JumpRope

IMPLEMENTATION
BENCHMARKS
FOR STANDARDS-BASED GRADING

JUMPROPE IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS

A framework to evaluate the readiness for and effectiveness of your implementation of JumpRope and standards-based grading.

Making the move to mastery requires many moving parts beyond the technical aspects of setting up a gradebook, and we here at JumpRope take seriously those other moving parts. As we like to say, we're not an ed tech company but a school improvement one. To that end we have created this set of implementation benchmarks for schools and districts to use to self-assess their progress towards achieving an effective and sustainable implementation of a standards-based grading system. We believe that each benchmark—along with the challenge statement and associated criteria—is crucial in the pursuit of a high-quality implementation.

Obviously, there are many ways to use this tool, but we recommend that you use it early in the process of setting up your standards-based grading system. An honest self-assessment at the start—and certainly throughout the implementation—will no doubt be beneficial to your school or district and to us, as we can craft appropriate support and related professional development and training opportunities.

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PHILOSOPHICAL & RESEARCH BACKGROUND

My school/district has existing experience and exposure to the philosophy and research underpinning standards-based education and holds the belief that standards-based education leads to improved student outcomes.

"While a cohort of teachers and leaders felt strongly that standards-based education was the right move, the introduction of a system quickly made it clear that there were other teachers and staff members that had little understanding or appreciation of the value of standards-based education. This led to internal disagreements, unclear messages to students, and a certain degree of industrial sabotage."

1. BEGINNING

Recognizes the value in standards-based education, but internal capacity to examine and change practice is limited or does not exist.

2. APPROACHING

Articulates the value of standards-based education, **identifies** internal expertise in that area, but does not capitalize on that internal expertise.

3. MEETING

Utilizes internal expertise to frame and conduct on-going and regular conversations about standards-based education.

4. EXEMPLARY

Fosters consensus around best practices for student-centered teaching and learning and regularly **examines** and **analyzes** internal ideological and practical expertise.

LEADERSHIP & CHANGE MANAGEMENT

My district/school leadership has a process to manage change. It recognizes that change takes time and seeks the active involvement of stakeholders to garner ideas and support to help with the change.

"Many of us at the district were excited about getting a new gradebook and about our new approach to teaching and learning—but we quickly realized that we'd jumped into something without undertaking some of the big thinking that needed to be done—that there were changes afoot that needed to be addressed that we had not planned for. We needed the same sort of planning process that we'd taken on when we implemented Responsive Classroom district-wide, for example. And we needed the same sort of patience, given the sea changes occurring."

1. BEGINNING

Reacts to circumstances and makes changes based on those reactions.

2. APPROACHING

Preemptively explains the change, its rationale, and the process involved with the change.

3. MEETING

Clearly and thoroughly **articulates the rationale** for steps involved in and time line necessary for change to occur and actively **solicits** thought—and action-partners to build consensus.

4. EXEMPLARY

Reflects on changes and their impact, **refines** steps and time lines related to change as necessary, and allows for thoughtful and ongoing reflection related to the change.

CLEAR LEARNING GOALS & STANDARDS

My school/district community provides or has developed clear learning goals and standards for students that are rigorous, student-friendly, and consistent with internal and external expectations of student achievement.

"We were excited to start using JumpRope to track mastery of the Common Core standards. We knew that our district would be expected to align classroom curriculum and assessment to the Common Core and had done extensive work to train teachers accordingly. It made sense in the abstract, but when we began working to directly assess the standards, we found that the standards were not student-friendly and were not specific enough to drive daily or weekly instruction in the way that we had hoped. As a result, we began to write student-friendly learning targets and align them to the Common Core in JumpRope, which gave us the best of both worlds."

1. BEGINNING
Recognizes that there is a relationship between standards and assessment.

2. APPROACHING
Utilizes standards directly linked to assessments and is beginning to **demonstrate** transparency of standards to students.

3. MEETING
Based on a backwards design model, **formulates** rigorous standards that:

• are made transparent to students

• are directly linked to assessments

• maintain consistency within grade levels and content areas.

4. EXEMPLARY
The school community **regularly reviews** its standards and revises as appropriate.

COMMON GRADING POLICY & PRACTICE

My school/district has structures in place to develop (and to some extent ensure) common policies and practices when it comes to grading.

"When implementing JumpRope, it quickly became clear that each teacher had previously had a large amount of freedom as to how their grades were calculated—from strict percentage-based weights of different assessments to essentially just making them up each marking period. Using an online gradebook that exposes individual standards and scores to students and other teachers in real time led to a lot of challenging conversations about norming the frequency, specificity, and criteria behind student scores."

1. BEGINNING

Policies were **considered or developed** by the administration without teacher input and are not regularly updated or referenced.

2. APPROACHING

Policies were **developed** with input from multiple voices, but they are not consistently utilized or applied.

3. MEETING

Collaboratively creates and utilizes manageable systems to develop, steer, and ensure common policies and practices across and between grade levels.

4. EXEMPLARY

In addition, seeks input from varied and multiple sources, **revises** as appropriate, and **reflects** on and learns from past practices.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

School/district personnel communicate effectively with students, parents, families, and the community about the value of and practical aspects (how to read reports, engage with the data, whether kids are going to college) of standards-based grading.

"One challenge we had was that parents and families weren't prepared for the new reports and grading methodology. As a result, we struggled with student and parent buy-in. Furthermore, teachers were new to the system and philosophy and had difficulty explaining it to parents and students, which exacerbated the situation."

1. BEGINNING
Considers the community when making decisions but

• knowledge exists only among school staff

• and it is unclear how parents and community can learn more.

2. APPROACHING
Informs stakeholders in a manner that is

• sporadic

• one-way

• and limited in scope.

3. MEETING
Engages in regular open discussions among a variety of stakeholders regarding

• school's values

• practices around instruction and assessment

• tools used

• and the quality of feedback given to students.

4. EXEMPLARY
Facilitates ongoing discussions:

• to both share and learn

• that take multiple formats

• and are always conducted with an eye toward continuous improvement.

TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

My school/district administration provides adequate time and resources for training and professional development for teachers and staff members.

"While teachers were trained on how to use JumpRope as a tool, we were surprised by how much the system 'pushed' teachers to change their practice. As a result, we realized that there was a lot of professional development required to get over the learning curve of standards-based grading (independent of the tool)."

1. BEGINNING
Delivers JumpRope training, but philosophical issues are not addressed with teachers and follow-up support is not scheduled.

2. APPROACHING
Conducts JumpRope trainings and follow-ups. **Irregularly and/ or partially conducts** in-house conversations around practice and the support of practice.

3. MEETING
Routinely plans for and **supports** timely, focused

- workshops
- trainings
- and in-house conversations to address philosophy and practice.

4. EXEMPLARY
Based on feedback, **collaboratively**

- **plans** with appropriate stakeholders
- **includes** reflective practices
- and **revisits** and **revises**, as appropriate, the school's direction.

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TECHNICAL CAPACITY

My school/district has the resources and expertise to manage and support a new mission-critical technical tool.

"While we have many computers in our schools and use Google Apps for education, adopting an online gradebook was challenging because it was not an optional system for teachers. At critical moments when grades were due, we found that we ran into technical problems that made that process difficult."

1. BEGINNING
Technology is **limited**, **unreliable**, and **not well supported**. A primary contact for technology needs is not available on site.

2. APPROACHING
Technology is **available** but not always reliable and supported. On-site technology support is limited.

3. MEETING
Technology is **reliable** and **effectively supported**, with key roles that are well defined and staffed.

4. EXEMPLARY
Technology is regularly **used to enhance learning** by stakeholders, including students, for improved teaching and learning. We have systematized our approach to resolve technological issues.

SEPARATION OF ACADEMICS FROM HABITS OF WORK

My school/district values and honors the difference between academic learning and habits of work, their relationship to one another, and the importance of each in analyzing and communicating mastery data.

"While our staff seemed to buy in to the idea of separating academic scores from habits of work, implementing it in practice was challenging. Since we told students their grades would ultimately come solely from academic scores, many teachers gamed the system by finding ways to sneak habits of work into their academic scores—essentially undermining the integrity of the whole system. Over time, we learned to find other ways to incentivize, recognize, and hold students accountable to the habits of work so that it wasn't an empty number on the page. Once we did that, we found the separation of the two types of data incredibly valuable to teachers, students, parents, and support staff."

1. BEGINNING

Academic learning and work habits are **assessed as a package**. The concept of divorcing work habit evidence from academic evidence is underdeveloped or nonexistent.

2. APPROACHING

Recognizes the value in **separating** the assessment of academic learning and work habits from one another but does not universally implement this practice.

3. MEETING

Distinguishes between academic learning and work habits, assessing each on its own merit and intentionally recognizing the interplay between the two.

4. EXEMPLARY

Utilizes common habits of work across the school, and the distinction between academic learning and work habits drives daily practice and conversations among stakeholders.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

My school/district implements cycles of on-going formative assessment and varied, robust summative assessment, which can all be aligned to standards.

"After a year of using JumpRope, it became clear that it was not designed to be a 'standards-tracker' that lives alongside a gradebook. Our school was using it exclusively to track ongoing, standardized interim assessments and state exams on a per-standard basis. A few times per year, teachers would perform item analysis on the exams and enter the data into JumpRope. We did not use it as a formative assessment tool, and it did not replace our existing gradebook. As such, teachers complained that it took too much time to use and that the reports were too complicated."

1. BEGINNING
Relies on a limited range of formative and/or summative assessments.

2. APPROACHING
Regularly **uses** formative and summative assessments.

3. MEETING
Establishes clear, purposeful formative assessment systems to inform learning and instruction, with a range of rich summative assessments predicated on stated standards.

4. EXEMPLARY
Co-creates various assessments, both formative and summative, with students.

STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

My school/district engages students in the learning process by regularly communicating feedback and providing opportunities for self-assessment, growth, and self-directed learning.

"When I was using JumpRope, I found that it provided me (as a teacher) with valuable data. It wasn't until I began to engage students regularly by sharing their data in printouts (and later the online portal) that I realized that standards-based grading is most effective when students a) understand what their goals are and what they mean; b) regularly get the chance to show mastery and see feedback (frequent assessment). Once they truly engaged with the standards and the feedback, we reached the holy grail of students asking teachers for opportunities to show mastery."

1. BEGINNING	2. APPROACHING	3. MEETING	4. EXEMPLARY
Provides feedback to students.	**Provides** formative and summative feedback to students.	**Designs** and **uses** systems to provide students with on-going feedback and actively include them in a goal-setting growth model.	**Refines** these systems based on student performance, growth, areas of need, and feedback from students.

BENCHMARK CHECKUP

	BEGINNING	APPROACHING	MEETING	EXEMPLARY
Benchmark 1: Philosophical & Research Background				
Benchmark 2: Leadership & Change Management				
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WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE GRADES IRRELEVANT.

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