EAB

Standards-Based Learning at Middle Schools

District Leadership Forum

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Dylan Desjardins
Research Associate

Matthew McCarthy
Research Manager

Olivia Rios
Senior Research Manager

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Administrators at profiled districts communicate the value of standards-based learning to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders before implementation to ensure they transition to standards-based learning successfully. All contacts note the importance of engaging stakeholders across the district community. By explaining the value of standards-based learning, contacts believe they received support from teachers and parents that they would not have received if stakeholders had perceived the implementation process as a top-down mandate.

Profiled districts conduct pilots of standards-based learning and offer opportunities for teacher and parent feedback to identify problems with the standards-based learning program before school-wide implementation. Middle school administrators at **District A** launched a standards-based learning pilot program in seventh-grade classrooms the year before school-wide implementation. Parents of students could attend evening meetings to ask questions and deliver feedback about the program. District administrators at **District D** included teachers from all departments in their pilot program, which allowed every department to ask content-specific questions.

Profiled districts use professional development meetings and professional learning community meetings to establish equivalent grading practices across classrooms and departments. These meetings include opportunities for teachers in the same department or grade level to discuss their grading processes to increase consistency in grades among teachers. Teachers at **District F** who teach similar courses grade sample student tests together and discuss appropriate scores every week.

Profiled districts predominantly use summative assessments to evaluate student learning. Summative assessments include tests and student projects**.** Contacts at four profiled districts view homework solely as student practice rather than an opportunity to assess student learning. However, teachers at **District D** incorporate homework completion into student grades, and teachers in some departments at **District E** consider performance on homework a small factor in student grades.

Contacts at all profiled districts report logistical difficulties configuring grading software to accommodate standards-based grading. Contacts across profiled districts express frustration or dissatisfaction with their grading software's capacity to integrate standards-based grades. Administrators at **District B**, **District C**, and **District F** consulted with technicians from their respective grading software vendors on strategies to enter standards-based grades in the software and convert them to letter grades with varying degrees of success.

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2) Implementation

Program Design and Staff Training

Transition to Standards-Based Learning over Multiple Years

Timelines to plan and implement standards-based learning frequently lasted for longer than an academic year at profiled districts. Profiled districts with elementary or high schools that already use standards-based learning (e.g., **District D**), or where some teachers had experimented with standards-based learning individually (e.g., **District F**), report shorter implementation time than profiled districts with no experience with standards-based learning. All profiled districts use standards-based learning for all courses (i.e., core curriculum and elective courses).

Standards-Based Learning Implementation Timelines at Profiled Districts

District A

- Planning process began fall 2014.
- Pilot program launched 2016-2017.
- The middle school launched standards-based learning for all courses fall 2017.

District B

- District administrators began to expand standards-based learning in 2012-2013, after the district magnet school adopted it.
- Middle school implemented standards-based learning in K-2, then in 3-5, and finally in 6-8.

District C

- Task force on standards-based learning met 2012-2013.
- Middle school teachers began using standards-based learning 2013-2014, and the middle school fully implemented it in 2014-2015.

District D

- Administrators began researching standards-based learning in the early 2000s.
- The middle school began a pilot program followed by full implementation around 2010.

District E

- The district began standards-based learning in 2012.
- Timelines for standards-based learning have varied across the ten middle schools.

District F

- Before 2012, middle school and high school teachers used standards-based learning on a voluntary basis.
- Middle school transitioned to standards-based learning 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

Create Task Forces to Establish Guidelines for Standards-Based Learning

Prior to piloting and implementing standards-based learning, profiled districts established task forces or committees to assess the value of standards-based learning at their district and determine standards-based learning guidelines.

At **District C**, administrators concerned about grade inflation in the district decided to research standards-based learning to assess whether it could address grade inflation. Following initial research, administrators created a task force to plan the transition to

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standards-based learning. This task force included approximately 25 staff: curriculum specialists from the central office, high school teachers and leaders, middle school teachers and leaders, English language arts leaders, special education leaders, and gifted and talented leaders. The task force organized a book study and extensive discussion on how to combat grade inflation at the district. Ultimately, the task force created a grading handbook, which they used to implement standards-based learning and train teachers on standards-based learning.

Middle school administrators at **District A** also held extensive staff meetings to plan the implementation of standards-based learning. Internal staff meetings during the 2014-2015 school year discussed the principals of standards-based learning and a design for a report card for standards-based grades. During the 2015-2016 year, staff developed a report card and began soliciting external stakeholders (e.g., parents, school board members) for input.

While methods to develop guidelines for standards-based learning differed across profiled districts, contacts emphasize the importance of considering how one school's transition to standards-based learning would affect student success across the district. Contacts at **District B** note the importance of coordination among middle school staff with high school teachers and administrators to improve students' transitions from middle school to high school. Contacts add that without the input of high school staff in middle school standards-based learning implementation, the student transition from middle school to high school may be difficult, especially if the high school does not use standards-based learning.

Research Helps Administrators Understand and Communicate the Value of Standards-Based Learning

At most profiled districts, administrators consult texts by experts in the field to develop standards-based learning guidelines or ask teachers to read research as part of training.

Contacts most frequently mention the following books for research on standards-based learning:

- *A Repair Kit for Grading* by Ken O'Connor
- *How to Grade for Learning* by Ken O'Connor
- *On Your Mark* by Thomas Guskey
- *Fair Isn't Always Equal* by Rick Wormelli
- *Developing Standards-Based Report Cards* by Thomas Guskey and Jane Bailey

Use Pilot Programs to Test Standards-Based Learning Prior to Full Implementation

Contacts at **District A**, **District D** and **District E** report that pilot programs allowed administrators to evaluate standards-based learning guidelines. Pilot programs also may help administrators determine the strengths and weaknesses of teacher training programs. At **District A**, administrators paired a small pilot program in the seventh grade with evaluations by staff and evening meetings with parents. District administrators listened to feedback and concerns from staff and parents and used the feedback to determine which aspects of their guidelines to improve for the full implementation the following year.

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District administrators at District D recruited teachers excited about standards-based learning to participate in the pilot program. Administrators included at least one teacher from each department in the program. At several of District E's middle schools, individual departments began to use standards-based learning before a grade- or school-wide implementation of the program.

Offer Multiple Opportunities for Teachers to Receive Training About Standards-Based Instruction

Administrators at **District F** implemented a professional release program that allowed teachers to use class period time to receive training on standards-based learning. This professional release occurred once a week and provided teachers with the opportunity to collaborate on concerns about standards-based learning and establish consistent grading practices. Administrators at **District C** required teachers to attend five, three-hour sessions about standards-based instruction during each year of implementation. Not all teachers attended the same session, and substitute teachers covered classes for teachers who attended the meetings. Session leaders discussed best practices for standards-based instruction and involved teachers in each session. For example, session leaders presented a situation and asked groups of teachers to discuss how to address the situation under a standards-based paradigm. At **District B** and **District E**, administrators use regular professional learning community meetings as a forum for middle school teachers to learn about standards-based learning.

Further, several profiled districts use external resources to support teachers. District F employed many teachers with standards-based learning experience prior to school-wide implementation. However, few teachers in the language arts department had experience with standards-based learning. To support language arts teachers, district administrators reached out to language arts teachers at districts that had implemented standards-based learning and asked them to hold workshops virtually. Other profiled districts facilitated conversations between teachers and experts on standards-based learning. For example, an administrator at **District D** led a group of teachers on a trip to receive training from a specialist who had worked extensively on standards-based learning.

Most profiled districts also provided teachers with standard-based learning policies and resources for professional development during implementation. The standards-based learning task force at District C created the grading practices in the grading handbook to train teachers and establish consistent grading practices. Middle school administrators at **District A** asked teachers to read research by an expert in the field and sent them multimedia resources (e.g., videos, articles, testimonials) to increase their understanding of standards-based learning.

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Example Types of Professional Development

Documents from other districts

School- or department-wide meetings

Book studies

Virtual or in-person workshops with experts

Standards-based grading training conferences

FAQ pages

Stakeholder Buy-in

Increase Community Support for Standards-Based Learning by Securing Teacher Buy-In

Contacts at profiled districts emphasize the importance of using teachers who support standards-based learning to advocate for the transition to standards-based learning. Contacts at **District D** mention that after skeptical teachers attend professional development sessions, they may provide vocal support for standards-based learning. Contacts at **District A** also report that administrators found it valuable to secure teacher buy-in through trainings and department meetings before engaging students and parents with standards-based learning. Contacts add that when parents approached teachers who attended trainings with questions about standards-based learning, the teachers could talk about the transition intelligently and positively. For example, contacts explain that these teachers would be more likely to answer parent questions on standards-based learning successfully or explain why middle school administrators decided to implement standards-based learning. Contacts at **District E** state that teachers who have one-on-one conversations with students and parents help them understand standards-based learning.

Profiled districts that failed to secure teacher support for standards-based learning face greater skepticism or hostility from other members of the school community. Contacts at **District F** state that criticism and passive resistance to the implementation of standards-based learning from a small group of teachers led to frustrated students and parents. Similarly, teacher resistance to implementation at **District B** led to several problems, including parent resistance to standards-based learning and the adoption of a grading scale that contacts believe does not adhere to best practices for standards-based learning. Contacts at District B suggest that administrators could have mitigated some of these problems by offering a more effective support structure for teachers and staff as they began to use standards-based learning.

Transparent Communication and Flexibility in Implementation Can Mitigate Parent Pushback

All profiled school districts experienced some pushback from parents during consideration or implementation of standards-based learning. Contacts at **District D** suggest that because standards-based learning had already been implemented at the elementary school level parents were less resistant than they would have been if standards-based learning was entirely new to the district. Contacts also credit communication with parents before implementation of standards-based learning as useful to mitigate parent concern when the middle schools in the district transitioned

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to standards-based learning. Administrators at District D hold discussions with parents early in the process to implement standards-based learning to communicate how the program can positively impact student learning.

District A and **District F** solicited parent feedback and responded to parents effectively to garner community support for standards-based learning. District A Middle School staff planned to begin the standards-based learning pilot program at the eighth-grade level. Parents objected to a pilot in eighth-grade classes. They argued that students in this pilot program would undergo a difficult transition back to traditional, letter grading at the high school after only one year of standards-based learning. Middle school staff responded by piloting the program in seventh-grade classes. At District F, the middle school principal held regular meetings for parents to express their concerns with the implementation of standards-based learning. Contacts report that these meetings gave parents the impression that the school listened to concerns and addressed them.

Strategies to Mitigate Parent Pushback at *District A* and *District F*

Challenge	District Solution
Parents at **District A** did not want to pilot standards-based learning in eighth-grade classes.	Middle school staff agreed to pilot standards-based learning in seventh-grade classes.
After **District F** implemented Standards-based learning, parents could not view students' grades.	The Middle School principal apologized to parents for the lack of access to student grades and prioritized timely grade entry to improve access.
Parents at **District F** were confused about aspects of standards-based learning.	Administrators created FAQ documents and published them online. Administrators update the FAQ page periodically.

Include School Boards and District Leaders in Early Planning to Foster District-Wide Unity

Contacts at profiled districts did not report significant levels of dissent from district administrators. Contacts at **District A** and **District F** outline strategies to garner support from school board members to implement standards-based learning. District administrators at District A communicated plans and rationales for switching to standards-based learning to the school board before they piloted and implemented the program. The following graphic displays how administrators at District F incorporated research on teacher preferences into a proposal for standards-based learning they submitted to the school board.

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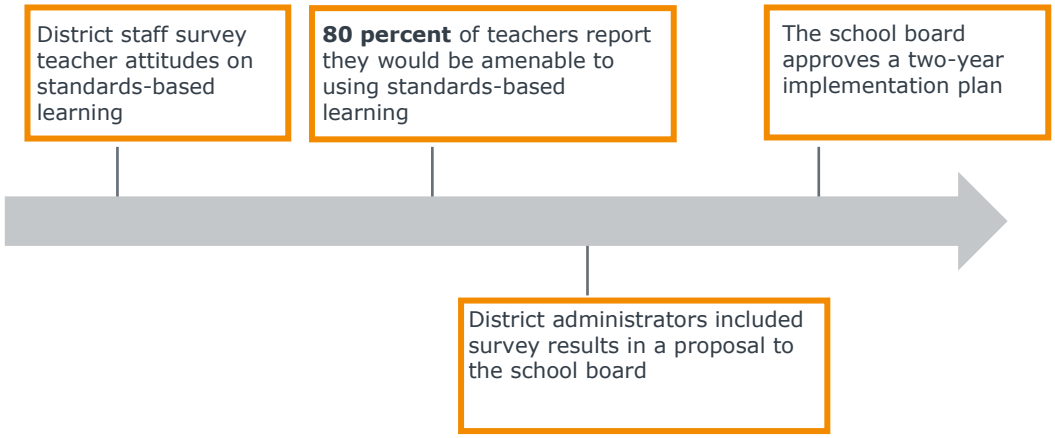
Development of a Standards-Based Learning Proposal at *District F*



Ongoing Program Evaluation

Analyze Documented Problems with Standards-Based Learning to Determine Areas for Further Improvement

Several profiled districts have conducted comprehensive evaluations or redesigns since they implemented standards-based learning. A reassessment of standards-based learning allows district administrators to understand satisfaction with the program and the programs' areas of greatest dysfunction.

Most profiled districts continue to train teachers after the implementation of standards-based learning and survey them to gather data on how staff perceive standards-based learning. In addition to training teachers, **District C** created a task force at the end of its fifth year of using standards-based learning. District administrators assembled this task force to identify problems in the standards-referenced grading handbook. The task force also plans to update the handbook with policies to address these problems. Contacts note that district administrators will offer sessions for 20-25 teacher leaders to discuss grading practices and example scenarios to increase consistency across teachers.

For over a year, middle school principals at **District E** have attended in-person professional learning community meetings to discuss standards-based learning. These meetings allow the principals of middle schools at different stages of implementing standards-based learning to collaborate and learn from each other's experiences.

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Middle School Principal-Led Evaluation Meetings at *District E*

Meeting Logistics and Actions

Scheduling and Agenda

Middle school principals met at one school (the school they meet at alternates). A curriculum director initially set agendas for meetings.

Teacher Evaluation

Principals sent out evaluations to teachers to determine their thoughts on standards-based learning. Principals used subsequent meetings to discuss take-aways from the survey.

Professional Development

The principals periodically attend professional development conferences and events as a group to ensure they are aware of best practices in standards-based learning.

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3) Grading

Standards-Based Scale

Encourage Teacher and Department Collaboration to Facilitate Consistency in Grading

To facilitate consistent grading across classrooms, district administrators at all profiled districts communicate standards-based grading practices to teachers. District administrators at **District F** ask teachers to consistently use the most recent evidence of student learning (rather than averaging student performance throughout the term) to determine grades. **District C** requires teachers to follow practices in its standards-based learning handbook to facilitate consistent grading across classrooms. However, contacts at District C acknowledge that district administrators need to meet and train teachers to ensure they understand and follow these practices.

District F uses professional release time to ensure teachers can attend weekly meetings. District administrators use these meetings to ensure teachers grade equivalently. During these weekly meetings, teachers who instruct the same grade-level classes review completed tests and discuss how they would grade each one. **District A** also leverages communication between teachers to develop grading practices. After initial research, administrators decided to use a grading scale to assess student learning. During standards-based grading implementation, the middle school hosted a meeting attended by forty teachers to discuss what each number on the scale meant in terms of student learning. A smaller task force with representation from every department established definitions foreach score on the grading scale. Because the meetings included representation from all departments, they allowed the middle school to establish standards that could apply to all subjects. Following the development of grading scales at District A and **District B**, staff disseminated copies of the scale to teachers. Middle school staff at District A created posters that explain the scale and hung them around the school.

At **District D** and **District E** middle schools maintain some autonomy over how teachers use standards-based grading. Contacts at District D acknowledge that school-level control over standards-based grading results in less consistency across middle schools. However, they believe that integration of the standards-based learning philosophy into all middle schools is more important than standardization of all standard-based learning practices. Contacts believe this because wide-spread adoption of standards-based learning means that schools assess the greatest number of students holistically. Additionally, contacts at District D report that school councils in their state maintain control of some aspects of curriculum and assessment (including practices related to standards-based learning). School council control restricts the ability of district administrators at District D to standardize standards-based learning practices. However, both District D and District E use mechanisms to establish consistency between units.

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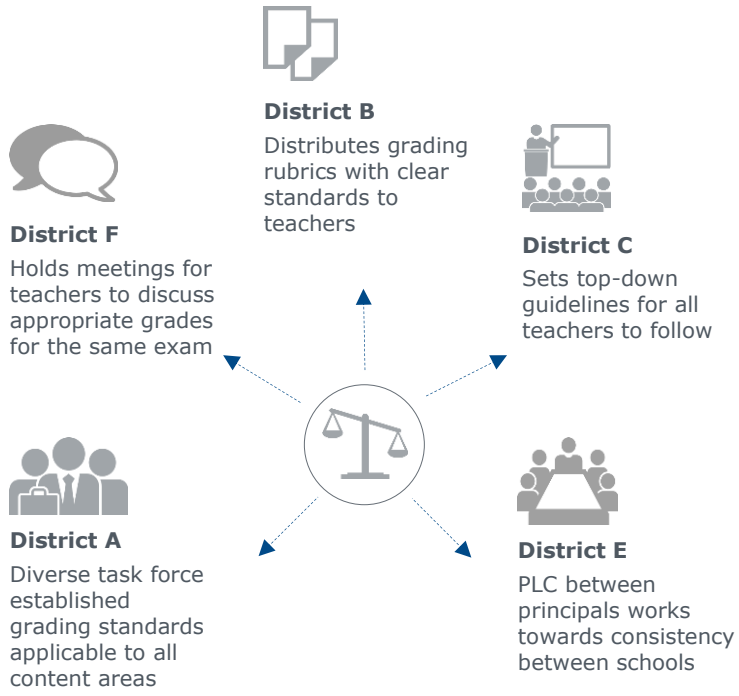
Strategies to Facilitate Grading Equivalency at Profiled Districts



Administer Summative Assessments to Assess Student Learning

At all profiled districts, standards-based grades are comprised primarily of scores on summative assessments. Summative assessments include tests and, at many profiled districts, student projects. Contacts at **District D** and **District F** explicitly state that they do not use any form of extra credit.

Teachers at **District A**, **District C**, and District **F** do not incorporate homework performance or homework completion into standards-based grades. Teachers at **District B** rarely weigh homework in grades, and contacts report that the middle school is increasingly moving toward only including summative assessments in grades. Contacts consider summative assessments more authentic measures of student understanding and state that homework should serve primarily as practice. Teachers at District A, District B, and District C frequently provide students with feedback or a score on homework assignments but do not incorporate these scores into standards-based grades.

Some middle school teachers at District D and **District E** grade completed homework. District D includes homework completion in the grading system under "work skills" standards that include responsibility, dependability, and cooperation. Contacts explain that school and district administrators agreed to grade homework completion partly due to teacher concern that students would not complete homework unless it factored into their grades.

At District E, schools and departments determine homework grading policies. The following graphic highlights three practices by different departments at District E.

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Departmental Homework Policies at *District E*

Grade Homework

Some departments include student completion of assignments (including homework) as 10-20 percent of students' final grades. Summative assessments form the other 80-90 percent of final grades.

Use Homework as Practice

Some departments view homework primarily as practice to reinforce classroom lessons, and do not grade homework assignment.

Force Completion

The math department at one middle school does not include homework in student grades. However, students cannot take assessments without first completing related homework assignments.

Allow Each Department to Determine Whether to Use Student Portfolios to Assess Learning

No profiled districts require teachers to use student portfolios to collect evidence of student learning. However, at several profiled districts, schools or departments may choose to use student portfolios. During standards-based learning training, staff at **District C** suggested portfolios as one method to assess student learning. Contacts at **District F** state that using student portfolios as a method to assess student learning is uncommon at the district, but that teachers may use portfolios in some classes (e.g., art). Similarly, contacts at **District E** believe that teachers may find student portfolios helpful to assess learning in some classes (e.g., art, computer engineering).

District B and **District D** do not use student portfolios to assess student learning. Contacts at District B report that the district considered student portfolios, but concluded that portfolios would be difficult to use; administrators were unsure who would keep the portfolios when teachers and students were not using them, and how teachers would assess learning if students lost their portfolios.

Establish Scales to Define Scores for Standards-Based Grades

Profiled districts use different grading scales and language to describe points on the scales to assess student learning. Teachers at **District A**, **District D**, and **District E** assess the extent to which students have "mastered" content. Rather than creating standards related to mastery, **District B** and **District C** base scales around the extent to which students meet each standard, with a score of three indicating the student meets the standard and a score of four indicating the student exceeds the standard. **District F** bases its scale on whether students understand course material. The highest score on this scale indicates that a student demonstrates understanding of the material.

No contacts at profiled districts voice dissatisfaction with the scale they use to assess student learning. Additionally, no contacts mentioned plans to evaluate or adjust the scale used at their district. Contacts' apparent comfort with their grading scales may indicate that the greater concern for district administrators is whether teachers understand the scale and apply it consistently, rather than the numbers on the scale and their definitions.

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Grading Scales Used at Profiled Districts

0-4 Scale

Used by:

- **District C**
- **District F**

Features:

Neither district uses "mastery" language.

1-4 Scale

Used by:

- **District B**
- **District E**

Features:

Both districts define four as going beyond the expectation of the standard, rather than meeting it.

0-5 Scale

Used by:

- **District D**

Features:

Rubrics may vary school by school in the district.

Modified 0-4 Scale

Used by:

- **District A**

The points on the scale:

0: Insufficient evidence or significant student difficulty

2: Needs support

3: Approaching mastery

4: Mastery

Conversion and Software

Convert to Letter Grades for Logistical Ease and to Accommodate Stakeholders

Most profiled districts convert standards-based grades to letter grades. Contacts at **District C** and **District E** view the conversion process positively. Contacts at District C note that standards-based grades determine letter grades. Because of this, contacts at District C consider standards-based grades and letter grades synonymous and would not describe the letter grades they issue as a process of "conversion." Contacts at District E report that staff have reached a consensus to continue to use a letter-grade system in addition to standards-based grades. Staff consider letter grades valuable for the student transition to high school and college. However, District E's middle schools use different methods of conversion to determine letter grades.

Contacts at other profiled districts report that they convert to letter grades to respond to pressure from parent and teachers. Contacts at **District F** feel that abandoning letter grades would invite pushback from parents who would worry that the lack of letter grades would negatively affect their child's college application process. Contacts at **District D** note that converting to letter grades is necessary to use InfiniteCampus. They also report that letter grades allow for a smooth transition of middle school student transcripts to high school. Contacts at **District B** believe that converting to letter grades may undermine some of the effectiveness of standards-

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based learning. Schools at the district eventually began to convert to letter grades because of pressure from teachers and the school board.

Of all the profiled districts, only **District A's** middle school does not use letter grades. Contacts at District A state that they implemented standards-based grading to prevent students from focusing on the letter grade they receive, and to help students think about their progress in learning. Contacts feel that converting standards-based grades to letter grades would undermine these goals.

To Convert to Letter Grades, Average or Add Standards-Based Grades in Electronic Gradebooks

At **District F**, PowerSchool determines letter grades based on the total number of student grades on all standards over the total number of grades possible to earn.

At middle schools at **District B**, **District C**, and **District D**, teachers enter standards-based grades into the district's grading software. The grading software averages these grades to produce a letter grade. The following graphic illustrates the conversion process at District C.

Grade Conversion Process at *District C* Middle Schools

1. Teachers enter standards-based scores (i.e., 1-4) into InfiniteCampus. Because each teacher assesses students in multiple areas, they enter multiple scores for each student.

2. InfiniteCampus averages the standards-based grades for each student. This average determines the letter grade students receive.

3. Middle school students receive letter grades at the end of each term. Because teachers use standards-based grades during the semester, the end of the terms are the only time students receive letter grades.

Collaborate with Grading Software Vendors to Address Difficulties Inputting Standards-Based Grades

Contacts at all profiled districts report problems with grading software. Several contacts describe difficulties associated with grading software as the greatest frustration of transitioning to standards-based learning. District administrators at **District B**, **District C**, and **District F** worked with technicians from their grading software vendor to enter standards-based grades into the electronic gradebook and convert them to letter grades effectively. While this collaboration helped all three districts convert to letter grades, contacts at these districts feel the resulting gradebook is imperfect.

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No profiled districts plan to implement a new grading software. Contacts at **District A** District C, and District F explain that changing grading software would be difficult. Contacts explain that the grading software connects directly to the student information system at District F. Contacts report that this connection makes changing one system without changing the other difficult. Further, changing both systems adds the additional cost of implementing a new student information system. Additionally, for District F, electronic reporting standards in Iowa limit which student information systems the district can use.

Electronic Gradebook Vendors and Concerns of Profiled Districts

InfiniteCampus

- Used by: **District C**, **District D**
- Contacts at District C report that district technology staff have worked with InfiniteCampus on multiple occasions to ensure the software can accommodate standards-based scores.

PowerSchool

- Used by: **District A**, **District F**
- Contacts at both districts report significant problems with PowerSchool. Contacts at District A consider the grading software one of their greatest frustrations because it is not user-friendly.

Skyward

- Used by: **District E**
- Contacts state that they wish the percentage score could be taken off the final report shown to parents to avoid parent's confusion about the conversion process.

TeacherEase

- Used by: **District B**
- Contacts believe that TeacherEase would be effective if the district did not use letter grades. However, staff encountered difficulty standards-based grades to letter grades in the software, though that problem has been resolved.

National Junior Honor Society

Convert to Letter Grades to Determine Academic Eligibility for Entry into National Junior Honor Societies

According to the **National Junior Honor Society webpage**, student applicants must possess a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or have achieved an equivalent scale of excellence to receive an invitation to join a chapter of the society. Middle schools typically use grade point average to determine student academic eligibility for admittance into the society.

Middle schools that convert standards-based scores to letter grades use grade point average of letter grades to determine academic eligibility for admittance into the society. Both middle schools at **District D** maintain junior honors societies, though only one is affiliated with National Junior Honors Society. The schools convert standards-based scores to letter grades and use grade point average of letter grades to determine academic eligibility for admittance into the society.

Contacts at **District B** report that some teachers at the middle school use the grade point average-based academic eligibility requirements of the National Junior Honors Society to suggest that the district should convert to letter grades. The district chose to convert to letter grades and currently uses grade point average of letter grades to

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determine academic eligibility for admittance into the society. However, contacts believe the middle school would have been able to maintain a National Junior Honor Society chapter even if they did not convert standards-based grades to letter grades. Contacts note that traditional characteristics of a student in an honors society (e.g., maintaining academic excellence) may conflict with tenets of standards-based learning (e.g., summative assessment of learning). While standards-based grading complicates how to determine academic eligibility, district administrators productively discussed the prospect of using academic eligibility criteria other than grade point average with NJHS representatives by calling the NJHS' main number.

Consider Creating an Honors Society that Incorporates Standards-Based Learning

Prior to adopting standards-based learning, **District A's** middle school maintained an honors society. Admittance into the society was based solely on grade point average. Rather than eliminate the honors society, the district established new qualifications for admittance into the society. To qualify for admittance, students must maintain grades at or approaching mastery in grades seven and eight, 90 percent attendance, and the highest marks in learning skills and work habits grades. Students must also complete a service project and participate in at least one extracurricular. The school holds quarterly recognition assemblies for admitted students.

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4) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member district approached the Forum with the following questions:

- How did contact districts implement standards-based learning at middle schools?
    - What courses do contact districts currently teach using standards-based learning, and how long did it take the districts to fully transition?
- What professional development opportunities, if any, do contact districts offer to train teachers in standards-based learning?
- How do contact districts communicate the benefits of standards-based learning to stakeholders?
- How do contact districts ensure teachers grade students equivalently across schools and classrooms?
    - What scale do contact districts use for standards-based grading?
- Do contact districts assign letter grades in addition to standards-based grades?
- How do contact districts weigh different types of assignments in standards-based grades?
- How do contact districts collect evidence of student learning?
- Do contact districts maintain National Junior Honor Society chapters? If so, how do they determine students' academic eligibility for admission into chapters?
- What grading software do contact districts use?
    - Does the grading software meet contact district expectations, and does it capture both letter grades and standards-based grades?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (http://nces.ed.gov/)
- National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) (https://www.njhs.us/)
- Profiled districts' websites

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Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed administrators who oversee standards-based learning programs at districts that operate programs at the middle school level.

A Guide to Districts Profiled in this Brief

District	Location	Approximate Enrollment
District A	Midwest	2,500
District B	Midwest	6,000
District C	Midwest	35,000
District D	Southeast	8,000
District E	Southwest	53,000
District F	Midwest	1,500

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