learning management less stressful and allows teachers to provide for learning differentiation. It also facilitates parent involvement in the learning process of their children

I believe the CSD report card serves the purpose of communicating student mastery levels of the standards to parents, teachers, and students. My suggestions for the improvement of the report card are as follows:

1. The portion of the student report card includes a circle resembling a doughnut within which the number of standards mastered is represented as a fraction of the total number of standards taught. This is somewhat confusing since parents will almost inevitably view that fraction as a percent grade. It may mislead children too as they compare each other and seek to label each other by rank.
2. The color code used to describe each mastery level is alarming to parents and children and may discourage children from trying harder. Red is associated with danger and failure. The "beginning" scale performance should not be marked red (Figure K-4).

1 Below expectations	2 Approaching expectations	3 Meeting expectations	4 Exceeding expectations

An alternative would be to use shades of green to note the progression from one level to the next (Figure K5).

1 Below expectations	2 Approaching expectations	3 Meeting expectations	4 Exceeding expectations

3. Learning targets should be modified for two groups of students, the gifted and those of special needs. For the gifted, mastery level 4 becomes mastery level 3, and a new more demanding level 4 is created. For special education children with IEP, level 4 becomes level 3. The report card, therefore, will

accurately reflect the student's mastery of the standards and of the learning targets.

Limitations to the Use of CSD Model at IAD

The CSD structure model is ideal for a school district. Dedicated instructional coaches at the district and the local levels worked together to plan, pilot, and to implement. At IAD, the privilege of using the services of instructional coaches is nonexistent simply because retaining instructional coaches as a layer for academic planning and counseling is not economically affordable. Planning starts with the administration, and teachers participate in creating the grading rubrics, planning PD, and implementing the approach in the classrooms. This places huge constraints and burdens on the teachers' shoulders and elevates the level of anxiety in the face of accountability before parents and the administration. To adapt, teachers must be provided with outside expertise and specialized PD to answer their questions and to guide them on this journey. The level and scope of accountability must be adjusted to meet the learning and growth needs of teachers as they implement this approach almost on their own time and on limited resources.

Conclusion

It took more than four years for CSD to transition fully from traditional learning and grading to SBLG. A structure and system were gradually put in place. Team or group work made the transition possible. The process transformed culture and led to the building of a very supportive mindset at the district and school levels. IAD must take notes from the teamwork, the transformation of culture and mindset to embark on a similar journey with limited resources. The realization that mobility to transform the

school is the best choice for student learning, and that the status quo is not an option, will make the school community pull together to make it possible.

Appendix L

ARTIFACT 12: WHITE PAPER

Implementing Standards-Based Grading at IAD

A White Paper by

Nidal Abuasi

University of Delaware
December 2019

INTRODUCTION

Standards-based grading (SBG) is essential to communicate student academic proficiency to all stakeholders accurately and fairly. As parents, you need to know how well your children perform to make informed decisions about interventions, enrichment, and school choice. As board members and administrators, we need to make schoolwide informed decisions that involve planning and resource allocation and will affect our children's learning and growth. As teachers, we need to have accurate grades to inform the modification and improvement of our teaching strategies. Students also need to know and understand their accurate grades to set learning goals and assume ownership of their learning. This paper is intended to inform our Islamic Academy of Delaware's (IAD) teachers, parents, administrators and the elected members of the Board of Directors that governs our school and the larger mother organization, the Islamic Society of Delaware.

We at Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD) initiated SBL(SBL) in the year 2018-2019. The initiative involved curricula, instructional strategies, and assessment. The school previously used Pearson's Reading Street and Envision Mathematics for ELA and mathematics respectively for eight years before it introduced EL Education and Eureka Math. Both curricula are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and structurally designed into modules and units to address the shifts and progressions called for by the standards.

As the school principal, I initiated the shift to the new curricula based on my desire and that of the school administration to change the entire school system to a SBL environment in conformity with the school vision, "to educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful and safe environment; providing rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens." We, at IAD, realize that the common core state standards were introduced to raise the bar for all students to create better college and work outcomes and establish a common bar by which all students could be measured.

Our Goal

Our goal is to implement Standards-Based Learning in our school. This implementation will be evident in curriculum planning, teaching strategies, learning practices, student assessment, grading, and reporting. We understand the transition to SBL is a very serious and challenging change that requires effort, time, and resources and, therefore, teamwork is necessary for success.

An essential component of SBL is to communicate a clear, accurate, and transparent message about student mastery of the standards to parents. Standards-based grading and reporting is the correct approach to communicating that message and IAD will implement this grading approach gradually starting with grades k-5 in the subjects of language arts and mathematics.

Our focus in implementing SBG at IAD will be on the following strategies:

4. Building teacher capacity by providing appropriate PD to our teachers utilizing our available resources.
5. Securing stakeholder buy-in to counter any challenges that may stem from concerns and objections by various segments of the community of stakeholders.
6. Using appropriate technology tools to facilitate learning, assessment, grading, and reporting to stakeholders.

Why We Need Standards-Based Grading

SBG is necessary to ensure full implementation of standards-based learning. In addition to facilitating learning, teachers need to attend to the inseparable practices of assessing, grading, and reporting to the standards. If student learning strategies are based on the standards, then designing standards-based formative and summative assessments to determine student need for intervention or enrichment, and grading those assessments ensure the full implementation of standards-based learning.

The Benefits of standards-based grading for teachers, parents, and students can be described as follows:

For Students:

- Learning targets are clearly defined and aligned with the standards.
- Students are offered multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency
- Students monitor their own progress toward the achievement of specified targets
- Specific feedback on progress helps build self-esteem, pride, and motivation for students.

For Parents

- Report card grades are less mysterious and have more meaning
- Parents are aware of exactly what their child knows, is able to do, and next steps for progress
- Parents know in what areas their child needs more support.
- Parents are empowered to increase their children's confidence and help their children set goals.

For Teacher

- Teachers know exactly where students stand in their progress toward learning targets and what support needs to be provided.
- Teachers of the same grade level have aligned expectations and standards.

Traditional Grading Vs. SBG.

With the percent-point and single letter grading (commonly known as traditional grading) system, many elements are combined to determine the student's grade – test scores, quizzes, completed homework, classroom participation, coming to school on time, extra credit – then, the average of the marking period's work is calculated as a percentage that correlates with a specific letter grade. Standards-based grading separates those elements. And while all elements should be addressed, parents will be able to see specifically if their child needs help with an academic concept or if the child can't remember to turn in homework. Instead of computing the arithmetic average of all assessments in a marking period, standards-based grading measures a student's mastery of grade-

level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. The visual below (Figure L-1) illustrates the difference between SBG and traditional grading.

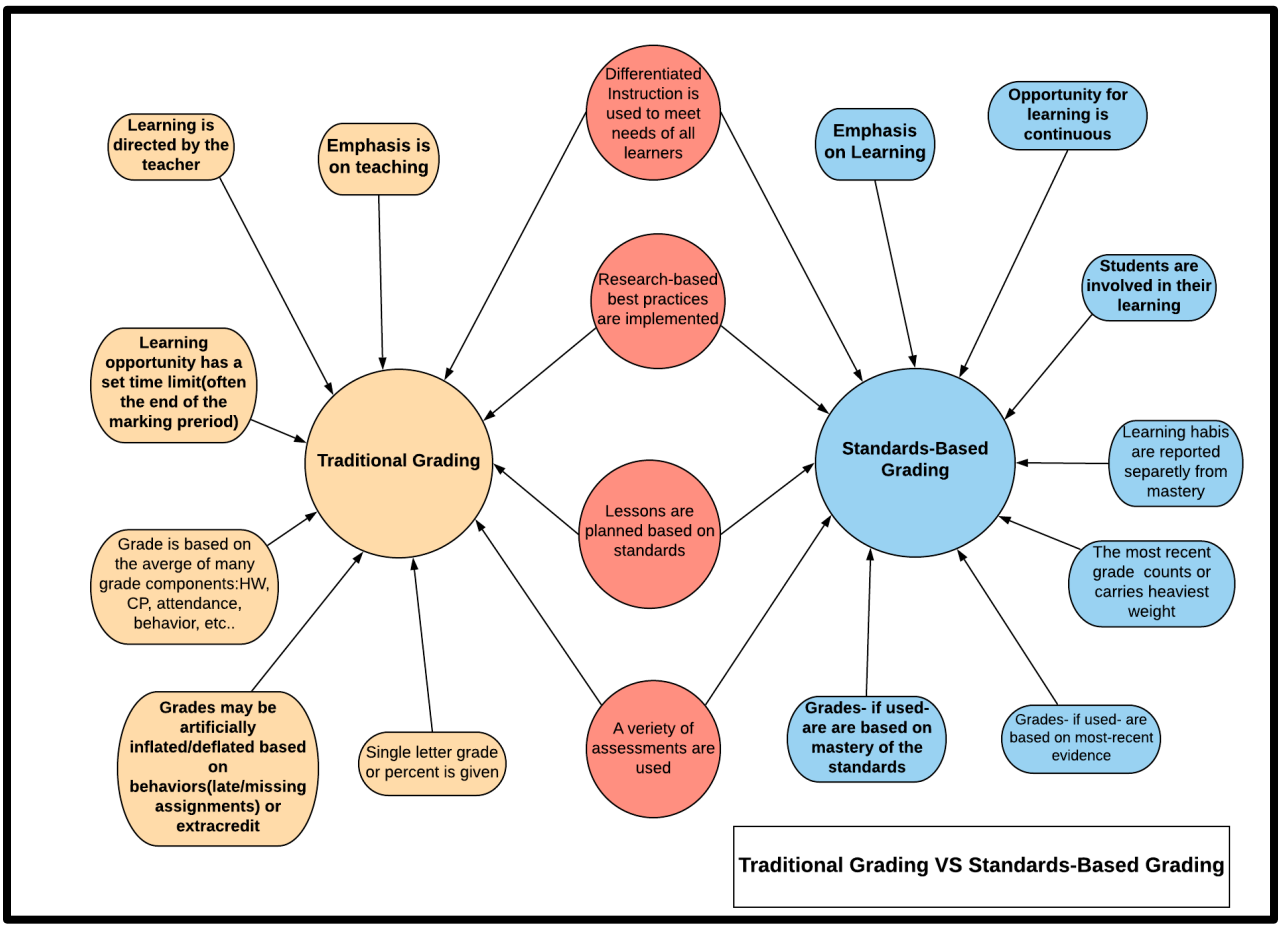


Figure L-1. Traditional grading vs. standards-based grading
(Adapted from *how to grade for learning, 2018)*

Our Current Approach to Grading

Our current grading system is in need of repair. It does not communicate fairly and accurately student mastery of the knowledge and skills taught at the grade level in the classroom. Here is an account of why our current grading system needs to be changed:

Unclear Message

Percent-point and letter grading approach, currently applied at our school, blend student mastery of the standards with the learning habits of students and, therefore, creates a “grade-fog” that obscures the extent of student learning of the knowledge and skills demanded by the standards. Percent-point and letter grading are prevalent at IAD as evident in the grade books of all grade levels posted on the school’s student information system and the report cards distributed to parents. Teachers combine learning habits with content mastery to create grades. The school grading policy stated in the parent handbook determines the weights allocated to homework, class

participation, quizzes, and benchmark exams (Table 1). When a student gets a grade, for example, 80%, one is not sure if the grade is the result of a perfect mastery of the content combined with poor homework submission, or if it's the result of poor mastery of the content with perfect homework and class participation effort.

Table L-1. IAD Student Grade Distribution

Grade Component	Percentage of Grade
Homework	15%
Classwork	15%
Formative Assessment	30%
Benchmark Assessment	40%

Grade Monetary System.

Implicit in the grade distribution are behaviors, projects, work ethic, neatness, handwriting, exit tickets, and bell work which can all contribute to any of the major categories making up the student's grade. In our school, we seem to be accustomed to a culture of extra credits and bonuses to boost grades. Before students commit to doing a task for learning, they often jump to ask, "what's in it for me" or "how many points is that worth". Grading mimics a monetary system where almost every student behavioral or academic activity contributes to the student's grade average. Homework is graded and a zero may be assigned to missing homework, and, therefore, students do not attend to their homework to learn or to receive feedback but to earn points. On the other hand, unless a student has a valid excuse, he or she may not make up a missing test and exams can rarely be retaken. When a second opportunity is given to make up a test or an assignment, the student is penalized for lateness or the retake.

Grade Inflation

The inclusion of the learning habits and learning practices such as class participation and homework, especially in the absence of grading rubrics, constitutes a grade phase shift upwards leading to grade inflation. For example, a comparison between the performance of students of some grades in reading and mathematics as reported on the school report cards at the end of the school year and the standardized Terra Nova test in May 2019 shows a substantial difference in student performance for the same group of students. While many students rank below the 50th percentile in either of the two subjects on the Terra Nova test, only two students received failing subject grades and. This disparity between percent grades and standardized tests is not limited to a grade level but spans all grades as the school data indicate. Similar results can be shown in comparing grade scores with Star Reading and Star Math assessment. In other academic subjects where no standardized assessments are administered, there is no frame of reference to accurately compare grades against and the need for standards-based assessment and grading is even greater.

Unhealthy Competition

Competition between students, often overlooked by some of us as parents, prevails within the school community. Many students strive to attain the top three grade-based school recognition awards as described in Table 2.

Table L- 2. *Grade Requirement for the Top School Academic Awards*

Award Category	Minimum GPA
Principal's Award	95-100%
Honor Roll	90-94%
Achievement Award	85-89%

Parents and their children who understand how the system works can often ensure their children will receive an award. Other families and their children are effectively excluded from the exercise of the award, leaving their children with bitterness, anxiety, and a de facto negative label as failing children. In my capacity as a principal at the helm of IAD, I have witnessed many times the frustration and agony of children who missed the required score for an award by a point or two and were fearful or ashamed of bringing home the bad news to their parents.

The competition becomes tense and very noticeable in grades 5 and 8 where students graduate from one school level to the next. Children compete to the fraction of a point to win the reputable valedictorian and salutatorian honorary positions where the winners are celebrated and usually given the honor of addressing the school community. In a culture of competition, when students compete for grades and not for learning, there is little room for successful collaborative learning as required by the standards.

Grading Inconsistencies

The student report cards on Alma contain a mixture of single percent scores and letter grades for each subject. Even though the report cards also contain standards mastery indicators that are marked on a 0-4 scale, these marks are inserted manually by the teachers without resorting to grading rubrics. Of course, in the absence of standards-based grading and rubrics, teachers use their professional judgment, but that creates grading inconsistencies. There are often disparities between the letter and percent grades on the one hand and marks reported for standards mastery on the hand. For example, a report card may indicate the student is an achiever with a calculated average of A in writing or math, but the standards indicators reflect marks of 1 or 2 because the teacher estimates this is the appropriate mastery level of the student on those indicators.

SBG Best Implementation Practices

Implementation in the Literature

Many scholars address SBG's implementation at the classroom, school, and district levels and suggested best practices and models. Figures (2-4) below show three example models for SBG implementation in schools and districts the literature addresses. The highlighted strategies are common among the models and are frequently suggested by the literature. IAD will introduce those strategies in the school's implementation. Specifically, PD, stakeholder buy-in, and the use of technology will be emphasized.

Model 1: A 4-year plan is suggested by Westerberg (2016):

The plan stresses gradual implementation to avoid errors or missteps. to allow for the organic growth of the new approach, and to secure the change in school culture and mindset.

Year 1: Inquiry and communication - Research the literature for best practices and the merits and benefits of the change to the SBG approach.
Year 2: • **Capacity building-Provide PD on the necessary prerequisite** • **Knowledge capacity** • **Educate students, parents, and board members**
Year 3: Development: work to develop standards-based education units of instruction and align instructional materials. Explore/create grading Software alignment
Year 4: Implementation will take place with on-going support and evaluation ongoing support will become an on-going process

Figure L- 2 *A 4-year Implementation Scheme*
*(*Adapted from *Charting Course to Standards-based Grading, 2016)*

Model II: Hanover Research Report

A report by Hanover Trust suggested the following strategies which have been implemented by schools and districts successfully. No time frame is suggested in this model but successfully implemented strategies are noted.

Classroom Strategies
• Establish grading principles for student evaluation
• Establishing learning targets
• Developing and selecting assessments
• Developing reassessments
• Assess late submission of student work
• Providing differentiated teaching in standards-based classrooms
District/Schoolwide Strategies
• Promoting stakeholder buy-in and engagement- Teachers- Through continuous PD Parents- Through workshops, information, and participation Students-Early education and empowerment

Figure L-3. SBG Implementation Strategies
(Adapted from Best SBG implementation practices, Hanover research, 2015)

Model III. Research Study.

Strategies for transitioning from the traditional grading approach to SBG were emphasized in a recent study conducted in California with the participation of an expert panel of K-12 principal srepresenting10,473 k-12 public schools. The participating principal led their schools successfully to full implementation of SBG. The five top-ranked strategies are listed in table 4.

• Align the student information system with standards-based grading;
• Teachers lead the planning and implementing of standards-based grading and reporting;
• PD for teachers;
• Educate parents on standards-based grading and reporting; and
• Coaching from peers and experts

Figure L-4. *Five Top SBG Implementation Strategies*
(as reported by Redmond, 2019)

Implementation at IAD

I, as a school leader, intend to implement SBG practices by focussing on PD for the teachers, parent and community buy-in, and utilizing appropriate technology tools for performance assessment, grading, and reporting. This approach is derived from our school needs as learned in our school survey conducted and shared with the teacher in the summer of 2019. It is also based on the literature models described above.

I. The Need for PD

The most important aspect of SBL and SBG takes place in the classroom. Teachers need the school support to build their capacity and to make implementation effective and also painless. At IAD, many of us, teachers and administrators, need to improve our conceptual understanding of SBG and the necessary prerequisite practices needed for its implementation such as creating mastery and grading rubrics and appropriately preparing and administering formative and summative assessments.

As teachers and educators at IAD, we have been participating in continuous professional activities since the school was established nine years ago. However, until our shift to SBL started a year ago, few PD activities were geared towards learning and implementing the standards. Carefully planned PD is needed to facilitate implementation. More than 50% of the teachers agree that they received less than three days of PD related to the standards, much less than the minimum of 30 hours recommended by researchers (Westerberg, 2016).

IAD aims at attaining teacher proficiency in standards related skills and practices. These practices and skills will include:

- unpacking and prioritizing the CCSS,

setting student learning targets,

- assessing student mastery of the CCSS using formative and summative assessment,
- grading assessments based on standards-based grading proficiency scales,
- and reporting grades.

II. The Need for Stakeholder Buy-In.

In order to implement SBG successfully, it is important to secure stakeholder buy-in and involvement. To that end, I plan to develop and implement a set of activities to ensure the continued involvement of stakeholders in the planning and implementation process. This will take place at the levels of teachers and staff, students, and parents. The following spheres of activities will form the framework for securing stakeholder buy-in.

Teachers and staff

- Establish and support the school professional learning community

- Early PD for curriculum planning, instruction, assessment, and grading.
- Train teachers to fluently use the school SIS, LMS, and assessment platforms
- Invite experts to be on the field for training and coaching.
- Designate time out of the school schedule for regular meetings

Parents

- Change the school grading policy and reflect the change in the parent handbook.
- Prepare material to inform parents including answers to frequently asked questions
- Utilize school open houses, parent-teacher conference nights, workshops, and town hall meetings to address SBL, SBG, and the need to change the culture and mindset.
- Eliminate the grade-based awards system to eliminate consequential competitions and report that in the parent handbook.
- Eliminate the grade-based valedictorian and salutatorian honorary positions for grades five and eight.
- Develop rubrics and celebrate growth and soft skills
- Utilize social media and the school website
- Invite parents to parent workshops and open houses
- Involve the school's PTO in the discussion
- Invite members of the PTO to serve on the planning committee

Students

- Explain the new system at an early stage
- Explain assessment policy
- Develop and explain reassessment policy
- Plan and execute student workshops to explain the value of homework, the importance of practice, the retake policy, the separation between learning habits and mastery, and the importance of a growth mindset.
- Emphasize student choice in learning and in assessment to empower students.

III. The Need for Utilizing Technology Tools

As a school leader, it is important to build the technology-based structures and supports needed to ensure SBG implementation. In particular, teachers and staff need to effectively administer formative and summative assessments, record and report grades through a technology-based grade book. A learning management system needs to be made available to facilitate formative and summative assessment and to avail learning resources for differentiated instruction.

We need to design a standards-based report card model that addresses process, growth and content mastery for all students. To address this need, we have upgraded our Alma SIS product service to include a standards-aligned grade book and report card. Parents and students can access their children's summative assessment scores and homework assignments. Entries from the grade book are currently being synchronized to be reflected automatically in the report cards.

To assist teachers in designing and administering standards-based assessments, we introduced Edulastic, a standards-based assessment online platform, to cater to the school's formative and summative assessment needs. Edulastic contains a bank of assessment questions pooled from professional circles and communities such as EngageNY.org, PAARC Smarter Balanced, and many state education department websites. A good portion of the assessment questions is authored by teachers who published their assessments on the platform.

With the introduction of Edulastic and the standards-based version of our grade book and report card, we will have put together all components of SBL with coherence and compatibility between the learning assessment, grading, and reporting. We plan to arrive at an integrated technology-support system that will connect assessment, grading, and reporting, and will assist our teachers in facilitating and differentiating instruction. The system will be accessible to teachers, parents, and students as illustrated in figure 5.

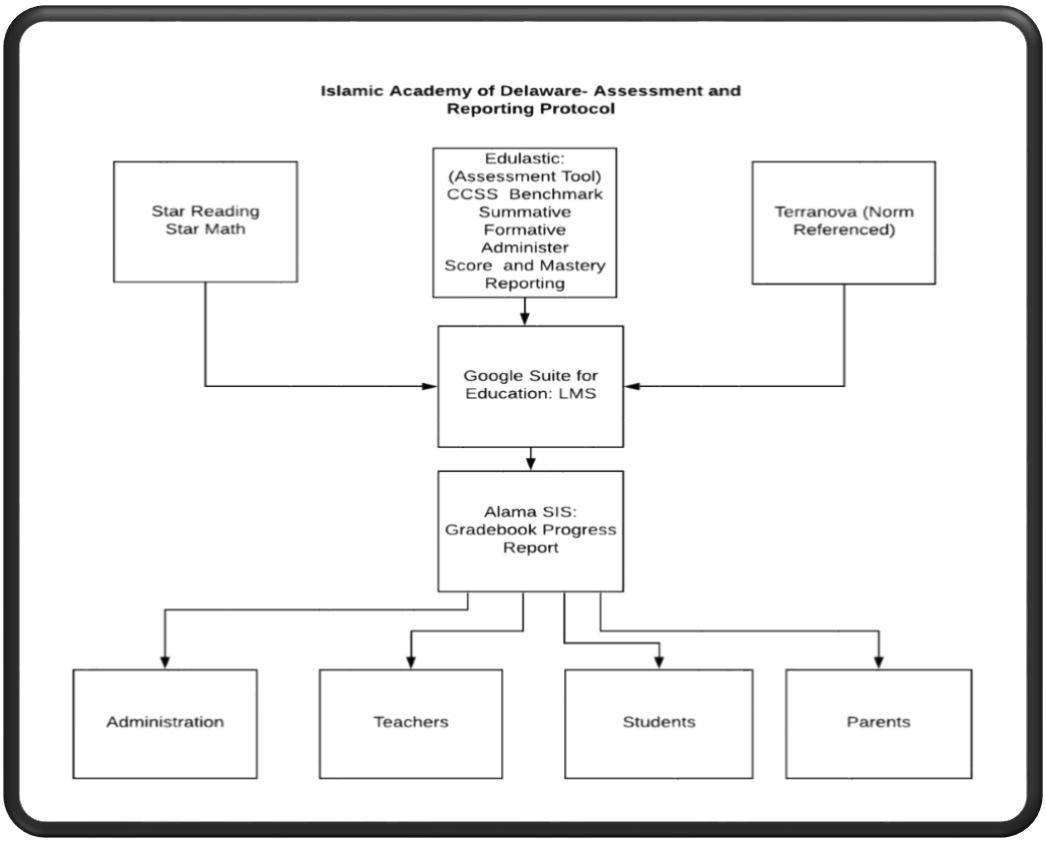


Figure L-5. IAD Assessment And Reporting Protocol

Conclusion

In implementing SBG, all stakeholders must understand that the process will be lengthy in time, tedious, and will require investment in resources. Mistakes will almost certainly take place by the administration and by teachers. Guidance and evaluation must be an on-going process to correct those mistakes and to improve implementation. All must realize that we are not experimenting with a new approach nor are we subjecting our children to trial and error. We are consulting with the experts in the field, training our teachers and staff, and following the example of many

successful implementation cases in the nation. We cannot afford to deprive our children of the exposure to the rigor they need, and we cannot afford but to be transparent in teaching, assessing, grading and reporting to our stakeholders. Our children deserve that and there must be no going back on that.

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Appendix M

ELP PROPOSAL

Abstract

This paper is intended to address efforts and activities aimed at implementing standards-based grading (SBG) at the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD). Since the academic year 2018-2019, the school has initiated efforts to transition to SBL(SBL) through changes of curricula, delivering SBL PD, introducing technology tools to address the needs for SBL, and informing parents of the changes. However, much more needs to be done to make sure SBL implementation is effective, especially as the school embarks on implementing SBG. In this ELP proposal, I will address the essential activities to implement SBG in the domains of PD, technology use, and parent buy-in. In particular, I will address the scope of the school's planned PD activities aimed at building teacher capacity to implement SBG. I will also address the strategies to be implemented to communicate the change to parents and stakeholders to elicit community buy-in. Further, I will identify the technology tools that will be employed to facilitate the implementation of SBG. Implementing SBL and SBG is an on-going process that will span the future life of IAD, and the activities addressed here should only constitute the beginning of that process.

Organizational Context

IAD is a faith-based community private school that serves students in grades PK-8. The school is registered with the Delaware Department of Education and reports enrollment and attendance to the state as mandated by the Delaware Title 14 education

law. The school participates in the federal meal benefit program and the federally funded Title I, Title II, and Title III programs which provide intervention services to at-risk students, PD, and technology, respectively.

Students commute to IAD from various cities in New Castle County and neighboring cities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. The school community is diverse with many families descending from many countries in the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, north and west Africa, and the United States. In addition to English, more than half a dozen languages are spoken as the primary language at home but all students are born in the United States and speak English as the first language. The school's student demographics and socio-economic status data for IAD are distributed as follows:

Table M-1 *Student Demography and Socio-Economic Status Data at IAD*

Race	Percent
White	44%
Black	21%
Asian	36%
Free	52.48%
Reduced	9.2%
Paid	38.29%

The teacher demographics are distributed as follows:

Table M-2 Teacher Demography at IAD

Race	Percent
White	58%
Black	19%
Asian	23%

Approximately 80% of the school revenue relies on student tuition and fees with an average of $4,150 per-student compared to the State's per-student spending of

$14,713. The remaining 20% of school revenue comes in through donations and the school's annual fund-raising event.

IAD will transition from percent-point and single letter grading to SBG. The school has taken some concrete steps in that direction and will take additional steps in the combining two years. The transition will focus on grades K-5 in the subjects of English language arts and mathematics in the first two years of implementation and will expand to grades 6-8 in the years to follow.

Organizational Role

I have been at the helm of IAD as a school principal since august 2011. I was hired by the executive committee of the board of directors of the mother organization, the Islamic Society of Delaware. The full board endorsed the hiring and the contract of the principal. Figure A-1 illustrates the organizational structure of the IAD. I serve as a nonvoting member of the IAD Operations Committee, the organizational entity created by the board to assist the principal in planning and executing major school decisions relevant to finance and accounting, maintenance, and procurement and allocation of resources. The committee also serves as a layer of authority addressing employee complaints and grievances.

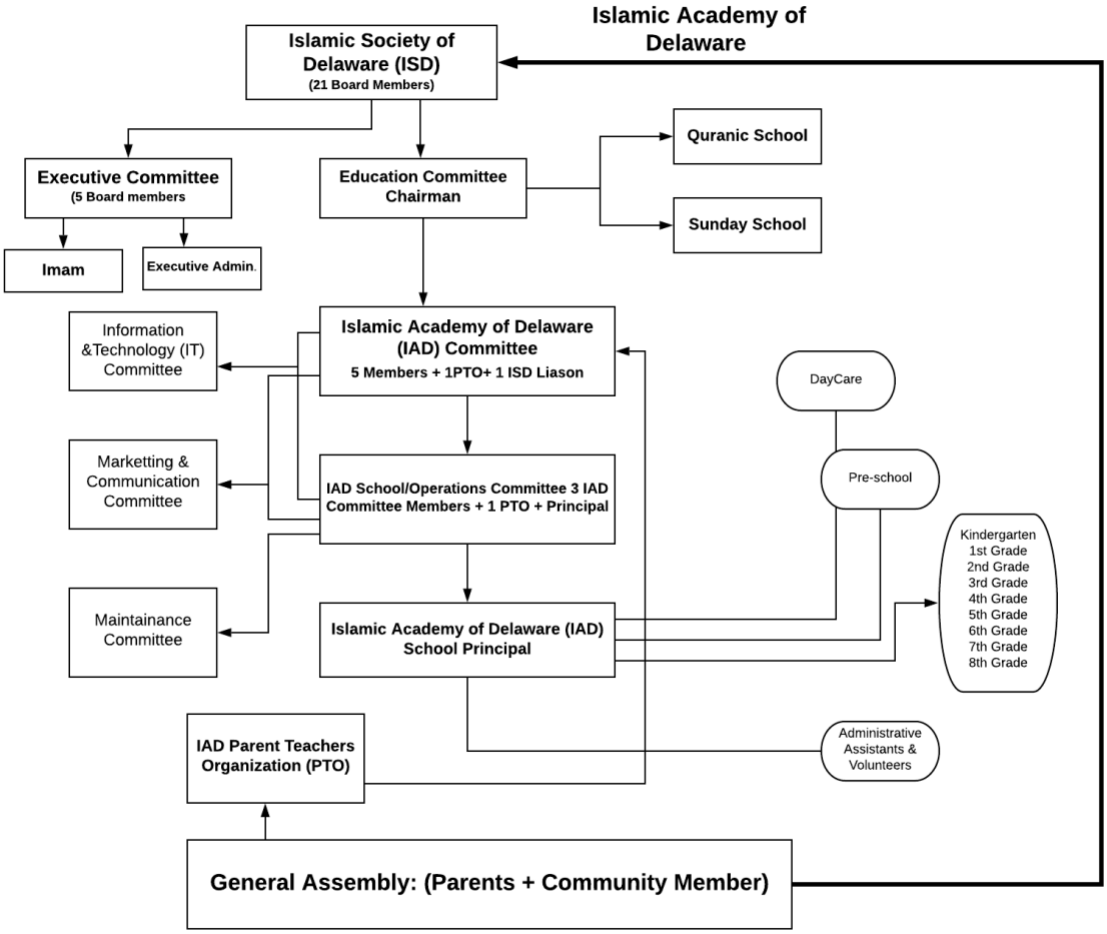

Figure M-1. *IAD Organizational Structure*

As the principal of the school, I assume the duties and tasks of the chief executive officer of the school in overseeing the administration and management of all academic aspects of the school life and the day-to-day operations of the school. With the assistance of lead teachers, I manage curriculum selection and implementation and supervision and evaluation of faculty and staff. I was instrumental in drafting the school vision and mission and I am a party to drafting school policies for endorsement by the IAD OPS. I serve on the Staff Selection Committee, the School Budget and Finance Committee, and the School Expansion Committee. I also plan and execute communication with

stakeholders on behalf of the school and represent the school in the community and political functions.

I started the shift to SBL(SBL) with the introduction of new English language arts and mathematics curricula in the year 2018-2019 which required a shift in instructional strategies and assessment. The school previously, since 2011, used Pearson's Reading Street and Envision Mathematics for language arts and mathematics for eight years before it introduced EL Education and Eureka Math. To select our curricula, we considered comparative reports by Edreport.org, an independent nonprofit designed to improve K-12 education, which gave high ratings to the new curricula based on meeting the expectations for alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) compared to low ratings for the old curricula (Expeditionary Learning, 2016).

> As the school principal, I headed the shift to conform to the school vision, "to educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful and safe environment; providing rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens." I took note of the fact that the common core state standards were introduced to "raise the bar" for all students to create better college and work outcomes and establish a common bar by which all students could be measured (Gewertz, 2015).

As the building leader, I am in a unique position to lead the school's transition to SBG implementation. My role as the principal facilitates the transition in the planning and implementation of PD. This includes content selection, the scope of teacher participation, venues, and scheduling, negotiating, and signing contracts on behalf of the school with PD vendors. I am in a position that enables me to use my leverage with

stakeholders to communicate and educate about SBG and to have access to teachers, parents, and students, for solicitation of opinion and feedback. I have access to data on subjects ranging from finance, assessment, grading, and reporting and also access to school policy and record keeping. This access is, of course, limited to use for the sake of furthering the welfare and advancement of student policy and is subject to laws and regulations protecting the rights and privacy of all constituents of the school community.

Problem Statement

We, at the Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD), have a goal to implement SBL(SBL) in grades k-8. Although private schools, in contrast to public schools, are not directly addressed by the No Child Left Behind initiative to implement the standards, we understand the need for our children to resume learning in the public-school system without interruption if when they transfer to other schools, progress to high schools, or head to college. We also decided to shift to SBL to conform with our school vision, "to educate our children and inspire them in a diverse, respectful and safe environment; providing rigorous academic engagement that enables them to be career-ready and helps them to become responsible leaders and citizens."

The shift to SBL is being made with the literature-supported understanding that it is necessary "to ensure transparency in all elements of the teaching and learning process: curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting" (DeWitt, 2016). To implement SBL is to select or design curricula, instructional strategies, assessments, and grading that are aligned to the standards. These four elements are the underpinnings of any discussion regarding rigor, college and career readiness, and global citizenship (De Witt, 2016).

IAD, however, wrestles with the implementation of SBL. Teachers have expressed concerns regarding best classroom practices to implement standards mastery. Classrooms are mostly teacher-centered and collaborative learning is not effectively implemented. We know this from the teachers' feedback as evident in a survey conducted by the school in July of 2019. As tables 4, 5, and 6 below indicate, teachers are split in terms of the extent of their familiarity with the standards and with many of the pedagogical aspects of teaching or assessing to the standards. For example, only 69% and 50% percent of the teachers are familiar with the standards for mathematics and Language Arts, respectively (Table M-3).

Table M-3 *Teachers' Familiarity with the Common Core State Standards*

Question	Unfamiliar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
Common Core State Standards in Mathematics	25%	6%	31%	38%
Common Core State Standards in Language Arts	27%	13%	47%	13%
Next Generation Science Standards	38%	19%	31%	13%
Delaware Social Studies Standards	40%	27%	27%	7%

Many teachers are not familiar with the knowledge and skills associated with the implementation of the standards such as setting learning targets and proficiency rubrics and scales (Table M-4).

Table M-4 Familiarity with the Implementation Concepts

Question	Unfamiliar	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
Unpacking the Common Core Standards	25%	25%	44%	6%
Prioritizing the Common Core Standards	19%	25%	44%	13%
Setting SBL targets	13%	25%	44%	19%
Proficiency learning scales	13%	31%	44%	13%
Summative assessment	13%	13%	44%	31%
Formative assessment	6%	19%	44%	31%

Equally concerning is the lack of clarity by many as to what should be included in a student's grade and how much weight should be allocated to each element contributing to the grade (Table M-5).

Table M-5 *Teachers' Perception of Grade Components*

Which of the following you agree must be a component of a student's grade?	Percentage
Homework	40%
Class Participation	82%
Behavior	40%
Attendance	40%
Exit Tickets	35%
Benchmark exams	71%
Extra credit/Bonus	47%
Formative assessment	65%

Summative assessment	76%
Student portfolio	24%
Student projects	71%

Next Steps: Implementing Standards-Based Grading at IAD

Following the changes, the school initiated as described above and noting that SBL improvement is an on-going process, Islamic Academy of Delaware (IAD) has a strategic school improvement goal to implement standards-based grading (SBG) over the next two school years.

SBG is necessary to ensure the full implementation of SBL. In addition to facilitating learning, teachers need to attend to the interconnected practices of assessing, grading, and reporting to the standards. If student learning strategies are based on the standards, then designing standards-based formative and summative assessments and grading those assessments ensures the full implementation of SBL. SBG also leads to accurate reporting of student achievement to parents and stakeholders. As O'Conner indicates, the primary purpose of grading is "communicating student achievement" (O'Conner, 2018, p. 19). Communication, O'Conner states, is most effective when it's clear and concise. Other purposes, such as administrative and instructional uses are served well when communication is clear.

Change to a standards-based approach to grading is needed to improve student learning and to prepare children for high school, college, and future employment. As Muñoz and Guskey indicate, "if assessments are graded and reported the right way, they can be a powerful tool for student learning. Classroom assessment practices that inform instruction will be invaluable as teachers work to implement the Common Core

standards, which are meant to prepare all students for college and/or career" (Muñoz and Guskey, 2015, P. 67).

The Gap to Be Bridged

Our current grading system is broken. If the purpose of grades is to fairly and accurately communicate student mastery of the knowledge and skills taught in the classroom, then our current student grading approach does not serve that purpose. Change from the current percent-points and single letter grading to SBG is needed to communicate to students, teachers, and parents an accurate assessment of what children know and can do at each grade level. Such accurate and fair information is necessary to prepare children for high school, college, and future employment.

"Grade-fog". Percent-point and single letter grading, currently applied at IAD blend student mastery of the standards with the learning habits of students and, therefore, creates a "grade-fog" that obscures the extent of student learning of the knowledge and skills required by the standards. Percent-point and letter grading are prevalent at IAD as evident in the grade books of all grade levels posted on the school's student information system and the report cards distributed to parents. Teachers combine learning habits with learning assessments to create grades. The school grading policy determines the weights allocated to homework, class participation, quizzes, and benchmark exams (Table M-6).

Table M-6 *Student Grade Distribution*

Grade Component	Percentage of Grade
Homework	15%
Classwork	15%
Formative Assessment	30%
Benchmark Assessment	40%

Grade monetary system. Implicit in the grade distribution are behaviors, projects, work ethic, neatness, handwriting, exit tickets, and bell work which can contribute to any of the major categories making up the student's grade. Students and parents are accustomed to a culture of extra credit to boost grades. Grading is a clear mimic of a monetary system where almost every student's behavioral or academic activity contributes to the student's grade average. Homework is graded and a zero may be assigned to missing homework. On the other hand, unless a student has a valid excuse, he or she may not make up a missing test and exams can rarely be retaken. When a second opportunity is given to make up a test or an assignment, the student is penalized for lateness or the retake by deducting points.

Grade inflation. The inclusion of the learning habits and learning practices such as class participation and homework constitutes a grade phase shift upwards leading to grade inflation. For example, Table M-7 shows the performance of students of grade 3 in reading and mathematics on the standardized Terra Nova Common Core test in May 2019 and the grades reported for the two subjects on the school report cards at the end of the school year. There is a moderate positive correlation $r = .57$ and a strong positive correlation $r = .78$ between the Terra Nova standardized scores and the report card grades in reading and math, respectively, indicating a grade inflation. While nine of the fifteen students are shown to rank below the 50th percentile in either of the two subjects on the Terra Nova test, thus are entitled to receive intervention as per district regulations, only two students, ID 9 and 13, scored failing aggregate subject grades and, therefore, deserved the services.

Table M-7 *Terra Nova Test Percentiles Vs. Percent Grades Reported*

TerraNova Percentile Ranks			Subject Percent Grade		
ST ID	Reading	Mathematics	ST ID	Reading	Mathematics
01	21	36	01	84	81
02	32	36	02	87	92
03	76	63	03	92	94
04	49	43	04	70	88
05	54	75	05	95	87
06	41	20	06	81	79
07	77	59	07	90	89
08	51	77	08	98	96
09	20	4	09	78	57
010	11	34	010	79	87
011	78	87	011	97	97
012	19	27	012	88	92
013	34	15	013	71	58
014	87	71	014	89	90
015	17	8	015	72	69
016	31	53	016	81	85

This disparity between percent grades and standardized tests is not limited to grade 3 but spans all grades as the school data indicate. Similar results can be shown in comparing grade scores with the CCSS aligned Star Reading and Star Math assessment. In other academic subjects where no standardized assessments are administered, there is no frame of reference to accurately compare grades against and the need for standards-based assessment and grading is even greater.

A culture of competition. A culture of competitiveness between students and families prevails within the school community. Parents and students strive to attain the top three grade-based school recognition awards as described in Table M-8.

Table M- 8 *Grade Requirement of the Top Three School Awards*

Award Category	Minimum GPA
Principal's Award	95-100%
Honor Roll	90-94%
Achievement Award	85-89%

Based on subject scores in table 8, at least 11 students in grade 3 above are entitled to receive any of the three top school awards even though their standardized test scores indicate poor achievement. Parents and their children who understand how the system works can often manipulate the system to ensure their children will receive an award. Other families and their children are effectively excluded from the exercise of the award, leaving their children with bitterness, anxiety, and a de facto negative label as low-achieving or failing children. In my capacity as a principal at the helm of IAD, I have witnessed many times the frustration and agony of children who missed the required score for an award by a point or two and were fearful or ashamed of bringing home the bad news to their parents.

The fierce competition becomes very noticeable in grades 5 and 8 where students graduate from one school level to the next. Children compete to a fraction of a point to win the reputable valedictorian and salutatorian honorary positions where the winners are celebrated and usually given the honor of addressing the school community. In a culture of competitiveness, when students compete for grades and not for learning, there is little room for collaborative learning as required by the standards.

Grading inconsistencies. The report card on Alma, our school SIS, contains a mixture of percent scores and letter grades for each subject. Even though the report cards also contained standards mastery indicators that were marked on a 0-4 scale, these marks

were filled out manually and subjectively by the teachers. There was often a disparity between the letter and percent grades on the one hand and marks reported for the standards mastery indicators (Figure M-2). The report card snapshot below indicates the student was an achiever who scored a calculated average of a B+ and A in writing and math, respectively, but the standards indicators do not reflect that level of achievement because the teacher's professional judgment indicates otherwise.

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ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF DELAWARE
2018- 2019 TRIMESTER 1 REPORT

CLASSES	T1	T2	T3	FINAL
WRITING GRADE 1	**B+**			
Writing Standards				
Write response to questions and details with support from provided text and visual sources	2			
Write narratives recounting two or more sequenced events use temporal words.	N/A			
Write informative text with a topic, facts and closure	2			
Participate in shared research and writing projects and use them to write sequence of instructions	N/A			
Use digital tools to produce and publish writing with support L+R	N/A			
MATHEMATICS GRADE 1	**A-**			
Mathematics: Operations and Algebraic Thinking				
Relate counting to addition and subtraction	2			
Solve word problems using addition and subtraction within 20	2			
Fluently add and subtract with 10	2			
Understand relationship between addition and subtraction	2			
Understand and apply properties of operations to addition and subtraction	2			

Figure M- 2. *Grade 1 IAD Report Card*

In general, grades allocated to students do not necessarily reflect student understanding or mastery of what they need to know at their grade level to be ready for high school and eventually college. While not documented, anecdotes of students struggling with critical thinking rigor after they move to high school are not uncommon.

Implementing SBG at IAD-A Three-Pronged Approach

In this Executive Leadership Portfolio, I will work to implement SBG practices through a three-pronged approach: professional development, parent and community buy-in, and utilizing appropriate technology tools for performance assessment, grading, and reporting to parents and stakeholders. The strategies and the emanating activities in this approach are recommended by scholars and empirical studies that address implementation.

The implementation of SBG in IAD is a strategic endeavor aiming at improving teaching and learning. As described above, my work for this portfolio focuses on the implementation of SBG with a focus on PD, buy-in, and technology. The specific strategies I will use are organized to address each of these areas as well as in ways that address the various elements of the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) framework (Coherence Framework, n.d.). In setting goals for implementation and selecting relevant strategies, I aim to address securing stakeholder support, systems and structures to be introduced, resources to be made available especially in technology, and eventually the change of the school's culture.

Professional Development

Implementing SBLG is a strategic change in IAD that will affect students, teachers, and parents. Change in any educational institution requires leaders and personnel to transform roles and responsibilities that may require learning new concepts and skills. As Guskey (2000) indicates, "PD is necessary for teachers and administrators at all levels so they can learn these roles and succeed in them" (p. 3).

In addressing PD, Westerberg (2016) recommends that teachers be "provided with time and technical supports to develop a standards-based unit that they will pilot" (p. 114). Along with this unit, Westerberg suggests, teachers should be trained to develop measurement topics, scoring scales, and matching assessments (Westerberg, 2016). Berger et al. (2014), on the other hand, emphasize the role of the leader in making the case for SBG with teachers and in providing them with PD that will build deep teacher understanding of grade-level standards and a strong foundation in student-engaged practices.

Leaders can also "support teachers with curriculum maps, a faculty grading guide, standard-based grading software and communication with families, and district and college officials." (p. 340). PD, along with SBG aligned student information system, and parent buy-in, is among the five top strategies recommended for successful implementation by a recent study that examined twelve K-12 school principals representing 10,473 (Redmond, 2019).

A similar emphasis on PD to teachers, parents, and board members was also stressed as critical for the shift to SBG in a report that examined implementation practices by many districts and schools in the nation (Hanover Research, 2015). The report found that successful districts provided "teachers and parents with information about standards-based grading early in the transition process and that PD was critical in providing parents with a clear explanation of the new system to dispel any misconceptions" (p.3).

Goals for Professional Development

Goal 1. As a school leader, I aim for all teachers to have a deep understanding of the CCSS and to be able to teach them. I expect teachers to know and be able to:

- prioritize and unpack the CCSS,
- set student learning targets based on their understanding of the CCSS,
- design or select and administer CCSS aligned formative and summative assessment,
- develop proficiency scales,
- report grades to students and parents based on SBG grading practices.

Goal 2. I aim to deepen our teachers' understanding of other SBLG concepts such as "differential instruction, checking for understanding techniques, and other compliments of a comprehensive students-engaged assessment system" (Berger et al., 2014, p. 340).

Implementation strategies

My team and I will plan, schedule, and implement professional development activities for teachers and administrators, taking into consideration content, process, and time.

In terms of content the activities will cover three domains:

1. Standards-based grading related concepts such as unpacking the standards, prioritizing the standards, learning targets, and proficiency scales and rubrics.
2. SBL related concepts such as curriculum mapping, differentiated instruction, checking for understanding, collaborative learning, and effective feedback.
3. Mastery of the technology tools available for assessment, grading and reporting, and learning management

In terms of process we will use the following three PD formats:

1. use our professional learning community and interested staff to plan and deliver in-house professional development.
2. contract expert vendors to provide in-service PD services on our school premises. These are usually several full-day sessions followed by walk-throughs and debriefing sessions.
3. online interactive 60-90 min webinars

In terms of time, we will use:

1. designated PD days as planned on our school calendar.
2. biweekly faculty meetings to implement brief PD sessions.
3. summer orientation week.
4. half-day sessions for selected teachers and grades to adequately secure substitute teachers.

Parent and Community Buy-In

To implement SBG, it is important to secure the parent and community involvement and support. Berger et al (2014) suggest school leaders should "provide a rationale for SBG to parents and students, explaining what is different, what's the same, and how the school will support every student to be successful" (p. 340). Westerberg also recommends ensuring parents and the board of education buy-ins through providing professional development that will deepen their understanding of the "why" and "how" of implementing SBG (Westerberg, 2016).

Goals for parent and community buy-in

Goal 1. I aim to secure parent and student buy-in and ownership of SBG through implementing a series of activities at the levels of parents and students as follows.

Implementation strategies

My team and I will:

1. revise the school parent handbook to reflect:
    a. the change in grading policy and practices
    b. the elimination of the percent-based awards system to foster collaboration instead of competition.
    c. the elimination of the valedictorian and salutatorian honorary positions for graduating students. Instead, we will include rubrics for and celebrate growth and soft skills.
2. prepare and disseminate material to inform parents including answers to frequently asked questions.
3. utilize school parent gatherings, e.g., open houses, parent-teacher conference nights, and town hall meetings to educate parents on SBG and the need to change the school culture and mindset. The team will populate these events on the school calendar and communicate the events promptly.
4. utilize social media and the school website for promoting SBG in the school community.

Utilizing Technology Tools for SBG Implementation

Aligning the student information system in a school with SBG and reporting is an implementation strategy that received the highest number of recommendations by school principals who successfully implemented SBG in their schools as reported in the study mentioned earlier (Redmond, 2019). Principals who led the successful implementation emphasized the need for an SIS that contains a grade book connected to the standards.

Assignments, in-classroom tasks, and homework practices can be marked in the grade book to monitor student progress and growth. Whether housed on the SIS or a separate platform, all assessments, formative or summative, must be aligned to the standards. The grade book's inputted grades should transport automatically to the grade book (Redmond, 2019).

To support our teachers at IAD in SBG implementation, it is important to avail teachers of the technology tools that will facilitate their in-classroom instruction, help in designing and administering assessments, and assist in grading and reporting to the school administration, parents and students. This is especially relevant in the aftermath of the recent implementation in IAD of one-to-one student Chromebook acquisition.

Goals for utilizing technology tools

Goal 1. As the school leader, I will make available to teachers and staff technology platforms and tools needed to facilitate SBG implementation. Technology will play an important role in enabling teachers and staff to:

1. effectively administer formative and summative assessments,
2. maintain grade records in a technology-based grade book, and
3. manage instructional resources for differentiated instruction.

Goal 2. My team and I aim to avail teachers of a standards-based report card for each grade level and will take note and benefit from the insights and fixes of Guskey and O’Conner on developing a standards-based report card (Guskey, 2010; O’Conner, 2018). The report card will:

1. address process, growth, and academic mastery for all students,
2. be web-based and accessible to teachers, parents, and students.,

3. separate learning habits from content and skill mastery, and
4. provide meaningful feedback to students and parents.
5. contain a statement of purpose reflecting the school's intention for grading and ostensibly placed on the front page (Guskey, 2015, p. 20).

Implementation strategies

My team and I will select and avail to the school community the following technology solutions:

1. Alma school information system (SIS) will house our grade book and student report cards.
2. Edulastic will serve as the summative and formative assessment platform
3. Google Suite for Education will be used as our learning management system LMS for formative assessment and differentiated instruction.
4. Renaissance Star Reading, Star Math, and Accelerated Reader will assess student growth in reading and math and will enhance student reading skills.
5. Prodigy and Freckle will help students in differentiation through gaming.

Artifacts

In order to achieve the goals for this proposal, I am creating artifacts that will serve and document PD activities, the technology employed, and parent buy-in initiatives (Table A-9). Artifacts that will also inform my own learning and demonstrate progress towards my ELP proposal are also included. I wish to state that implementation of SBG at IAD will represent a big change and these activities and the associated artifacts are intended to capture the most critical aspects of the change and may not necessarily be exhaustive of all activities that will take place in the building.

Learning Artifacts

Artifact 1: Review of the Literature. This artifact will serve as a reference for my own learning and growth as a leader on this issue and will serve as the scientific rationale foundation for my decision making in SBG related matters. It will inform me of the best implementation practices that have been tried successfully by other learning environments.

Artifact 2: Mastery-based learning at CSD-Case study. This artifact is a report that describes my understanding of a successful implementation case of SBG in the Colonial School District. During my summer internship at the District, I was able to learn and capture best practices as described by principals, instructional coaches, and teachers. The experience served to deepen my understanding of standards-based implementation at the district and school levels.

PD Artifacts

Artifact 3: PD needs assessment survey. This artifact is directly connected to goals 1 and 2 under PD. The survey was prepared and administered in July 2019 to

measure IAD teachers' preparedness for the implementation of SBG. The survey was necessary to plan for PD based on the teachers' abilities and needs. The results informed the administration of future planning and allocation of resources. Based on this survey, other artifacts such as the school PDP, implementation schedule, and the school calendar will be determined.

Artifact 4: PDP. This artifact is a planning document informed by the need assessment survey. It will detail the modules that will be covered in the domains described to enable teachers to master the content of SBG concepts and related practices and the use of the technology platforms. It will also describe the format and processes of PD.

Artifact 5: IAD master schedule, PD schedule, and school calendar. This artifact is directly connected to goals 1 and 2 under PD. Planning for the activities will be according to the PD schedule and events will be affixed to the calendar. The PD schedule will depict all SBG planned and proposed events for the entire school year. Based on our knowledge of teacher preparedness from artifact 1, the PD program will be marked on the school calendar.

Technology Artifacts

Artifact 6: School technology plan. This artifact is a document detailing the goals, technology tools, resources, and technology evaluation of SBG at IAD. It will benefit from the PD artifact and from artifact 5 in terms of the PD component of the plan.

Artifact 7: Standards-based grade book and report card. This artifact represents the final product and is at the core of SBG implementation. It is related to the artifacts under goals 1 and 2 for PD. Before using the grade book or the report card,

teachers need to master the relevant grading concepts. Also, to use Alma SIS, teachers need adequate exposure to the grade book and the report card. Parents and students too will need the grade book and report card to understand the mastery of the standards and the learning habits. The report card will be designed to report learning habits separately from academic mastery. The grade book and report cards govern parent-teacher communication on a daily basis and during parent-teacher conferences. It also records master and student growth which are needed to inform learning.

Stakeholder Buy-In artifacts

Artifact 8: Interview protocol with parents. This artifact is directly related to the goals for parent buy-in. It is intended to measure parent perceptions relevant to SBG implementation and how the newly implemented system is affecting them. I will select a group of parents at random from the school directory and will present to them constructed response questions and follow-ups. The intention is to measure parent perceptions about SBG and their sentiment. This will inform our communication with parents and planning for parent-related activities. The communication plan will inform artifact 9 in that the parents' input will be taken into account in preparing a school communication plan.

Artifact 9: School communication plan. This document will set goals for communicating with parents and the community, utilizing the school website, social media, and our student information system. It will describe the message, the frequency, the tools, and the assigned parties to initiate communication. This document will benefit from parent interviews, artifact 8, and will inform the parent handbook and the white paper.

Artifact 10: Parent handbook. This artifact is a revised version of the school parent handbook. It represents the contractual agreement between the school and parents, and it contains policies and practices concerning grading policy, awards, celebrations, and culture. This handbook will be informed by the technology artifacts since parents will need to understand the new grade book and report card.

Artifact 11: White paper. This artifact is related to stakeholder buy-in. It is intended to market the change and to brand the school as an institution of rigor and high standards of learning. It will chronicle and describe implementation activities and SBG concepts. Securing stakeholder buy-in will facilitate funding for the school implementation of SBG and needed technology tools. Content in this artifact will be informed by the synthesis of the literature, albeit in a language appropriate for a broad audience.

Implementation Progress Monitoring Artifacts

Artifact 12: SBG implementation walk-through rubric. This artifact will set indicators and a 0-4 scale for teacher implementation as manifested in the PD program, classroom practices, the use of the technology to implement SBG, and community buy-in. Elements of the implementation rubric will be imported and modified from pre-existing commonly accepted implementation rubrics on state department websites and other Common Core dedicated websites such as Achievethecore.org.

Artifact 13: Parent satisfaction survey. This artifact will measure parent understanding, satisfaction, and concerns regarding the first stage of implementation. It will be used for quality control and improvement of SBG implementation practices. This artifact will be informed by artifact 13 as we examine growth in parent buy-in.

Table M- 9 *Artifacts and Timeline*

#	Artifact	Type	Purpose and Audience	Description	Action Steps	Plan for IRB	Timeline	Status
1	Review of the literature	Document	Will form the basis and rationale for SBG implementation and will inform me as the leader and school reference to change.	This artifact will serve as a reference for me as a leader. It will form the scientific basis rationale for implementing SBG as well as the best implementation practices that have been tried successfully by other learning environments.	Content is being synthesized for a first draft		Feb 2020	Drafted and will be finished before ELPII
2	Mastery-Based Learning at CSD-Case Study	Document	This document is to inform me of an implementation case relevant to implementation at IAD	This artifact is a report that describes my understanding of a successful implementation case of SBG in the Colonial School District. During my summer internship at the District I was able to learn and capture best practices as described by principals, instructional coaches, and	The document has been Drafted		Jan 2020	Drafted and will be completed before ELPII

				teachers. The experience served to deepen my understanding of standards-based implementation at the district and school levels.				
3	PD Needs Assessment Survey	Survey and report	To inform the self and the school community	This was a survey prepared and conducted to measure the teachers' preparedness for the implementation of SBG.	Review report	Yes	Jul 2019	Drafted and will be completed before ELPII
4	PDP	Document	To inform, staff, and teachers	This artifact is a plan document informed by the need assessment survey. It will detail the modules that will be covered in the domains described to enable teachers to master the content of SBG concepts and related practices and the use of the technology platforms. It will also describe the format and processes of PD.	Draft		Feb 2020	Drafted and will be complete before ELPII

5	IAD PD Master Schedule, Pd Schedule, & School Calendar		To plan for strategic activities To inform self and others	This is a PD schedule depicting all SBG planned and proposed events for the year 2019-2020. This is the 2019-2020 school calendar depicting PD activities.	Review		Jan 2020	Will be completed before ELPII
6	Technology Plan	Document	To inform self, staff, and teachers	This artifact is a document detailing the goals, technology tools, resources, and technology evaluation of SBG at IAD. It will benefit from the PD artifact and from artifact 5 in terms of the PD component of the plan.	Not started		March 2020	Not started
7	Standards-based grade book & report cards	Web-based Platform	To inform self, students, teachers, and parents	These are standards-based report cards for grades k-8 depicting the separation of learning habits and academic proficiency.	Share and review with PLC and teachers		Late Feb 2020	Will be completed by mid Feb.
8	Interview protocol with Parents	Questionnaires	To inform self and the school community	These questionnaires and responses measure the perceptions of parents about SBG	Will be revised and presented to an advisor before execution		Early Feb 2020	Not started

9	School communication Plan	Document	To inform self, staff, and teachers	This document will set goals for communicating with parents and the community, utilizing the school website, social media, and our student information system. It will describe the message, the frequency, the tools, and the assigned parties to initiate communication. This document will benefit from all artifacts especially the school calendar since the essence is relaying the message and activities to the community.	Not started		Late Feb 2020	Not Started
10	Parent Handbook	Document	To inform parents	The parent's handbook will serve as the governing contract between the school and parents. It is essential that parents be properly and formally informed of the grading policy and procedures in an official school document.	The current handbook will be revised		April 2020	Not started

11	White paper	Document	To inform self, teachers, parents, and the community	This document will make the case for SBG implementation as supported by the research and literature	Content is being synthesized for a first draft		Mid Feb 2020	Started and will be completed Mid Feb
12	CCSS Implementation Walk-through Rubric	Walk-through Rubric	To inform self and teachers	This rubric will be used at different intervals of SBG implementation to measure the level of compliance.	Share and review with teachers and PLC		Apr 2020	Started
13	Satisfaction Survey	Survey and Report	To inform self, teachers, and stakeholders	This is a climate survey that will focus on SBG implementation and will be administered at the end of the first year of implementation to assess the level of understanding and implementation of SBG	In the developmental process	Yes	May 2020	Not started

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Appendix N

IRB EXEMPTION LETTER

Institutional Review Board
210B Hullihen Hall
Newark, DE 19716
Phone: 302-831-2137
Fax: 302-831-2828

DATE:	September 2, 2020
TO:	Nidal Abuasi
FROM:	University of Delaware IRB
STUDY TITLE:	[1626427-1] IAD Teachers' Perceptions of Standards-Based Grading
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 2, 2020
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption category # *(2,4)*

Thank you for your New Project submission to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). According to the pertinent regulations, the UD IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT from most federal policy requirements for the protection of human subjects. The privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of participants must be safeguarded as prescribed in the reviewed protocol form.

This exempt determination is valid for the research study as described by the documents in this submission. Proposed revisions to previously approved procedures and documents that may affect this exempt determination must be reviewed and approved by this office prior to initiation. The UD amendment form must be used to request the review of changes that may substantially change the study design or data collected.

Unanticipated problems and serious adverse events involving risk to participants must be reported to this office in a timely fashion according with the UD requirements for reportable events.

A copy of this correspondence will be kept on file by our office. If you have any questions, please contact the UD IRB Office at (302) 831-2137 or via email at hsrb-research@udel.edu. Please include the study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
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- 1 -

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