



**Critical Tips** for Implementing  
Standards-Based Grading that Every  
Pre K - 12 Administrator Needs To Know


# TIP #1

**Pull out the school calendar and devote regular professional development time for ongoing teacher collaboration around standards-based grading.**

**Professional Learning Teams will benefit from shared reading, experiences, student work samples, and expectations on grading for mastery. We see so many schools get excited about standards-based grading because they want to end the obsession with points and grade-grubbing and usher in an era of authentic desire for learning. But a vision and a desire is just a theory until you turn it into practice...  
And that takes time.**



**Want help structuring your collaboration time?  
[Book a free consultation call with us here.](#)**



## **Why is devoting teacher time to ongoing learning about standards-based grading so important?**

This is such an important step to take for a few reasons. It shows commitment and value from school leadership. The old adage “what you value is where you spend your time” couldn’t be more true here. For example, if you value standards-based grading but spend your professional development time talking about issues on the playground, then what you really value above all else is order on the playground. As an administrator, your teachers will be excited about a new initiative if you are, and they will feel supported if you give them the time to build their own knowledge, capacity, and a toolbelt for standards-based grading.

## **How do you implement this tip to get better standards-based grading results?**

It can be challenging to decide what to put aside or what to let go of to make space for a new initiative like standards-based grading.

Part of what we love to do at Mastery Portfolio is to get on the phone with a school and really listening deeply to your story, learn about your school, and ask questions to help you gain clarity about what your values and aspirations are, and where standards-based grading fits into your picture of student progress. School administrators often get off their first call with us, their free discovery call, feeling like a burden has been lifted and they have a path forward to really envision standards-based grading as part of the fabric of what they do. And we stay with you through the entire implementation process.

# TIP #2

**Validate what teachers are already doing-  
this is not an 'out with the old, in with the  
new' kind of transition!**

**One common misunderstanding  
we hear is that teachers fear that  
a shift to standards-based  
grading is a reflection on their  
teaching. (Why would the school  
be changing what I've done for  
years unless they thought what  
I'm going isn't good enough?)**



Want to learn more validation tactics?  
[Book a free consultation call with us here.](#)



## **Why is it important to validate what teachers are already doing?**

As teachers, we are our own worst critics. We care so much about our students that our work is personal. The best thing you can do as the teachers' leader early on is to frame the conversation about adopting standards-based grading as a way to simplify the grading code so that students can get more out of the fabulous teaching you are already doing.

Frame it as a structure in which there is a lot of freedom for kids and teachers to design engaging learning experiences. When we facilitate workshops with teaching teams, we love to use the phrase “the knowledge we need here is already in the room- my job is merely to facilitate the conversation so it can emerge and we can sync up as a team and see how standards-based grading can bolster what we already love to do with kids.”

## **How do you implement this tip to get better standards-based grading results?**

Once teachers realize that their lesson plans, assessments, projects, and curriculum are all valued and intact, they become curious to learn more about the tips and tools of standards-based grading and to choose one that they can adopt easily to see how it has an impact on their students. For example, I recently had a teacher at a workshop say that she would start adding a line at the top of every worksheet, quiz, homework assignment, and other graded work with the language of the standard and a box for the student to self-assess after they complete the assignment. She would then assess in a second box, and if they differed in their ratings, that would be a conversation so that the teacher can coach the student on what mastery-level work looks like. This simple move has entirely changed the conversation in her classroom from ‘can I get extra credit to bring my grade up?’ to ‘I don’t feel as confident with this skill. When can I meet with you to practice it more?’ This is a powerful shift.

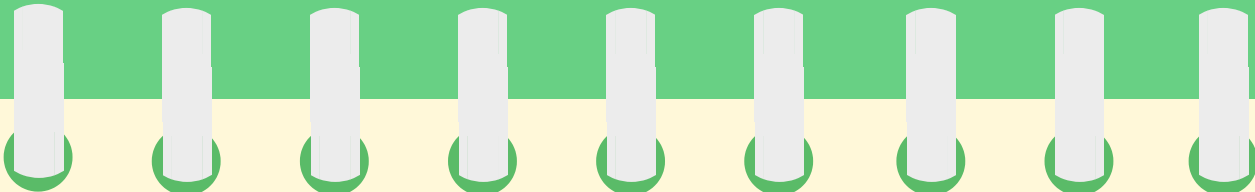
# TIP #3

**Parent Coffee Hour: Host an SBG conversation with parents so they understand how they can partner and support their students' learning**

**Find a time on the calendar when you can invite parents to campus (or to an online video chat forum) where they can ask any and all questions about standards-based grading. It's best to do this a few weeks into the school year, after students have already experienced some of the language and feedback that sbg offers. Invite students to join- they can often speak very convincingly to their parents about what standards-based grading means and does for them!**



**Want to hear common parent questions?  
[Book a free consultation call with us here.](#)**



## **Why is it important to have these conversations with parents?**

Parents want nothing more than to understand where their student is according to where he/she should be. Standards-based grading empowers families with knowledge around what exact skills their student has mastered, and what skills their student is still working on. Get parents on your side and advocate for the shift to standards-based grading by including them in the process.

## **How does hosting a parent coffee hour help you see results in your standards-based grading implementation efforts?**

Including parent voice builds buy-in. Showing parents what it means for their student's report card or transcript helps set clear expectations. Make an ask for help- give some tips. Suggest to them that, instead of asking 'what did you get on your science test,' ask your student 'what did you master and what are you still working on?' At Mastery Portfolio, we've built our own standards-based grade book to make the picture of progress abundantly clear to students and families. Hosting a parent coffee hour will also give you a venue to showcase this tool, and fielding their questions will help parents understand how powerful standards-based feedback is, and you will walk away more confident in your decision.

# TIP SUMMARY

#1

Devote professional development time for teacher collaboration



#2

Validate what teachers are already doing



#3

Communicate with parents



If you're a Pre K - 12 Administrator who wants to Increase student motivation by incentivizing learning, making sure that teachers and families see the value in adopting Standards-Based Grading, then book a free consultation call with us. We will help you walk away with your own customized pathway to and through innovation of your school's grading and assessment practices and see higher student achievement and graduation outcomes.

## We Can Help You!

We are in the business of helping teachers grow and kids learn through grading practice innovation- it's what we do- and we are so excited to talk to you about how we can help you achieve that at your school. And we don't leave our parent community behind in the process.

Now that you've got the important tips for Standards-Based Grading success down, I'd like to invite you to get even MORE advanced help with your (free) discovery call.

**Book your free Consultation and Needs Assessment for SBG and SBG-Aspirational Schools now here.**

The logo for masteryportfolio features a lowercase 'm' with a small rainbow-colored bar underneath it, followed by the word 'masteryportfolio' in a grey, lowercase, sans-serif font.