

Overview of Oakridge School District's Proficiency Based Education System (PBE)

Basic information on academic grading, behavior grading, interventions and more!

pro-fi-cient

prə'fiSHənt

adjective

1. competent or skilled in doing or using something
Synonyms: skillful, expert, experienced, accomplished, competent, masterly, adept, adroit, complete, consummate, professional

(Google Search Definition, 7.10.2015)

What is Proficiency Based Education?

Proficiency-based education refers to a system of instruction, assessment, grading and reporting that is based on students demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn before they progress to the next lesson, get promoted to the next grade level or receive a diploma.

The goal of proficiency-based education is to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers and adult life. If students struggle to meet minimum expected standards, they receive additional instruction, practice time and academic support to help them achieve proficiency, but they do not progress in their education until expected standards are met.

Proficiency Based Education allows for intervening immediately when a student begins to struggle. This is especially important at the early elementary years.

"Social Promotion" has been a tradition for over 200 years in American public education where children are placed in 'grades' based on their age, not based on what they know or can do. Each year children were advanced one grade, in all subjects, because they were a year older. Children were advanced to the next grade regardless of how much, if any, they had learned that year. The material continued to become more complicated, and kids who were promoted to the next grade and did not know the material from the previous grade struggled more the next year. In time, students promoted without being proficient in their learning goals stopped trying because they simply could not keep up. This social promotion practice (advancing a child to the next grade because they have had a birthday) is inherently unfair to the learner who needs a little more time to "get it." When students are advanced to the next level without having learned previous information they are being setup for failure. Sometimes, students who proved they knew learning targets were kept in classes much too easy for them. In other words, traditional education kept kids in 'age leveled' classes even if they had already mastered the materials.

What Proficiency Based Education is NOT!

Proficiency Based Education does NOT promote kids to higher level learning unless they prove they are ready for it. Proficiency Based Education does NOT keep kids from advancing to higher levels of learning when they prove they are ready for it.

Proficiency Based Education does NOT assume that all kids learn at the same rate, at the same age. Proficiency Based Education does NOT assume that students learn different subjects at the same rate of speed

Why change such a long held educational tradition?

The world has changed dramatically in the past two hundred years. As we prepare children for their future as contributing members of in advanced society the educational outcomes expectations have grown dramatically. Society cannot afford to minimize the achievement of students who have already mastered content, nor can we afford to promote students who are not ready for the next learning goals. EVERY child deserves an opportunity to achieve their greatest potential - in order to be fair we must treat every child differently.

BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

A person's success and happiness is almost always based on their behavior. The Oakridge School District considers Behavior Standards more important than Academic Standards - without the first, children cannot maximize their achievement of the latter. We strongly encourage you to review your child's performance on the Behavior Standards. There needs to be family discussion regarding these behavior expectations. Chances are their behavior (including submitting homework complete and on time, 'grit,' 'work ethic,' being responsible, acting respectful and safe) is more important to their future happiness and success than academic grades. Please, before you look at your child's Academic Grades, look at their Behavior Proficiencies. A copy of the BEHAVIOR PROFICIENCIES grading rubric has been placed in this back-to-school newspaper.

Why isn't homework part of a student's semester or quarter academic grades?

Homework is not proof a student has achieved a learning goal. It's practice. Our academic grades reflect student mastery regarding learning goals. Our Behavior Proficiency grades reflect homework effort. Consistent and accurate completion of homework

is **very** important for student academic success, not unlike athletics. For example, points scored during a basketball practice on Tuesday afternoon are not added to the score of the basketball game on Friday night. But . . . without consistent hard work at practice no athlete can achieve their potential during the game! This fact is the same for academic success and homework: we wouldn't expect a team to just show up at a game without practicing, and we don't expect students to show up at school without doing their homework!

While many would argue that grading homework encourages responsibility, this is not as fair as we might like. It is decidedly unfair to students who don't have adequate resources (time, help from parents, a quiet, well-lit study environment) for doing homework.

Again, place as much (or more!) emphasis on the *Behavior Proficiency Grades* vs. *Academic Grades*. In fact, children would benefit more from their education if everyone focused on behavior such as effort, grit, responsibility for getting their "practice" (i.e., homework!) done correctly and on time.

The grade for students doing homework consistently, correctly and on time is located on report cards and JumpRope reports under "Responsibility" subcategory, "Do Your Best."

Remember, even the best musician in the world practices so when it is time to perform they are at their best!

Where do our learning outcomes originate?

Standards are developed by each teacher, aligned with state and national norms. Learning goals are posted on the wall of each classroom and in the syllabus for individual classes.

Incompletes

Students learn at different rates from each other and at different rates in different subjects. Some students do very well in mathematics, but struggle in reading. Even with tremendous effort, some kids just need more time than other kids.

Teachers have the OPTION of assigning a grade of "I" ("incomplete") for students who have put forth the effort but need additional time to become proficient in a class. The amount of extra time allowed to show proficiency in a class is agreed upon by the teacher, student and parent and formalized with an "Incomplete Contract." Contact the teacher if you have concerns about a student needing an "I" at the end of a quarter or semester.

How does this translate to transcripts and traditional grading?

Transcripts and traditional grading outcomes will remain the same. For example, a student who earns a "4" in a class will earn an "A" on their transcript. AP Courses will continue to receive 1.25% "weighted grades" on students' transcripts.

Proficiency grades impact on college entrance

Since all proficiency grades are translated to traditional grades on the high school transcripts there is no impact on college entrance. In fact, it has been noted that several colleges prefer to enroll students from proficiency based education districts.

Interventions

Students *not on track* to meet proficiency in a class by the end of the grading period (in other words, if they are not on track to pass!) can participate in multiple interventions, including: Friday School, After School Tutoring, Before School Tutoring, Lunch Time Study Hall, or study halls while school is in session. Contact your building principal for more details.

What is JumpRope

JumpRope is an electronic grade book that all teachers are using this year. JumpRope is specifically designed to grade proficiency-based education, which is how our teachers have been teaching for the past several years.

How will this be different from what we are currently using?

The first thing parents will see when they log into JumpRope is the wealth of information available regarding their student's progress. In fact, this can at first be a little overwhelming. However, once parents and students learn how to filter this information they typically appreciate the increased communication JumpRope offers.

The biggest change is the fact that the JumpRope grade book is centered around standards and not on assignments. Remember, showing proficiency in each standard is now the focus. By "drilling down" in each standard, you can see the opportunities (assignments) your child has been given to show proficiency in that standard.

Students and parents can log into JumpRope from the links provided on the Oakridge School District home page (www.oakridge.k12.or.us). Use the student's school Google account password and click on "log in with Google". For assistance with this process, please contact Mr. Chapman at (541)782-3226 or gchapman@oakridge.k12.or.us