

SWITZERLAND POINT MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Roadmap to Understanding Your Child's Grades



WHAT IS STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Standards-based grading measures your child's mastery of the grade-level standards for a course, or how well your child understands the material in class. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of essential standards taught and assessed throughout a unit of instruction.

A focus on learning: The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, your child, and you as a parent with a true picture of the knowledge and skills mastered, and to encourage a dialogue about what instruction your child needs next. Teachers will assess your child's learning using a variety of formative and summative assessments, tools such as traditional paper-and-pencil tests, written papers, lab reports, or projects, but also informal assessments such as classroom discussions or teacher observations. Essentially, everything your child does in a standards-based classroom will provide teachers with evidence of his/her learning.

WHAT ARE SPMS' GRADING PRACTICES?

SPMS teachers report grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning. As you sit with your child to review class progress using Home Access Center (HAC), here are some things to keep in mind:

- Teachers' gradebooks are developed to place emphasis on summative assessments (the results of all the hard work your child puts in to mastering course material throughout each quarter) over formative assessments and general assignments (the homework, class activities, and assignments that allow students to practice and deepen new knowledge). As such, 70% of students' grades will consist of summative assessments (under the category "Summative"), while formative assessments, homework, and class assignments will make up the remaining 30% (under the category "Formative"). For High School credit-earning courses (Algebra, Geometry, Biology), summative assessments will account for 75% of the course average, with formative assessments, homework, and class assignments accounting for the remaining 25%.

- Graded homework assignments will be entered into the Formative category and will account for no more than 5% or less of the total grade, per district policy. If a grade is used for a homework assignment, the title of the assignment in the gradebook will begin with “HW”.
- Teachers continually plan to assign coursework and assessments to gather data they use to make instructional decisions based on your child’s learning and growth. They update gradebooks in eSchool Plus on a regular basis to provide both students and parents with timely feedback through HAC.
- A standards-based grading approach recognizes that because learning is a process that takes place over time, students should—and will—be allowed to retake assessments. If the new assessment scores show a higher level of mastery, the original grades will be replaced (up to and including 85%, which serves as the highest grade recorded for a retest).

Gradebook Codes:

Gradebooks show numerical values that result in alphabetical grades. The following grading scale is used by all schools in St. Johns County in accordance with the State Grading Scale outlined in 1003.437 F.S.

Grades	Descriptor
A=90-100%	Outstanding Progress
B=80-89%	Above Average Progress
C=70-79%	Average Progress
D=60-69%	Lowest Acceptable Progress
F=0-59%	Failure

WHAT DOES THIS LOOKS LIKE IN HAC?

Here are some guidelines for interpreting the grading practices above when looking at your child’s performance in HAC:

Retest Scores:

- A student who has taken a test again to demonstrate growth from the first assessment will receive a new score up to and including an 85%. To help differentiate an 85% on a retest from an original score of 85%, check to see if there is a decimal after the score. The number after the decimal indicates your child’s score on the original assessment.
- For instance, if you see a score of “**85.56**”, your child scored a **56%** the first time the assessment was given.

EXT vs. 0% vs. “INC”:

- The placeholder “INC” under the assignment name where a score should be indicates a student has not completed the necessary assessments/assignments to be given a grade for a standard due to absences or other factors.

- In this case, the score is calculated as a zero in the student's grade to show the effect of not completing the assessment/assignment, and will significantly impact the class grade until an attempt to demonstrate mastery by completing the work is made. Once your child has completed the test/assignment, the 0% ("INC") is replaced by the score actually earned.
- "EXT" will be used to exempt a student from an assignment (typically only used in rare and extenuating circumstances). Although no score will be entered for a particular assignment, the overall class average will not be impacted.
- Scores of zero (displayed as 0% and calculated into a student's class average) may be entered for graded homework or other general assignments if a student makes no attempt to complete and submit despite intervention.

WHY THIS DECIMAL SYSTEM?

Although it may seem confusing, when consistently applied across all SPMS classrooms, this grading system helps SPMS teachers, administrators, parents, and most importantly, students, easily compare their progress over time when checking course grades. Teachers are also better able to make instructional decisions to meet the needs of individual students in preparation for upcoming assessments in which students may encounter standards/concepts they struggled with previously.

RETAKES/RECOVERY:

SPMS teachers are your child's advocate in the classroom in support of learning and knowledge gained over time. Our teachers believe what students do not know at the beginning of a course or unit should not be held against them at a later point in time. To that end, the following parameters apply:

- Students can recover (remediate/retest) a summative assessment if the original score earned was lower than 85%. Teachers are required to help students recover (remediate/retest) summative scores lower than 70%. Remediation/relearning must occur prior to a retest even if the original score was higher than 70% but lower than 85%.
- Students will earn the higher score (either summative retake score or original grade) in the gradebook. In the case where a summative was remediated but the original score was higher than the retest, teachers will use the comment feature to note this.
- Summative assessments should only be retaken and rescored once and in a timely manner, ideally, prior to the next unit summative. Teachers will utilize Schoology to communicate retake deadlines.
- Students must engage in learning opportunities prior to retaking a summative assessment, which will include teacher feedback. The intent is to ensure student success in relation to assessed standards.

CHEATING ON A SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Discipline for cheating is established as per the Code of Conduct as a level II offense and will be administered via the Deans. Students will receive a zero; however, students are eligible for a retake and must engage in learning

opportunities before retaking the summative assessment. Students will earn up to and including 85% on the retake assessment.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO TO RAISE THEIR GRADES IN A STANDARDS-BASED CLASS?

The goal in a standards-based class is ensuring that students master the essential standards for the class, so any efforts to raise your child's grade will have the same goal. Your child should meet with the teacher to determine which standards need improvement and work together to develop a plan on how to relearn the material and when to retest. If your child demonstrate a higher level of mastery on the reassessment, then the grade for that standard will be increased (up to and including 85%) and his/her grade will increase.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD'S GRADE OR ABOUT STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Teachers should always be the first point of contact should you have questions or concerns regarding your child's performance in a class. SPMS teachers strive to keep you regularly informed of your child's progress through a variety of communication methods (including Schoology and HAC), and will provide information about such methods when your child enrolls in their classes.