



SAU7
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT 7

***Common Grading and Reporting
For Learning Expectations***

July 2024

SAU 7 Common Grading and Reporting For Learning Expectations



This document was developed by a grading subcommittee during the 2022-2024 school years based on the works of educational researchers, including Thomas Guskey, Robert Marzano, Ken O'Connor, Doug Reeves, Rick Stiggins, and Rick Wormeli.

SAU7 schools believe that the purpose of grading is to communicate student achievement. Grades are not about what students *earn*, they are about what students *learn*. All teachers use the same grading practices in their classrooms. This promotes grades that are consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning. The purpose of this document is to explain how those practices work and how our schools communicate grades on report cards and transcripts.

Using Grades to Communicate Learner Academic Progress Toward Competencies

Grades are a communication tool and serve a variety of purposes for a range of audiences. The primary purpose of a grading system is to clearly, accurately, consistently, and fairly communicate learning progress and achievement. The chart below provides an overview of how various audiences use grades.

Audience(s)	Purpose for Using Grades
Learners	To utilize feedback for growth and development of skills and concepts
Teachers	To plan ongoing learning and assessment and to communicate with students, parents, and colleagues
Parents	To evaluate their children's progress
External Organizations	To make important determinations about our learners (i.e., discounts, employment, skill capability, etc.)
Colleges/Universities	For admission to higher education institutions
Community/State/National Organizations	To award special recognition and scholarships and to determine participation in athletic and academic programs.

In order to effectively summarize the academic progress of our learners to these various audiences, SAU 7 uses grades to communicate:

- Summative assessment grades
- Overall competency grades
- Overall Transferable Skills
- Class/course grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA) for 9-12
- Transcripts for 9-12

Academic Grades

Academic grades are communicated separately from academic behaviors (also known as transferable skills).

Academic Grades: Our grade level and course curriculum identify specific *big ideas*, known as competencies that answer the question: What is it we want our students to know and be able to do? Each competency is broken down into a subset of specific skills and learning targets. Think of these as building blocks on the road to mastery of the end-of-year competencies. Teachers collect evidence of learning throughout the year through assessments that are linked to the learning targets, which are linked to competencies. This allows teachers to report progress grades for each competency throughout the year on report cards. At the high school level, in order to receive credit for a course, students must receive a minimum passing grade in each competency.

“Competency” is the ability of a student to apply content knowledge and skills in and/or across the content area(s).

Transferable Skills

SAU 7 schools recognize that effective learners are able to employ and develop strategies, habits, and skills that prepare them to be effective lifelong learners and contributors in our society. These skills are defined through four Transferable Skills and are integrated into learning activities and assessments. Self-assessment and teacher feedback provide an ongoing cycle of reflection and opportunities for continued growth. The four transferable skills are:

1. **Collaborator:** I can work in diverse groups to achieve a common goal and produce a quality product while appreciating individual contributions.
2. **Communicator:** I can use various media to interpret, question, and express knowledge, information, ideas, feelings, and reasoning to create mutual understanding and accomplish goals and tasks.
3. **Innovative Thinker:** I can use original and flexible thinking to communicate my ideas or construct a unique product or solution.
4. **Self-Directed Learner:** I can initiate and manage my learning, and demonstrate a “growth” mindset, through self-awareness, self motivation, self-control, self-advocacy and adaptability as a reflective learner.

Personal Competency development is reported using the following scale for K-12:

4	Expanding	The learner independently and regularly performs the expectations.
3	Proficient	The learner needs occasional prompting or support in order to perform the expectations.
2	Approaching	The learner inconsistently performs and/or needs routine support in order to perform the expectations.
1	Beginning	The learner needs modeling and/or direct support or explanation in order to perform the expectations.

Formative and Summative Assessments

SAU 7 teachers collect evidence of learning with diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments.

- **Diagnostic Assessments** take place prior to instruction and are designed to determine a student's attitude, skills, or knowledge in order to identify student needs. They are used to help place students in proper instructional groups and are available to discuss with your child's teacher upon request.

Examples of Diagnostic Assessments include but are not limited to sight word lists, running records, student writing samples, and AIMSweb Plus & STAR360 assessments.

- **Formative Assessments** capture a student’s progress through the learning process and help students and teachers understand to what extent a student is learning a concept or skill. Formative assessments are considered *practice* and are weighted as 10% of the overall grade. They are recorded in the gradebook to provide feedback and show growth in skills over time. Examples include classwork and homework. Formative assessments are used to determine summative readiness and when students need reteaching, intervention, and extension during the learning process.
- **Summative Assessments** are used to capture transferred evidence of student learning and demonstrate what a student knows and is able to do. They are oftentimes comprehensive and performance-based in nature. These assessments are linked to one or more of the grade level or course competencies and are used to calculate the overall course grade with a weight of 90%. Examples include mid-unit check-ins, research projects, presentations, labs, writings, tests, simulations, and other similar tasks. Students are expected to complete key formative assessments before they are considered eligible to take a summative assessment.

Grading Proficiency Scale

SAU 7 schools have replaced the traditional A/B/C letter 100 point scale for a 4 point scale at the assignment level. This increases the precision, objectivity, and reliability of grades, allowing our teachers to offer more honest, sensible, and reliable evaluations of students' performance at the assignment/assessment level. For transfers and college courses, there is a conversion chart that is used to transition these grades to the 4.0 scale, which is available upon request.

Elementary and Middle School Scale		
Level	What the Level Means	Rubric Score
Expanding	The student consistently and independently extends and transfers content knowledge and skills beyond essential competencies.	4
Proficient	The student demonstrates essential content knowledge and skills consistently and independently with ability to apply and transfer to real-world situations and/or a new task.	3
Approaching Proficient	The student demonstrates the emerging application and transfer of essential content knowledge and skills in familiar tasks.	2
Beginning	The student is initiating the ability to demonstrate the essential content, knowledge, and skills.	1
Insufficient Evidence Shown	The student has submitted an insufficient level of evidence yet to receive a grade.	0

**Honor Roll will be presented for students in grades 3-8 as well on a quarterly basis to acknowledge and celebrate student successes. (See page 8 for more information).

Students must have an “AP” or “P” in five out of six subjects CAES & SCS, or in three out of four subjects at PSD, at reporting time to be eligible for grade 8 promotion to high school.

High School Scale: Assignment Level		
Level	What the Level Means	Rubric Score
Expanding	The student consistently and independently extends and transfers content knowledge and skills beyond essential competencies.	4
Proficient	The student demonstrates essential content knowledge and skills consistently and independently with ability to apply and transfer to real-world situations and/or a new task.	3
Approaching Proficient	The student demonstrates the emerging application and transfer of essential content knowledge and skills in familiar tasks.	2
Beginning	The student is initiating the ability to demonstrate the essential content, knowledge, and skills.	1
Insufficient Evidence Shown	The student has submitted an insufficient level of evidence yet to receive a grade.	0

High School Scale: GPA			
Report Card Grade	GPA Multiplier <i>Grades are calculated automatically in Alma based on the rigor of the course/level</i>		
	“Standard/General” <i>All standard non-leveled courses</i>	“Honors/Challenging” <i>Honors-level courses</i>	“Dual Enrollment” <i>Advanced Placement / Dual Enrollment Courses</i>
4	4.0	4.5	5.0
3.8	3.8	4.3	4.8
3.6	3.6	4.1	4.6
3.4	3.4	3.9	4.4
3.2	3.2	3.7	4.2
3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0
2.8	2.8	3.3	3.8
2.6	2.6	3.1	3.6
COURSE CREDIT NOT EARNED BELOW THIS LINE			
0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Students Not At Grade Level

All students who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) indicating a modified curriculum will receive instruction, assignments, and assessments at their instructional level (which is indicated in their IEP) from their classroom teachers with support of the special education teacher. These assignments and assessments are to be reported in ALMA and connected with the specific grade level competency. For example, a 6th grade student who is at the 2nd grade instructional level will have 2nd grade competencies on ALMA. Teachers will report using the same grading system as those without modifications.

Other Common Grading Practices

Grading is an exercise in professional judgment wherein the educator seeks to ensure that the grade each student receives is an accurate representation of his or her achievement. For this reason, the following common practices are used by all SAU 7 teachers.

- **Quality Assessments:** Teachers shall use quality assessment instruments. They shall properly record evidence of student achievement on an ongoing basis. Each assessment must meet five standards of quality. It must arise from a clearly articulated set of achievement expectations, serve an instructionally relevant purpose, rely on a proper method, sample student achievement in an appropriate manner, and control for all relevant sources of bias and distortion that can lead to inaccurate assessment.
- **Rubrics:** Teachers shall discuss methods of assessment and scoring scales (rubrics) with students in an age-appropriate manner, at the beginning of instruction. This rubric will always be available to students prior to the administration of any summative assessment.
- **High School Course Syllabus:** At the beginning of the school year, high school teachers shall provide to students and parents a written course overview/syllabus that includes assessment and grading guidelines, in clear, easily understandable language. The course syllabus must be consistent with the grading practices detailed in this document but may include additional, age or course-appropriate expectations.
- **Formative Revision:** Students have the opportunity to complete a revision of any formative assessment when a score below “3” is received. Revisions require students to fix their mistakes, showing all of their work. The redo must be turned in within 2 school days.
- **Summative Reassessment at the Middle/High School Level:** Reassessment is a critical part of the learning process because it encourages students to practice the lifelong skill of continuous improvement in their learning. Depending on the circumstances, a teacher may designate reassessment as mandatory or optional for a particular assignment.
 - **Mandatory:** Reassessment of a summative may be mandatory if the student scores a “1” or a “2” on an assignment. This reassessment would follow an intervention or reteaching plan developed by an educator team and would allow for the team to check if the intervention was successful or not. The reassessment must be completed within 10 school days of receiving the assessment they want to retake back from the teacher.
 - **Optional:** Reassessment of summative assessments is available to students who score a “3” no more than 2 times per semester or 4 times in the school year, with no more than one reassessment attempt per assignment. The reassessment must be completed within 10 school days of receiving the assessment they want to retake back from the teacher.

Any student who is required to or elects to do a reassessment must first meet with the teacher and develop a reassessment plan (Appendix A). The plan indicates a specific deadline that is strictly enforced.

An appropriate reassessment focuses on an assignment which will demonstrate the student's competency. When possible, a student should only reassess the relevant part of the assignment or assessment.

When a student completes the reassessment, the teacher records the new grade in the grade book, which replaces the old grade.

- **Mandatory Assessments and Deadlines:** Students are expected to complete assessments in a timely manner, which is the date the teacher sets as an expectation for a formative/summative assessment to be completed and turned in. Any work turned in after the due-date set by the teacher is considered to be late and will be reflected/documentated in the student's Transferable Skills grades. The academic portion will be graded and documented. Students who refuse to complete an assessment on time will receive classroom and/or school-level disciplinary consequences. In a 9-week quarter, a student may submit work during the first eight weeks.

The teacher will work with the student and their parents to resolve the issue of continued late assignments as soon as possible. Teachers will contact parents once a student has 3 missing formative/summative assessments. Students may receive after-school detentions to make up missed assessments. If the behavior persists, the school will work with the family to develop an appropriate plan to address the behavior.

If a student is absent due to illness, they receive two days for every day absent to make up their work. For students who have been absent due to illness, formative/summative assessments are considered "late" *after* the deadline of acceptable missing time of two days per each day out.

- **Averages:** For the report card, final grades will be computed using a traditional average of the summative assessments for each competency.
- **One Term (Rolling) Grading:** At the secondary level, a student's final overall course grade is cumulative over the entire length of a course; it is not an average of quarter grades.

Determination of Credit for High School Courses

A student will receive credit for a course when both of the following two conditions have been met:

1. They receive a passing overall course grade (numerical grade of 2.6 or higher),
2. They receive a passing grade for each competency (numerical grade of 2.6 or higher).

If one or both of these conditions are not met, the student will need to complete a credit or competency recovery program with approval from the counselor.

Honors/Challenging Class Contracts: The Honors class option at CAES / Challenging class option at PHS will require more out-of-class responsibilities as well as leadership responsibilities in the classroom in order to receive the honors credit on a student transcript. The intention of honors coursework is not to pile students with extra reading or assignments, but rather to allow students to take their learning to a more rigorous level of thinking and to encourage students to make connections to information they are learning and the world around them. An Honors Contract must be completed and turned in for a student to qualify for Honors/Challenging classes. Students will not be able to join the honors courses after 5 days from the start of the course.

Honors students are required to complete all assignments. To be eligible for Honors/Challenging courses, students must have a 3.0 or higher in the class, have no IES scores for academic or Transferable Skills grades, and demonstrate they are an independent learner. Throughout the course, students must demonstrate

a passion for learning, complete additional, extended, or self-directed projects and assignments, adhere to all due dates in a timely manner, show growth in Transferable Skills, lead in class discussion & activities, make content connections, and act as a positive role model both in and outside of the classroom.

Students who wish to withdraw from the Honors/Challenging program may do so by completing the Honors Contract Release Form. Students who refuse to complete required assignments in the Honors/Challenging program will be removed immediately and not receive Honors credit. Teachers also reserve the right to release a student from their contract before the end of the first semester. Reasons for a Release of Honors Contract include but are not limited to: failure to meet deadlines, poor academic performance, academic integrity issues, etc...

Credit Recovery: If a student does not receive a passing overall course grade, they will have to recover the credit for that course by repeating it either at the school or by registering for an approved online program. This will be discussed and determined during a meeting that includes the teacher, principal, and guidance counselor.

Competency Recovery: If a student does not receive a passing grade on one or more of the competencies for that course, they will receive an incomplete final grade and they will need to recover each failed competency using an alternative method such as an online module or a teacher-directed project. Once completed successfully, an incomplete grade will be replaced with a grade of "PASS" and the competency recovery will be noted in the transcript with a grade of "PASS."

Online Grades, Report Cards, and Transcripts

Grades can always be viewed in real time online using the program "Alma." Each school issues unique logins and passwords for both students and parents to Alma. Alma lists, for each course, the competency grades, work study grades, and overall course grade. Periodically, the school will print for high school students their transcript report, which summarizes all of the course grades and summary success skill grades for a student for their entire high school career.

Honor Roll, Class Rank, and Graduation Titles at the High School Level

Colebrook Academy and Pittsburg High School transcripts follow a very common format that is familiar to colleges and universities around the country. Transcripts report two important statistics: Grade Point Average (GPA) and Class Rank.

Grade Point Average (GPA) is reported on the transcript as both a weighted and a *non-weighted*, cumulative calculation using the scales found in the High School GPA Scale chart in this document. Non-weighted means that all classes, regardless of level, receive the same weight.

Class Rank

Class rank at the high school level is based on a students' weighted GPA and is calculated at the end of every school year, once all grades have been finalized.

Graduation Titles

Per school board policies, each high school will recognize a valedictorian and a salutatorian at the end of the school year. The two students at each school with the highest weighted GPA at the end of their four years of high school, respectively. The Valedictorian or Salutatorian must have been a student at the High School for his or her entire Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years (six semesters) in Colebrook or Junior and Senior years (four semesters) in Pittsburg.

Additionally, students who achieve a cumulative *non-weighted* grade point average within the following ranges will receive the following graduation honors:

- Summa Cum Laude: 3.7 cumulative GPA or higher (will receive a cord at graduation)
- Magna Cum Laude: 3.4-3.6 cumulative GPA
- Cum Laude: 3.0-3.3 cumulative GPA

Honor Roll**

Quarterly, each high school will produce an honor roll list by grade (9-12). To be eligible for the honor roll, students must be taking a minimum of four classes, and have a 3.0 or higher at reporting time. Pass/fail courses are not included.

- Honors With Distinction: 3.7 annual GPA or higher
- High Honors: 3.4-3.6 annual GPA
- Honors: 3.0-3.3 annual GPA

Transferable Skills Honor Roll: Students may receive recognition for demonstrating proficiency (“3” and above) in all assessed Transferable Skills each marking period.

****Honor Roll will be presented for students in grades 3-8 as well on a quarterly basis to acknowledge and celebrate student successes.**

APPENDIX A

Reassessment Plans

Colebrook Academy & Elementary School

Pittsburg School

Stewartstown Community School

Honors Contracts

Sample Honors Contract

Honors Contract Release Form



Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to *learn* the concepts, knowledge, and skills, after the assessment that they did not master previously.

In addition to staying caught up on current instruction, you have selected to apply for reassessment on a previously measured learning target/competency. In order to help you meet the competency(s) being assessed, please fill out the learning plan below.

Student Name:

Initial Grade: _____

Teacher/Class:

Date of Reassessment (Must be within **10 school days** of receiving grade):

→Reflect on why you did not meet the targets on this assessment. Why were you under-prepared for the original assessment? Be specific.

→What did you do to prepare for the reassessment? Be specific (i.e., what resources did you use to study/practice? Just saying you studied with no evidence is not sufficient).

In order to reassess you must complete the following steps:

- check your gradebook to review your grade and feedback
- complete this reassessment form for each assessment you wish to be re-assessed on
- complete all required assignments prior to reassessment
- review and correct the original assessment
- provide additional evidence of retake preparation (just saying you studied, without proof, is not acceptable)

Reassessment Activity Options (or other provided by your teacher)

You and your teacher will meet to discuss which activities are recommended/appropriate from the activities listed below to complete the "Preparation Information" section of the reassessment agreement. If you need any additional explanation or information about any of these ideas, please see your teacher. Each activity can only be used once per reassessment.

Sample Activities	Possible Evidence of Completion
Complete missing assignments	Completed assignments
Tutoring with a teacher	Signed note documenting tutor time
Complete assessment corrections	Completed corrected assessment
Complete review exercises	Completed exercises
Research on the topic	Research and resource list

Student Name:

Student Signature:

Date:

Teacher Approval:

Date:

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to *learn* the concepts, knowledge, and skills, after the assessment that they did not master previously.

In addition to staying caught up on current instruction, you have selected to apply for reassessment on a previously measured learning target/competency. In order to help you meet the competency(s) being assessed, please fill out the learning plan below.

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Initial Grade: _____

Teacher/Class:

Date of Reassessment (Must be within **10 school days** of receiving grade):

→Reflect on why you did not meet the targets on this assessment. Why were you under-prepared for the original assessment? Be specific.

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Complete review exercises	Completed exercises
Research on the topic	Research and resource list

Student Name:

Student Signature:

Date:

Teacher Approval:

Date:



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In addition to staying caught up on current instruction, you have selected to apply for reassessment on a previously measured learning target/competency. In order to help you meet the competency(s) being assessed, please fill out the learning plan below.

Student Name:

Initial Grade: _____

Teacher/Class:

Date of Reassessment (Must be within **10 school days** of receiving grade):

→Reflect on why you did not meet the targets on this assessment. Why were you under-prepared for the original assessment? Be specific.

→What did you do to prepare for the reassessment? Be specific (i.e., what resources did you use to study/practice? Just saying you studied with no evidence is not sufficient).

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Sample Activities	Possible Evidence of Completion
Complete missing assignments	Completed assignments
Tutoring with a teacher	Signed note documenting tutor time
Complete assessment corrections	Completed corrected assessment
Complete review exercises	Completed exercises
Research on the topic	Research and resource list

Student Name:

Student Signature:

Date:

Teacher Approval:

Date:

Honors Contract Application

Collected by/on _____

Please print the following information:

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Course (s): _____ **Period:** _____

_____ **Period:** _____

_____ **Period:** _____

_____ **Period:** _____

The Honors Option at CAES will require more out-of-class responsibilities as well as leadership responsibilities in the classroom in order to receive the honors credit on your transcript. The intention of honors coursework is not to pile students with extra reading or assignments, but rather to allow students to take their learning to a more rigorous level of thinking and to encourage students to make connections to information they are learning and the world around them. Students will not be able to join the honors courses after 5 days from the start of the course.

Eligibility:

- All IES grades on formatives or summatives have been resolved at the time of application
- Current grade is a P (3.0 or higher) in the course
- Demonstration as an independent learner
- May include a summer/independent assignment

Expectations:

- Demonstrate a passion for their learning
- Completion of additional/extended assignments
- Completion of self-directed projects
- Adherence to all due dates in a timely manner (assignments should be fully completed and handed in on time)
- Show growth in Transferable Skills
- Leadership (this might look like...)
 - Leading class discussions
 - Leading small group activities
 - Assisting with classroom activities
 - Making content connections
 - Acting as a positive role model both in and outside of the classroom

Grading: Honors students will be graded on these requirements as well as on assessments inside the regular class curriculum. Honors students are required to complete all assignments.

Release from the contract: Students may be released from their Honors contract before the start of the second semester but must sign a Release of Contract which must also be signed by their parent/guardian and their school counselor. After a student is released from their contract, they will receive regular credit for the course.

Teachers also reserve the right to release a student from their contract before the end of the first semester. Reasons for a Release of Honors Contract include but are not limited to: failure to meet deadlines, poor academic performance, academic integrity issues, etc.. **The final determination regarding the release of the student will be made by the Principal.**

Application Project:

In a format of your choosing (written, oral, or digital), please fully explain the following:

- Why do you feel you meet the eligibility criteria of an honors student?
- What are you hoping to gain from your experience as an honors student and how will you contribute to your class?
- How have you demonstrated that you are an independent learner in the last year?
- Why have you decided to enroll in honors this year in EACH of the identified course(s)?

You only need one Application Project (regardless of the number of honors courses you are applying to).

Return this application and your project to your school Guidance Counselor by the start of the class, but no later than the fifth day from the start of the class.

To be accepted into the Honors program, your project must address all parts of the prompt in order to be considered. You must clearly articulate and organize the answers to the prompt, using detailed and specific evidence to explain your reasoning for each part of the prompt. Projects that do not meet this expectation will not be accepted into the Honors program.

I am interested in enrolling in the HONORS OPTION for the course(s) listed above.

I am aware that the assessments and assignments used for honors students will reflect expectations for honors-level work. In addition, I acknowledge that I will be expected to act as a positive role model in my classes and I will demonstrate leadership skills in the classroom.

I also understand that if I change my mind and decide not to complete the honors option, I must complete the following in order to drop the course before the end of the first semester. After the end of the first semester, there will be no withdrawals..

- Consultation with and signature of the course teacher(s)
- Consultation with and signature of counselor
- Consultation with and signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Complete the Release of Honors Contract (signed by parent/guardian and guidance counselor)

If I refuse to complete required Honors assignments, I will be removed from the program immediately.

If I do not complete the Honors option requirements within the time frame established by the classroom teacher, I will not receive Honors credit.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of student:

I understand and agree to the terms of the above honors contract.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent(s)/guardian(s) email address: _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

***This packet must be submitted to your School Guidance Counselor by _____.**

Honors Contract Release Form

Release from an Honors Contract: Students may be released **from** their Honors contract before the start of the second semester but must sign an Honors Contract Release Form, which must also be signed by their parent/guardian and their school counselor. After a student is released from their contract, they will receive regular credit for the course.

Teachers also reserve the right to release a student from their contract before the end of the first semester. Reasons for a Release of Honors Contract include but are not limited to: failure to meet deadlines, poor academic performance, academic integrity issues, etc..

I understand that if I change my mind and decide not to complete the honors option, I must complete the following in order to drop the course before the end of the first semester. After the end of the first semester, there will be no withdrawals.

- Consultation with and signature of the course teacher(s)
- Consultation with and signature of counselor
- Consultation with and signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Complete the Honors Contract Release Form

Consultation with course teacher(s)

Course: _____ Consultation Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Course: _____ Consultation Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Course: _____ Consultation Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Course: _____ Consultation Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Consultation with Counselor

Consultation Date: _____ Counselor Signature: _____

Consultation with Parents/Guardians

Consultation Date: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B



Most traditional, time-based education systems fall short because the focus is on covering material, even when students do not fully understand what they are learning. This creates gaps that widen if not addressed. SAU 7 is committed to doing better with a competency-based system that puts each of our students at the center and emphasizes the essential learning outcomes that we - the students, families, and educators of SAU 7, believe are necessary to help our students thrive both now, and in the future.

Competency-Based Education in New Hampshire

All New Hampshire schools are expected to be competency-based. In SAU 7, we use the nationally-recognized definition of competency education developed by the Aurora Institute in 2016.

What does it mean for our schools?

- We empower our students to make important decisions about their learning as much as we can.
- We consider assessment to be a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for our students.
- We provide our students with timely and differentiated support for their learning when they need it.
- We measure student progress based on evidence of learning, not the time they spend on their learning.
- We encourage our students to learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.
- We ensure strategies for equity for all students are embedded into all aspects of our SAU 7 policies, procedures, and practices.
- We set rigorous, transparent, measurable, and transferable expectations for learning for all of our students

CAES= Colebrook

PSD= Pittsburg

SCS= Stewartstown

SPORTS & EXTRA CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY

How do grades impact sports eligibility in the middle and high school?

At CAES student athletes need to be passing five out of six subjects with a minimum class grade of 2.6 at reporting time to be eligible for athletics and extracurricular activities. At PSD, student athletes need to be passing three out of four subjects with a minimum class grade of 2.6 at reporting time to be eligible for athletics and extracurricular activities. At SCS, student athletes need to have an “AP” or “P” in five out of six subjects at reporting time to be eligible for athletics and extracurricular activities.

GRADING

Will credit earning be impacted by CBE?

The state of NH requires high school students to acquire credits in different subject matter, CAES and PHS complies with all state requirements. CAES and PSD require more credits than the state minimum.

How will CBE be evaluated?

Faculty are continually assessing their curriculum, instruction and assessment practices. Just as in a “traditional” model of education, faculty are evaluating and updating curriculum, instruction and assessment based on student learning.

How do teachers determine grades? Do teachers get to interpret grades any way they want?

Students are assessed on a predetermined set of criteria embedded in a rubric. Teachers have been provided with and should be following a clear set of instructions related to assessing and grading student work, based on rubrics. Should any student or parent have a concern related to a grade, they should first talk directly to the teacher, and then, if needed the student or parent should reach out to a member of the administrative team.

How is the grading more specific?

Grading in a competency-based system is more specific because teachers are providing students with “next steps for growth” in order to meet competency. This individualized, targeted feedback on assignments and rubrics gives students the ability to focus on what they need to know and be able to do to meet competence.

How will I know how I’m doing in school if we don’t have an overall grade?

Students receive detailed feedback regarding next steps for learning based on the rubrics for each summative assessment. The feedback includes the grades for each competency as well as an overall grade.

What numbers/letters/symbols will be used in this new grading system?

Assigning a number value to student work does not describe the actual learning the student demonstrates. In a competency-based grading system, Performance Indicators (what students must do to demonstrate understanding) describe the learning targets very specifically, giving students and parents more detail about what students know and can do.

How do I know if I passed?

When a student is Proficient on an assessment, the student has demonstrated all of the identified necessary skills, content knowledge, and understandings outlined in the Performance Indicators as described below.

Students must have an “AP” or “P” in five out of six subjects CAES & SCS, or in three out of four subjects at PSD, at reporting time to be eligible for grade 8 promotion to high school.

4 Expanding	3 Proficient	2 Approaching	1 Beginning	0 IES
Consistently and independently extends and transfers content knowledge and skills beyond essential competencies.	Essential content knowledge and skills are demonstrated consistently and independently with ability to apply and transfer to real-world situations and/or a new task.	Demonstrates the emerging application and transfer of essential content knowledge and skills in familiar tasks.	The student is initiating the ability to demonstrate the essential content, knowledge, and skills.	Insufficient Evidence Shown: The student’s work was not completed or turned in.

Does homework still count in CBE?

Yes. Homework is a formative assessment that allows for the teacher and student to guide learning and is highly valued. Homework and classwork may be called practice work. Formative assessments are individualized allowing for further student success and decreases “busy work” that causes stress and anxiety. The work students complete prior to a summative (a cumulative assessment of student mastery) is valued, assessed, and reported. If it’s essential for success, teachers work with students to ensure that they have opportunities to practice skills and apply knowledge.

What is your GPA if you have a Proficient or an Expanding?

There are several factors that determine the answer to this question. As we settle into this new way of measuring student growth, we are hoping that students will see learning and achievement as more than a number on a piece of paper and that students will be able to talk, in depth, about what they know and how they will apply this knowledge.

What does a score of E mean and how is it earned?

An “E” or Expanding, represents the application of the concepts in a new or extended way. Different kinds of tasks reflect varied levels of demonstration of understanding by students. Expanding student work reflects a depth of knowledge that is highly complex. All summative assessments provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate Expanding levels of understanding.

How are final grades calculated?

Grades are calculated using “weighted mean across all assignments,” meaning that all grades are averaged. Formative assessments have a weight of 10% while summative assessments have a weight of 90%.

CBE & COLLEGE

Will grading in a competency-based system impact my student's chances of getting into college?

No. In a competency-based system, grades are intended to specifically communicate what students have learned. Students earn credit when they demonstrate competency, the ability to apply their knowledge. In a competency-based system, student achievement is measured using a variety of tools, including performance assessments and high quality rubrics. We track student performance with rolling grades, meaning the overall grade is calculated at the end of the course—reports up to that point are simply a snapshot of your student’s progress at that moment in time. Students continually provide evidence of their learning, and that evidence is compared to established proficiency scales.

Another component of competency-based grading is that student behaviors are reported separately from student academic achievement. For example, what do you know about a student who receives a "C" in math? Did that student learn 75% of the material? Did the student learn 100% of the material but not turn in some of his assignments? Did the student only learn 60% of the material but complete extra credit assignments to bring up his grade? A traditional system that mixes behaviors, averaging, and achievement makes it impossible to answer the question. What is worse is that the answer can change from teacher to teacher. A competency-based system attempts to clearly communicate exactly what was learned and what kinds of behaviors (Transferable Skills) are being demonstrated.

Will colleges choose another student from a different school over me because I don’t have a GPA?

A student’s Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated at the end of every semester and will be reported out on the student’s transcript.

Does moving to competency-based grading practices mean there will be no more class rank or GPA?

Both GPA and class rank can be computed in competency-based grading systems. There are many different ways schools are engaging in this work. Philosophically, class rank isn’t part of a competency-based system. However, it is still required by many colleges so it will continue to be reported.



How do I see my GPA?

At the high school level, quality points are assigned to each of our courses which will be computed using the Competency Grades values assigned by Alma and the point value determined by the level of the course in which the student is enrolled. Higher level courses like Honors or AP (Advanced Placement) will have higher point values than basic level courses. At the Elementary and Middle levels, a GPA is not calculated.

How do you get AP credit for college?

Advanced Placement courses have very specific requirements as determined by the College Board. The curriculum is clearly articulated and must be in line with any AP course wherever it is taught. AP credit is given (pending college review) when a student achieves a 4 or 5 on the common assessment (AP Exam) given to all students across the nation enrolled in that AP course. Nothing has changed for any student taking an AP level course.

How do colleges look at this grading compared to the old system? Are higher level colleges okay with CBE? Do high-achieving students have a chance of attending those schools?

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is not a new concept. College admissions officers process student information from around the world. Each institution has trained staff to process a variety of student information and portfolios from different schools to determine college readiness and determine if their university or college is a good fit for a particular student.

WHY COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION?

What is the state requirement for CBE?

Per the State of NH, high schools are required to have competencies written and posted for classes. All schools in SAU 7 are compliant with this requirement. SAU 7 competencies are derived from the State of NH Model Competencies, which are all directly tied to the Common Core State Standards (that teachers have been using for years).

What was wrong with the old [traditional] system?

Competency-based education (CBE) is best practice for students in the 21st century. The State of New Hampshire mandated (in 2009) that high schools must transition toward a system of reporting student learning according to competencies. As a public school system, SAU 7 was obligated to fulfill the mandate by implementing a new competency-based structure which includes a new grading and reporting system.

Why was the curriculum changed?

The curriculum was not changed. SAU 7 has taken the time to align all curriculum in all content areas in vertical documents spanning from grades K-12. Specific learning targets, based on national



standards (Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards; National Core Arts Standards) linked to District Competencies for Learning have been developed in all content areas at all grade levels.

How does CBE enhance the SAU 7 values surrounding student individualization and personalization?

Competency-Based Education (CBE) has expanded how teachers can personalize instruction and assessment; in the feedback, revision, and reassessment process students and teachers consult more frequently to discuss what an individual student needs to be successful. CBE allows for students to extend this learning and challenge themselves outside of the traditional setting with experiences such as extended learning opportunities (such as Running Start or dual enrollment classes), Career & Technical Education (CTE), and School to Work.

How does a CBE environment motivate students?

In a competency-based learning environment students are aware of the goals of their learning and “take ownership” of their pathway. Through differentiated instruction, students are able to learn and advance at their own pace within their course/classroom.

Why is there a CBE grading system when other parts of CBE (like learning at your own pace) aren't happening?

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is a complete transformation of every aspect of teaching, learning and assessment. This also transforms how we ask students to demonstrate what they know and can do. There is an emphasis on the process, or “journey” of learning. Students have always learned at their own pace and when we used words like “behind” or “ahead” suggested that there was a problem with a child’s learning. We continue to work on ways to support individualized learning every day for all students.

Terms & Definitions

Standard	Content or skills that define a content area. Clusters of standards are used to create tasks in which students demonstrate a level of proficiency.
Competency	Essential skill, knowledge, or behavior required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. Each competency is supported by standards that are reflective of grade level expectations.
Learning Targets	What the student will know or be able to do at the end of a lesson.
Formative Assessment	Formative assessments capture a student’s progress through the learning process and explain to what extent a student is learning a concept or skill. They are considered <i>practice</i> and show growth in skills over time. Examples include classwork and homework. Formative assessments are used to determine when students need reteaching, intervention, and extension during the learning process.
Summative Assessment	Summative assessments provide a summary of what a student has learned over a given time period. The goal of summative assessment is to <i>evaluate student learning</i> by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Examples of summative assessments include major projects, performance assessments, chapter tests, quizzes, research papers, and so on.
Differentiation	The process of applying various strategies to lessons in order to meet student’s needs, interests, and strengths.
Rubric	A coherent set of criteria for students’ work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality.
Transferable Skills	“Soft Skills” or Transferable Skills are among the key skills that will ensure that our students are school, life, and career ready. The four transferable skills are Collaborator, Communicator, Innovative Thinker, and Self-Directed Learner.
Feedback	Information about strengths and areas for improvement in student learning, usually given by a teacher, peer, or the student himself on the basis of criteria applied to student work or a progression of student success habits.

Resources:

- [Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Competency-Based Education](#)
- [Competency-Based Education FAQ](#)
- [Competency Based Education Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Formative vs Summative Assessment - Eberly Center - Carnegie Mellon University](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions - School Administrative Unit 9](#)
- [SAU 7 High School Graduation Competencies Policy](#)