



Promoting District Office and Family Collaboration to Support Teaching and Learning: Scaling Standards-Based Grading in Highline Public Schools

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Promoting District Office and Family Collaboration to Support Teaching and Learning:
Scaling Standards-Based Grading in Highline Public Schools

Doctorate of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)

Capstone

Submitted by

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To the Harvard Graduate School of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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To Matt and my family-

I am so grateful for your support

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Abstract

In 2018, Highline Public Schools set an ambitious goal of district-wide implementation of standards-based grading by the fall of 2022. This includes the use of common rubrics and assessment strategies, shared grading scales and aggregation methods, and standards-aligned report cards. In 2021-2022, the superintendent and chief academic officer invited me to take residency in the district to further their efforts towards this goal. I joined Highline in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, when educators were relying on families more than ever and online video conferencing was creating both challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

By mindfully integrating into a team of leaders, I was able to promote the identification of clear short- and long-term goals, increase collaboration across departments, and lead the district's efforts to engage families in the design of a new report card. Leadership strategies I employed included using choice architecture to influence educator behavior, triangulating data and stories, incorporating an equity lens in decision making, and transforming power dynamics between staff and diverse families.

This capstone explores the relationship between teacher practice and technology platforms and the equity issues inherent in both engaging diverse families and grading non-academic behaviors. I address the need for ongoing collaborative, iterative processes for selecting the academic standards and non-academic skills to prioritize in teaching and feedback. Recommendations also include establishing multiple mechanisms and strategies for gathering meaningful family feedback at all stages of an initiative.

I. Introduction

In the 2020-2021 school year, I took residency in the Highline Public Schools to help with their district-wide implementation of standards-based grading. Since 2018, a team of district and school leaders had been leading teacher teams in determining the most important standards to be graded and creating professional learning modules to spread practices such as the use of rubrics. Their plans to engage families in the design of a new standards-based report card were put on hold when the Covid-19 pandemic closed school buildings and made in-person family engagement impossible. When I joined the district in the summer of 2020, the district was preparing for a fully virtual start to the school year and families were becoming accustomed to meeting through online video conferencing. I considered this unique situation and existing research as I developed strategies for engaging families in the new report card design and creating the conditions for more teachers to adopt standards-based grading practices.

As a member of the superintendent's cabinet, I leveraged my cross-department perspective to elicit the support of key leaders in technology, communication, and family engagement. I supported academic leaders on the standards-based grading team to clarify and share their implementation and outcome goals. I assembled and led a diverse team to design a family engagement plan that transformed power dynamics between staff and racially, linguistically, and economically diverse families. In this capstone, I analyze my efforts to enact these research-based approaches to both family engagement and building political and operational capacity for standards-based grading.

A. National Context for the Strategic Project

For decades, public schools in the United States have attempted to provide all students with rigorous, equitable instruction that prepares them for post-graduation success. National and state standards describe what students need to know and be able to do in each academic subject at each grade level, creating continuity as students progress from grade to grade. These standards drive curriculum development and state assessments across the country. They do not, however, consistently drive grading practices, especially for students in middle and high school. Many teachers continue to use a traditional points-based approach that averages students' scores on individual assignments throughout the term and includes factors such as homework completion and participation. Districts and schools have attempted to shift to a standards-based grading approach with varying degrees of success in implementation.

In a standards-based approach to grading, teachers track students' progress towards mastery of individual standards. Students can demonstrate their understanding through a variety of assessments and are able to retake portions of assessments to demonstrate mastery. If a student has a misunderstanding at the beginning of the term, that performance is not averaged into the final grade. Instead, students earn grades based on their most recent work, making the final grade a true reflection of what students know and are able to do at the end of the course. Proponents of standards-based grading see the approach as more consistent and equitable, promoting student agency and a growth mindset (Feldman, 2019).

When there is not a consistent approach to grading, students with similar content mastery in the same courses can have very different final grades depending on their

teacher's approach. Traditionally, most public school teachers make individual determinations about how to allocate points on individual assignments and how to assign weight to different types of performance. For example, if a student in Algebra 1 performed well on tests but didn't complete homework or attend regularly, one teacher may give them a C while another may give them an A. Conversely, if a student did not perform well on tests but always came to class, did their homework, and asked for and completed extra credit, one teacher may give them a C while another may give them an A.

Districts can influence teachers' approaches to grading through policies that require or forbid certain practices, professional development, and tools such as rubrics, online gradebooks, and report cards. Teachers can be resistant to using standards-based grading because it may seem more time-consuming and requires a shift in mindset from how most people were graded as students themselves. Districts can pursue consistent grading practices within a points-based approach. For example, they could have a policy that outlines consistent weighting for types of student performance such as quizzes and projects. Under this approach, teachers would have to give the same assignments across schools and score every assignment similarly. The downside of pursuing consistency with a points-based approach is that it doesn't allow teachers to differentiate assignments based on students' needs and interests. In addition, gradebooks with assignment percentages and a final aggregate score do not provide clear information on which standards the student mastered. Alternatively, when teachers provide feedback on the same individual standards based on multiple assignments (e.g. standards-based grading),

the district achieves consistency while providing more information and tailored instruction.

Proponents say standards-based grading provides more accurate information on student performance and promotes equity because scores are based on students' demonstration of mastery of the standards at the end of the course and not components such as attendance, timely submission of work, and extra credit. Students who have access to at-home academic support are already more likely to master standards than students who do not. If the grading policy also gives students credit for behaviors such as homework, these students are doubly advantaged. Adding these compliance-related factors to the grade also has the potential to overshadow a students' true academic performance, masking the need for learning supports such as reading interventions.

When I asked people across the country their opinions about grading, they often spoke of their own children's grades and the need to prepare students for the real world. Some educators spoke of grades as their most powerful tool in communicating with students and their families, a system to reward or punish. The powerful and personal nature of grading means that changing teachers' practice requires a combination of technical training and changing mindsets. The shift also requires students and families to think about grading in a new way and take a more active role in the process.

Standards-based grading includes a suite of teaching practices and accompanying reporting tools that interact with one another to promote students' academic growth. Standards-based grading practices include the use of rubrics to score student work and provide students with multiple opportunities to assess and reassess. In 2021, most teachers used online gradebooks that allowed students and their families to see grades in

real time. Traditional gradebooks often list scores on individual assignments chronologically and a running average of those scores. Standards-based gradebooks, on the other hand, are organized by individual standards with performance on that one standard listed across different assignments (see Appendix A). Standards-based report cards list student performance levels on individual standards for each course, often using a four-point scale such as Beginning, Approaching, Meeting, & Exceeding. The performance levels listed for each standard do not reflect an average of student performance across the term but instead reflect the final student performance at the end of the course.¹ When a student doesn't master a particular standard on one assessment, they have the opportunity to override that performance with a future assessment including re-taking related parts of a previous assessment after re-engaging with the standards.

Proponents of standards-based grading believe that when teachers use standards-based grading, students, teachers, and their families are focused on the most important skills and students are motivated to improve (Guskey & Bailey, 2001). For example, a gradebook that only shows overall assignment scores may inspire parents to tell their children to study for upcoming tests or make sure to turn in their homework. A standards-based gradebook allows families to provide more specific support for areas of need. For example, if a parent knows that their child needs to work on the standard of arguing from evidence, in everyday conversations they may prompt their child to use evidence to support their opinions.

¹ Districts vary in the aggregation method they used for standards-based grading. Some use power law, an algorithm that reflects proportional growth. Others use decaying average meant to place more weight on the most recent performance. In 2020-21, Highline Public Schools uses last score as their aggregation method while allowing teachers to override the most recent performance on a standard if previous performance was higher.

Partnering with families about their students' academic progress became even more important once schools closed in the spring of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the fall of 2020, the majority of students in U.S. public schools, whether by district constraints or family choice, continued to learn remotely. When districts were able to offer in-person learning, it was often in a hybrid model with students attending only one or two days each week. Any exposure to positive cases required students and staff to quarantine at home. Both fully remote and hybrid instructional models led to fewer hours of live instruction with a teacher and a reliance on students continuing their learning asynchronously at home. Nationwide school closures and hybrid models exacerbated the inequities among students.

During asynchronous learning, families' ability to support their children varied. Some had family members sitting with them guiding them towards the right answers. Others were home alone while their families worked essential jobs. Language barriers impacted some families' ability to support their children with online learning platforms. Some students struggled to access the internet, due to a lack of broadband or competing with family members to use the laptop. Other students weren't able to attend synchronous class sessions because they had to work during the school day after a family member was laid off due to the economic downturn. Some teachers continued to give and take away points for attendance, participation, and on-time completion of assignments. In these classes, students' grades were negatively impacted by their home responsibilities and

access to wifi, creating even greater inequities than in-person school.² The economic and health impacts of Covid-19 disproportionately impacted families of color.

While the pandemic was making inequities more pronounced, they had always existed. Many leaders saw the moment as an opportunity to not only shift school practices in the short-term but also prompt lasting change in areas such as grading and family engagement. Families had been listening to online classes and looking closely at teacher feedback, providing them with valuable insight about the future of their children's learning. Educators who had previously only engaged with families by telling them how to support their child during parent-teacher conferences were challenged to consider families as equal partners throughout the year. District leaders in Highline recognized that the pandemic presented both the need and opportunity to partner with parents more meaningfully and establish a more coherent approach to grading.

B. Organizational Context

Highline serves approximately 18,000 students in grades Prek-12 south of Seattle, Washington. Highline's 33 schools are located in the cities of Burien, Normandy Park, Des Moines, and SeaTac and the unincorporated areas of King County including White Center and Boulevard Park. Approximately 30% of Highline's students are English language learners, most speaking Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, or Amharic as their first language. Equity across schools is particularly challenging due to the economic diversity of the district. Depending on the geographic location within the district, the share of

² Dashboards of Highline students' grades indicated an increase in failing course grades in spring 2020. School leaders shared that high schoolers were not attending live sessions due to lack of stable internet and family responsibilities such as work and caretaking. Leaders attempted to address this by introducing an 'In Progress' grade that allowed students to complete credits in the future term. This option, however, did not address the immediate problem because fully remote learning continued into spring 2021 and students who had received IPs did not have access to in-person support to retrieve the credit.

students in elementary schools who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch ranged from 39% to 92%. While Highline's high school graduation rate has risen steadily from 62% in 2012-2013 to 84% in 2019-2020, it varies considerably across high schools, ranging from 77% to 100% in 2020.

The district's work is guided by the Highline Promise: *Every student in Highline Public Schools is known by name, strength and need and graduates prepared for the future they choose*. I observed that the Highline staff was invested in the shared vision of the district, regularly citing the Highline Promise across departments, schools, and stakeholder groups. To meet the Highline Promise for every student, the district established an equity policy that set a vision for "being an anti-racist organization focused on eliminating racism, racial and other identity inequities, and institutional bias" (2010). As part of its implementation, the district provides regular professional learning on race and identity for all staff. Staff were encouraged to use an equity tool to consider the impact of a policy, program, practice or decision on stakeholders. Each year the district publishes an equity report that includes data demonstrating progress towards the goal of eliminating institutional biases. As of 2020, a breakdown of course grades by student groups had not ever been included in the annual equity report.

The district office leadership is more stable than many similar districts and works closely with the school board. At the time I entered the district, the superintendent, Dr. Susan Enfield, was in her ninth year of leading the district. Her cabinet consisted of eight chiefs who led the following areas: academics, human resources, operations, communications, finance, technology, engagement and partnership, and policy and strategy. A five-member board of directors was locally elected and reflected some of the

racial diversity of the area but did not include any speakers of Vietnamese or Somali. Superintendent Enfield had a very productive working relationship with the board evidenced by their regular, cooperative communication. When she felt a change such as standards-based grading was needed, they usually embraced it.

Highline's policies and decisions were influenced by state code and the surrounding districts. The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provided requirements for all public schools in the state, including course grades on transcripts. Highline was part of the Road Map Project, a group of seven nearby districts working together to solve shared problems. Superintendent Enfield was in regular communication with the Road Map superintendents, often coordinating decisions and advocating for their schools together to OSPI. Three of the Road Map districts, Federal Way, Kent and Renton, had fully implemented standards-based grading. Federal Way had experienced some public struggles in their initial rollout but had recovered and seen increases in their graduation rate to 88%, seven percentage points above the state average.

The district regularly convened teachers, school-based administrators, and other staff to provide input on new initiatives. These stakeholders often came to consensus on the philosophy behind different programs and discussed different ideas about how to operationalize them at the school and classroom level. Due to the varying contexts of schools and dedication to principal autonomy, establishing shared district-wide processes was challenging. District leaders regularly provided general guidance and hoped that educators would implement the recommended approaches under the leadership of their school principal. While principal supervisors (referred to as Instructional Leadership

Executive Directors or ILEDs) regularly visited schools, they did not share quantitative or qualitative data on the fidelity of implementation with other district leaders.

Highline leaders usually consulted with the teachers union and principals association before making decisions. The Highline Education Association (HEA) is an affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA) and bargains on behalf of certificated staff. Some principals found elements of the collective bargaining agreement restrictive. For example, in my interviews, some staff cited a provision guaranteeing teachers academic freedom as the reason that teachers can grade however they like. There was, however, a process by which 80% of staff in an individual school could vote to adopt a shared practice such as standards-based grading. Principals and Assistant Principals, while not unionized, were represented by the Association of Washington School Principals. Their interaction with district leadership varied, sometimes characterized by advocacy typical of a union and other times by a collaborative approach.

1. Highline's Implementation of Standards-Based Grading

When I arrived in the district in July 2020, the district was working towards the goal of system-wide implementation of standards-based grading by fall 2022. The chief academic officer had assembled a team of district office and school-based educators to guide the district towards full implementation. Led by two directors in the district office's Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership (TLL), this Standards-based Grading Team (SBG team) had spent two years attending professional learning and creating a timeline of action steps to complete before September 2022 (see Appendix B). They had established essential standards in some subjects and designed professional learning on standards-based grading practices. Three schools and some individual teachers had begun

to customize the online gradebook in the district’s student information system to reflect standards-based practices. Their planned next steps included finalizing the essential standards selection process, establishing district-wide assessments and rubrics, adopting new board policy, engaging families and students, and creating a new report card.

For years, Highline had been talking about the importance of standards-based instruction, which they defined as all students receiving grade-level content closely aligned to essential standards. TLL had focused on delivering a “Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum” such that all students, regardless of school or teacher assignment, had equal access to high-quality instruction. Highline increased instructional staff at the district office to aid in the creation of district-wide unit frameworks with assessments and rubrics aligned to state and national standards. They narrowed down acceptable curricular materials to those ‘adopted’ through the district’s instructional materials committee. At the school level, teachers met weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze student performance on common assessments and plan future instruction accordingly. Principals conducted individual classroom observations and walkthroughs to assess the delivery of the standards-based instruction and provide feedback and support.

In October 2019, the district launched the standards selection process for math. Teachers across all schools selected essential standards using the following criteria suggested by Solution Tree Press (2015):

- *Endurance: Those standards that provide students with knowledge and skills beyond a single test date.*

- *Leverage: Those standards that provide knowledge and skills that will be of value in multiple disciplines (examples: non-fiction writing, graphing, arguing from evidence).*
- *Readiness: Those standards that provide knowledge and skills that are necessary for success in the next grade or level of instruction.*

Once the individual school teams came to consensus on which standards most met the criteria, lead teachers and department chairs analyzed the results and brought a synthesized version back to the teacher teams for feedback. TLL supported a final iteration process and those standards were included on district frameworks and loaded into the online gradebook.

There was some debate about how standards should be described in the gradebook and on the report card. Some teachers believed the standards should be adapted to make them the ‘right size’ for grading. For example, they believed some standards were too big (e.g. world languages included both speaking and writing in the same standard) or too small (e.g. math standards that addressed only one skill, usually mastered in less than one week). They believed that the descriptions of standards should be converted into ‘reporting standards’ that were more accessible to students and their families.

A few schools and some individual teachers across the district were voluntarily using the standards-based online gradebooks which allowed families to see the areas in which their children needed more practice. If their children’s teachers were still using a traditional approach, families saw scores on tests and quizzes but no indication of the content that their child mastered or which areas caused them to lose points. At the secondary level where students had multiple teachers, some teacher teams had agreed

upon a consistent way of grading, making it easier for families to understand their children's performance across courses. For other families, each of their children's teachers graded differently, forcing them to decipher multiple different grading systems in each of the teacher's gradebooks. With the increased role of families in remote schooling during the pandemic, a consistent, standards-based approach to grading was more important than ever. To support their children's learning, families needed to be equipped with an understanding of what their children were expected to know and be able to do and their children's current strength and areas of growth.

2. Highline's Family Engagement

The board of directors made explicit their commitment to family engagement. One of the five goals in the strategic plan included family engagement as part of the implementation plan reading, "In order to promote academic growth and mastery, the district plans to expand successful partnerships including: We will provide professional learning for leaders to include explicit ways to encourage family engagement around student learning" (2018). Highline's Parent and Family Engagement Policy included: "families should know what their child should know and what their child should be able to do by the end of the school year" and "families have access to . . . information about how to support their children's learning at home" (2016). Highline continually increased its investment in strong family partnerships. In 2013, the superintendent assembled a Family Action Committee to provide input on district decisions during quarterly meetings. The Human Resources Family Advisory Council works directly with the human resources department to select school leaders.

C. Framing My Strategic Project

The superintendent and chief academic officer charged me with preparing the system for districtwide implementation of standards-based grading in fall 2022. I began my residency thinking that I would be joining the Department of Teaching, Learning and Leadership (TLL) and focusing on a strategy for scaling standards-based grading practices across schools. I anticipated that I would need to deeply understand the pedagogical nuances of such an approach and design professional learning experiences that inspired teachers to unlearn previous grading practices in order to incorporate the new approach. In the first months of my residency, I interviewed over forty people and discovered that there were many instructional leaders already building professional learning materials on the topic and working with schools to scale practices. Observing an abundance of existing leadership in this area, I analyzed the landscape for other opportunities to add value.

By the beginning of November, I identified gaps in leadership that I could fill. I decided to focus my work on building the systemwide conditions for a new standards-based report card, including messaging, collaboration across district office departments, and engaging families. While there had been rich discussion about standards-based grading, the district still needed a clear shared vision for how it would be implemented in Highline. TLL leaders had been hesitant to simplify a complex idea into one-page memos or to push schools towards a consistent implementation when staff were still learning the approach. Educators, on the other hand, expressed a desire for more specifics on implementation and technical support. I hoped to bridge this gap by proposing implementation guidance that was tight enough to create consistency across

the system but loose enough to allow for variation at the school and teacher level. I also focused on communicating the rationale behind standards-based grading. Concerns arose that we were labeling everything as an equity strategy, leading stakeholders to question how standards-based grading would create more equitable outcomes. I hoped to help more stakeholders understand why we were adopting the approach, what outcomes we hoped to see, and what role they could play.

Since the adoption of the equity policy in 2010, staff built a strong culture of working towards equitable outcomes for all students. If a practice was perceived as promoting equity, it was more likely to be adopted. I attempted to promote community buy-in by connecting the standards-based grading approach to equity. As the work evolved, I also realized the need to explicitly connect standards-based grading to other district initiatives such as professional learning communities and Universal Design for Learning.³ Synthesizing the strategies we were asking schools to implement mitigated the perception of standards-based grading as just “one more thing.”

To expand the work beyond TLL, I focused on strengthening collaboration with the departments of Communications, Student Support and Family Engagement, and Technology. Staff members, including TLL leaders, were still getting comfortable with the new online gradebook. Collaborating with staff from the Department of Technology, I aligned the online reporting tools with best practices in standards-based reporting and design principles from behavioral science. Additionally, the standards-based grading team’s planning for family and student engagement had been put on hold since the spring’s pandemic-related school closures. I convened a subcommittee of teachers,

³ Universal Design for Learning is a framework that supports the operationalization of Highline’s vision for inclusive education, providing students with multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression.

district leaders, and family engagement staff to involve families in the new report cards design process.⁴ I hoped to pilot the new report cards in fall 2021 with a feedback cycle to inform revisions before district-wide implementation. In collaboration with the Department of Communication, I developed a plan for multimodal communication about the rationale for and strategies aligned with standards-based grading.

In this capstone, I a) describe my work preparing the system for district-wide implementation of standards-based grading, b) share evidence of my work and c) analyze its success, including my efforts to link implementation to the district's priority on equity. Finally, I describe the implications of the project for my future leadership, the ongoing work of leaders in Highline Public Schools, and the U.S. education sector more broadly. I begin by reviewing the knowledge that informed the development of my two theories of action for the work.

⁴ My capstone is focused on family engagement on the new report card design. While I also ensured educator and student participation in the design process, that engagement is not the focus of my writing because there were already existing approaches and structures to support it.

II. Review of Knowledge for Action

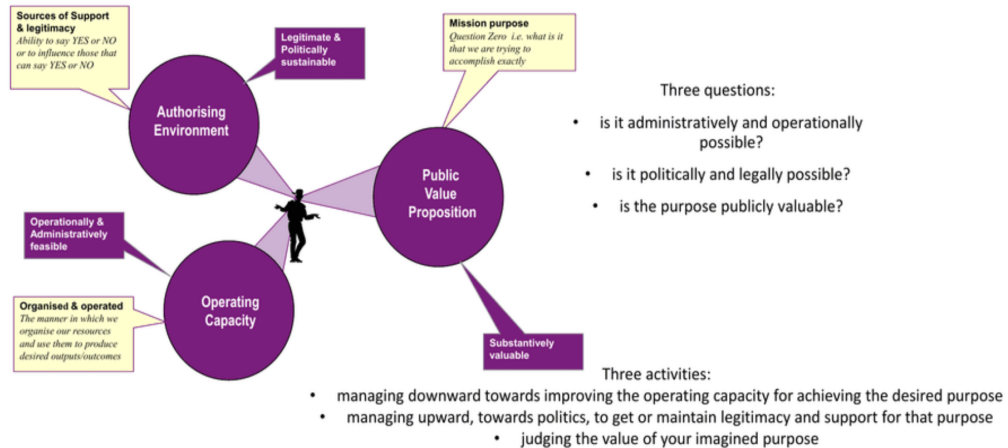
Standards-based grading is intended to create public value in multiple ways: reducing biases in grading, motivating students to learn, and providing more accurate, detailed information about student performance that allows families to partner with teachers. To ensure that the expansion of Highline’s family engagement did not exacerbate inequities, I needed to understand how educators can meaningfully collaborate with diverse families. I also wanted to understand other district’s experiences implementing standards-based grading. Finally, my initial assessment pointed to a need for a) revamping the ‘why’ behind the approach, b) mobilizing stakeholders, and c) ensuring that we could implement the vision. To inform this aspect of the work, I studied Mark Moore’s framework for manager action in varying environments.

A. Strategies for Creating Public Value

Based on his work at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in the 1990s, Mark H. Moore developed a framework that describes how managers determine the appropriate interventions to create public value. He studied hundreds of cases to determine what managers in the nonprofit and government sectors considered as they navigated their context. He concluded that the most successful managers operated at the “intersection of political support, substantive value, and administrative feasibility” (1995, p. 99). Figure 1 below, referred to as the strategic triangle, describes the questions and activities to create the conditions for change.

Figure 1: Moore’s Strategic Triangle (P. Reville, January 4, 2021)

The strategic triangle: Mark Moore



Moore M H (1995) *Creating Public Value*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

1. Expanding the Authorizing Environment

Moore describes political support for an intervention as the environment that authorizes particular actions by the manager. This authorizing environment reflects how the current balance of power among stakeholders allows for managers to take certain actions without too much pushback. Different groups hold varying degrees of power in promoting or impeding instructional change. While Highline’s chief academic officer, superintendent, and board of directors publicly signaled their support of standards-based grading, their influence could be counterbalanced by other strong forces within the district. The teachers union and principals association are powerful voices that had reversed decisions in the past. Without enough of their support, standards-based grading would not be widely adopted. Some teachers had experienced positive results with standards-based grading, but they had not yet influenced enough people for the approach

to pass the threshold of legitimacy. Through distance learning and an emphasis on equity, I saw an opportunity to build support for standards-based grading by increasing the power of families. Building demand from families would require close collaboration with the director of family and community partnerships and chief communications officer.

When I described the concept of standards-based grading to a few parents, they expressed interest in having more detailed information about their child's performance aligned to grade-level expectations. These interviews led me to believe that most parents would support this approach. Colleagues told me that some families would be resistant if their child was currently receiving high grades because the teacher was grading on a curve or allowing extra credit. I predicted that we could win over these families by communicating the short-lived benefit of those practices and emphasizing the goal of college and career readiness. I felt confident that if I amplified the voices of families and equipped them with strategies to advocate for standards-based grading, they could create a situation where principals and teachers would feel compelled to make the shift. For families and other stakeholders, I wanted to find compelling research that we could use to describe the positive impacts of standards-based grading.

a. Studies on the Impact of Standards-Based Grading

While there are many books asserting the benefits of standards-based grading, the research on the impacts of standards-based grading is limited. Few studies provide strong causal evidence on its impact, and studies examining the correlation between standards-based grading and state assessments have mixed results. For example, a Massachusetts study of 4th grade report cards and performance on mathematics assessments found that there was no correlation between report cards with a

standards-based format and performance on the state assessment, leading the researcher to conclude, “efforts of school leadership to engage stakeholders in this significant change may not be producing the desired improvements in learning” (Craig, 2011, p. 103). In contrast, a Colorado study examined the correlation between end-of-course proficiency in grades 6-10 reading, language arts, mathematics, and science courses and the state assessments. The researcher found that the district that employed a standards-based grading model demonstrated a “higher correlation and higher mean scores and grades across the overall population and sub-groups including students of low socioeconomic status, English language learners, and Latinx students” (Hapstonstall, 2010, p. 4).

Standards-based grading may be associated with other positive outcomes besides improved test scores, however. One qualitative study found that standards-based grading promoted a growth mindset in high school students, but it was based solely on the perception of seven teachers (Knight & Cooper, 2019). At least one component of standards-based grading has been isolated in causal studies. In particular, one study found that when teachers employed specific evaluation criteria using rubrics, they exhibited less racial bias in grading than when the criteria were vague (Quinn, 2020). This suggests that a key component of standards-based grading, rubrics, may have positive effects. In contrast to the research on rubrics, I was unable to find a study indicating that standards-based report card formats are associated with increased student achievement. As I executed my project, I could promote buy-in by citing the study on rubrics, but I would have to find other ways to demonstrate the value of other standards-based grading practices as well.

2. Building Operational Capacity

Even with a strong authorizing environment, standards-based grading will not deliver its intended value without operational capability. Moore found that managers often have to grow their team's skills in order to make their vision for change a reality. For the new reporting tools to be meaningful, teachers would have to align their instruction and assessment to standards and effectively implement practices such as using rubrics for feedback and allowing students to re-assess. The district was dedicating professional learning time for both teachers and school administrators to the development of these practices. There was not as much time dedicated to setting up and training teachers on the report card or online gradebook in Synergy, the district's student information system. In order for public value to be created, the Department of Technology would have to ensure the system reflected the instructional vision and teachers were trained to use it. If there were continued glitches and inefficiencies with the system, teacher frustration would lead to opposition. In short, building the system's operational capacity would be essential for teachers to effectively use the new reporting tool.

a. Choice Architecture

In order to build technical skills, the system needs to be designed to encourage people to start practicing the desired behaviors. In a system that promotes teacher autonomy, there is a strong preference towards getting 'buy in' instead of mandating new behavior. A successful implementation of standards-based grading could be accelerated by employing strategies from behavioral science that encourage teachers to voluntarily adopt the new practices. Behavioral economists Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein

provide such strategies in their application of libertarian paternalism, wherein institutions “steer people’s choices in welfare-promoting directions without eliminating freedom of choice” (2003, p. 1). People are still able to make their own choices, yet the design leverages cognitive biases to encourage the preferred behavior. For example, when the design requires the user to exert more effort to select a path that the system finds undesirable, people are more likely to choose the alternative that avoids this work.

Employing such choice architecture was found effective in a study of employee contributions to their 401(k). Making regular contributions is advantageous to employees because the companies match the contributions, increasing their savings for retirement. Brigitte Madrian and Dennis Shea (2002) studied the impact of shifting from an opt-in to an opt-out system. Instead of requiring employees to complete paperwork to initiate contributions from their earnings, employees were automatically signed up to contribute to their 401(k) and had to complete paperwork to stop the contributions. The result was an increase from 49 percent to 86 percent in initial enrollments.

In Highline, teachers are asked to use many different online systems in the regular course of their work week. They complete a Google form in professional learning communities to document meetings. They upload lessons and grade assignments using the online learning platforms Seesaw and Google Classroom. Grades are entered in the Synergy online gradebook. There is a separate function in Synergy for progress reports and report cards. If we could use choice architecture to design each of these interfaces to promote standards-based grading, we could encourage more people to align their practices with the district’s vision for standards-based grading.

3. Statement of Purpose

Moore found that effective managers build stakeholder support and technical capacity by communicating the public value they are trying to create through a statement of purpose. Depending on the current political landscape and level of systems and skills needed to support the intervention, statements of purpose range in their level of specificity. More abstract statements reduce opposition and allow for flexibility. Without concreteness, though, abstract statements don't allow the system to identify the capacity that needs to be built to operationalize the vision. If a statement is too specific, however, the initiative could be undermined if the environment changes enough that it is no longer feasible. Moore's analysis of the implications of such messaging informed my interventions on communication about standards-based grading in Highline.

When I began work in the district in July 2020, the vision created in the fall of 2018 was still in use: "We believe that to provide equity for all students we must consistently implement standards-based practices and grading systems throughout Highline Public Schools." The breadth of this statement and its connection to equity increased buy-in at the beginning stages of the initiative. To implement the change, however, we needed to more concretely articulate the implementation and outcomes we were hoping to produce. This would allow stakeholders to begin practicing the approaches and more clearly measure results, building operational capacity and support.

In Moore's research, once the public sees the value the system created, the manager gains additional legitimacy and support. To promote such a virtuous cycle, the new reporting tools and processes must serve the teachers, students, and families. My project would benefit from my prioritizing the experiences and expressed desires of

stakeholders to ensure that they were aligned to my predictions of the benefits of standards-based grading. If the new reporting tools and processes created the value people desired, they would invest more deeply in standards-based grading practices. For example, if teachers began to share rubrics with families and provide more opportunities for reassessment, these behaviors could result in increased family collaboration and student agency that would lead to improved student performance. Families would be motivated by their child's ability to improve their grade and analyze teacher feedback more closely to support their students' learning on the needed standards.

B. Learning from Other Districts

While each school district is unique, learning about the challenges and successes of other district's adoption of standards-based grading informed my decisions about the strategies I would employ in Highline. I reviewed the news coverage of a neighboring district's implementation and studied work by national researchers on report card design and.

1. Federal Way's Implementation of Standards-Based Grading

The difficulties that a neighboring district had with implementing standards-based grading influenced Highline's decision to have a multi-year approach with professional learning and community engagement before mandating the change. When Federal Way Public Schools implemented standards-based grading in the 2011-2012 school year, teachers testified at board meetings citing concerns such as students not being incentivized to turn in assignments (Allmain, 2011). High school students staged a sit-in to protest the change. Federal Way's implementation of standards-based grading

continued to have some public bumps along the way. In the 2013-2014 school year, Federal Way changed their gradebook software and the vice president of the school board shared that the “biggest hangup” was students and families not understanding how their grade was calculated (Allmain, 2013). The algorithm, Power Law, was meant to account for growth throughout the term but was more complicated to understand than simply determining the grade by the most recent score. Federal Way adjusted the calculation after they found that if the student scored very low at the beginning of the term, their end-term proficiency was overreported.

In the following years, Federal Way focused on proactively engaging stakeholders to understand standards-based grading. To help explain how grades are calculated, Federal Way hosted a series of public forums. These included a panel of college admissions officers who said that standards-based grading does not hurt a student's chance of admission. In fact, they shared that the approach supports college success by preparing students for more rigorous courses and increasing student agency and a growth mindset. In a video on the district's website, a parent shared that the separate reporting of academic and social development work habits allows her to know where her child needs support. A student shared that consistent reporting allowed her to know right away what she needs to improve and have “time to do it before the end of the semester when grades are final. It helps a lot and doesn't make things as stressful for me (2018).” The experiences of this student and parent illustrate the potential benefits that advocates of standards-based grading cite. Federal Way's challenges with implementing standards-based grading and the strategies they used to overcome them influenced my project.

2. Research on Standards Based Report Card Design

Districts that use standards-based grading vary in their approach to the content and format of their report cards. Guskey and Bailey (2001) analyzed report cards for students in preschool through grade 12 in the United States and Canada. They also conducted informal interviews and surveys with families and educators to make recommendations for revisions to district report cards. They concluded that there is no one way that fits all contexts. They recommended that districts first determine what purpose the report card serves and then “what reporting format, method or structure best serves that purpose,” with a balance of “detail and practicality” (148).

Guskey and Bailey described a detailed report card at one school that was given to the parents along with a curriculum guidebook. They cautioned that using this type of form requires educators to “commit themselves to educating parents about the content of the form and how it can be meaningfully interpreted” (154). Reporting tools can serve the purpose of prompting students, parents, and teachers to engage in goal setting. Some they studied had space for students and parents to write comments, encouraging two-way communication.

They recommended involving teachers, administrators, parents, students, local businesspeople, and board members in the design process. Once a draft is established, focus groups can provide input on “the stated purpose, the marking system, the vocabulary used, organization, and the design” (170). The language should be consistent and clear for students and their families. Items that appear the largest will be perceived as the most important. Finally, Guskey and Bailey found that the frequency of reporting needs to balance the perspectives of both teachers and families. They found that while

most parents would like to receive reports six to eight times each year, teachers prefer to provide reports only three or four times each year. This gap can be filled by designing a multifaceted approach to feedback that includes more informal avenues such as online gradebooks accessible to families in real time.

Guskey, Swan, and Jung applied these recommendations in a partnership with the Commonwealth of Kentucky (2010). They involved educators from 36 different schools to establish a statewide standards-based report card. For each subject, the teachers created four to six reporting standards drawn from the groupings of national standards. The template included a short class description that teachers customized each marking period to provide more details about the standards taught. Kentucky piloted the new report card with forty-one teacher volunteers. They distributed both the new report card and the old one. They asked both parents and teachers to complete an online survey. Both groups were asked to compare their satisfaction with the two forms in terms of the “amount of information offered, quality of instruction provided, clarity of information included, and the ease of understanding the information presented” (2010, p. 11). Both parents and teachers perceived the new report card to be superior in all four categories. Teachers were also asked to compare the amount of time it takes to complete the reporting process and share the “biggest hurdles/questions/reservations colleagues might have in joining this effort” (p. 11). The biggest concern for spreading the practice that teachers cited was time. They suggested the software could have more efficiencies for generating the reports.

After the pilot, some schools in the study decided to use the new report card schoolwide. At the time of publishing in 2010, Kentucky planned to recruit more teachers

to use the new forms by sharing the pilot process, rationale and available technical support. They hoped to involve more districts in the pilot to eventually implement statewide in three years. A media scan of Kentucky grading practices revealed that their pilot was not able to expand statewide. In a Kentucky School Boards Association article from 2016, one district was highlighted for its use of standards-based report cards in their elementary schools. The superintendent and one elementary principal shared that “challenges and changes in leadership at the middle and high schools precluded introduction of standards-based grading there,” while a professor who worked with Kentucky districts cited the importance of a GPA for college admissions and other “political things” attached to grades such as “scholarship money, athletic eligibility, and valedictorian honors” (Coldiron, 2016). The experiences in Kentucky reinforced the need for my project to promote a) widespread support of standards-based grading so that it can be sustained amidst leadership changes and b) address potential concerns about GPA by continuing to report letter grades.

C. Research on Equitable Family Engagement

Creating the conditions for meaningful family engagement requires new ways of thinking and working. Instead of imposing the school’s agenda on parents or assuming that parents will speak up, educators need to invest time and effort to partner with all families. With this project, the decision to move towards standards-based grading had already been made by the educators without family input. At first, this felt like a major impediment to meaningful engagement. I did not want to use parents as a rubber stamp. Eventually, I realized that there were still lots of important decisions to be made that were

well suited to be influenced by family voice. In fact, the development of the new reporting tools and processes was an ideal topic for family engagement because families were the tools' primary audience.

To prepare for equitable engagement, I studied the work of The Family Leadership Design Collaborative, a participatory design research project working to “center racial equity in family engagement” (2020). The Family Leadership Design Collaborative convened what they called “design circles” in ten cities across the country to identify common strategies for building family and community design collaboratives. The five most common strategies included:

1. *Involve families and communities as co-designers of their own futures.*
2. *Engage multiple identities and perspectives in interactions and relationships.*
3. *Sustain reflexive and iterative learning processes over time.*
4. *Engage current and ongoing tension points.*
5. *Imagine and enact change.*

Prior to becoming the project investigator for the Family Leadership Design Collaborative, Professor Ann Ishimaru investigated parent engagement initiatives in three districts in the Road Map Project (2014). These case studies of family engagement efforts in the region generated twelve recommendations for a more equitable approach to family engagement. The two most relevant to my project include:

- *Recognize and address inequities in power between policymakers, professional educators, and parents/families.*

- *Rather than feeling they are losing power or control, professionals and educators can proactively seek out the expertise of parents and families to gain new ideas and additional capacity.*
- *Organizational leaders must play a key initiating and supporting role in creating the conditions that promote equitable relationships.*
- *Create and sustain a culture of professional learning in family engagement practice.*
 - *Ongoing reflection, learning, and efforts to innovate*
 - *Use broad forms of data (including student and family voices) to assess progress and guide improvement (p. 5)*

One of the case studies included content directly connected to standards-based grading. In Kent Public Schools, parent leaders revised the Parent Academy for Student Achievement curriculum and facilitated its nine modules, including one entitled ‘Ensuring Academic Success.’ This module began with families defining academic success for their own children and comparing those definitions with the school’s definition for all children. Families then learned about teachers’ assessment practices and reviewed the standards-based report card. The key contact for the Parent Academy, Dr. Millicent Borishade, Kent’s assistant director of family and community engagement, was now an elementary principal in Highline Public Schools. I asked her to meet with me to share her insights.

In recounting her experiences with the ‘Ensuring Academic Success’ module of Kent’s Parent Academy for Student Achievement, Dr. Borishade recalled that parents’ vision for academic success for their children was outcome-driven. They wanted to

ensure that their children went to college and had success in their careers, as has been found in other studies (TNTP, 2018). They thought that their children would be on track to college if they came to school, did all of their work, listened to the teacher, and did their homework. If teachers were not using a standards-based approach to grading and instead included these work ethic factors into the grades, report cards would communicate to families that their children were on track even if they hadn't mastered the standards required for success in college. Dr. Borishade recalled that parents had limited knowledge of the Common Core State Standards and, consequently, the lesson served as an 'eye-opener' for what their children needed to know and be able to do to be successful in each grade (personal communication, October 21, 2020). This knowledge helped me predict the type of engagement families may have and reinforced the importance of grades reflecting students' knowledge and skills. If the public value we wanted to create was preparing students for the future, we needed to align our communication about students' progress to that goal.

D. Theories of Action

The research detailed above led me to develop two theories of action: one related to creating the conditions for teacher adoption of standards-based grading practices and the other for co-designing reporting tools with families, educators, and students. Based on what I learned, I planned a series of actions that I predicted would lead to my desired outcomes. My first theory of action was designed to support system wide readiness for implementing the changes I was presenting to families. My second theory of action was specific to the way I would design and execute family engagement to promote sustainable

partnerships with diverse families. Together, I hoped that these two sets of actions would position the district for a successful scaling of standards-based grading.

1. Creating the Conditions for Teacher Adoption

If I	Then
Revise the statement of purpose to be more specific	We will be able to build operational capacity (teacher use of strategies, technology alignment and districtwide understanding)
Use choice architecture that promotes the desired behavior	More staff will shift their practices and develop the aligned skills
Promote collaboration between the Department of Technology Services and the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership	The gradebook and other technology tools will support the implementation of the standards-based grading philosophy and reporting tools
Build understanding of why standards-based grading is an equity strategy and how it supports other district initiatives	Standards-based grading will be integrated with other work and move beyond compliance towards a higher purpose
Which Will Result in:	
Teachers implementing standards-based grading practices. Stakeholders experiencing the benefits and creating more demand.	

2. Co-designing Reporting Tools with Families

If I	Then
Assemble a representative team of staff to lead family engagement on standards-based grading	We will create a family engagement strategy that leverages different perspectives and existing relationships to engage diverse families.
Lead the creation of multimodal family communication on the standards-based grading philosophy and implementation	Families will have a shared understanding of the district decision that inspires them to use the new approach to support their children’s learning.
Identify the non-negotiables with the teachers union and principal’s association and avoid asking for family input in areas that could be overridden	We can maintain family’s trust by acting on their input
Engage families in a co-design process for the new student performance reporting tools	The gradebook and report card will become a meaningful communication tool between school and home
Position family engagement as an example of anti-racist action	More stakeholders will support the initiative
Which Will Result in:	
School-family collaboration that supports student achievement.	

III. Description of Strategic Project

Guided by my two theories of action, I integrated into the district with a focus on opportunities to strengthen the district's support of standards-based grading and build on the family engagement work underway. As the residency progressed, my influence increased and I was able to exercise more leadership across departments and within the SBG team. In this section, I detail the actions that I took to realize my theories of action.

A. My Role in the Organizational Context

As the doctoral resident, I was often referred to as the superintendent's intern. Although there was a precedent of district office employees completing doctoral internships, these were not full time and were usually executed within their existing role under the guidance of their current supervisor. While I originally thought I was going to be the leader of the standards-based grading initiative, it became clear that the two directors who were former principals in the district were already the leaders. In addition, entering a district remotely during the stress of a pandemic and school closures made building relationships more challenging than in a typical year. Consequently, it took time for me to establish myself as a team member and determine the appropriate scope of my work. In the first few months, I focused on understanding the district culture and building allies through one-on-one interviews, group meetings, and online research.

By October, the directors who had been facilitating the standards-based foundation team for the past two years agreed for me to lead a SBG family engagement subcommittee within the SBG team. For most meetings, we met as a whole group at the beginning and then spent the majority of time in subcommittees. While other

subcommittees focused on professional learning related to rubrics and the online gradebook, my subcommittee created a plan to engage families. Before launching the new SBG family engagement subcommittee, the two directors and I met with the two members of the team who had worked on family engagement in the previous year. They passed on their thinking and agreed to continue in the work with me. I asked them to help recruit additional subcommittee members to expand our representation. The SBG team was almost entirely English speakers who worked either in TLL or at elementary schools. At my urging, we were able to recruit a high school teacher of Somali and French and a high school math teacher. I recruited two additional members from the Department of Student Support and Family Engagement, including a Spanish speaker. As leader of this subcommittee, I was charged with building and executing a family engagement plan to ensure families understood why we were planning for districtwide implementation of standards-based grading and how they could have a voice in the new report card design. In order to respectfully engage families, I needed to have confidence that teachers and district leaders would be able to execute the strategies we would be discussing with families. I did not want to tell families that Highline was moving in this direction without confidence that the district was able to operationalize the vision.

I leveraged my role on districtwide leadership teams such as cabinet and the TLL leadership team, which consisted of the chief academic officer, executive directors and instructional leadership executive directors. In these interactions, I advocated for standards-based grading to be prioritized in meetings and pointed out connections between standards-based grading practices and other district initiatives. In addition, I initiated and sustained collaborating with leaders outside of TLL. These included a) the

chief communication officer, who would lead the community messaging for the district-wide rollout, b) the director of data integration and visualization, who would lead the setup of the new online gradebooks and report cards and c) the director of family and community partnership, who would contribute her expertise working with families and community organizations and sustain the work moving forward.

As a co-leader of the overall standards-based grading team, I served as a thought partner, bringing an outside perspective to advance our thinking. In the beginning, my role on the standards-based grading implementation team was behind the scenes and focused on family engagement. I was still gaining an understanding of the work that had been done with standards-based grading in the previous years and how the district operated more generally, especially in the areas of professional learning and communication between district office and schools. By November, I was gaining more and more credibility among my colleagues and building strong relationships with the two directors who had been leading the team for two years. I began to exercise more leadership with the team as a whole and influence the design of our monthly sessions. By strategically selecting the content and delivery, I was able to accelerate our work and promote ownership among all members.

B. Creating the Conditions for Teacher Adoption

In October 2018, the chief academic officer distributed a letter to all district staff announcing the district's commitment to fully adopt a standards-based grading in approximately three years. When I joined Highline in July 2020, the standards-based grading foundation team had been meeting for two years to lead the essential standards

selection process and create professional learning modules. The team was led by the director of pre-K and elementary success and the director of secondary initiatives. Participants mostly included staff from the district office and schools who had already embraced the standards-based approach to grading. The directors considered two schools, a middle and high school, to be furthest along in implementing the approach and materials were pulled directly from those two schools to share with other schools.

The majority of teachers across the district continued to use a points-based grading system. Some allowed students to earn points for non-academic components such as on-time submission. Many used an aggregation method that averaged scores across the term, penalizing students for poor performance at the beginning of the semester. With varying aggregation methods and some teachers including non-academic factors, even if students performed similarly in the same course, depending on their teacher they may receive very different final grades. As the year progressed, I focused my actions both on our ability to execute standards-based grading and the reasons why we were invested in the approach.

1. Promoting Clearer Messaging

When I shared themes from my initial staff interviews with the leaders of the standards-based grading team, they were surprised that stakeholders reported that the vision was not clear. They pointed to their vision statement and the fall 2018 letter from the chief academic officer as providing clear guidance. To provide an example of the type of clarity that would help us, I referred to the district's signature practices for social and emotional learning. Every member of the district could name the practices of welcoming rituals and optimistic closures. I asked the two directors what the result would be if we

asked people to write down from memory the signature practices of standards-based grading. They predicted that it would yield different results across the system. I acknowledged that when they began two years ago, the team needed to start from a more abstract place sponsored by the chief academic officer. Through our conversation they recognized that as the work progressed, the vision needed to become more specific and internalized by multiple stakeholders.

To make clear what full implementation meant, I drafted a list of signature practices with accompanying definitions: essential standards, rubrics, multiple assessment opportunities, and a consistent aggregation method and grading scale. This list was included in the director's launch memo to secondary principals as well as the chief academic officer's memo to the board of directors. I encouraged the standards-based grading foundation team to consider changing the nature of their work based on the phase of the process. Instead of focusing on learning about standards-based grading and discussing possible approaches, we now needed to support coherent implementation. I proposed that we change our name to the standards-based grading implementation team. In their September meeting, the team met to discuss their work for the year. They acknowledged the shift from learning about the philosophy to piloting approaches and refining the implementation in Highline. Without dissent, they agreed to change their name to reflect the shift in focus.

As the year continued, I led the standards-based grading team in developing even more detailed messaging that would support the ongoing implementation. In a December meeting, I asked team members to predict what concerns teachers might have and how they would respond. I framed the conversation by saying, "You are the leaders who will

help ready the system to answer and respond to concerns. What will inspire educators to change practice and families and students to embrace a standards-based approach to grading?” In addition to SBG team members, we needed system-level leaders such as the board of directors to be able to respond to community concerns with clear messaging about standards-based grading.

2. Building Political Support

The October board of directors working session gave me an opportunity to work with the two directors to frame our work for the year. While I personally only presented the slides related to family engagement, I strategically contributed to the creation of the entire presentation, keeping in mind the messaging that would most create the conditions for change. In conversations and meetings with district staff, I often heard predictions that when the district asked all schools to use standards-based grading, people would go to the board to convince them not to move forward. In preparing for the board session, I recommended that the directors address this concern directly. I drafted the following three goals that guided the board session:

- deepening our knowledge of standards-based grading in alignment with the Highline Public Schools strategic plan goals and vision,
- sharing and gathering feedback on the plan to engage families in understanding the shift and providing input, and
- understanding the policy and leadership implications for sponsorship of this system-wide change.

One of the impediments to teachers shifting the way they grade was seemingly competing annual foci from the district. The stated goals for the year included

professional learning communities, universal design for learning, and standards-based grading. While these practices do support one another, they were often spoken about in isolation. To demonstrate their coherence, I created a graphic that illustrated the connection between professional learning communities and standards-based grading (see Appendix C).

At the board work session, I presented three slides on family engagement. First, I shared the core beliefs from Karen Mapp's Dual Capacity Framework to connect standards-based grading to mindsets for partnering with families to promote student learning. Next, I discussed the plan to engage families in two-way communication about the rationale for standards-based grading and the creation of new reporting tools. Finally, I presented a slide about how the SBG family engagement subcommittee will promote equity and coherence by working across departments.

The director of secondary initiatives presented the section about board sponsorship. She described the policy implications as revising Policy 2420 and other parts of the 2000 series to ensure alignment. She described the leadership implications as "assisting the broader community to understand standards-based grading as an equity strategy." At the conclusion of the presentation, one board director asked how we know the strategies work for families of color. She asked what evidence we had and what metrics we would be tracking. I mentioned the study that found a reduction in bias with the use of rubrics for scoring second-grade writing. The standards-based grading team had not yet named internal metrics that we would be tracking. I used the board director's questions as the impetus for engaging the entire SBG team in the process of clearly defining how SBG can promote equity and what outcomes we expect.

3. Describing the Public Value

The SBG team was becoming more focused on defining desired teacher practices but had not yet established the specific outcomes they hoped those practices would produce. They stated that standards-based grading would promote equity but hadn't identified the metrics they would track to determine if a full implementation yielded the desired results. I hoped to build allies in clarifying how exactly our work would promote equitable student outcomes. When TLL self-organized into equity-focused book groups, I jumped on the chance to join three colleagues in reading Joe Feldman's *Grading for Equity*. After two monthly meetings, I started to wonder why Highline was basing a racial equity strategy primarily on the work of three white male authors, Guskey, O'Connor⁵, and Feldman, all published by Corwin Press. The ideas in their books resonated with what I believed promoted equity and learning, but I wanted to verify that the strategies were promoting equity and learning among Highline students.

I conducted a data analysis comparing students' course grades at the three secondary schools that had implemented standards-based grading school-wide to course grades at the other secondary schools in the district. To avoid mixing in any effects of COVID-related school-closures, I analyzed grades from fall 2019. I reviewed the percentage of F grades received by the following student groups: race⁶, English language learner (ELL), and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs describing special education services). The three schools that said they were practicing standards-based grading schoolwide gave a higher percentage of Fs overall. The

⁵ Highline's leadership team references O'Connor, Ken (2015). *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*. Boston, MA: Pearson ATI. Corwin Press published O'Connor's *How to Grade for Learning* (2017).

⁶ The racial categories are based on Washington state categories defined by OSPI.

difference between student racial groups was slightly reduced in these schools because of a slightly higher percentage of Asian and White students receiving Fs. With the exception of Hispanic students, the percentage of students who failed at least one class was higher for all racial groups in the standards-based grading schools than other district schools.

When I shared this data with the book club, they were disheartened with the results but shared that they were not surprised because they knew from their work in schools that implementation was uneven. They reported that depending on the academic department, teachers' use of standards-based practices varied. We wondered how the results might change if certain courses that were known to not use all of the practices were removed from the analysis. I decided not to invest more time in the analysis of these outcomes because the district had not yet established a method for measuring implementation in the various departments and schools. The conversations that I initiated in the book club allowed me to test out ideas for measuring equitable impacts and build allies in the quest for more coherence in Highline's implementation of standards-based grading. These monthly conversations also influenced my leadership within the SBG team.

I shared the course grades data with the two directors, and it prompted a deeper commitment to both clarifying what implementation of standards-based grading meant in Highline and finding clarity on the impact we were trying to achieve. I asked if improving course grades overall and achieving a more even distribution among student groups was an expected impact of standards-based grading practices. They said that it was and agreed that we should explore grades as a long-term outcome with the SBG team. I suggested that one of them facilitate the conversation knowing that while I was a

temporary resident, they would still be working in the district when the metrics would be analyzed.

During the December meeting, the director of pre-K and elementary success shared slides I had created with bar graphs of grades for different student groups. The data showed that students of color, ELLs, and students with IEPs received a disproportionate number of Fs. The director asked the group, “How do we predict standards-based grading practices will improve outcomes especially for our students of color? What would it look like if this was our indicator of success to measure implementation and outcomes?” She then led a conversation that built agreement towards a measurable goal related to students’ grades, especially those groups whom our system had disproportionately been giving Fs. She also suggested that student and family voice could be a metric for success.

4. Building Operational Capacity

Highline experienced complications reminiscent of the struggles Federal Way had when changing their student information system (SIS). Ahead of the 2019-20 school year, Highline had to abruptly change its SIS after the previous SIS, Illuminate, was discontinued in Washington State. In summer of 2020, Highline was still in the process of setting up the Synergy grading tools. They were able to avoid the power law algorithm by using last score as the default aggregation method but still had not fully aligned the platform to the desired instructional approach.

The new SIS, Synergy, included an option for a standards-based gradebook, but the district-wide default gradebook was points-based. Teachers who wanted to use a standards-based approach had to learn how to create custom settings. Early adopters of

standards-based grading had to customize the online gradebook to fit the district's approach. Some teachers who agreed with the standards-based approach cited technical hurdles as the reason they were not yet using a standards-based gradebook. In my interviews, two principals said that their teachers were interested in the approach but found the gradebook setup confusing and time consuming. All requests related to the Synergy gradebook were directed to the Department of Technology Services, whose staff reported that some of the requests were not related to the functionality of the platform but instead misunderstandings about the philosophy behind standards-based grading. Those requests were forwarded to the TLL directors, who were still building their understanding of the technical aspects of the gradebook.

a. Using Choice Architecture to Design the Online Gradebook Settings

Considering choice architecture, I prompted the shift of the district's default gradebook from points-based to standards-based. The student information system required teachers to set up a new gradebook every term. The district could set a default that teachers could automatically adopt and allow teachers to customize the gradebook. When I joined the district, the default gradebook was points-based. Teachers who wanted to use standards-based grading needed to learn how to manually change the gradebook settings and customize their gradebook at the beginning of every term. These settings were creating a disincentive for teachers to practice the desired behavior because it required additional technical knowledge and time. The amount of time it took for teachers to set up their gradebooks was doubled in the 2020-21 school year because of the new master schedule designed for distance learning. Based on feedback on remote learning in the spring, the district shifted the secondary schedule from semesters to quarters so

students would take only half the number of classes at one time. In the 2019-2020 year, teachers needed to set up their gradebook only twice each year because students took six classes each semester. The 2020-2021 master schedule was organized into four quarters with three classes each. This required teachers to set up their gradebooks four times each year. Changing the default gradebook from points-based to standards-based saved time for teachers who chose the district-preferred standards-based approach and provided opportunities for teachers to select a standards-based gradebook at four points throughout the year. In order to understand where each school was in implementing standards-based grading practices, I created a google form for principals to complete. This process created the impetus for more schools to shift towards standards-based grading practices, increasing the number of teachers trying out the practices.

I navigated resistance to the change with both district office and school staff. When the decision was still under discussion in August, I mentioned the standards-based default gradebook in another meeting. An instructional leadership executive director interrupted me saying, “That is not happening.” In the moment, I replied that it was still under review. Afterwards, I connected with another leader who had more social capital in the district to ensure that they would champion the change. The change was agreed upon by enough TLL leaders for the default to be set as standards-based, but the settings still allowed teachers to customize their gradebook. The Department of Technology Services created instructions for teachers to customize their gradebooks for a points-based approach. When the first term began, a principal sent me an email expressing that he had told me before that the default gradebook should stay points-based and now his staff had extra work. I replied that the results of the August principal survey indicated that the

majority of schools were moving towards standards-based grading. I attached the instructions for customizing the gradebook back to points based, letting him know that it takes approximately fifteen minutes and district staff are on hand to help. In the winter of 2021, I focused on the next technical change needed in the SIS: a standards-based report card.

b. Implementing a New Report Card

The process of trying to develop a draft report card template uncovered additional areas where more discussion was needed to come to consensus. I encouraged the director of data integration and visualization to arrange a meeting with members of the SBG team and a representative from the student information system, Synergy. The February 5th meeting was intended to launch our work with Synergy's Gradebook specialists who would be supporting us in using the newest version of their gradebook and report card module. In preparation for the meeting, the Synergy specialist shared a demonstration copy of the report card (see Appendix D). The initial reaction from the director of secondary initiatives was that Synergy's version was not close to our vision (see Appendix E). I entered the meeting with the goal of bridging the differences between the director's vision and Synergy's capability in order to establish a draft Highline template that we could share with families the following month.

The Synergy representative walked us through the report card functionality for the different grade levels. The teachers included on the call were impressed by the more efficient and flexible ways to enter grades in the online gradebook. We did not, however, leave the meeting with an understanding of how the actual report card was generated and if it could include the content on our draft report card. This led me to suggest that we

push back the family focus groups to the first week in April. I did not want to present a report card template to families that wasn't technically possible or fully agreed upon by key stakeholders. I suggested we connect with another district that had used the Synergy platform to generate a standards-based report card. The director of data integration and visualization arranged a meeting with Federal Way leaders who had partnered with the student information system to build the module.

On March 23rd, we met with Federal Way's director of instructional technology, and the executive director of scholar learning, academic programs, and staff development. They shared their process of collaborating with Synergy to ensure that the report card reflected the information they wanted and was efficient for teachers. For example, they programmed an aggregation method that calculated the level for each priority standard by determining the mode of the three most recent assignments for that standard. For the report card, the program averaged the priority standards to determine a grade for the "reporting standard" that appeared on the paper version of the report card. The online ParentVue portal allowed families to select a reporting standard and see all of the priority standards that contributed to that grade.

On March 24th, members of the SBG team met again with the Synergy representatives. Early in the conversation, the director of data integration and visualization expressed concern that we were jumping to designing a report card template before having documented the decisions we had made about our philosophy. Key decisions she cited were how the standards would be fed into the report card and the aggregation method. The director of secondary initiatives said that we needed to gather more feedback before determining the aggregation method for next year. We developed a

document outlining the decisions we made for the 2020-21 gradebook with a column to add the decisions for the pilot year and 2022-2023 school year with accompanying rationale. This running document would be helpful to coordinate between the technology and TLL departments and emphasized the need to make decisions for the 2021-22 pilot before the April focus groups. At the time I submitted this capstone, the team was still finalizing the details of the report card. Despite the ambiguity, I went ahead with the family focus groups hoping that the feedback might inspire our decision making.

B. Promoting Equitable Family Engagement

In distance learning, parents were more involved than ever in their children's education. I hoped to capitalize on this attention to involve families in the adoption of standards-based grading. If families became invested in a grading system designed to more accurately communicate learning and motivate their students, they would encourage more teachers to adopt the practice. If they co-created the new reporting tools, they would be more likely to use them to support their children's learning, demonstrating the power of standards-based grading to educators.

1. Context of Highline's Family Engagement Work

The standards-based grading foundation team had created a three-year implementation plan that included family engagement. In February 2020, a member of the team met with the Director of Family and Community Partnerships to discuss a plan. That work, including meeting with the superintendent's Family Action Committee, was put on hold when the pandemic began. The fall 2020 Family Action Committee agenda included a discussion of standards-based grading, but that item was replaced with a

conversation about families' experiences with remote learning and the possibility of returning students to in-person learning.

Some Highline staff felt that implementing standards-based grading in the 2020-2021 school year was urgent so that families and students could better understand learning expectations and not be penalized for missing assignments. In an Instagram survey conducted at the end of the entirely-remote spring 2020 semester, Highline students expressed a need for improvement in grading, writing that “Teachers were extremely vague when grading” and “I didn’t really get the grades part but I did pass just explain the grades better [sic].” These student comments demonstrated a need for more clarity in grading. Some Highline leaders hoped that more teachers would employ standards-based grading and the accompanying practices. They believed that providing clear expectations with rubrics and multiple assessment opportunities would motivate students to engage in remote instruction and assist families in supporting their children. Other leaders worried that teachers were overwhelmed with the new demands of distance learning and this was not the time to add one more thing to their plates.

a. District-wide Professional Learning on Family Engagement

In 2020, for the first time, all staff in the district were required to participate in a three-and-a-half-hour workshop on family partnerships. As part of asynchronous work prior to the live districtwide session, staff was asked to complete an anonymous survey asking how much they believed in the four core beliefs for family engagement from the Dual Capacity Framework (Mapp & Bergman, 2019). The results of the survey identified the need for educators to find new ways to support families in academically engaging with their children (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Anonymous Survey Administered for Learning Purposes (Highline, August 2020)

Survey Question	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them.	100%
All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.	76%
Families and school staff should be equal partners.	99%
The responsibility for building and sustaining partnerships between school, home, and community rests primarily with school staff.	82%

I interpreted these results as an indication that a substantial minority of educators had not consistently had successful experiences with parents supporting their children academically. They may have found connecting with families difficult because of challenges with technology access, limited availability due to work responsibilities, or language barriers. These experiences may have contributed to educators believing that some parents don't have the capacity to support their children in meeting standards. With this mindset, educators may see investing in a standards-based gradebook and helping families use it as an unproductive use of their limited time.

b. Family Access to Online Gradebooks

In 2020-2021, many families were not accessing the online gradebooks. Families could login to view their child's performance in real-time but many were not accessing the information at all. As of October 12, 2020, only 61% of students had a family member who had logged in. This number was even lower for high schoolers at 51%. There was a further decrease for students whose home language is Vietnamese or Spanish - only 43% had a family member who had logged on.

In addition to the online gradebooks, schools reported progress to families twice each term by mailing home a mid-term progress report and end-of-term report card. The reports from elementary schools indicated student progress towards standards with the following level descriptions: beginning, approaching, meeting, or exceeding (B, A, M, E). At the secondary level, the reports included letter grades for each course and did not reference standards. Teachers who were using a standards-based gradebook translated the four levels (B, A, M, E) into a letter grade aligned with the district's grading scale. At the secondary level, the report cards in Synergy fed into the transcripts that were used for college applications and required by OSPI to include letter grades. While this official purpose drove some content, the district was most focused on using the progress reports and report cards to communicate with families.

c. Engaging Families in 2020-2021

To learn more about district level family engagement, I asked TLL leaders about other district staff attempting to meaningfully involve families in their initiatives. Highline's policy on curriculum requires an adoption process that includes family input. In spring 2019, the initial request for family participation on the instructional materials adoption committee was extended to all families. Some parents attended but did not

actively participate in the pedagogical discussions happening mostly among the educators in the group. There were also some language barriers, and translation in real time was challenging. Eventually, the parents stopped attending. The district team reflected on what happened and revamped the process from start to finish to promote more meaningful family input.

The new recruitment process for the curriculum adoption committee included an application and membership approval process. The process was not so cumbersome as to deter people from applying. Instead, it is intended to make the commitment more official. There was an explicit focus on their onboarding that included one-on-one meetings with the facilitator. The facilitator asked each family member what it would take to make them feel like a real member of the team in “ten different ways.”⁷ The facilitator reported that new members who didn’t participate in the individual onboarding meetings seemed overwhelmed in the first meeting and didn’t talk as much. Team members made more of an effort to connect with family members throughout the process. When one joined the meeting an hour late, a staff member connected with her after the meeting to catch her up. When a family member did not attend, the facilitator called the family member afterwards.

Separate sessions for family members and a narrower range of topics allowed family members to participate more equitably in decision making. Instead of learning about ten curricular options, the team of educators narrowed the choices down to three for the combined group to consider. During separate sessions, families were able to learn about the curricula, including technical terms, and ask questions that they may have been

⁷ Throughout my capstone I share excerpts from personal communications I had with district leaders and the organization’s stakeholders throughout the time of my residency.

uncomfortable asking during the larger group session. When they then came together with the combined group, they were more confident in sharing their opinions. I hoped to employ these strategies in our engagement with families on standards-based grading.

Observing another family engagement strategy illustrated both Highline's recognition of families as equal partners in student learning and the challenges of engaging families remotely during the pandemic. Elementary schools in Highline partnered with WestEd to conduct Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTTs). Designed by Maria Paredes, APTTs bring all of the families of one class together to learn about expectations of the grade and strategies to support their children at home. On November 5, 2020, I observed an APPT where fourth-grade teachers focused on two math standards through a dice game that practiced multi-digit multiplication. After demonstrating the game, the teachers invited families to discuss how they might make it easier or more challenging for their children and other ways they could practice the skill at home.

While the meeting was well planned, technical issues with the translation function in the video conferencing platform Zoom made equitable engagement challenging. Live interpreters were present but the Zoom default translation menu did not include all the languages spoken by Highline families. For example, if families required translation into Somali, they were directed to select the French option to hear the audio of the live interpreter. One family could not find the translation button on their district-supplied Chromebook. The facilitators turned off the translation function and started it again but the family still could not access interpretation. When a family wanted to share their thoughts in a language other than English, the host had to turn off the interpretation so that the interpreter could translate into English for the group. The host then had to turn

translation services back on and each family member who wanted interpretation had to select the language again. These technical complications not only took time away from the content but also privileged English speakers. As it became clear that the pandemic would continue throughout the school year, I recognized the need to incorporate strategic use of Zoom to both equitably and efficiently engage families.

2. Planning for Family Engagement

Under my leadership, the SBG family engagement subcommittee planned to create multimodal family communication on the philosophy and implementation. I culled resources from individual Highline schools as well as other districts including Federal Way, WA, Everest, WI, and Des Moines, IA to inform the district-wide content we created. We planned to share those resources with district families and use their feedback to make revisions. In partnership with the Department of Communications, we planned to post the materials on our website and present them during family webinars. Our goal was for families to understand why the district had decided to have all teachers use the approach and what it meant for them and their children. We hoped these materials would equip families with the knowledge to interpret teacher feedback on progress towards standards and support their children in reengaging with standards not yet met. The communication materials would serve as an important resource for preparing families for co-designing standards-based reporting tools.

a. Assembling a Family Advisory Group

I planned to assemble a team of parents to meet monthly starting in January 2021. While the content had initially been limited to a new report card format, I planned to expand the engagement to include input on the medium and timing of communication. I

planned to invite parents to share their experiences with the current grading approaches and respond to questions about how and when they want teachers to communicate their student's performance. In the previous six months of pandemic-related school closures, the district had invested in equipping all homes with broadband and a device. As a result, parents were getting more comfortable with using online platforms. I predicted that parents may prefer the district redirect the resources they were currently using to print and mail report cards towards making sure information is available online throughout the semester.

To make the co-design process truly equitable, I planned to recognize my positional power and other identity-related dynamics when engaging with families. For example, while I have opinions about what families may want, I planned to make explicit that they should not defer to me as “the expert” even though I am a professional educator. I predicted that complex power dynamics would be especially present given the racial and linguistic makeup of the district. I planned to analyze the conversations to “understand conceptually and relationally how to disrupt institutionalized and racialized scripts” (Ann Ishimaru, personal communication, November 10, 2020).

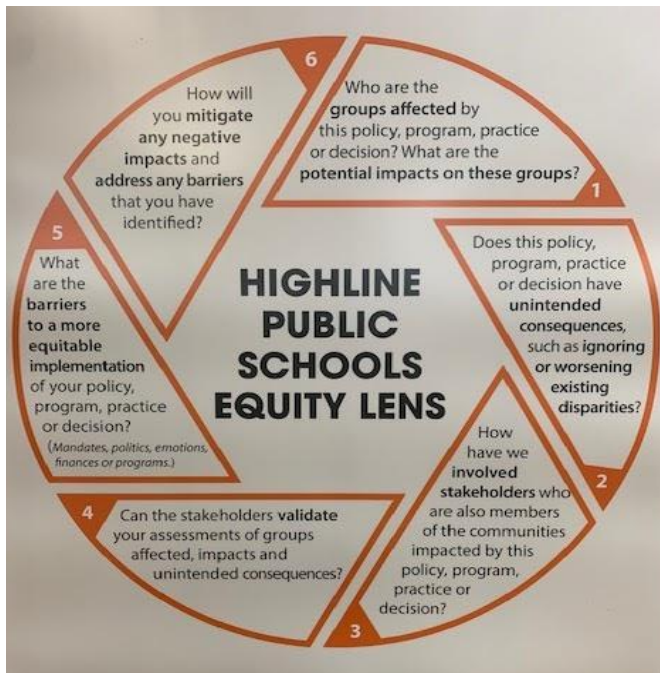
To support the iterative co-design process, I planned to involve district leaders, the teachers union, and the principals association. I planned to bring the families' ideas back to these stakeholders to determine what options were feasible amidst considerations such as state regulations, teacher workload, and technical capabilities. I would then report back to the family group so they could continue their design within the given parameters. I also planned to facilitate joint meetings with multiple groups so they could hear one another's perspectives directly. This experience would not only support the development

of standards-based reporting tools but also served as a model for future engagement with families.

b. Using Highline’s Equity Tool

District leaders had committed to using an equity tool to consider the impacts of a policy, program, practice or decision on different groups in the district (see Figure 3 below). In their attempts to use the tool, TLL leaders found that it was often limited to one-time internal discussions of steps one and two: considering the groups affected and the unintended consequences. I hoped the family engagement work on standards-based grading could become a model for steps three and four: involving stakeholders and seeing if they validate steps one and two. I predicted that linking our work to the district-wide equity tool would strengthen the district’s commitment to honoring family voice and making changes based on their input.

Figure 3: Highline Public Schools Equity Lens



3. Leading the SBG Family Engagement Subcommittee

As leader of the SBG family engagement subcommittee, I positioned myself as a facilitator who would both create space for the equitable exchange of ideas during our monthly meetings and continue our work in between meetings. I sent out draft agendas in advance that included time for members to adjust the agenda and build the agenda for the following month. Based on members' ideas during subcommittee meetings, I researched and drafted documents and brought back my findings to the group the following month. In an October 8th e-mail transmitting the agenda for our first meeting, I described my role in the following way, "I will be working between each monthly meeting to make sure we have the resources we need to maximize our teamwork. While this may make me seem like the leader of our group, I will be following your lead on how we can best collaborate with each other and families."

In October, I led the subcommittee in drafting our family engagement strategy and generating questions we still had about standards-based grading. When people posed a question, I encouraged them to do some research to gather information to share at the next meeting. At the start of the November meeting, I asked people to report out their learnings since the last meeting. I was eager to share lots of information, but the other members did not share as much as I did, and some expressed concern that they hadn't done enough pre-work. As a result, I decided not to ask participants to complete tasks between meetings again. Instead, I focused each meeting on one or two key topics and provided time within the meeting for members to complete some independent work.

In between meetings, I had one-one-one conversations with the Director of Family Engagement. She recommended that I not attempt to assemble a family advisory

group to meet throughout the year. She felt that there were too many competing priorities and that we should rely on one-time focus groups instead of asking families to commit to a series of meetings. To publicize the focus groups and promote participation from a diverse group of families, she suggested that we connect with community partners including New Futures/SWYFS, Para Los Niños, SPEB (formerly Somali Parents Education Board), and the African Community Housing and Development. I followed her lead and shifted away from a consistent family advisory group towards one-time focus groups.

During our January meeting, I led the SBG family engagement subcommittee in developing our focus group protocol and drafting FAQs for the website. First, we agreed to the three goals that I had drafted based on our previous conversations:

1. Incorporate family input into the new design and process of standards-based reporting tools.
2. Communicate how standards-based grading supports educators and families working together to improve student learning.
3. Equip families with skills to understand standards-based feedback and support their children's academic progress.

We then reviewed the proposed focus group questions that I had drafted. We agreed to start with open-ended questions about their experience with report cards before discussing a draft report card. We would use the feedback to make revisions before bringing it to the superintendent's Family Action Committee on March 22nd. Our hope was to have a vetted report card for a few schools to start using in fall 2021. During this

pilot, we would continue to collect feedback to improve the report card before district-wide implementation in fall 2022.

To generate the FAQs, I first led the group in a discussion of the topics we felt were most important for families. Next, I asked each subcommittee member to work independently to draft language into a shared document prepopulated with a labeled space for each of them. After ten minutes, each member had written ideas for the group to see. Finally, we read through each other's work, highlighting sections we thought were strong and agreeing on common language. I committed to bring a draft of FAQs to our next meeting for their review. On February 8th, we met to finalize the first draft of the FAQs and schedule focus groups for the first week in March (see Appendix F). I proposed that we expand our scope to include students and educators; the group agreed. We adjusted the structure to allow participants to hear overview information in their native language and then discuss in multilingual groups by role (families, students, and staff) with translation (see Appendix G). During my work with the SBG family engagement subcommittee, I also paid close attention to the district as a whole to ensure that we had system wide capacity to support our work.

The district's transition to in-person learning on March 1st was occupying much of the staff. Starting in December, I had taken on the additional role of project manager for the return to in-person learning. The entire staff was working long hours to develop and communicate plans for safety within the half-day instructional model as well as determining which students and staff were coming in person and which were staying remote. I did not believe that our focus groups would be successful without the attention

of the communications and family engagement staff. I suggested that we postpone the focus groups until April and the subcommittee agreed.

Some of the disruptions caused by the return to in-person learning had unexpectedly positive impacts on my project. The March meeting of the entire SBG team was transitioned to asynchronous due to scheduling conflicts with events, particularly the teachers union vote on the memorandum of understanding for returning to in-person learning.⁸ The directors and I shared a list of tasks that we wanted committee members to complete independently including reviewing the FAQs and signing up to facilitate focus groups. Multiple team members from other subcommittees provided suggestions for the FAQs and volunteered to lead focus groups.

4. Executing The Family Engagement Process

Even though the focus groups were delayed until April, we still needed to prepare for the Family Action Committee (FAC) meeting in March. Now that this event was happening before the district-wide focus groups, I reframed it as a pilot that would allow the SBG team to try out our approach and refine it before engaging more families. To launch the family engagement process with the FAC, I needed the report card template for them to review. This proved harder than I had anticipated.

a. Content for the Report Card Template

Although the directors had been discussing a new report card for months, I hadn't seen anything in writing that I could share with families. When I asked them about their progress towards generating a draft, they described a planning session where they

⁸ The emergency March 8th union meeting was scheduled after the February 23rd and March 2nd union meeting resulted in a no vote for a March 1st start date of in-person learning for elementary students. In response to the union vote, the board authorized the superintendent to file an injunction to prevent the work stoppage. HR notified teachers that if they refused to report to their work location that week, they would be personally subject to legal action. The March 8th meeting resulted in a yes vote for a March 11th start date.

documented ideas for a report card template. The chart papers were in an area of the district office that seemed to be frozen in time. Staff abruptly left when the pandemic began and had been working remotely ever since. I went into the office and took a picture of the chart paper and emailed it to them. During the January 11th meeting, they met with their subcommittees to discuss the report card template.

On January 27th, the Director of Secondary Initiatives shared the new report card templates with me and other district leaders for review. The templates for K-2, 3-5, and secondary included sections to list and rate standards for each course using the levels beginning, approaching, meeting, and exceeding. There was a section called “Behaviors that Promote Learning” with a three-point scale labeled consistently, sometimes, and developing with the categories ownership of learning, self-management, and collaboration. No standards or scores were listed, making it hard for families to visualize. I adjusted my request for the focus group to an actual sample with standards and scores, not just a template.

On January 29, I met with the Director of Secondary Initiatives to discuss the report card sample. She shared that she had pulled the non-academic skills section directly from Federal Way’s template. She said there was consensus among the SBG team that these skills should not be part of the course grade but varying opinions on how they should be handled. They were still working to resolve if there should be common categories across the district or if teachers should be able to select the categories most relevant to their courses. Some felt these skills should not even be part of the report card because there could be implicit bias in the ratings. Others felt they needed to be on the report card to show that they mattered. Some felt we could reduce implicit bias by

establishing district-wide categories with accompanying rubrics. I shared with her a discussion I had led earlier that month with a group of central office leaders. When applying the equity lens to the new standards-based report card, the group focused on the implications of adding non-academic skills such as effort as separate ratings on the report card. The director of language learning described the need to explicitly teach organization and study skills. When I asked if feedback on non-academic skills should be on the report card, she replied, “If we don’t put it somewhere important, then we ignore it and we don’t teach it.”

Upon hearing this, the director of secondary initiatives was concerned that the participating TLL leaders seemed to agree that non-academic skills needed to be on the report card. I referred back to our agreed-upon timeline which included establishing a report card for spring feedback. In order to identify a starting point for the report cards, we needed to engage more stakeholders now and come to a decision, even if there was still some disagreement. I suggested we work with the SBG team on February 8 to make a recommendation. I created PowerPoint slides describing the decisions needed around success skills including possible rubrics to score them. I also added the topic to the full TLL leadership team meeting and cabinet meeting agendas for later in the week. Adding broader engagement to the calendar motivated the SBG team to generate a clear recommendation that could be understood by others. After going through the protocol I created, they recommended that non-academic skills not appear on the report card and instead be used for goal setting and reflection in other structures such as student-led conferences and portfolios. We communicated the rationale behind this recommendation

to the larger leadership teams and they accepted our recommendation. With the content of the draft report card set, we were ready to gather feedback from families.

b. Facilitating the Family Action Committee

On March 22, I led the Family Action Committee (FAC) to demonstrate a style of facilitation that mitigated the power dynamics caused by diverse language, education, professional expertise, and racial and gender identity. I invited multiple SBG team members to observe in preparation for facilitating April focus groups themselves. In my opening, I let the FAC know that this would not be the type of presentation they were used to but instead a feedback session. I told them that while the team and I had been studying the topic and preparing materials for them, we were not the experts in the conversation. Instead, we were asking for their expertise as the primary audience for report cards. To further mitigate the power dynamics between educators and families, I referred to members of the SBG team using their first names and not their titles and was explicit about our roles in the meeting. To set up the conversation, I described participant agreements including, “Speak from your own experiences. There are no wrong answers.” I described the facilitator role not as an expert but instead promoting full participation, asking clarifying questions, and moving the group along. To cue the SBG team members observing, I included three possible facilitator moves questions under each goal the such as, “Can we hear from someone who hasn’t yet spoken?” (see Appendix H.)

Throughout the process, I promoted full participation by using strategies that considered language and communication preference. I shared FAQs with the group ahead of time in both English and Spanish. I also provided independent time during the session for participants to process. Before each section, I shared the questions on a slide and read

them aloud. To begin the discussion, I stopped sharing my screen and placed the questions in the chat so they could reference them throughout. During the conversation, I used many of the phrases to promote participation and also identified new ways to engage more participants. Participants started using the chat and I revoiced what they had said to the group. I noticed that a participant used the “raise hand” function so I invited them to speak. Early in the discussion, I referred back to the comments made by members of the group outside the dominant culture.

After the Family Action Committee meeting, I debriefed with members of the SBG team to respond to areas that could be improved. At a few points during the discussion, the participants asked questions about standards-based grading. I responded saying that I would not be answering questions in order to provide time to hear from the families. During the debrief we discussed this dynamic. We worried that not answering their questions left some participants feeling unsatisfied but knew that if we tried to respond to all of the questions, the power dynamics would shift. To mitigate this feeling in upcoming focus groups, we decided to front-load more content that addressed the questions the FAC had and add a follow-up communication. We added comments on the sample report card and a rubric to the FAQs. After the focus group, we planned to send a thank you email to participants addressing any of the questions that arose.

IV. Strategic Project Results: Evidence of Progress

As I led my project, I captured evidence along the way to monitor implementation. I collaborated with others to complete the work described in my theory of action and read the resulting feedback. While some strategies didn't yield immediate impact, others did. Throughout the process, I engaged leaders across departments to develop their capacity to support the transition to standards-based grading. To see the benefits of standards-based grading, we needed all stakeholders to understand why we were making the shift and how it promotes a more collaborative approach to promoting student learning. While previous efforts had focused almost entirely on teacher practice, I expanded the work to include the communications and family engagement departments. Our cross-department approach was evident in a communication to principals about how the central office is supporting standards-based grading (see Appendix J). My references to multiple departments illustrated a new, more comprehensive and coherent approach that demonstrated our ability to realize the benefits of standards-based grading. In this section, I describe the results of my actions related to creating system-wide readiness for the change and promoting meaningful family engagement.

A. Creating the Conditions for Teacher Adoption

I executed a series of strategies intended to promote a shared understanding of the implementation of and desired outcomes for standards-based grading as well as inspire teachers to voluntarily adopt the practices. For each of these actions, I tracked the impact through documents, meetings notes, and teachers' use of online gradebooks.

1. Providing Clear Messaging

As the year continued, the messaging of what standards-based grading is became more specific. The vision shared from October 2018 to October 2020 was, “We believe that to provide equity for all students we must consistently implement standards-based practices and grading systems throughout Highline Public Schools.” In November 2020, we articulated the goal as “System-wide, consistent grading practices based on common essential standards, using a consistent grading scale on family/student/teacher-friendly reporting tools.” More schools were following the aggregation method of last score. There was still some variation in practice, but we were getting closer to having a shared understanding of what it meant to implement standards-based grading in Highline Public Schools.

I was also able to develop district leaders’ capacity to reinforce the shared vision in their interactions with stakeholders. To support their day-to-day communication of the vision, I asked SBG team members to predict concerns that would arise and then discuss how they would respond. Figure 4 below documents the breakout room discussion that built collective responsibility and strategies for communicating our approach to and rationale for standards-based grading.

Figure 4: Concerns with Standards-Based Grading & Possible Responses

Concern	Possible Response
Teachers want to add zeros for missing work to teach life skills of turning things in when they are at work.	Add a separate rating on the report card for things like on-time completion of work.

	Host a career event with business leaders from diverse fields talking about what is most important to them.
Parents ask if their child can get caught up with extra credit.	Describe the reassessment process. If you didn't meet it here, that's okay, we will reassess in another unit.
At parent-teacher conferences, they may be concerned that grading doesn't look the same.	Describe how this approach can be motivational. Give opportunities for parents to understand what they need to do.
Others might say that students won't be motivated because we won't hold them accountable.	Describe how you're actually teaching them to be self-motivated; help students and colleagues see the connection between the life skills you're helping to prepare them for.

2. Describing the Public Value

The SBG team made progress towards describing the public value they expected to create with standards-based grading. By engaging the team with an analysis of the grades dashboards, I was able to focus our conversation on student outcomes. In future conversations, I realized that our goal wasn't just to improve student grades but instead have grades be a more accurate reflection of what students know and are able to do. At

the close of my project, we were considering a new dashboard that would compare a student's course grade with their performance on standardized tests. For example, we could compare a student's grade in math class with performance on the iReady and state math assessment.

In addition to outcomes related to students, positive outcomes for teachers emerged. When implementing shared assessment practices aligned to essential standards, teachers were more able to collaborate with colleagues in professional learning communities and use universal design for learning to create inclusive classrooms. I knew my communication of this value was resonating when the graphic that I created for the October board meeting was used by other leaders throughout the year (see Appendix C). Two directors used this graphic in their facilitation of the January meeting with the professional learning community steering team. The slide prompted people to find connections between the three initiatives even when the meeting topic focused on only one or two of them. At the request of an executive director, I created another version for asynchronous professional learning as part of the Professional Learning Communities online course (Appendix I).

3. Building Political Support

We hadn't yet formally engaged the teachers union or principal's association to determine their stance on the new report card. The teachers union president was on the standards-based grading implementation team, so she had been part of the conversations. In the December meeting, she had asked, "Is there any indication that there is an increase in workload associated with standards based grading?" A district office specialist replied that it eventually reduced her workload but it took more time in the first two years before

she changed where and how she spent her time. The exchange ended with the teachers union president saying, “It would be helpful to identify the impact on the CBA/working conditions.” The chief academic officer and I planned to discuss standards-based grading during January’s monthly meeting with the teachers union leadership, but the entire time was spent discussing the recently announced return of elementary students to in-person learning by March 1st.

When I brought up union agreements with the two directors, one said she trusted principals in the pilot to get their staff to agree. The other mentioned the possibility of a letter of agreement with the union. While I planned to meet with the executive director of human resources who negotiates with the union, her time was occupied negotiating the return to in-person learning. Just when the two parties had come to agreement on the return of elementary students, the governor made an emergency declaration ordering all districts to offer in-person learning to all students by April 19. We immediately began planning for a secondary return which proved more complicated than the elementary return due to the rotating classes, older ventilation systems, and variety of different programs in our middle and high schools.

4. Building Operational Capacity

After changing the district default gradebook from points-based to standards-based, the percentage of teachers using a standards-based gradebook increased from 30% to 70%. While some teachers may have only made the shift to save time with gradebook setup, once they started to use the standards-based gradebook, they became more skilled at the approach. I was unable to leverage choice architecture with other technology platforms in the district. Unlike the student information system, which was

managed by the Department of Technology, instructional tools such as Google Classroom and Seesaw were managed by a division of the Department of Teaching, Learning and Leadership whose staff was focused on providing support for remote and hybrid learning. I attempted to explore interoperability with rubrics being fed from these systems into the online gradebook, but the idea didn't get much traction. My leadership did produce one area of alignment between the elementary platform and standards-based grading: when I passed on feedback from a teacher on my SBG family engagement subcommittee, essential standards were loaded in Seesaw.

B. Promoting Equitable Family Engagement

My leadership motivated other district leaders to focus on family engagement. Their continued participation in after-hours meetings and comments throughout indicated the impact our work was having not just on standards-based grading but also our approach with families in general.

1. Leading the SBG Family Engagement Subcommittee

I created purpose among subcommittee members by focusing on families as our audience and building a timeline leading up to that engagement. The director of family and community partnerships initially expressed concern about the time we were asking from families and seemed worried that we would take the usual "rubber stamp" approach. Just a few months later, she was initiating planning and sending emails offering support. At the close of the January meeting, one subcommittee member shared that the family gradebook access data and focus group audience motivated him to act. Another said that

she had felt stagnant but now feels on the precipice of something great. This excitement laid the groundwork for executing our plan.

2. Modeling Equitable Family Engagement

The strategies that I used while facilitating the Family Action Committee (FAC) led to participation from all families present. While a white-presenting male was the first to share after my two initial questions, my prompts to hear from others and acknowledgement of the written comments and raised hands eventually elicited responses from all voices in the diverse group. I asked for different opinions throughout. One woman commented that she liked how the standards were listed because it reminded her of the goals for her son's individualized education plan for special education services. Another woman said that she was not born here so it was "really wordy" for her and she would need support understanding it. This exchange demonstrated that the conversation allowed for families to express different opinions, surfacing tension points that the SBG team would need to consider.

Leading the FAC in front of SBG team members built capacity in other district staff to not only lead the report card focus groups but also engage families in a more equitable way moving forward. I asked members to share which parts of my facilitation seemed effective and why. One member noted that asking follow-up questions and repeating and rephrasing the questions elicited deeper responses and helped some participants realize that they did have an answer. She shared, "You made it feel like you really wanted to hear them. It felt that the parents were experts and we were there to listen to them. I haven't facilitated any family focus groups or listening sessions. It feels daunting for the first time. I feel more comfortable now. It set me up to facilitate more in

the future. We always have our perspective of what we think is best so it is helpful to hear if our intentions are hitting the mark (personal communication, March 24, 2021).” Her comments along with the voluntary participation of other SBG team members demonstrated interest and increased capacity in meaningfully engaging with families.

V: Strategic Project Analysis

As detailed in the previous section, the results of my efforts varied. Some yielded measurable results, others generated artifacts and perception data, and some did not have the intended impact. There were many factors that contributed to these results including my own leadership, organizational culture and structure, and the global pandemic. In the following section, I describe my hypotheses about why my project played out the way it did. Finally, using the knowledge I gained, I revisit my theories of action to reflect on what could have done differently.

A. Creating the Conditions for Teacher Adoption

My use of Moore's Strategic Triangle along with my district-wide leadership of the return to in-person learning allowed me to build capacity across the system to support standards-based grading. As project manager for the return to in-person learning, I worked across departments to support communications, family outreach, operations, and technology platforms. Through these experiences, I gained an understanding of functions that later supported my work with standards-based grading such as the online surveys and translation services. I also built trust by demonstrating both my competency and commitment to listening. This credibility and understanding of different departments allowed me to assess and influence the elements of the strategic triangle: envisioning public value, building support and legitimacy, and delivering public value. Throughout the project, I attempted to embody Moore's vision for managers: "It is not important for them that they initiate every solution. They appropriate many initiatives taken before they

arrived on the scene. When someone solves a problem that was on their agenda, that is great news and celebrated as such” (p. 292).

1. Promoting Clear Messaging

I was able to increase coherence among district and school-based staff because I assessed the current phase of implementation to design appropriate interventions focused on building capacity in multiple educators. There was already a foundation of learning and discussion about standards-based practices but not yet a consensus on how to scale it across the district. I listened closely in early meetings to determine the level of specificity and coherence people needed to move to the next level of implementation. I shared what I heard with the two directors to inspire their ongoing work. I found natural opportunities to provide more clear written guidance in documents such as the secondary principal launch memo and connection between standards-based grading and professional learning communities graphic. To ensure the documents were widely accepted, I shared them ahead of time and provided opportunities for people to suggest revisions. When people proposed revisions, I encouraged the group to move towards consensus instead of unilaterally responding to edits or allowing the conversation to extend on without a decision. These tactics built shared ownership and understanding that allowed more educators to support their colleagues in implementation.

2. Describing the Public Value

Members of the SBG team seemed convinced that the approach would promote equity for students but hadn't yet defined how they would track progress towards that goal. Establishing desired outcomes for standards-based grading proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the project. When I entered the district, the culture of the

SBG team was focused on learning and building consensus. When a topic was not resolved, it was often tabled for more conversation. While my project did not lead to a clear metric of the public value, I was able to move the group towards a clearer description of the public value we were trying to create. For example, the focus group dates that I set provided a sense of urgency for decision making related to the new report card. This process deepened our understanding of the public value we were trying to create.

a. Purpose of Non-Academic Skills

Upon reflection, I realized that the complications involved in finalizing the report card template stemmed from a difference of perspectives on the purpose and value of including non-academic skills. Some leaders described the non-academic skills as those that promote learning the standards. Others framed them as skills necessary for the work world. Even though the SBG team was citing the Highline promise as a goal of our work, we had not discussed exactly how our work would support the promise of every student being known by name, strength, and need graduating prepared for the future they choose. Being prepared for the future requires both content knowledge and skills. Skills required for success in the work world vary depending on the type of job. For example, most computer programmers benefit from being self-directed, creative, and detail-oriented while store managers must be punctual, collaborative, and rule-oriented. Skills required for success in college also vary depending on the institution, department, and professor.

The skills that promote the acquisition of content knowledge (i.e. standards) vary widely depending on the learning environment and curriculum. For example, in some classrooms, students learn primarily through group work so collaboration skills are

necessary to meet the standards. In other classrooms, students learn primarily through independent assignments so self-direction is required to learn the standards. The skills that promote learning also vary depending on the curricular materials being used. Some require students to demonstrate mastery of skills in a fast-paced, sequential way. Others include more extended, open-ended projects that don't rely on meeting multiple deadlines along the way. Without a deeper exploration of how the report card would support these different approaches to teaching and learning and our future careers, we would continue to flounder. If I had used the equity tool earlier in the process to examine non-academic skills, I would have realized the need to initiate conversations earlier so that we could have involved students and families in our decision making. Without a collaborative process to design an inclusive, bias-resistant system for determining and scoring non-academic skills, their presence on the report card could lead to less equity. If I had realized the depth of this issue earlier, I could have been working on it all along and avoided the pressure created before we needed the report card ready for focus groups.

b. Equity as the Goal

My interrogation of standards-based grading as an equity strategy deepened the conversation and uncovered how positioning standards-based grading as an equity strategy may have unintentionally perpetuated deficit-based thinking. When I initially suggested the outcome metric of decreasing the variance in the percentage of Fs among student racial groups, I assumed standards-based grading would do that because grading with rubrics would reduce implicit bias and removing non-academic factors would disproportionately advantage BIPOC students. Without an explicit explanation of which standards-based grading practices would support students of color, people may fill in the

blanks based on mindsets inherited from a racist system. For example, could they infer that Latinx students were less likely to submit assignments on time and removing a penalty for that behavior would benefit them? Were we saying that it was harder for students in poverty to turn in homework or come to school so we should stop penalizing them for that? Were we assuming that the problems resided in the home? I heard stories of parents who had two children with very different experiences of school and grading. The home environment was the same but the level of the children's non-academic and academic skills were dramatically different. While my probing questions about standards-based grading as an anti-racist strategy were a good start, I may have had more success re-framing the rationale entirely.

Upon reflection, we needed to have a more nuanced conversation about how grading practices impacted individual students. Equity was often interpreted as ensuring that students living in poverty and students of color have an equal opportunity to succeed. There was the assumption that the system was working for white, middle-class families when that was often not the case. In hindsight, we may have avoided deficit-based thinking and increased buy-in if we had framed standards-based grading as supporting all students. We could have provided real-world examples that addressed different learner profiles as well as implicit racial bias and the impacts of poverty. We also could have made clearer that we were not suggesting that students or homes were the problem; it is our broken grading system. As a model for this work, we could have used the social and emotional learning team's presentation on trauma and anti-racism that directly addressed the misconception that students with trauma are forever damaged. We could have avoided

deficit-based interpretations of standards-based grading by addressing the misconceptions directly and providing clearer framing of how it promoted equity.

3. Building Operational Capacity

My actions increased the capacity of the system to deliver on the promise of standards-based grading because they did not attempt to direct or mandate teacher behavior but instead promote the conditions that would motivate them. This style took into account the existing organizational context that values principal autonomy and relied on the support of labor partners. In addition, I deepened the collaboration between the department that managed the technology required for implementation and the department that was guiding teacher practices and designing the reporting tools. I listened to the perspectives of leaders in both groups and asked questions that bridged the divide.

B. Promoting Equitable Family Engagement

My leadership actions as the facilitator of the SBG family engagement subcommittee set the tone for the type of collaboration Highline envisioned with families. I demonstrated a belief that all families could meaningfully contribute and took responsibility for creating the conditions for them to do so. To assess my leadership with families, I used Ishimaru and Galloway's framework of equitable leadership practices (2014). Overall, the evidence from my project demonstrates that my work supported the SBG team's advancement from the Emerging Equitable Practice defined as "begins to examine, plan, and initiate actions to address inequities" to Proficient Equitable Practice defined as "takes consistent action with staff for change in school policies and practices for equity" (see Appendix K). In this section, I describe why the strategies I used resulted

in these improved outcomes, particularly in the areas of transparent and culturally appropriate communication and integrating community resource expertise.

1. Transparent and Culturally Appropriate Communication

One of the reasons my engagement with families was successful was because I applied the research on equitable family engagement related to mitigating power dynamics. I was explicit about my role as the facilitator and their role as participants. When I started by asking open-ended questions about their current experiences, I signaled that I acknowledged their expertise, building trust before asking them to comment on the report card. I provided the materials in multiple languages and modalities and encouraged many forms of participation. I also considered the discussion medium of online videoconferencing. The Zoom platform added another power differential related to the type of technology people were using. Some had laptops connected to monitors where they could see all the meeting participants and slides clearly and have the chat box open. Others were logging in on phones where the slides were too small to be legible, they could only see four people at a time, and would have to choose between using the chat and seeing participants or slides. By revoicing the comments in the chat and reading the slide information at a pace for varying processing speeds, I kept everyone in the room informed and involved.

2. Integrating Community Expertise

The change from a regular advisory group to one-time focus groups required me to adjust the vision of co-creating the new reporting tools and processes with families. Although transitioning to one-time feedback sessions didn't allow us to build the report card together, the process I created still demonstrated integrating community expertise to

improve learning. Since we couldn't engage in multiple iterative sessions with the same group of families, I led the SBG team in drafting more complete materials. I built in time for the team to make revisions between the Family Action Committee, focus groups, and an online ThoughtExchange that allowed participants to score each other's feedback.

VI. Implications for Self

In the transition between my previous role as a principal and my future role as a superintendent, experience as a district office leader exposed me to new challenges. Throughout my residency, I had the opportunity to assess my own leadership and try out strategies to ensure that I was having the impact I desired. As I reflect on my year, two main themes emerge: managing my professional and racial positionality and balancing a sense of urgency with collaboration.

A. Managing Professional and Racial Positionality

Leading stakeholder conversations allowed me to experience the possible dynamics between district office leaders and teachers. A fall focus group about the Highline Virtual Academy included current staff who were frustrated by previous decisions about their online credit recovery program. I attempted to generate conversation about the model for virtual learning, but they continually asked questions challenging the decision to start a virtual academy. I was having difficulty listening and took a moment to reflect internally on the situation. I recognized that I was feeling defensive and reminded myself that I was not there to defend the actions of all district office leaders in the past but to gather feedback. I returned my presence to the conversation and was able to re-engage with purpose. Afterwards, I debriefed the focus group with my colleague and he offered that “People ascribe intent to district office leadership mistakes.” His insight reminded me that I could no longer rely on the trusting relationships I built as a school principal. As a system-level leader, I would regularly encounter people I had never met, frustrated with the way things were and assuming I caused them and could fix them. They

might believe that I have not yet fixed them because I don't care enough or, worse, have intentionally placed the needs of one group over another. This dynamic was initially quite painful to me because part of my identity is as a helper. When feedback threatened that identity, my first instinct was to prove that I was a good person. This response interfered with me fully hearing the person's concern and inviting more dialogue.

Once I began to accept the role I was playing in a system that had failed them, I was able to depersonalize the interaction. Instead of trying to prove myself, I began to empathize with the person's perspective and take responsibility for what the system had done and how I could improve it in the future. As a superintendent, I predict I will experience even more criticism directed at me. My leadership will benefit from me recognizing that filling this role doesn't mean I am being personally attacked or need to defend the system. To best meet my goals of moving the system towards more equitable outcomes, I need to listen with a balance of empathy and detachment. This stance will allow me to consider all perspectives, invite more, and sustain myself in the work.

As the project manager for in-person learning, I continued to build strategies for managing my positional power and encountered explicit racial dynamics. While facilitating a focus group with over 200 educators, many of whom were understandably afraid to return to the classroom, the Zoom chat was very active. As I described the hybrid model we were developing and asked for ideas to adapt it for our dual language models, some started to write comments in the chat such as, "So the district hasn't figured this out and they are using us for free labor?" I reminded myself that I don't need to prove to anyone that we were all working hard. To this employee, I represented the structure that has power over them and they were angry that I didn't have more answers.

While I envisioned myself as a colleague creating the space for collaborative solutions, to them I was an authority figure asking for too much. The feedback was also valid. In hindsight, we could have started our design with programs such as dual language and special education and then crafted our general education model around these traditionally marginalized groups. When planning for the secondary return, I took that approach. In future events about our plans to return to in-person learning, I became more and more able to respond strategically to criticism and find benefit in the feedback, no matter how harshly it was delivered.

During a webinar on the return to in-person learning, one participant put my name in all caps, challenging me to answer for the deaths that would result from our plans. I responded with my email address inviting him to engage in a conversation. He did not send me an email. The following month, multiple participants at the board meeting posted comments claiming that our plan was ignoring the “black and brown community” and an example of “white supremacy culture in action.” When accused of racist actions, I attempted to listen but not assume that the claim was valid, especially if it was not made directly by the affected stakeholders. Part of my reflection included involving others in analyzing the situation. The next morning, I engaged colleagues in reviewing the family interest and staff leaves data by racial group to build understanding and collective responsibility for addressing ongoing concerns. To be able to initiate these difficult conversations, I need to sustain a positive relationship to my white identity, acknowledging both my privilege and ability to be part of undoing racism.

When I personally felt like the tenor and volume of negative feedback was causing me to lose resolve, I returned to the initial community feedback that guided our

decision making. In the fall survey, families described the strain of fully remote learning on their children and families. Many of those comments had been made in Spanish, a language rarely used in the board meeting chats. As a system-level leader, I don't want to be reactive along the way but instead consider feedback given over time in multiple ways, especially from those whose voices may not be as loud. This proactive approach, coupled with an awareness of how my identity as a white leader operates, will allow me to meet my goal of welcoming and incorporating all stakeholder perspectives into our work together.

B. Balancing Urgency with Collaboration

Throughout the standards-based grading rollout, I experienced tension between meeting the timelines set forth by the district and meaningfully engaging stakeholders. District leaders had sometimes referred disparagingly to deadlines as creating a sense of urgency inherent in white dominant culture. To be anti-racist, we wanted to avoid pushing things through at the expense of inclusivity. At the same time, we were aware that current grading practices were inconsistent and producing results that could be characterized as racist. Amidst a global pandemic that required all educators, students, and families to learn new skills, we were sticking to a timeline created before anyone imagined the type of extreme disruption and suffering caused by Covid-19. During this difficult year, there were times when I questioned the continued push to reform our grading practices. I paid special attention to these moments to ensure that I wasn't just defaulting to my tendency to meet deadlines but instead thinking creatively about which target dates were flexible.

Instead of doggedly pursuing arbitrary deadlines, I developed the ability to pause and consider the end goal to determine if more time could be given. When I postponed dates, I found that the additional time lowered stress and promoted collaboration. The context of these situations (e.g. being a resident during a pandemic), however, made postponement easier and I worry that in another context, under stress, I may revert to unnecessarily prioritizing deadlines over reading the feedback and adjusting. As I move forward in my career, I hope to use the following strategies as way to consistently check in with myself about the pacing of the work:

- Focus on the end goal for students: Is there another way to get there that is preferable to the current timeline?
- Balance timeliness with collaboration: If we allow more time for input and discussion, will it yield a better solution and more buy-in that will ultimately save us time? Has the conversation been exhausted and people will become frustrated without forward momentum?
- Depersonalize deadlines: Am I trying to meet the deadline to prove that I am worthy of this job? Would people actually have more respect for me if I acknowledged that adjustments needed to be made?

When asking these questions, I need to involve stakeholders who have different perspectives so that I don't miss the complexity of an issue. For example, my own blind spots didn't allow me to foresee how complicated the decision-making process for non-academic skills would be. In my experience as a student, teacher, and principal, the non-academic skills that led to success were consistent: be present and on time, meet deadlines, and respect authority. As I learned more about the varying programs in our

district and contemplated the changing world our students will enter, I recognized that we needed to consider more perspectives. If I assemble a diverse team to balance a sense of urgency with collaboration for each initiative, we can promote shared ownership of the direction and move at a pace that benefits students.

VII. Implications for Highline Public Schools

As leaders in Highline continue the work of deepening family engagement and adopting standards-based grading practices, I recommended they consider the following actions.

A. Embedding Family Engagement in TLL

Highline's efforts towards more equitable grading practices are influenced by the deeply personal experiences that educators, students, and families have had with report cards. Throughout my residency, I attempted to consider all voices as we clarified our goals and made decisions that would impact the entire district. I mostly hear from educators and found it challenging to access and amplify the voices of students and families because of inadequate mechanisms for regularly gathering and incorporating feedback. Highline has some structures to hear from students and families, but without a more comprehensive, consistent approach to engagement, the input will remain sporadic. To establish equitable partnerships with families, districts need to engage them at all stages of planning, from the setting of priorities to the evaluation of programs underway. True collaboration requires educators to leverage their professional expertise while not allowing it to override the experiences and hopes of families. District staff can also recognize and mitigate the impacts of other power dynamics related to race, class, and language.

Currently, many leaders in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership are attempting to recruit families for feedback on their initiatives such as curriculum adoption and the new Highline Virtual Academy. Family engagement is seen as

everyone's job but without a singular leader, it can be deprioritized. To further build a culture of collaboration and coherence, the department could identify a point person for family engagement. This family engagement liaison could support one-time focus groups on high-priority topics as well as establish a standing TLL family advisory group. The TLL family advisory group can be designed by considering the challenges and successes of other Highline groups such as the HR family advisory committee, the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee, and the superintendent's Family Action Committee. A regular meeting time with the same group of families will promote more equitable participation because participants will build relationships and an understanding of district practices and protocols.

Allocating resources to the new TLL family advisory group would promote access for a range of diverse families. Providing meals and childcare for in-person meetings or grocery store gift cards for remote meetings will support families currently experiencing economic hardship. Meetings can be conducted in the district's four major languages and avoid centering one language above the other (i.e. rotate the primary language of the meeting so different participants need to use the zoom translation feature each time). Different families can also participate more equitably when there is a predictable protocol for each meeting that honors cultural differences. For example, there may always be an option to give feedback in writing, orally, or in small groups.

Even with all of the strategies in place, some families will not be able to commit to regular meetings. To gather more input on high-priority topics, the district can plan one-time focus groups at different locations and online. The new TLL family engagement liaison can work with community partners to determine the most comfortable setting and

protocol and help get out the word. My project has demonstrated equitable engagement for many TLL leaders so they are prepared to facilitate these one-time focus groups.

If the ongoing budget can't sustain an additional position, the family liaison could be temporary and funded through federal COVID recovery funds. The temporary family liaison could ensure that family engagement continues to strengthen amidst the demands of a return to fully in-person learning. They could focus on building structures and staff capacity so the work is sustained when the funding for their role expires.

B. Supporting Non-Academic Skills

As Highline continues to expand the adoption of standards-based grading, TLL leadership can provide direction by clearly establishing the purpose of scoring non-academic factors. If ratings of non-academic skills are meant to provide feedback on the behaviors that promote learning, they may need to be customized by departments, teachers, or schools depending on the curriculum and type of pedagogy. For example, students in the Highline Virtual Academy will need self-direction to meet standards, so that skill should be highlighted on the report card. In the Maritime School, on the other hand, collaboration may be more important since students learn through group projects. Some programs, curricula, and schools have existing tools for non-academic skills such as the International Baccalaureate's Approaches to Learning. Curricula recently adopted by the district, such as K-8 SFUSD math, include tools for providing feedback on non-academic skills. Involving teachers across the district in an analysis of existing tools will build shared understanding of which skills are most important for students to learn in their classrooms. Alternatively, TLL leadership could determine that their purpose for

providing feedback on non-academic skills is not as related to promoting learning within Highline's programs but instead focused on equipping students with skills for college and career. In that case, teachers would benefit from a deeper understanding of the range of continuing education and jobs their students will experience and which non-academic skills are most crucial for each.

Once the purpose of non-academic skills is agreed upon, teachers can work together to build rubrics that describe visible behaviors for each level of mastery. Such rubrics will reduce bias and promote consistency across classrooms and schools. Some skills such as effort may not be included if staff can't come to agreement on visible behaviors. The rubrics for non-academic skills should be vetted by multiple students, educators, and families from different cultures. In a January conversation, the chief academic officer asked, "Are these skills important to white culture or skills that all cultures appreciate and want reported on? Are there other perspectives that would want something different?" A dedicated family liaison in her department could facilitate the incorporation of different perspectives into the process.

Elevating non-academic skills to the districtwide report card would need to be accompanied by regular opportunities for students to learn, practice and receive feedback on them. Skills can be taught during class meetings in elementary schools and advisory periods in secondary schools. Teachers can also embed the teaching of non-academic skills in daily lessons so that students practice and receive feedback throughout the term, not just on the report card. District office specialists can support the teaching of non-academic skills by including them in the unit frameworks. School-based and district office administrators can build understanding of the skills by referencing their importance

in their work as adults. For example, meetings can end with the process observer connecting behaviors they saw to the district-wide rubrics. These strategies would provide direction for how Highline is living out its promise of preparing students for the future they choose.

C. Planning Ahead for Sustainability

The current timeline for standards-based grading in Highline ends with district-wide implementation in September 2022. If the district changes the Synergy gradebooks to not allow customization, all teachers will be forced to use a standards-based grading approach, but they may not adopt the practices that yield a positive impact on student outcomes. The district needs to create an ongoing plan to ensure that all teachers have a deep understanding and commitment to standards-based grading practices. All staff will need ongoing professional learning experiences to sustain a shared approach and commitment to signature practices.

To promote system-wide readiness for standards-based grading, Highline should set interim benchmarks for the 2021-2022 school year. Currently, all of the approaches and accompanying professional learning are optional. Consequently, some school-based departments have not adopted any of the practices, including the use of standards-based rubrics. It may be challenging for these teams to begin implementing all of the standards-based practices for the first time in September 2022. The district can scaffold the professional growth by moving some practices from optional to expected. For example, there is already a professional learning module on rubrics that includes an assignment where teachers upload rubrics. If a school has not yet done this assignment,

the school’s instructional leadership executive director could work with the principal to ensure that staff have experience creating rubrics. Setting these interim benchmarks will ensure that the new grading policy set to be adopted in the spring of 2022 aligns with educator practices.

Each year, staff new to Highline would benefit from a professional learning experience that equips them with the understanding of and skills to implement standards-based grading practices. This module can be designed for asynchronous completion to account for the varying experiences with standards-based grading that new staff will bring. An end-of-module assessment could ensure that all staff met the goals of the module and determine future supports needed.

As Highline updates their curricula and builds new programs, staff will need to re-engage in the selection of essential standards and the creation of associated rubrics. As one member of the SBG team said, “If teachers don’t have any input into which standards are graded, it allows people to not buy in.” At least every three years, an iterative process should occur that takes into account the current pedagogical approach as well as updates to state and local assessments. In addition to the ongoing work of updating the essential standards, the district can regularly review data on implementation and impact to monitor the approach and make improvements.

Implementation data can be collected through existing district processes such as perception surveys, professional learning assignments, school Annual Action Plans, and the Professional Growth and Evaluation Process.⁹ TLL Leadership can use this information to inform the design of ongoing professional learning supports for individual

⁹ See Appendix L for connections between the Standards-Based Grading and the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Learning and the Association of Washington School Principal’s Leadership Framework.

teachers, departments, schools, or the entire system. Once the district is confident that a school is implementing standards-based grading with fidelity, they can review student outcome data to determine if it is having the desired impact. Examples of desired outcome data include responses to growth mindset questions on the Secondary Student Survey, improved performance on state assessments and internal assessments such as iReady, and the alignment between these assessment results and course grades. Involving multiple stakeholders, including families and teachers, in the review of implementation and impact data will promote continued understanding across the system.

VIII. Implications for Sector

Based on my experiences in Highline, I recommend that other districts implement the following approaches to grading. If they do, I hope they have a researcher following along to document their challenges and successes.

A. Conducting an Audit of Grading Practices

Districts that would like to employ standards-based grading should start by auditing their current assessment and grading practices and resulting outcomes. This process will allow them to better understand the current variation in practice across the district and the outcomes it is yielding for different profiles of learners. If this audit suggests that current practices are leading to inequity, they can engage the impacted stakeholders (i.e., students, families, and teachers) to verify the root of the problem and co-create solutions. This process will allow them to design the strategy for district-wide implementation with a clear idea of the problem they want to solve and the desired outcome. Engaging stakeholders early in the process will ensure that district leaders can continually validate their assumptions about how the proposed changes will impact students and families.

The audit should recognize not only the technical aspects of grading but also the emotions associated with report cards. In every conversation I conducted, people wanted to talk about their experiences with grading, whether it was their own schooling or their children. People remember these stories from their childhoods because of the cultural significance of grades and the connection between this form of judgement and their identity. As an example, here is one story that my project uncovered.

I have two children, one who is great at process skills, organized, and turns in the work. But he's dyslexic. His elementary school used a standards-based grading approach and he was always below grade level. I never showed my child those grades. It can be devastating. My other child is always at or above standard. The kid didn't need half of what was going on in school because she was already there. Her process skills were awful. She was totally disorganized and couldn't get stuff turned in. She struggles. I'm way more worried about that child in the work world than the other.

Paying close attention to these stories can help districts determine their grading policy and predict the reactions stakeholders will have to changes. Districts can use stories to describe the intended benefits of a standards-based approach to grading. Combined with external research and internal quantitative data, stories can make a district's audit and messaging more inclusive.

B. Selecting Non-Academic Skills

In the transition to standards-based grading, some educators will be concerned that they are no longer able to score skills that they feel are important, such as collaboration skills and on-time completion of work. To address these concerns and encourage teachers to adopt standards-based grading, the district may choose to provide an avenue for feedback on these non-academic skills. In the grading audit, the district will most likely learn that teachers vary in the types of non-academic skills they emphasize. To create a district-wide structure for promoting non-academic skills, districts can engage stakeholders in a collaborative, iterative process similar to the essential standards

selection process. Unlike the standards selection process, which requires a great deal of professional expertise, families and students can equitably contribute to the selection of non-academic skills.

Stakeholders can first identify the purpose of reporting on non-academic skills and then select the skills they want to prioritize. If districts view the purpose of non-academic skills as promoting learning within the classroom, they would need to consider the range of instructional practices and curricula in the district's classrooms because the student skills that promote standards acquisition in one course may be quite different than another. Instead of requiring all courses to use the same non-academic skills, districts might create a menu that allows students to receive feedback on multiple different skills throughout their K-12 years. Elementary and middle schools could ensure that students are explicitly taught and scored on all non-academic skills across multiple learning environments and curricula. Knowing which types of skills a student performs best can provide important data for school staff and families as they support each child's planning for high school and beyond. In contrast, differentiating the skills by course may be especially useful in high school when students are narrowing their path.

If districts view non-academic skills as related to success in college and career, they would need to consider the range of post-secondary experiences their students may choose. Students would benefit from exposure to the variety of skills required for success in different college programs and careers. Success in college may vary widely depending on the type of program a student decides to attend and the nature of the courses they select. Some students will complete online courses at their own pace that only require them to complete one major assessment at the end of the term. The professor may accept

late submissions without docking any points and instead focus on the quality of the work. Other courses may require regular attendance and weekly submission of on-time assignments. If districts want their report cards to support success in college and career, rating non-academic skills could inform students about which types of programs, courses, and professions would allow them to thrive.

In an increasingly diversifying professional world, there is a wide range of skills needed for different types of jobs. A software designer or professor may have few deadlines to meet and rarely have to report to any particular place at any particular time. An entrepreneur's success may hinge on their ability to pitch their ideas to investors but not rely at all on their ability to engage in sustained collaboration with others. In this process, there may be tension between preparing students for the current dominant structure or a world more inclusive of varying skills. While we want students to thrive in the world that currently exists, we also want to equip them with skills to envision and create the world they want. As Audre Lorde wrote, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (1984, p. 112). For students to be prepared for the future they choose, they need to have the skills to survive in the current structure as well as the skills to transform it.

IX. Conclusion

Through my residency in Highline Public Schools, I gained a deeper understanding of both the efforts required to successfully adopt a new approach district-wide and the content of standards-based grading. Selecting the knowledge and skills to prioritize in all classrooms is laden with value judgments that necessitate agreement on the purpose of school and a shared understanding of the varied post-graduation pathways that students will pursue. Rubrics can provide more clear feedback and reduce implicit bias, but their use must be combined with assessment and grading practices that provide students with multiple opportunities to meet standards by the end of the term. To achieve the goals of standards-based grading, educators, students, and families must unlearn a task-oriented, compliance mindset and develop a learning-oriented, growth mindset. Such a shift requires coordinated efforts across the district office and the authentic involvement of families throughout the initiative.

In medium and large school districts, academic departments of the district offices are viewed as central to the mission while other departments such as technology and family engagement are seen as ancillary. This framing can lead to certified educators determining the course of change and other staff playing a supportive role. Consequently, district leaders may miss opportunities to follow the voices of staff with deep understanding of the operational capacity of the system and families who understand their children's strengths and needs. Knowledge of effective instruction is critical, but if initiatives don't connect to technology platforms and serve a perceived need of the community, they will not yield student learning.

In the 2020-2021 school year, being responsive to the community became more important than ever. In addition to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the United States was in a period of racial reckoning. After the public murder of a black man at the hands of police, protestors nationwide were demanding reform to police departments and other public services. Many school districts began to analyze the equity of their policies through texts such as the New York Times #1 bestseller, Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist*. As education leaders underwent this process, they realized the need to understand the experiences of the groups who had been most marginalized by the system. Spreadsheets and books couldn't tell the whole story; decision makers needed to build trust with and acknowledge the expertise of all members of the community, especially those with whom they had the most difficulty engaging.

My project demonstrated the possibilities for equitable engagement moving forward. By acknowledging and transforming power differentials, district leaders were able to hear from diverse families and honor their experiences by incorporating their suggestions into the new report card. I increased both families' involvement with standards-based grading and cross-departmental support at the district office, creating the conditions not just for teacher adoption but also family-school partnerships for student learning

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XI: Appendices

Appendix A: Standards-Based Online Gradebook

GRADE BOOK

All Classes Progress 1 Algebra 2

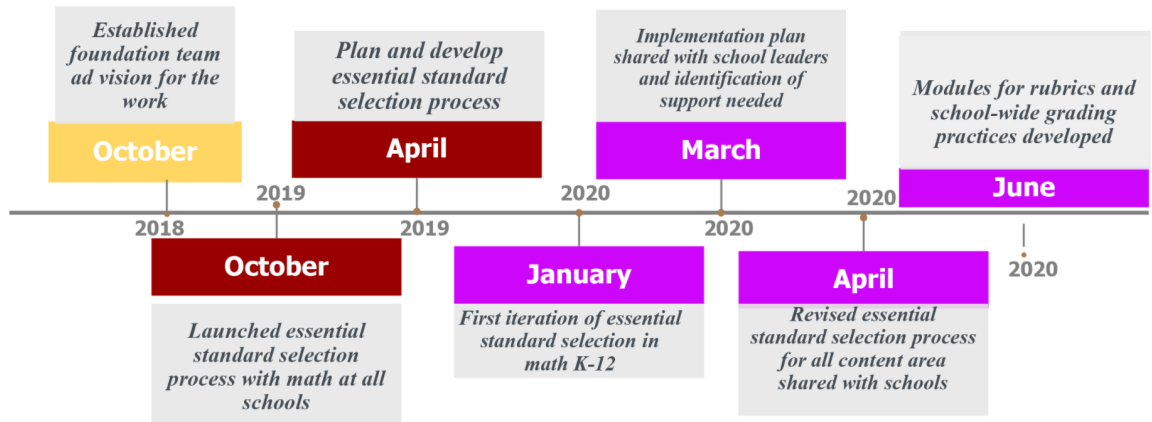
Assignment View Standards View



Standards															
Subject	Standard	Mark	Notes	Performance Indicator											
Mathematics <small>[expand all]</small>	For a function that models a relationship between two quantities, interpret key features of graphs and tables in terms of the quantities, and sketch graphs showing key features given a verbal description of the relationship.	4		4.00 / 4.00											
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assignment</th> <th>Assignment Type</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(Tue 9/29) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4</td> <td>Formative Assessment</td> <td>09/29/2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Std #1: Learning Log Week 3</td> <td>Summative Assessment</td> <td>09/25/2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Learning Log Week 2 (Standard #1: Representing and Interpreting Functions VISUALLY)</td> <td>Summative Assessment</td> <td>09/18/2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Assignment	Assignment Type	Date	(Tue 9/29) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4	Formative Assessment	09/29/2020	Std #1: Learning Log Week 3	Summative Assessment	09/25/2020	Learning Log Week 2 (Standard #1: Representing and Interpreting Functions VISUALLY)	Summative Assessment	09/18/2020	
Assignment	Assignment Type	Date													
(Tue 9/29) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4	Formative Assessment	09/29/2020													
Std #1: Learning Log Week 3	Summative Assessment	09/25/2020													
Learning Log Week 2 (Standard #1: Representing and Interpreting Functions VISUALLY)	Summative Assessment	09/18/2020													
		4	Please see my comments on Google Classroom!	4.00 / 4.00											
		3	<i>(Not For Grading)</i> This is the score you gave yourself! You can improve your score this week with the Week 3 Learning Log. If you have questions, please let me know!	3.00 / 4.00											
	Create equations in two or more variables to represent relationships between quantities; graph equations on coordinate axes with labels and scales.														
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assignment</th> <th>Assignment Type</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(Thu 10/1) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4</td> <td>Formative Assessment</td> <td>10/01/2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Tue 9/29) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4</td> <td>Formative Assessment</td> <td>09/29/2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Assignment	Assignment Type	Date	(Thu 10/1) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4	Formative Assessment	10/01/2020	(Tue 9/29) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4	Formative Assessment	09/29/2020				
Assignment	Assignment Type	Date													
(Thu 10/1) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4	Formative Assessment	10/01/2020													
(Tue 9/29) Desmos Evidence for Learning Log Week 4	Formative Assessment	09/29/2020													
			COMPLETE-thanks!												
			COMPLETE-thanks!												

Appendix B: Highline’s Standards-Based Grading Implementation Timeline

HPS Standards-Based Grading Timeline for Implementation Oct. 2018 – June 2020

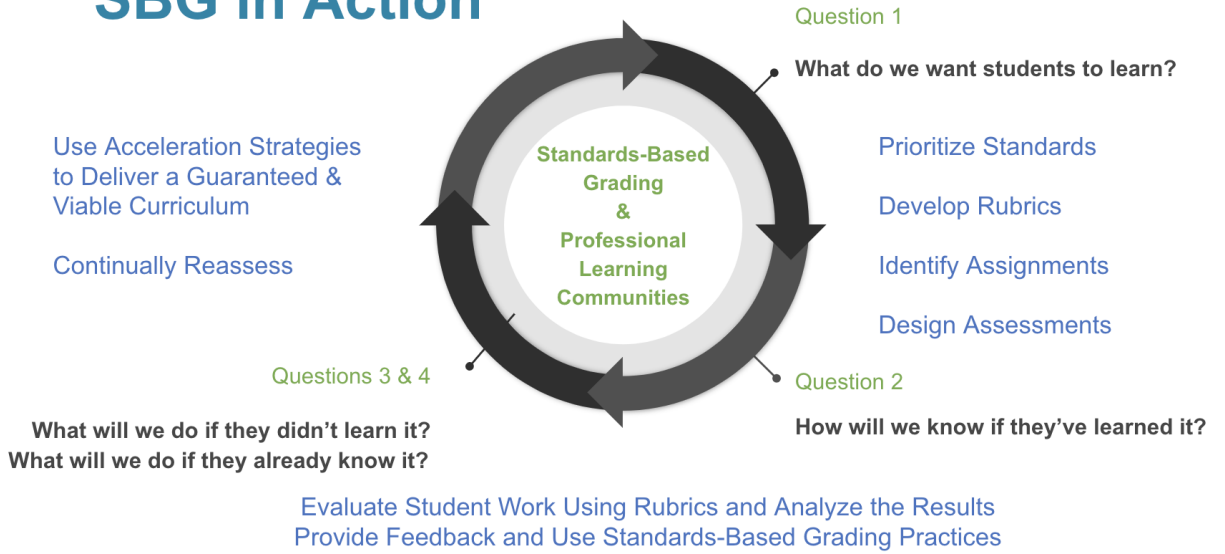


HPS Standards-Based Grading Timeline for Implementation August 2020-September 2022



Appendix C: Connection Between SBG and Professional Learning Communities

SBG in Action



Appendix D: Synergy's Sample Standards-Based Report Card

Edupoint School District 2012-2013	Hope High School Gordon Aderson, Principal 123 Main St Phoenix, AZ 85694	949-555-1212	
Student Name: Abbott, Billy C.	Perm ID: 905483	Home Room: 234	Grade: 12

Grade Legend
 A = Outstanding
 B = Above Average
 C = Average
 D = Below Average
 F = Failure
 WF = Withdraw/Fail
 I = Incomplete
 1 = Failing
 2 = Needs Improvement
 3 = Below Average
 4 = Average
 5 = Above Average
 6 = Excellent

Period	Course ID	Course Title	3rd Qtr	Teacher	ABS
0	SS51	Am Govt	B-	Jackson, K.	3
Standard					Score
01 Draw inferences about meaning of new vocabulary, based on knowledge of linguistic roots and affixes (e.g., Latin, Greek, Anglo-Saxon).					90
01 Read from a variety of genres with accuracy, automaticity (immediate recognition), and prosody (expression).					80
1 Interpret historical data displayed in maps, graphs, tables, charts, and geologic time scales.					80
2 Distinguish among dating methods that yield calendar ages (e.g., dendrochronology), numerical ages (e.g., radiocarbon), correlated ages (e.g., volcanic ash), and relative ages (e.g., geologic time).					70
3 Formulate questions that can be answered by historical study and research.					60
1	EN46	Prin Eng Iii	B	Gordon, K.	3
Standard					Score
01 Draw inferences about meaning of new vocabulary, based on knowledge of linguistic roots and affixes (e.g., Latin, Greek, Anglo-Saxon).					50
01 Read from a variety of genres with accuracy, automaticity (immediate recognition), and prosody (expression).					80
02 Identify the meaning of metaphors based on literary allusions and conceits.					60
1	PP522	Consumer Math		Sargent, L.	
2	PA86	Int Acting	C	Gardner, D.	2
3	PE762	Weight Trn Boys	B-	Swartz, M.	2
4	FS77	Prin&prac Econ	A-	Patenge, S.	2
5	NC952	Rt 5th Per	A	Rel Time, R.	2
6	NC962	Rt 6th Per	A	Rel Time, R.	1
7	EN57C	Cc-Am. Lit		Nunes, K.	

Appendix E: Draft Highline Standards-Based Report Card

Highline Public Schools Secondary Report Card: Sample							
Student Name: Sample			School Name: Sample School				
Student ID: 1111111			School Address:				
Grade: 7			School Phone:				
Overall Course Grade Scale		Grade Scale Description					
A	4.0-3.4	Student has mastered at a very high level, the academic learning of the course. A student would need to be Meeting Standard (3) or Exceeding Standard (4) in the majority of standards to earn this letter grade. No zeros on summative assessments are allowed.					
B	3.39-2.70	Student has the academic learning of a course in place and is well equipped to move forward. A student would need to earn nearly all Meeting (3) on the standards to earn this letter grade. No zeros on summative assessments are allowed.					
C	2.69-1.60	Student has a basic understanding of the academic learning of the course. This student has attained the minimum required knowledge and skills to move on to the next course by earning mostly Approaching (2) or higher on most standards.					
NC	1.59-0.00	Student has begun the process but has not yet mastered enough academic learning in the course (or demonstrated it) to receive credit. This student lacks the prerequisite learning to be successful in the next course and interventions will be necessary. This student would have earned mostly Beginning (1) on the standards for this course. The students will not receive credit for this course.					
Standard Scale Score		Course Title		S1 Course Grade		S2 Course Grade	
4	Exceeding	Science 7	C	B			
3	Meeting	Language Arts 7	A	A			
2	Approaching	Math 7	C	B			
1	Beginning	History	B	A			
NE	No Evidence	PE	A	A			
NA	Not Assessed	AVID	B	B			
				Grade Point Average			
				Report Period	2.5		
				Cumulative	2.7		
Period	Course	Course Title	Teacher	S1 Course Grade	S2 Course Grade		
1	#9999	Science 7	Sample Teacher 1	C	B		
Essential Standards				S1 Standard Scores	S2 Standard Scores		
MS-LS3-1: Develop and use a model to describe why structural changes to genes (mutations) located on chromosomes may affect proteins and may result in harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects to the structure and function of the organism.				3	3		
MS-PS1-4: Develop a model that predicts and describes changes in particle motion, temperature, and state of a pure substance when thermal energy is added or removed.				2	3		
MS-PS1-2: Analyze and interpret data on the properties of substances before and after the substances interact to determine if a chemical reaction has occurred.				3	3		
MS-PS1-5: Develop and use a model to describe how the total number of atoms does not change in a chemical reaction and thus mass is conserved.				2	2		
MS-ESS2-2: Construct an explanation based on evidence for how geoscience processes have changed Earth's surface at varying time and spatial scales.				3	3		
MS-ESS3-4: Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.				NA	3		
MS-PS4-2: Develop and use a model to describe that waves are reflected, absorbed, or transmitted through various materials.				3	3		
				Absences	3	2	
				Tardies	4	2	
Comments: Your learner is mostly beginning and/or approaching standards for this course. Your learner has started to apply science and engineering practices to explore and explain phenomena and to take action on problems in the world.							
Period	Course	Course Title	Teacher	S1 Course Grade	S2 Course Grade		
4	#5555	Language Arts 7	Sample Teacher 2	A	A		
Essential Standards				S1 Standard Scores	S2 Standard Scores		
ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.				4	4		
ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.				3	3		
ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.				4	4		
ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.				4	4		
ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.				3	3		
ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.				3	4		
ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1.A: Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.				NE	3		
ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1.B: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.				3	3		
				Absences	2	2	
				Tardies	1	2	
Comments: Meets or exceeds standard in reading and comprehending literature with 6th-8th grade level text. Student can read various types of literature with the ability to comprehend what they have read. Student has the ability to form and identify: key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas as well as text complexity while reading various types of text.							

Period	Course	Course Title	Teacher	S1 Course Grade	S2 Course Grade
2	#8888	History 7	Sample Teacher 3	B	A
Essential Standards				S1 Standard Scores	S2 Standard Scores
<i>D2.Civ.6.6-8. Individually and with others describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.</i>				3	3
<i>D2.Eco.1.6-8. Individually and with others explain how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and society.</i>				3	4
<i>D2.His.14.6-8. Individually and with others explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.</i>				2	3
<i>RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.</i>				3	4
<i>RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</i>				3	4
<i>WHST.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes</i>				3	3
Absences				2	1
Tardies				0	1
Comments: Excels at reading like a social scientist by using evidence in their analysis of a text. Making growth in analyzing economic concepts by practicing the definitions of a variety of lenses.					
Period	Course	Course Title	Teacher	S1 Course Grade	S2 Course Grade
3	#3333	PE 7	Sample Teacher 5	A	A
Essential Standards				S1 Standard Scores	S2 Standard Scores
<i>PE1.1.7: Perform a throw (underhand and overhand) with mature pattern for distance and accuracy during small-sided game play.</i>				4	4
<i>PE1.5.7: Perform underhand and overhand striking with competency with and without an implement in small-sided game play.</i>				4	4
<i>PE1.12.7: Perform correct technique for a variety of skills in one selected individual performance activity.</i>				4	4
<i>PE3.1.7: Describe how being physically active contributes to mental health.</i>				4	4
Absences				2	2
Tardies				0	1
Comments: Student consistently demonstrated proficiency of standards, could work independently, and did not need redirection					

Period	Course	Course Title	Teacher	S1 Course Grade	S2 Course Grade
5	#6666	Math 7	Sample Teacher 4	C	B
Essential Standards				S1 Standard Scores	S2 Standard Scores
<i>7-RP.A: Analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems</i>				3	3
<i>7-NS.A: Apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers.</i>				3	3
<i>7-EE.A: Use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions</i>				3	4
<i>7-EE.B: Solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical and algebraic expressions and equations</i>				2	3
<i>7-G.A: Draw, construct and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them.</i>				2	3
<i>7-G.B: Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.</i>				3	3
Absences				2	0
Tardies				0	1
Comments: Student is making growth in meeting standards for the course. Student is able to solve problems involving angle measures, surface areas, and volume.					
Period	Course	Course Title	Teacher	S1 Course Grade	S2 Course Grade
6	#7777	AVID 7	Sample Teacher 6	B	B
Essential Standards				S1 Standard Scores	S2 Standard Scores
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to reflect on a variety of systems in support of personal health (e.g., create a strong support network, ability to self-advocate, develop a growth mindset, apply strategies to support motivation and self-awareness)</i>				3	3
<i>Student will demonstrate integrity and ethical leadership, including online, pursue leadership opportunities and hold leadership positions, and manage and resolve conflicts with others.</i>				3	3
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to follow all steps of the writing process (analyze, compose, revise, polish, publish) for a variety of writing tasks.</i>				3	3
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to take notes using the focused note-taking process.</i>				1	2
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to develop questions and use questioning techniques to think critically about content and concepts, and engage in discussions.</i>				3	3
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to interact with peers in complex situations (providing feedback, conflict management, academic discourse) while maintaining a focus on respect, trust, and empathy.</i>				3	3
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to stay organized for academic success including extracurricular activities, using a variety of organizational tools (e.g., binder, planner, portfolio, activity log)</i>				2	3
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to follow the critical reading process (Pre-read, Interact with the text, Extend beyond the text).</i>				3	3
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to identify personal interests, skills, and knowledge related to future college aspirations. (e.g., college fit, college entrance exams, financial aid)</i>				3	4
<i>Student will demonstrate the ability to define key personal attributes to investigate, explore, and reflect on best-fit career fields and pathways.</i>				3	3
Absences				2	3
Tardies				0	2
Comments: Great work on the writing process. Family can support by asking student about their organizational tools and helping them find a system that keeps them self-directed and meeting deadlines.					

Appendix F: Standards-Based Grading FAQs for the Highline Website

What is standards-based grading?

- Standards-based grading (SBG) is a system of assessing students' progress toward learning specific standards set for each grade level and course.
- Standards-based grading is not just a new way of grading but also a set of teacher practices that promote learning.
- Standards-based grading frames learning as a process: asking questions, finding answers, and applying new learning to our lives outside of the classroom. It is based in a *growth mindset*, the understanding that our skills and knowledge develop through effort and persistence.
- Students are graded on the same standards across the district. This means that regardless of which teacher a student has or what school they attend, they will focus on learning the same content and skills.

What are standards?

- Standards describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of each grade level or course.
- Each content area (e.g. mathematics, English language arts) has specialized standards that connect with their discipline.
- Standards are adopted and developed by Washington State's Office of Public Instruction, in alignment with national frameworks.

What are essential standards?

- Our teachers were part of the district-wide process of selecting the essential standards for each course. Teams reviewed all the standards for a course and used the criteria below to select those that were essential:
 - **Endurance:** Provides knowledge and skills beyond a single test date.
 - **Leverage:** Provides knowledge and skills that will be of value in multiple disciplines (examples: non-fiction writing, graphing, arguing from evidence).
 - **Readiness:** Standards that provide knowledge and skills that are necessary for success in the next grade or level of instruction.
- Other standards will continue to be taught, but only the essential standards are part of the grade. This helps teachers and students focus on the skills and content that are most important.

How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?

- Standards-based grading evaluates learning of specific content and skills rather than grading on individual assignments. The online gradebook is organized by the standards students are expected to master by the end of the term.
- On assignments, students don't receive one overall score that averages all of the skills and knowledge together. Instead, when an assignment includes more than one standard, each one is assessed separately in order to show the students' strengths and needs.
- Students have multiple ways to show proficiency in each standard.

Why is standards-based grading beneficial for students?

- Standards-based grading provides feedback for students and families on current learning and ways to progress.
- Students and families can see which specific standards are current strengths and which standards the student needs to work on.
- Students have opportunities to be assessed again if they have not mastered a standard. If they perform better, the new grade replaces the previous one.
- Students are not penalized for having a bad day that causes them to do poorly on a task or test. They will have other opportunities to show they have met the standard, such as a chance to re-do the assignment or more time to complete the assignment.
- Students have the opportunity to choose how they demonstrate mastery of the standard using their personal strengths, as appropriate to the standard.
- Standards-based grading helps a student change their mindset from task-orientated learning to a growth mindset. By doing this students have more ownership of their own learning, become advocates of their own learning, and will be able to better identify and use their own strengths.

How can families support standards-based grading?

- It helps families focus on learning instead of focusing on task completion.
- By accessing the gradebook on ParentVue, families can identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, and they can focus on key concepts with their students.
- Instead of asking, "What did you work on today," families can talk about standards with their students. For example, if a parent sees that their child is working on using evidence, the family may ask, "Tell me about how you wrote using evidence today"?

What do the numbers/levels mean?

- 1 = Beginning to Meet Standards
- 2 = Approaching Meeting Standards
- 3 = Meeting Standards
- 4 = Exceeding Standards
- A student might perform at the beginning level (1) at the beginning of the unit, which is normal. They will have multiple opportunities to show growth toward meeting a standard. If the student's performance improves, the 1 will be replaced by higher proficiency levels (2, 3, or 4) later in the term. The initial 1 won't have a negative impact on the final grade.
- A family might become concerned with their student's growth if they start to see a pattern that does not demonstrate that their student is progressing (for example, 1-1-1, 2-2-2, or 1-2-1). If this happens, the family should first talk to the student about their learning, then if more clarification is needed, reach out to the teacher (if the teacher hasn't already done so).

How is the final grade calculated?

- Final grades for each standard are determined by the student's performance by the end of the term. Instead of averaging all of the grades from the term, a standards-based approach focuses on how students are able to demonstrate their understanding by the end of the term.
- In rare cases, a student may have an instance of lower performance near the end of the term. The teacher may choose to have the higher performance earlier in the term override

the later performance if the earlier assessment better demonstrated the student's actual skill or knowledge.

- On secondary report cards, the 1-4 scores are converted into a letter grade for each course. The final score for each standard is averaged to calculate an overall 1-4 for the course. This average is then translated into a letter grade using the following scale:
 - A = 3.4 – 4.0
 - B = 2.7 – 3.3
 - C = 1.6 – 2.6.
 - Grades below 1.6 are coded as NC (no credit) and do not affect a student's GPA.

What is factored into the final grade?

- In a standards-based gradebook, academic progress is separated from other non-academic behaviors such as participation and work completion.
- The final grade is not about behavior, work completion, or attendance. Students still receive feedback and reflect on these areas, but the gradebook and report card only measure performance on learning standards.

Does that mean a student doesn't have to complete all of their assignments and homework?

- Even though we aren't averaging the grades of the assignments, doing all assignments is how students learn, grow, and ultimately develop proficiency in the standards.
- Continuing to work towards standards at home is still an important part of learning. In a standards-based approach, the focus is less on completing individual assignments and more on building the knowledge and skills to demonstrate proficiency on standards.
- Students will still come home with work to complete. As their family, you can support them by asking which standards they are working towards and how it is going. Instead of asking, "Did you do your homework?," you could ask, "What learning did you work on today?" You can look in the online gradebook to see which standards they need to continue to work on in order to meet expectations.

How might this impact my child's college admission?

- Our secondary report cards convert the scores in the gradebook into a letter grade. This allows college admissions officers to easily compare our students with those in districts with traditional grading systems.
- College admissions officers have reported that students coming from standards-based schools tend to be more successful in college because their K-12 experience has focused on their attainment of key skills and knowledge.
- Standards-based grading helps students take ownership over their learning and build a growth mindset that helps them be successful in the future.

What are rubrics and how do they help?

- Rubrics describe how students are expected to demonstrate their learning of a standard. They include descriptions of the quality of student work at different levels: beginning, approaching, proficient, and exceeding.
- Rubrics help teachers grade more consistently and objectively.
- Rubrics are a guide to help students know how to grow their learning.
- Rubrics support families in knowing what their children are expected to know and be able to do.

Sample Rubric for Social Studies

D2. Civ.6.6-8. Individually and with others, students describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.				
	Beginning	Approaching	Proficient	Exceeding
	I can identify political, civil, <u>or</u> economic organizations that shape people's lives.	I can identify how political, civil, <u>and</u> economic organizations shape people's lives.	I can describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.	I can compare and contrast the roles of multiple political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.
S O U N D S L I K E	<p>Political organizations are the government and laws of areas.</p> <p>Economic organizations are how people trade or get paid for their work.</p> <p>Civil organizations are how people live together or how they treat each other that are usually not the government.</p>	Rich people in Medieval Europe controlled everything and everyone. They owned the land and made all the rules. If you didn't come from a rich family, you were out of luck.	Medieval Europe's government was called Feudalism. This was a type of government where everyone had to listen to the king. People were forced to work on the king's farms by law, and had hard lives because they worked too much. The king was at the top, then nobles, knights, and peasants were at the bottom.	Feudalism controlled how people were able to live and work. Serfs had to work and pay taxes (money, food, services) to the nobles that owned the land. If serfs refused, they were punished because the nobles enforced the king's laws also. Serfs could not move up to be a noble because socially and politically that was not allowed, so they were stuck being poor.

Appendix G: Focus Group Timeline and Protocol

Family Engagement Timeline

March 22 - Family Action Committee (FAC) gives feedback on the documents.

March 23 - SBG revises based on FAC feedback.

March 26 - Post Materials & Publicize: Participants pre-register and indicate language,
Support from: New Futures/SWYFS, Para Los Niños, SPEB, African Community
Housing & Development

April 5th & 6th - Focus Groups

April 9th - Process focus group feedback to make edits before ThoughtExchange

April 15th - Email thanking focus group participants and answering questions

April 19th - ThoughtExchange opens for stakeholders to provide written feedback

Discussion Prompts

1. What is SBG?: Review FAQs on the District Website.

- In your own words, what is standards-based grading?
- What questions still remain?
- What recommendations do you have for improving this communication?

2. Open-Ended Questions: Experiences with Current System

- Content: What do you like about the current report cards, progress reports, and online gradebooks?
- Content: What do you wish were different?
- Process: How often and how would you like to receive the information? (mail vs. email vs. logging in to Synergy)

3. Review Draft Report Card: Translated Samples on the Website

- Quantity: Is there too much, not enough, or just the right amount of information?
- Readability: How does the word choice and format make it hard or easy to understand and translate?
- Teacher Comments: What type of comments are most helpful to you?
- Action: How might this information support students' academic progress?

April 5th Focus Group Plan

Time	Content	Groupings	Facilitator & Notetaker	Slides Here
3:00 - 3:05	Welcome	Whole Group	Linda	Slides 1-6
3:05- 3:20	Preview Materials & Discussion Prompts Answer Clarifying Questions	Breakout groups by Language	Spanish: Lita, Rebeca, Bernard English Elem: Jenniffer & Kathy English Sec: Deborah, Nicole, Julie Vietnamese: Hoa & Nalene Somali: Mana & Linda	Slides 8-13, share linked website materials and preview discussion questions. (No notetaking needed. If someone gives feedback, thank them and ask them to bring it up again in the discussion by role.)
3:20 - 3:25	Transition to role alike groups	Whole group	Linda	Slide 7
3:25 - 4:00	Discussion based on the Content from slides 10-13	Breakout Groups by Role	Notecatcher Here Families: Lita & Rebeca Bernardo - Spanish Mana - Somail Hoa - Vietnamese Elem. Staff: Jenniffer & Kathy Sec. Staff: Deborah & Nicole	Intro 5 min (slide 8-10) 10 min (slide 11) 10 min (slide 12) 10 min (slide 13) We recommend sharing screens only briefly to introduce each section and then go into gallery view. reading putting questions in the chat. This allows participants to see each other and it gives a 'discussion' feel rather than presentation.
4:00 - 4:05	Closing		Students: Julie & Bernard	Slide 14 – recommendation to include an optimistic close, facilitator’s choice
4:05 - 4:15	Debrief	SBG Team & Interpreters	Linda	

Facilitator Role

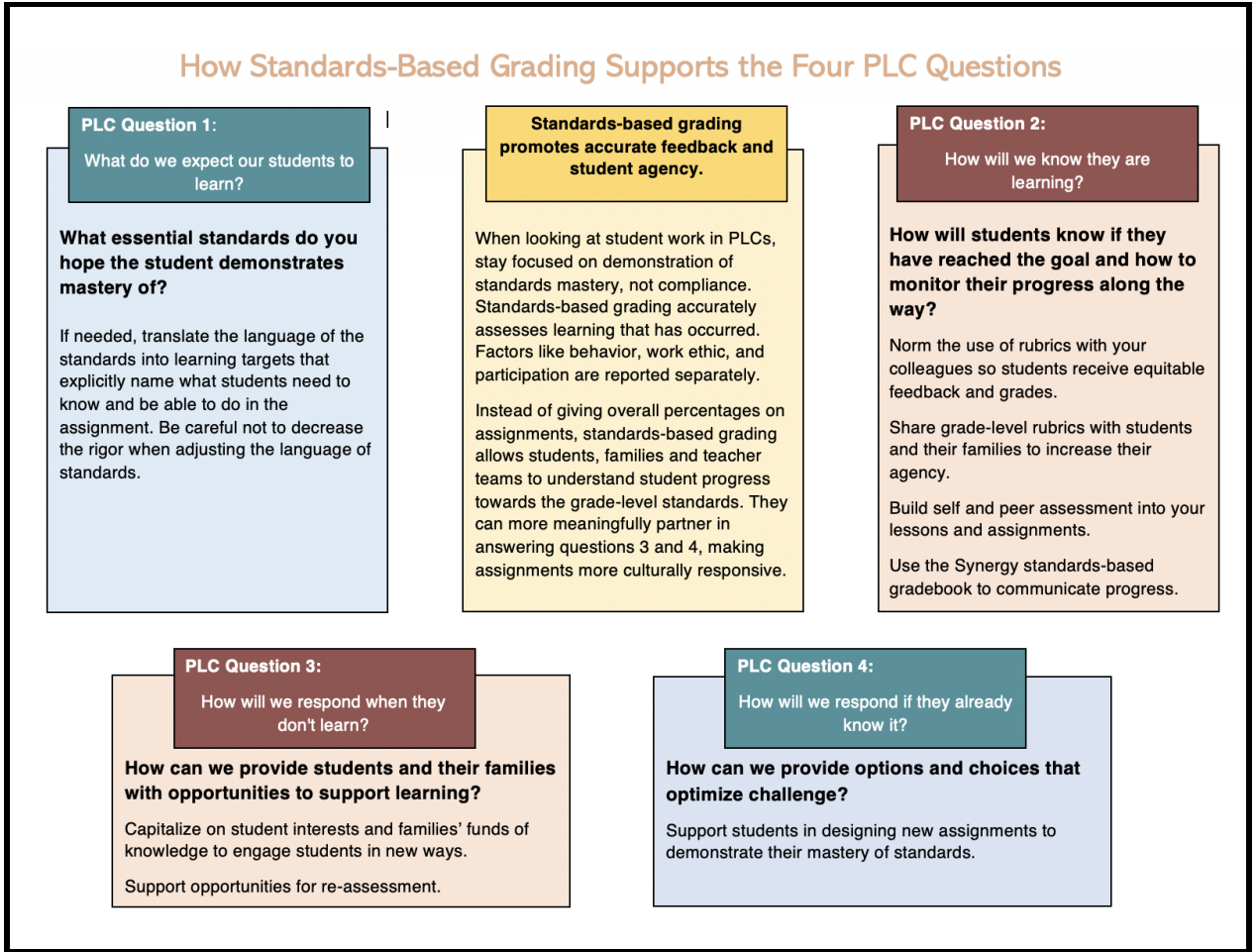
1. **Promote Full Participation**
 - “Does anyone want to respond to those comments?”
 - “Can we hear from someone who hasn’t yet spoken?”
 - “Does anyone have a different opinion?”
2. **Ask Clarifying Questions of Participants**
 - “Is that something you wish were different?”
 - “Can you say more about...”
3. **Move the Group Along to Hear From Participants**
 - “We have time for one last thought on this topic.”
 - “Let’s move on to the next topic.”
 - “That’s a great question. We will make sure to include the answer in our follow up communication to you next week.”

Group Agreements

- Speak from your own **experiences**. There are no wrong answers.
- Make **space** so everyone can share.
- Focus on **one idea at a time**. It is ok not to discuss every question.
- **Listen** in order to **build** on ideas or provide **different opinions**.
- We will take notes but you will remain anonymous.

Can you all **agree** to these? Are there any **questions or additions** before we begin?

Appendix I: Connection between SBG and Professional Learning Communities



Appendix J: Communicating with Schools About District Office Support

1. STARTING PLACE Starting in this place of our current strengths and areas for growth...	2. STRATEGIES If we use these strategies...	3. GOALS We will be able to realize these goals...	4. RATIONALE And we think so because....
<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBG Implementation team has developed initial plans and engaged in learning about rubrics • Essentials standards were identified at school level and compiled for content areas • Initial phase of development of rubrics at some elementary and secondary schools <p>Areas of Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systemwide momentum and connection to UDL, PLC and inclusive education (SDI) • TL & L leaders having deep knowledge about standards-based practices • common understanding of rubric requirements and development • current grading practices (non-standards based) are subjective, and as such highly vulnerable to racial bias • variation among grading processes creates <u>inequity</u> across classrooms and schools • multiple different approaches to grading make it hard for families and students to interpret and use feedback to improve 	<p>TLL creates professional learning modules in standards-based grading practices. Implementation rubrics will be available for each module for schools to identify their learning trajectory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rubrics • assessment • portfolios, goal setting, & student learning plans • approaches to success skills (non-academic skills) including rubrics, reflection tools, etc. • standards-based feedback (student-led conferences, Progress Reporting, Report Cards: standard grading scale & aggregation method) <p>TLL specialists will further the development of rubrics by subject K-12</p> <p>TLL creates sample APP/SIP goals related to standards-based grading.</p> <p>SBI Cadre will move through a trajectory of learning that will support schools in implementation.</p> <p>TLL/IMS will support a pilot of a standards-based report card and facilitate the collection of feedback from stakeholders (including family, community, students and staff), throughout fall 2021. In collaboration with Comms & Family Engagement, TLL will create tools (FAQs, videos, webinars, etc.) to explain SBG.</p> <p>Through regular communication with program leads and the intentional cross-representation in individual workgroups, steering committees, etc, continued alignment of standards-based grading with programs (Highly Capable, Inclusive Education, Dual Language, ELL/WIDA, CTE, etc.) and districtwide strategies such as PLCs, UDL, SEL, MTSS, etc.</p> <p>In addition to the website, ongoing information sessions and feedback sessions with families and students about standards-based grading including how to interpret the standards-based report card and tools to support learning.</p>	<p>By Fall 2022, systemwide implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rubric development and use • assessment • portfolios, goal setting, & student learning plans • standards-based feedback (student-led conferences, Progress Reporting, Report Cards: standard grading scale & aggregation method) <p>By Fall 2022, all stakeholders (families, students, staff) will understand the rationale behind standards-based grading and how they can use its structures to support inclusive practices and student learning. (Measurement through surveys.)</p> <p>By August 2021, professional learning materials and resources are available to all school leaders to learn on their own and share resources with staff.</p> <p>By June 2021, all schools have a plan for the professional learning they will engage in next year to support standards-based grading practices.</p> <p>By June 2024, Desired Student Outcomes: As schools across the district implement all standards-based grading practices, we will compare the expected student outcomes below to a baseline from June 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Student Survey Responses: Increase in positive responses to the question related to Growth Mindset. • Grades dashboard reflects more proportionality (rubrics reduce implicit bias) • Alignment between standards-based assessments (iReady, SBAC, SATs, WIDA) and course grades including overall proficiency and individual standard analysis <p>Progress Monitoring will use the AAP tool: https://hsd.instructure.com/courses/12093/files/1051185/download</p>	<p>Standards-based grading is ONE high leverage component to support clarity in understanding what we want our students to learn and the corresponding feedback to students and families. Combined with instructional practices and a growth mindset, standards-based grading can promote more equitable outcomes for students of all learning profiles.</p> <p>Guaranteed and viable curriculum can be an equity strategy ensuring that all students have access to high level content, standards, instructional materials and instruction. GVC starts with a clear understanding of what we want our students to learn (PLC question #1) and continues with Q2 (rubrics and assessment practices) and Q3&4 (goal setting, progress monitoring, and reassessment).</p> <p>These are tools that are already in hand – they don't require an additional lift for teachers.</p> <p>Tech abilities have increased; with good relationships, we can provide tier 3 supports for families/kids that cannot access ParenVue/StudentVue</p>

Appendix K: Continuum of Leading for Equity: Collaborating with Families and Communities (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014)

TABLE B6 Collaborating With Families and Communities (Standard 4).

Little or No Equitable Practice (Takes little or no action to address inequities)	Emerging Equitable Practice (Begins to examine, plan, and initiate actions to address inequities)	Proficient Equitable Practice (Takes consistent action with staff for change in school policies and practices for equity)	Exemplary Equitable Practice (Collectively enacts systemic policies and practices for equity and has evidence of more equitable outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership focuses within the school/system and shields teachers and students from unnecessary interference from families and community organizations. • Families are informed of important school policies and student expectations. Community partners are informed of how students and families will best be served based on the leadership's own knowledge. • Leadership identifies ways to overcome perceived deficiencies of nondominant families and communities that impede teaching and learning in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership has an "open-door" policy for families and is receptive to partnering with community organizations to address the needs of students. • Leadership uses language-appropriate communication to share ways families and community partners can support the school's agenda at home or outside the classroom (e.g., supporting homework completion, fundraising, donating supplies, or providing social services). • Leadership talks about the need to build understanding of the diversity of values, practices, and social and cultural capital in the school community. • Leadership provides opportunities for nondominant parents to improve their parenting skills and better support learning at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership engages teachers and staff in proactively partnering with and learning from families and community organizations, especially from nondominant communities. • Leadership uses transparent, culturally appropriate communication to reach out to families and community members and engage them in student learning at school. • Leadership has evidence of policies and practices that result in greater awareness and valuing of the diverse values, practices, and resources in the school community. • Leadership engages teachers and staff in integrating community resources and expertise, especially from nondominant communities, to improve and enrich teaching, curriculum, and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership collaborates with teachers, staff, students, families, and community members, especially from nondominant communities, in shaping the educational process and school improvement for equity. • Leadership develops and maintains meaningful and ongoing relationships with families and communities through regular two-way, culturally responsive communication. • Leadership has evidence of teacher, staff, student, family, and community capacity to embed "funds of knowledge" and other resources in instruction. • Leadership positions the school as part of the community and builds capacity to meaningfully enact a collective equity vision. • Leadership has evidence of ongoing processes to assess and update collaborative work as the community changes.

Appendix L: Connecting SBG to Teacher & Principal Evaluation

Danielson Indicators	HPS Equitable Practices
<p>1F Designing Student Assessments</p> <p>Variety of Performance Opportunities for Students, Expectations clearly written with descriptors for each level of performance.</p>	<p>None included</p>
<p>2B Establishing a Culture for Learning</p> <p>Expectation and recognition of effort and persistence on the part of the students.</p>	<p>The teacher consistently helps students see that learning and achievement come from hard work, not natural ability, offering specific praise for student effort and process, not task compliance of "being smart."</p>
<p>3D Using Assessment in Instruction</p> <p>The teacher paying close attention to evidence of student understanding. Students assessing their own work against established criteria.</p>	<p>The teacher uses developmental assessment cycles so that students have multiple ways to show learning, re-engage, try again and re-assess.</p> <p>SBI Implementation Rubric: Student-centered feedback allows for individual students to accurately self-assess and monitor their own progress.</p>
<p>4B Maintaining Accurate Records</p> <p>Systems of information regarding student progress against instructional outcomes</p>	<p>The teacher's records of student learning are understandable, accessible, and useful to both student and family for the learning process.</p> <p>The teachers uses proactive, consistent and responsive communications to establish common understanding about classroom expectations and the student's learning process.</p>
<p><u>Association of Washington School Principals Leadership Framework</u></p>	
<p>3.4 Implements Data-Informed Improvement Plans</p>	
<p>4.3 Assists Staff in Aligning Assessment Practices to state standards and district learning goals</p>	
<p>7.1 Partners with Families to Promote Student Learning</p>	
<p>7.2 Incorporates Strategies that Engage all Families, Particularly those who have been Historically Underserved</p>	