

STAFF PERCEPTIONS ON STANDARDS-BASED GRADING  
PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION  
Educational Leadership Doctoral Defense

November 10, 2021

1:30pm

Steve Perkins

The purpose of this qualitative study was to evaluate the perceptions of a group of middle school teachers facing the possibility of implementing standards-based grading (SBG) within their district. Data was collected from two focus groups which allowed for themes and possible resistance points to be discerned. Conclusions made from this study will help the author add to the compendium of information regarding perceptions related to all SBG grading and reporting measures. Results indicated that SBG measures are not well known by all staff, and while what they have heard may have positive aspects, many clear resistance points arose. Resistance points centered around five key themes. As a result of these resistance points emerging, the author recommends comprehensive data collection on staff to determine their beliefs about grading and reporting in general prior to implementing SBG as well as targeted, differentiated professional development for staff depending on the results of such surveying. Continuing to expand SBG practices within schools is the ultimate goal due to such large bodies of work espousing its' benefits.

**NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY**  
**National College of Education**  
**NCE Doctoral Studies**  
**Dissertation Hearing: Candidate Steve Perkins**  
**Dean's Representative Report**  
**Date: 11/10/2021**

**Dean's Representative:** Renee Gugel

**Candidate Name:** Steve Perkins

**Candidate NLU ID#:** N00487022

**Full Name of Candidate Program and Major:** EDD, Educational Leadership

**Dissertation Title:** Staff Perceptions of Standards-Based Grading Prior to Implementation

**Committee Chair:** Karen Tardrew, Ed.D.

**Committee Members:** Geri Chesner, Ed.D., Renee Gugel, Ed.D.

### **Executive Summary**

I attended the dissertation hearing for Steve Perkins on Wednesday, November 10, 2021. The focus of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of a group of middle school teachers regarding changing to standards-based grading (SBG).

The study's findings concluded that standards-based grading is an effective means of assessing and reporting student growth and learning, yet this method of grading and reporting is only very slowly appearing in schools and is overall not a prevalent system in American schools. By implementing strong and effective professional development over a steady and measured amount of time, teachers' perceptions of SBG should shift toward a positive reception and allow for a greater amount of success in future implementation.

Based on research results, the candidate's recommendations included the following:

- Prior to implementing SBG, comprehensive data be collected regarding staff beliefs about grading and reporting in general
- Targeted, differentiated professional development should be planned for staff based upon the results of the data collected

On the basis of their written document and evidence presented at the hearing, the committee agreed that Steve Perkins has passed this requirement of the doctoral degree provided the candidate addresses all revisions recommended by the committee. Committee recommendations included:

- (1) Triangulation of data (analyze policy against documents)- fully describing the document analysis methodology. Also compare Iowa handbook vs. current one-page policy.
- (2) Expansion of background of science SBG pilot
- (3) Incorporation visuals into paper, demographics, focus group participants
- (4) Incorporation of literature that supports SBG and culturally relevant practices
- (5) Information about the elementary district's implementation of SBG and how that may impact implementation at the middle school level.

Listed here are important and agreed upon dates for submitting final documents and concluding degree pursuit.

- (1) Dissertation hearing was conducted and successfully passed on Tuesday, November 10, 2021;

- (2) Projected diploma date of December 31, 2021 be recognized on the official transcript;
- (3) Deadline for submitting final edited documents will be Friday, December 31, 2021 (end of the subsequent 10-week term); and
- (4) Eligibility for Commencement will be NLU's Spring, 2022 Doctoral Hooding Ceremony and Commencement.

Respectfully,

*Renee Gugel*

Dean's Representative  
National College of Education

Date Submitted: November, 11, 2021



NATIONAL  
LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY

Staff Perceptions on Standards- Based Grading Prior to Implementation

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of  
Doctor of Education  
in the National College of Education

Steve Perkins  
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Approved:

*Karen F. Tardrew*

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Chair Dissertation Committee

*Geri Chesner*

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Co-Chair / Member, Dissertation Committee

*QAL*

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Dean's Representative

*Hampton Gibbs*

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Director, NCE Doctoral Programs

*R. Muller*

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Dean, National College of Education

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11/22/2021

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Date Approved