

# The Knightly News



Queen of All Saints

October, 2015

Principal Sánchez

## QAS News

### Goodbye Pope Francis!

Our nation is truly blessed to have had the presence and guidance of our Holy Father. He was a popular figure around Queen of All Saints! Did you miss him? Visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) to access his speeches and videos of the papal visit.



## QAS FYI's

### Stay Informed!

#### Prayers for Mrs. Hecht

Please join us in praying for our school secretary, Mrs. Hecht, as she prepares for neck surgery Wednesday of next week. Pray for our secretary-less school, too! Volunteers are in place to help us temporarily until Mrs. Hecht returns to save us!

#### Field Trips Requirement

Please note that anyone 18 years of age or older who will be volunteering to work with minors (including parents attending field trips) must have completed the Protecting God's Children workshop through the diocese. We will be hosting a workshop on Monday, October 12 at 7:00 PM in the school cafeteria. You must preregister by going to the Archdiocesan website: [www.archstl.org](http://www.archstl.org). For detailed instructions, call the rectory at (314) 846-8207 x 200.

#### New Family Folder System!

We are pleased to introduce a **Wednesday Family Folder** system for more efficient communication between families and the school. The new system will begin Wednesday, November 4. Folders will be given to the **oldest child** of each family instead of the youngest (this is due to the preschool program). Any forms needing to be sent home must be included in the Wednesday Family Folders and must be turned into the school office by 3:00 PM the Monday before to be included. Forms that do not meet the deadline will be included in the next week's folder. Organizations will be contacted regarding the new system. Thank you in advance for your cooperation that supports our goal of improved communication!

## Catholic Family Services



At Queen of All Saints, we deeply care for our students' overall well-being, academically, socially, and emotionally. We are excited to begin counseling services this week through Catholic Family Services. Please join me in welcoming Mrs. Meghan Diven to our school community. Mrs. Diven is a Masters-trained clinician who will be available to students and staff Tuesdays and Thursdays for individual and group sessions and classroom presentations.

**Two different consent forms (PDF files) have been attached to this School Messenger email. Please fill out and return the forms completely if you wish to grant your children permission to participate in the counseling services.**

If you would like more information on Catholic Family Services counseling, please contact:

Sandra Barker LCSW  
Chief Program Officer  
(314) 748-5646  
[sbarker@ccstl.org](mailto:sbarker@ccstl.org)  
[www.cfsstl.org](http://www.cfsstl.org)

### Emergency Drills

Today's intruder drill was a success. Please be aware the Fire Department will be conducting a fire drill next Monday morning, October 5. Several emergency vehicles will be on campus for the drill. A demonstration will follow with third and fourth grade students.

### Eighth Grade High School Applications

Just a reminder—high school applications for eighth grade students will be given out during Fall conferences. Each student receives only one application. Parents must fill out the applications, not students. More information will be available during conferences and attached to the applications.

### Pope Francis T-shirts

Just a reminder—students and staff members are allowed to wear our new Pope Francis T-shirts with uniform bottoms the first Wednesday of every month. Mark your calendars for next Wednesday, October 7!

### Walk for the Poor!

One last reminder—walk with us for the poor this Sunday, October 4 at 1:00 PM to help combat poverty and celebrate St. Vincent de Paul's 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Mass at noon, walk at 1:00, potluck to follow. See the bulletin for more details regarding the potluck.

### Standards Based Grading FAQ's

Please see the following pages for the Standards Based Grading FAQ's document given out at the Home & School meeting. Principal Sánchez will host a "SBG Round Table" session available to parents after each quarter. The first meeting will take place in the school cafeteria on Tuesday, October 27 from 6:30-7:30 PM. Bring your questions, concerns, and feedback!

### Capital Campaign Volunteers

We have a need for volunteers who want to help our school but are not able to commit long-term. Principal Sánchez is asking for volunteers to help with our parish capital campaign. **This is only an eight-week commitment!** The school will greatly benefit from our capital campaign. Please consider volunteering. Contact Principal Sánchez if you are interested. (314) 846-0506 x 305 or at: [sanchezs@qasstl.org](mailto:sanchezs@qasstl.org)

### Children's Liturgy of the Word

Volunteers needed to help share their love of the Gospel with children of the parish at 10:30 AM Masses. If enough volunteers sign up, we will only need you once a month! All materials will be provided. If you have a love for the Gospel, please consider volunteering for our children's sake! Please contact Ann Bender, CRE / PSR Principal, at (314) 846-8207 ex 311 or at: [bendera@qasstl.org](mailto:bendera@qasstl.org).

## Open House Reminder!

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Please join our new Fall **Open House** Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:00.

### Special Features:

**Give-Away's!**—Attend Open House for chances to win waived book and technology fees for next school year, Queen of All Saints apparel, and other great prizes.

**Tuition Break Raffles!**—Families who register early for next year at Open House will be entered to win a \$500 tuition break. Recommend QAS to a new family and be entered into a separate \$500 tuition break raffle. (The new family must attend Open House and list you as their reference.)

**High School Reps**—Get information on regional Catholic high schools by talking to their representatives.

**Student-led Tours**—Take a school tour with our current student ambassadors and get the chance to speak with QAS alumni. Let them tell you about their great experiences as Queen of All Saints knights!

**Mehlville Fire Department**—Receive valuable information on protecting your family this holiday season from our dedicated Mehlville firefighters.

**Food!** Get a bite to eat while learning more about our exceptional academics and traditional Catholic values!



# *From the Principal's Desk...*

## **Standards Based Grading Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How is this type of grading different than traditional grading?**

Unlike traditional grading, which usually involves a “percentage correct” in regard to items being assessed or a letter grade assigned to a range of percentage points, standards based grading gives descriptive feedback based on the student’s performance of a specific learning goal.

In traditional grading, the teacher or test designer assigns points to each item and awards points based on the child’s answer; points are calculated and divided by the total number possible to obtain the percentage grade. In standards based grading, the learning goal is stated up front, as a target for the child to consistently and independently perform. The teacher gathers assessment data to determine the student’s progress toward meeting the learning goal.

In traditional grading, numbers and letters are typically used to communicate a student’s progress in a particular subject or on a particular assessment. In standards based grading, descriptors, such as “secure”, “approaching”, “proficient”, “progressing” etc. are defined and used to describe progress.

### **What is wrong with traditional grading?**

Point-Driven Economy: Diminishes the value of learning.

Students begin to view academic wealth as the number of points they can accumulate.

Teachers set the currency exchange rate when they establish their grading standards (assign points / point values)

Some students keep track of current exchange rates, calculating far in advance the exact number of points they need to get the grade they want, and adjust their efforts accordingly.

### **Subjectivity in Grading**

All grading is basically an exercise in professional judgment.

It measures product criteria (what students produce), process criteria (what students do/show), and progress criteria (changes in student performance).

Traditional grading mixes grades or marks for effort, work habits, or learning progress with assessments of achievement and performance. It is difficult or impossible to get clear feedback in regard to each of those areas through traditional grading. Students also learn their grade can be influenced by actions other than their actual academic performance.

Standards based grading gathers data and reports on effort, work habits, learning progress, achievement and performance **separately**. This provides more clarity.

Traditional grading often relies on one summative (final) assessment, usually a written test, for a grade. Standards based assessment considers multiple sources of evidence: projects (graded by rubric), class activities, conversations with the child, observations, and written tests and assignments.

## What is the benefit to using standards based grading?

Standards based grading provides a higher quality of feedback to more clearly communicate information to be used in directing learning and teaching.

*“Feedback is not praise or blame, approval or disapproval. Feedback is not evaluation, the act of placing value. It describes what the learner did and did not do in relation to her goals. It is actionable information and it empowers the student to make intelligent adjustments when she applies it to her next attempt to perform.”* –Ken O’Connor, 2009

## How are grades determined?

The student’s performance, measured in several ways, is assessed using the criteria in the Primary Performance Descriptors listed below. The main difference between the performance levels is how often the learning is evidenced with independence (versus teacher help or supports), fluidity (smoothly), and at the depth indicated by the learning goal (e.g. **identify** colonists and their colonies versus **evaluate** the role of various groups in creating colonies).

Teachers **analyze** the students’ answers to determine their depth of understanding. They teach the students to do so as well. They assess in different ways to check for consistency and fluidity.

### Primary Performance Descriptors

Performance Level	Description
<b>Secure</b>	The student <b>CONSISTENTLY</b> demonstrates secure mastery of the grade level learning goal.
<b>Approaching</b>	The student <b>USUALLY</b> demonstrates mastery of the grade level learning goal.
<b>Progressing</b>	The student <b>SOMETIMES</b> demonstrates mastery of the grade level learning goal, or the student needs teacher support to meet the targeted goal.
<b>Beginning</b>	The student <b>INFREQUENTLY</b> demonstrates performance of the grade level learning goal. The student needs reteaching and extra support to understand what is required to meet the learning goal.

Grading Example: intermediate grades

Learning Goal	Student Performance (Sample)	Grade
Form compound and complex sentences using conjunctions	On written work, as observed during reading workshop, and in conferencing with teacher, student <b>consistently</b> performs learning goal	<b>Secure</b>
	On <b>some</b> written work, observations, or conversations student can perform goal as written but on others is <b>unable to do parts</b> of it	<b>Approaching</b>
	Student is able to do <b>some parts</b> of goal independently but <b>needs coaching</b> or assistance to do other parts	<b>Progressing</b>
	Student is <b>still learning major parts</b> of the goal	<b>Beginning</b>
	Student struggles to identify key concepts of the learning goal and <b>may need to be retaught previous skills</b> necessary to achieve the current learning goal.	<b>Not Yet</b>
	Student <b>did not turn in or complete</b> the assessments; student may have been absent	<b>Insufficient Evidence</b>

## Multiple Choice Example: Middle School

Question	Answer	Score / Explanation
How did having colonies benefit European countries?	They mined gold and silver	<b>Beginning:</b> basic understandings about personal gains
	They grew crops that could be traded for gold and silver	<b>Progressing:</b> Understands more, including the trade aspect, but needs assistance to understand the higher economic factors
	They served as a market for the home country	<b>Approaching:</b> Understands the higher level economic gains but missed the basic parts.
	All of the above are true	<b>Secure:</b> Correct answer; includes both lower and higher levels of knowledge

Fine Arts (Performance-Based) Example:

**Goal: Play simple songs on the recorder from a notated score** (As observed by teacher)

Secure	Approaching	Progressing	Beginning
Student <b>fluently</b> plays the notes with correct finger position and clarity	Student plays the notes with correct finger position and clarity in a <b>mechanical manner</b> .	Student plays the notes with unsure fingering and difficulty producing clear tones. Able to do more with teacher assistance.	Student does not know finger positions and/or is unable to produce clear tones.

**How can my child come home with several items marked “wrong” and still have a “B” or an “Approaching” on their report card?**

Students receive two types of feedback: **formative** and **summative**. Only summative assessments are used to formulate grades.

Like a coach, teachers provide **formative** feedback when students are still learning and practicing a skill. Feedback is specific in terms of what the goal is, where their progress is, and on what they still need to improve. Students make adjustments to better meet the goal. Teachers also use the information to make adjustments in their instruction based on the feedback. It’s similar to a GPS offering you very specific directions so you can reach your destination.

Once teachers feel that the students have had adequate instruction and time to practice, they give them some opportunities to perform the skill independently. This is **summative** assessment. In sports, this is like the big game. In class this may take the form of written work or tests but can also take the form of observations during group activities or learning games, projects, interviews with students, etc. Summative data is that which is used for grades.

**Won’t my child be at a disadvantage when he goes on to a high school that grades in a traditional way?**

The opposite is actually true. While the movement across the country is toward standards based grading and it is likely that your child’s high school will use the method in some form, even if they don’t, your child will be better educated to gauge their own progress because of it. Students learn to analyze answers, a skill necessary when they take standardized tests such as the ACT and other assessments. This puts them at

an advantage, not a disadvantage over other students. It teaches them to ask very specific questions about their progress in order to receive clarity about their grades that traditional grading cannot provide. It helps them learn to self-evaluate and make adjustments.

In the future, if your child takes the ACT or a certification test for nursing, real estate, etc., the test that they take will be assessed in this way. Each multiple choice answer is weighted by level of depth. Each answer is not just evaluated as right or wrong but **HOW** right or **HOW** wrong. If you take a practice test you will see examples of this. The written portions are also graded by very specific criteria; a skill learned by students who experience standards based grading.

### **How are the descriptors converted into letter grades?**

Ideally standards based grading does not use overall grades or letters. In our highly competitive high school system characteristic of this Archdiocese, however, we knew that grades were a reality with which we had to work. To help with the transition from traditional to standards based grading, we use central tendency or averaging of the entire pool of data, along with patterns of performance, as recorded by the teacher. As mentioned previously, the grades are entered by learning goal. All of the data is averaged together to create an overall grade. Natural weighting occurs by the amount of time spent on a particular set of learning goals. Teachers look at most recent outcomes when there is further evidence of growth.

If the pattern of performance and central tendency indicate a student performs the learning goals in a **consistent and independent manner**, they earn a “Secure” (previously “4”), or “A”.

If their overall performance pattern and central tendency indicate that they **usually** perform the learning goal, but perhaps not as consistently or sometimes at a lower level of depth, they would earn an “Approaching” (previously “3”), or “B”.

If their overall performance pattern and central tendency indicates that they **sometimes** meet the learning goal but need teacher assistance or supports; or if they perform at the basic levels of understanding but not at the depth defined by the goal, they earn a “Progressing” (previously “2”), or “C”.

If their overall performance pattern and central tendency indicates that they **infrequently** meet the learning goal and need frequent re-teaching, they’ve earned a grade of “Beginning” (previously “1”), or “D.”

### **Why isn’t there an “F”?**

In this system there is no “F”.

Students will receive a “**NY**” if necessary foundational skills have not been mastered in order for them to achieve the current learning goal(s).

Students will receive an “**IE**” if there is **insufficient evidence** of achievement toward a goal (Example: not turning in work, absent, etc.) The “**IE**” will remain on the report card until the student provides the missing evidence.

“**IE**” means no credit until the missing work is completed.

In a traditional system, the student who received an “F” had to redo the work just as in this system.

## **Why do students get to redo work? Why do they get second chances? Is that fair?**

The primary purpose of grading is communication, not competition. In the real world, there are very few items of consequence that depend on a single opportunity for performance. Judgment is made over a body of work that has been given feedback, adjusted, and re-evaluated over and over. As life provides second chances, so should school.

## **What if my child goes beyond the learning goal or is performing beyond grade level?**

This will be addressed within the narrative (comments) portion of the report card. Using another symbol of indication is currently being researched and discussed. Advanced courses at the high school level handle the grading in a similar manner.

## **One final Analogy—Sports:**

Think of the Olympics next year in Rio de Janeiro—all competitors, including the runners, will be fighting for gold metals. What would happen if, as young learners, their coach stood along the sideline and evaluated their performance with “Good job”, “B+” or “You did that wrong – X”? (Traditional evaluation)

Instead, the coach yells out split times (the times for each lap) and what she’s on pace to perform as compared to the goal. The coach then gives specific strategies to increase her pace such as, “Lift your legs higher” or “You’re not swinging your arms as much as you did when you met that time previously.” These are the same types of specific feedback that standards based grading provides.



## **Other Important Notes**

### **Standards Based Grading Transcripts**

Other regional private and public schools are using and / or moving to standards based grading to assess students and communicate grades. Among them, St. Justin Martyr elementary in Sappington and Holy Cross Academy of the St. Louis Archdiocese have been using SBG for several years. St. Justin contacted the following Catholic high schools and the Lindbergh school district and received 100% acceptance of SBG on student transcripts:

Cor Jesu	Vianney
Ursuline Academy	Chaminade
Rosati Kain	St. Mary’s
Notre Dame	SLU
Nerinx Hall	Bishop Debourg

Other regional public schools, including but not limited to Mehlville, Kirkwood, Rockwood Summit, Fox, and Pattonville are currently using standards based grading or are in the preliminary stages of moving to SBG. We are proud that Queen of All Saints has chosen to be progressive in the areas of teaching and learning to benefit our students’ achievement and success.

It is important to note, too, that Queen of All Saints middle school student grades are also calculated to traditional grades (A-B-C-D-F) and show up on report cards and transcripts.

## **Celebrating Success!**

Queen of All Saints is proud to say that over 99% of graduates the past ten years have been accepted to their **first choice** high school—a testimony to the talented and dedicated teachers of Queen of All Saints!

## **Mark Your Calendar**

Principal Sánchez will have a “SBG Round Table” available to parents after each quarter. The first meeting will take place in the school cafeteria on Tuesday, October 27 from 6:30-7:30. Bring your questions, concerns, and feedback!

## Save the Dates!

**October 4:** Walk for the Poor!

**October 5:** Fire Department at QAS for fire drill and demonstration

**October 7:** Mrs. Hecht Surgery

**October 8:** Picture Day. Students may dress out of uniform on this day. Please see the [parent / student handbook](#) for the dress code policy. (Seventh grade students going to St. Margaret Mary in the morning for Homelessness No More program.)

**October 10:** Casino Night

**October 12 at 2:00:** All-School Living Rosary in church. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend!

**October 23:** End of first quarter

**October 27:** Standards Based Grading round table session with Principal Sánchez

**October 29:** Halloween Parties

**October 29, November 2, 3, 6:** Conferences

*Queen of All Saints*

*Pray for Us!*

