Standards-Based Gradebook for Elementary Teachers

Elementary Teachers and Standards-Based Gradebook

As an elementary teacher, you have probably used standards-based grades as your primary grading practice in your classroom. There are two ways elementary teachers might use the Aspen gradebook with standards-based grades:

- Enter and post end-of-term scores for each standard associated with each class or subject at the end of a marking period for report cards only; teachers do not enter specific assignment scores in the Aspen gradebook:
Enter scores for standards aligned to every assignment for each class or subject. Then, at the end of each marking period, Aspen provides teachers with both an average score that a student receives for each standard, and a Trend score.

Aspen calculates the Trend score based on the Power Law calculation:
The Power Law references each score you enter for a student. Each student's goal is to 'trend up'; meaning students should perform better on a standard towards the end of a term after more instruction and practice.

When it’s report card time, you can easily post Trend scores to the office.

To enter standards-based scores for assignments throughout the grading term:
1. View the reporting standards you district has set up for each of your classes.
2. Create assignment categories.
3. Create assignments and align them to reporting standards.
4. Enter standards scores for assignments.
5. View Trend scores to help guide your lessons.
6. Post scores to the office for report cards and transcripts.

View Reporting Standards

If you enter standards scores for assignments in a subject or class, your district creates the rubrics, or reporting standards, for your classes.

To view the reporting standards your district creates for a class, or subject:
1. Click the Gradebook tab.
2. Select a class or subject, and click the Reporting Standards side-tab:
3. For each standard, refer to the ColHdr column to see the column header name:

This name appears on your Scores page when you enter scores:

4. If your district matches these reporting standards with learning standards, such as Common Core, or state learning standards, this information appears in the Standards column.

5. Click a reporting standard's name to see all its details:

6. If your students and their families use the Portals to track academic progress, you can select the **Hide in Portal** checkbox for a specific reporting standard. This keeps that standard and any associated scores from appearing in the portals.

7. **Click Save.**
Once you are familiar with the reporting standards for your classes, you can begin to create assignments and align them with the appropriate standards.

**Create Assignment Categories for a Standards-Based Gradebook**

Define the types of assignments you give in all of your classes by creating categories. For example, you might assign *Classwork* and *Assessments*. Define a category for each one.

You can use these categories to sort your list of assignments. Even if you do not want to sort your assignments in this way, you must create at least one category. You have to select the category you want to use each time you create an assignment in Aspen; it is a required field.

**Important:** You need to create at least one category.

**To create a category:**

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Gradebook** tab.
3. Select a class to create categories for.
4. Click the **Details** side-tab. The details for that class appear:

   ![Details side-tab image]

   5. Click **Categories**.
   6. Click **Add**. A pop-up appears:
7. Use the following steps to enter information in the fields:
   a. At **Enter Category Code**, type a code, such as HW, for homework. You will type this code each time you create an assignment in this category.
   b. At **Enter Category Description**, type a description.
   c. At **Enter Category Weight**, type a category weight.
   d. Click 🔄.

When you create a category, a category bar appears:

8. Click the **Category Code**. The category details pop-up appears:
Because Aspen uses the Power Law to calculate standards-based Trend scores, you only need to define information in the Total points and Visibility type fields on the pop-up, if you enter all standards scores for assignments in this category.

9. Enter a value at Total Points. Although this field is required, Aspen does not use this value in standards-based calculations. It is recommended that you enter a value here, since that value will default for each assignment in this category, so you won't have to enter a value in that field each time you create an assignment.

10. If your students and their families use the Aspen Student and Family portals, the value you select at Visibility Type determines what they can view for assignments in this category. Select one of the following:
   - Public: Assignments and grades appear in the portals.
   - Private: Assignments do not appear in the Student or Family portals.
   - Public-no grades: Assignments appear in the portals but without grades.

   **Note**: This is a default for the category; you can change the value for each individual assignment you create.

11. Click Save.

**Create Standards-Based Assignments**

To track student progress in meeting standards, apply the reporting standards you want to enter scores for within an assignment's details.
For example, you might apply the *Sort objects by category and similarities* standard to an elementary ELA assessment:

![Image: Cut and paste the 4 vegetables into this circle: Broccoli, Strawberries, Onion, Carrot.]

This way, you can enter scores to determine student growth in this standard as demonstrated by their work on the assessment.

**To create an assignment for a class and align reporting standards to enter scores:**

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Do one of the following:
   - Click the **Gradebook** tab. Select the class you want to create an assignment for, and then click the **Assignments** side-tab. Click **Add Assignment** on the **Options** menu; or select an existing assignment, and then click **Save and New**.
   - Click the **Gradebook** tab. Select the class you want to create an assignment for, and then click the **Scores** side-tab. Click **Add Assignment** on the **Options** menu.
   - Click the **Planner** tab, **Events** view, and then select a class. Click in the date you want the assignment to be due.

No matter where you like to create assignments, the New Assignment page, **General** sub-tab appears:
3. For assignments that you enter standards scores for, you only need to complete the following fields:

- **Category**: Type or select the assignment category.
- **GB column name**: Type the name that you will use to identify this assignment on your Scores page.
- **Date assigned**: This field defaults to today’s date. You can change the date, if needed.
- **Date due**: This field defaults to today’s date. You can change the date, if needed.
- **Total points**: This value comes from the default **Total points** you defined for the assignment category. Although this field is required, the value does not affect the student’s standards scores.
- **Visibility type**: This value comes from the **Visibility type** you defined for the assignment category. Change the value, if needed. If your students and their families use the Student and Family portals, the value you select determines what they can see for assignments in this category. Select one of the following:
  - **Private**: Assignments do not appear in the Student or Family portals.
  - **Public**: Assignments and grades appear in the portals.
  - **Public– no grades**: Assignments appear in portals, but grades do not.
- **Resources Provided by the Teacher**: Click an icon to attach files to this assignment.

**Note**: The rest of the fields are pre-determined by the reporting standard you align to this assignment, or do not apply to a standards-based assignment. For example, you cannot apply a grade scale, weights or extra credit points to a standard score.

4. If you are expecting students to access this assignment online in the portal, click the **Portal Description** sub-tab to enter instructions:
5. To align the reporting standards you want to enter scores for to this assignment, click the **Standards** sub-tab:

**Note:** The district populates the **Reporting Standards** side-tab when it prepares reporting standards. These school-created standards are then available for teachers to align to assignments. Teachers often use the school-created standards because they are associated with the Rubric Library, and have a rubric name and performance descriptor. If they prefer, teachers can also create their own standards.

6. Below **Section Reporting Standards**, click **Multi-Add**. A list of the reporting standards for this class appears:

7. Select the checkbox next to each reporting standard you want to align to this assignment. This selects the reporting standard "parent" and any "child" criteria within it. Or, click ‏ ‏ to expand the standard and select the checkboxes next to the criteria that you want:
8. Click **OK**. The selected standards appear:

![Image of selected standards]

If you selected a standard by mistake, select the checkbox next to it, and then click **Delete**.

9. Do one of the following:
   - If creating the assignment in the Planner, click **Save**.
   - If creating the assignment on the **Gradebook** tab, **Assignments** side-tab or your **Scores** page, click **Save** to save the information you enter without closing the assignment. Or, click **Save and New** to create another assignment.
   - If editing an existing assignment on the class **Page > Submit Assignments** widget, click the assignment name, and then click **Save and New** to create another assignment.
Once you create an assignment and align it to reporting standards and their criteria, the standards are available for grading (from the **Standard** drop-down) on your Scores page. In the Single Student or Single Assignment view, the standards appear as columns headers for the assignment:

![Image of a screenshot showing standard scores]

**Entering and Viewing Standards Scores**

In Aspen, you can align every assignment in every subject you teach with the standards you are covering, and enter scores for each. Then, Aspen automatically updates the Trend and average score for each standard. This way, when it is the end of a grading term, your Trend score for each standard has been calculated and is ready for you to quickly post to the office for report cards:

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Also, having access to the latest Trend scores is essential in guiding your instruction for each student throughout the term; you know who needs more help with which skills.

**To enter standards scores for an assignment:**

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Gradebook** tab.
3. Select a class, and click the **Scores** side-tab.
4. There are three ways to enter standards scores for an assignment. Do one of the following:
   
   a. To get a feel for how your entire class is progressing in meeting a standard, enter scores by standard, for the entire class.

   Select the **Standards** view. Then, from the **Standards** drop-down, select the standard. Any assignment aligned with that standard appears:
Press `CTRL + L` to select a score, or rubric rating, from the scale associated with this standard by your district:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>id</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cutoff</th>
<th>Mastery?</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Excellent P</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>effort excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Satisfactory P</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>effort satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>effort not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>Needs Improvement P</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>effort needs improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory P</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>effort unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. To keep track of how one student is progressing, enter standards scores for that student, one standard at a time.

On the Scores page, click the student's name. The **Single Student View** appears:

Select the **Standards** view, and then the specific **Standard** you want to see or enter scores for. A row appears for each assignment aligned to that standard.

You can enter scores in cells that are not pink.
c. Or maybe you want to determine if the lesson before this assignment sufficiently prepared students in each area. Then you would enter scores for all students, for all standards aligned to a specific assignment.

On the Scores page, click the Single Assignment Entry icon in the column header of the assignment you want to enter scores for. The Single Assignment view appears:

A column appears for each standard aligned to this assignment. Enter scores for each standard, for each student. With each standard score you enter for an assignment, Aspen uses the Power Law calculation to calculate a Trend score.

**Note:** After you enter a standards score, you can hover your cursor over the grading cell to see the rubric rating scale's name and description (as defined by your district).

**Posting End-of-Term Grades and Standards Scores from the Gradebook to Transcripts**

At the end of each grade term, teachers must post their gradebook grades and standards scores to transcripts, which means they save and send their term grades and comments to the School and District views. Posting grades is like sending your final term grades to the office.

**Note:** If your district defines the calculation used to compute student semester or final averages, you can update the values in the average columns on the Scores page to include these averages.

To post grades and standards scores to transcripts, do the following:

- Update post columns with gradebook averages.
- Post grades to transcript.
- Print the grades you posted.

**Update Post Columns with Gradebook Averages**

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During a grading term, you use the gradebook to enter all of the grades students earn on assignments in your classes. With each new grade you enter for a student, the system updates his or her averages columns (for example, their homework average, quiz average, test average, and term average). The averages appear in columns with the Calculator icon in the grade column header:

As the teacher, you own the averages columns on the Scores side-tab (just as you would in a leather-bound paper gradebook). The office cannot see or edit these values. Similar to a paper, school-issued grade input sheet, the district and school offices own the post columns. These are the columns containing the information that appears on student transcripts, such as term grades, final grades, and comments.

At the top of each district-defined grading column, a pushpin appears. The pushpin’s color and icon indicate one of the following:

- If the pushpin is black, you can enter grades for this column, but you cannot post them to transcripts yet.
- If the pushpin is green with a triangle, you can enter and post grades for this column.
- If the pushpin is red with a square, you already posted the information to transcripts. If you need to change a grade, you might be able to repost grades yourself, or you might need to contact the office for assistance, depending on your school’s grade preferences. Ask your Aspen system administrator.

At the end of a grading term, finish entering all assignment grades for the students in your classes. The term average is complete.
**Note:** Once you post grades, the pushpin and icon turn red and do not change color if you post again. If your school lets you repost grades, you could potentially change a student’s score and forget to repost. (There is no visual reminder to repost, since the pushpins stay red.) To ensure that all of your changes get posted to transcripts, you might want to repost grades for all of your classes before you leave school on the last day of the posting window.

To begin to post these grades to student transcripts, use the Update Post Columns option to copy your term averages (in the Calculator columns) to the district and school office-defined and -owned post columns. This is similar to physically copying students' final averages from your paper, leather-bound gradebook to a school-issued Grade Input sheet.

**Note:** If your district uses a special calculation for averages, Update appears in the column header. Click Update to update all grades in that column without having to complete the Update Post Columns wizard.

**Note:** In certain cases, if a post column is an average column, you can click the post column’s name in your gradebook column header to view the grade calculation weights applied to the average’s component grades via a pop-up. This occurs if the following conditions are met:
- Your administrator has defined that column as an Other Average or Final Average in your district’s transcript definition.
- The column is associated with a grade calculation, and the grade calculation contains non-grouped weights.

### To update post columns with gradebook averages:

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the Gradebook tab, and then select the checkbox next to the section you want to update post columns for.
3. Click the Scores side-tab.
4. Change your Grade Columns to Post Columns - Term.
5. Click Update Post Columns at the top of the Scores page, or select it from the Options menu. The Update Post Columns wizard appears.
6. Select the Grade Term you want to post columns for and the grades to update (progress or report card).
7. Click Next. Step 2 of the Update Post Columns wizard appears.
8. If reporting standards are aligned to this course, the Update All Rubric Columns field appears. Select one of the following to determine which rubric average you want Aspen to copy to the district (office) column:
   - **Do not update**: Does not update the current values in the columns.
   - **Trend**: Aspen copies the Trend averages into the district post column.
   - **Average**: Aspen copies the Traditional standard average into the district post column.
**Note:** When using standards-based grading, the Trend average for a report card is the one that supports the theory of standards-based grading. Trend averages are calculated using the Power Law calculation to determine the student’s progress in reaching the standard. Each student’s goal is to ‘trend up’; students should perform better on a standard towards the end of a term after more instruction and practice. Trend averages calculate a heavier weight to scores entered later in the grade term.

9. The next field displays the name of the post column for the term and grades you selected in Step 1 (for example, Quarter 3 Grade). This is the column you copy grades into. Select the gradebook averages column you want the system to copy grades from.

10. Click **Next**. Step 3 of the Update Post Columns wizard displays your selections.

**Note:** Running this procedure will overwrite manually-adjusted grades in a standards-based gradebook. The message on Step 3 of the wizard, "This operation will not update manually adjusted scores," only applies to the traditional gradebook.

**Example:** Assume that you have a traditional gradebook and you updated post columns. Later, you manually adjust a student's grade in the district post column from a B- to a B. That grade appears in the post column with the override symbol 🆕. (The override symbol might not appear in your gradebook, depending on the column type your district selected. The override symbol does not appear in a standards-based gradebook.)

When you update post columns, the system does not overwrite any grades you manually changed.

11. Click **Finish**. The values in the term average column you selected appear in the post column you select.

   Now, you can change these values, enter comment values, and post these grades to transcripts.