

# Implementing O'Conner's 15 fixes using the Aeries GB

Ken O'Connor, is a consultant who specializes in issues related to the communication of student achievement, especially through consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning, grading and reporting.

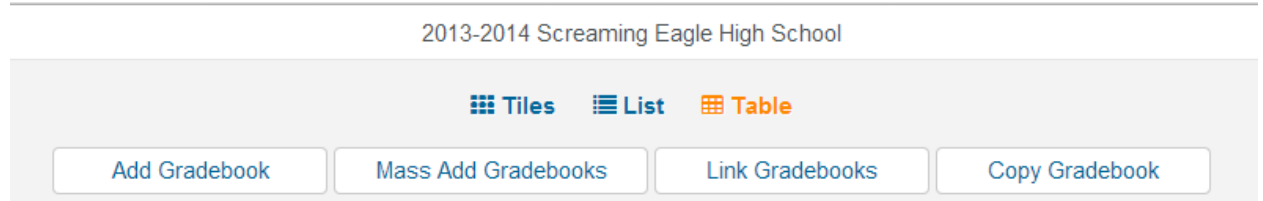
In 1995 Ken developed eight guidelines for grading, and he has continued to refine those guidelines. In 2007 the same ideas were organized into fifteen fixes for broken grades. He is now generally acknowledged to be one of a small group of leading experts on how to grade and report effectively.

Aeries Gradebook was designed around these theories of grading and features were developed so that our users had options in grading styles. We fully embrace the concepts described by both Marzano and O'Conner. Aeries routinely utilizes feedback from focus groups and other reputable areas of grading expertise to develop new features and keep up-to-date with grading standards and changes.

## Fix 1: Don't include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) in grades; include only achievement,

Using Aeries Gradebook you can create separate Gradebooks for grades and behavior. This method will allow teachers to track grades that include achievement only while tracking behaviors separately. This will result in better evidence toward achievement rather than a single grade that includes achievement and behaviors. Here is how you can set up a new set of Gradebooks in Aeries.

### 1. ADD NEW GRADEBOOKS



There are several ways for a teacher to add new Gradebooks. The following buttons are available on the dashboard page as shown above.

- Add Gradebook – allows adding Gradebooks individually
- Mass Add Gradebooks – ability to mass add Gradebooks for all of the sections for the logged in teachers. NOTE: Button will only display for Secondary or Elementary with MST Schedule Schools
- Copy Gradebooks function – will allow you to copy Gradebooks from another teacher or year.

To see the full document on how to add Gradebooks using these outlined methods visit our document library and download HTML\_Gradebook.pdf

## Fix 2: Don't reduce marks on "work" submitted late; provide support for the learner.

When a teacher reduces a mark on work submitted late it reduces the amount of perceived support for the learner. Instead, provide support for the learner, and assess timeliness of work as a behavioral standard. Create clear expectations for the assignment that are clearly established and understood. Make lateness a behavioral consequence and clearly identify them, ie parent contact, after school follow-up. In the Aeries Gradebook, late assignments can be avoided by using our Gradebook options for adding a comment or a status in our scores by class page. See below for example. Using NA (Not Applicable), TX (Temporarily Excused) or the late status does not affect a student's grade but helps to categorize the tardy in a Gradebook. Use the behavior Gradebook to track late assignments, and assign a true mark.

The image shows two parts of the Aeries Gradebook interface. On the left, a dropdown menu for the 'Status' column is open, showing options: 'Absent - No Make Up', 'Absent - Able to Make Up', 'Excused', 'Late', 'Not Yet Graded', 'Not Yet Processed', 'Incomplete', and 'Received, Not Yet Graded'. On the right, a student record for 'Alyunan, Tracy' is shown. The record includes columns for 'Grd' (10), '%', 'Mark' (93.4, A), and two assignment columns: 'Ch21 IHOS' (10/30/2014 #37 : 100, NA) and 'CN 22-3' (10/30/2014 #38 : 3, TX).

## Fix 3: Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.

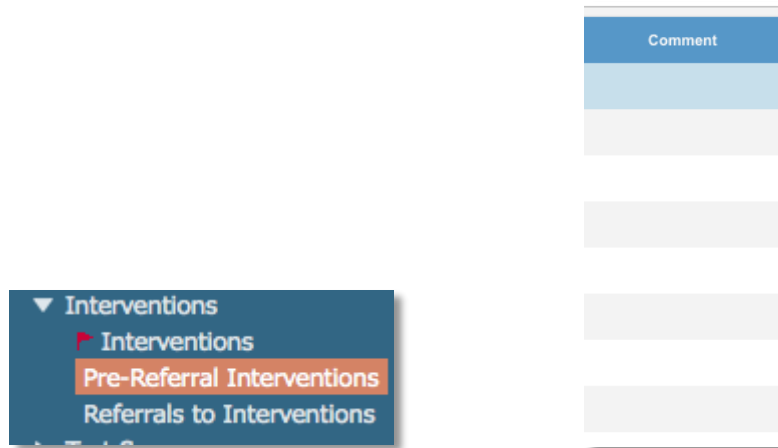
Avoiding giving extra credit or using bonus points can be done by setting up separate assignments in Aeries Gradebook and seek evidence that the extra work has resulted in a higher-level achievement as evidence. Using Aeries Min-Max rule can allow teachers to cap amount the amount of points available per assignment so a student cannot get bonus points. Prohibiting extra credit is an option as well in the Aeries options for creating an assignment.

The image shows two parts of the Aeries assignment settings interface. The top part shows the 'Min Assignment Value' set to 50 and the 'Max Assignment Value' set to 100, with up and down arrows for adjustment. The bottom part shows the 'Extra Credit' checkbox, which is unchecked. Below the checkbox, text reads: 'If checked, the Number Correct Possible and Points Possible will be set to zero and will be invisible in this form'.

## Fix 4: Don't punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades; apply other consequences and reassess or determine actual level of achievement.

Instead of promoting greater effort, lowering a student's grade as a punishment more often than not, causes students to withdraw from learning. Apply other consequences, and reassess the assignment to determine the actual level of achievement.

Other consequences can be recorded in the Aeries Gradebook under Comments, see below. As a teacher, you can also record consequences in our Pre-Referral Intervention or Interventions screens but reducing grades is not a good way to determine actual level of achievement. You can also record a comment in the Gradebook section in Scores by class.



## Fix 5: Don't consider attendance in grade determination; report absences separately.

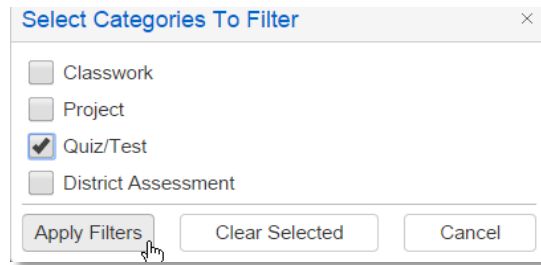
Similar to behavior, teachers must report absences separately. Recording attendance in a separate behavior Gradebook would be a more accurate way of accounting for achievement. Using Aeries Gradebook, attendance can be tracked separately using a completely separate Gradebook, see below. Aeries also can utilize the flag to note when a student has an attendance specific comment on the date the assignment was due. The attendance does not affect the grade because it's separate but still noted.

					▼ Chapt10 Rev Wrksht	▼ Conics Project	▼ Hmwk 5/21
					✓ 5/13/2014 #45 : 25	✓ 5/14/2014 #46 : 50	✓ 5/21/2014 #49 : 10
	Name	Grade	%	Mark			
22	Iriarte, Joey	12	63.0	D	13	30	10
23	Linder, Sean L	11	87.7	B+	25	50	0
					ACTIVITY on date due 5/13/2014.		

## Fix 6: Don't include group scores in grades; use only individual achievement evidence.

Group work is not an accurate indicator of an individual student achievement. Don't include group projects in the final grade. The idea of grading group works undermines student motivation and violates individual accountability for learning. Instead, create an individual quiz in Aeries Gradebook that assesses the concepts students were supposed to learn during the project. See sample filtering by below. In Aeries Gradebook a teacher could effectively create a category called "Group Work" and filter it out of the students final grade.

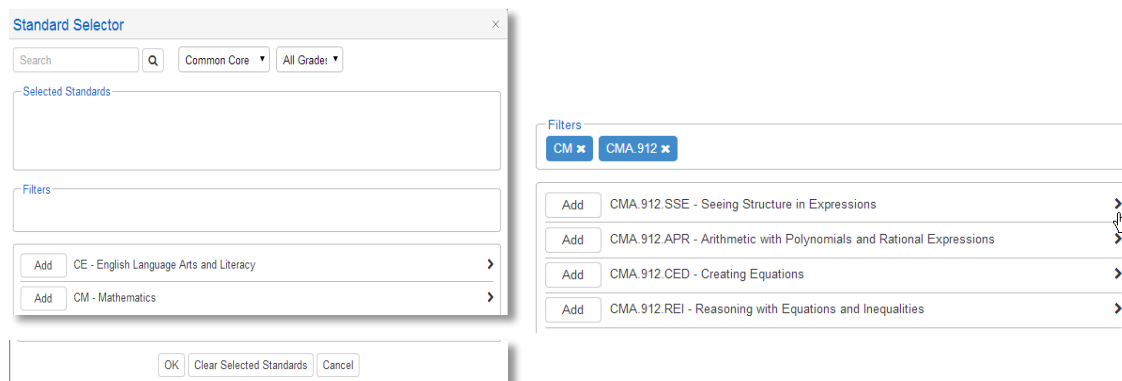
Selecting a Category will filter the Scores by Class page to only assignments with the selected category. Below the Quiz/Test category is selected.



## Fix 7: Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade; organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals.

Attach standards to assignments, assess, organize, and report by individual standards and learning goals. Score standards individually, not in summary. If a test is used to cover 3 standards, the teacher should have 3 entries in the grad book for each student. This can be easily done one by utilizing Aeries Gradebook where we offer various ways to view the standards and attach them to assignments/quizzes etc. The tracking of the standards is visible in the Gradebook, our SBG Dashboard and easily searchable when trying to align them. Our sample below shows a single assignment being aligned with several standards. The Gradebook view will show each standard and report them individually for proper assessment of the standard by student.

The Add Standard button will only display if the System Administrator has enabled the Portal Option of Support Standard-Based Grade Reporting for the school.



## Fix 8: Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards; provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations.

Creating clear descriptions of achievement expectations can help mitigate any confusion or unclear use of grade assignments. Giving students this expectation can assist them in understanding the grading methods used and what to expect when they turn in assignments. Use the Aeries descriptions in the Gradebook so parents/students/teachers have access to all the information. Using our Parent and Student Portal can assist in clear communication of what is expected. Also, publish clear guidelines for all teachers/parents and students at the district website or somewhere visible. Use plain language so every stakeholder can understand and avoid using language that is comparative, eg average. Below is an example of an individual assignment description that can be entered at the classroom level. Other higher-level descriptions of report cards can be housed on the district website or a hyperlink in your parents Aeries portal.

**Add Assignment**

General Info

# 1

Name

Description

Type Formative

Formative Assignments are those that form knowledge (ex: homework or projects). Summative Assignments are those that measure a student's progress (ex: quizzes and tests).

Category Homework/Notebook/Quizzes

Extra Credit

If checked, the Number Correct Possible and Points Possible will be set to zero and will be invisible in this form.

Narrative Grading

Assigned On 09/10/2014 Due On 09/11/2014

Number Correct Possible 0 Points Possible 0

"Number Correct Possible" can be used as the number of questions on an assignment (like a quiz or homework) while "Points Possible" should be the maximum possible value of that assignment. This is normally used to give certain types of assignments equal weight, even when they have different numbers of questions.

Grading Completed Visible to Portal Score Visible to Portal

Standards

Save Save and Add New Save and Close Cancel

2014-2015 **Golden Eagle Elementary School**

Home Student Info Attendance Grades Medical Guidance Test Scores Programs

**Student Data Confirmation**

Student number	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Perm ID	Sex	Grd	Age	Birthdate
7	Alavez	Abel (DB)	Benny	99000007	M	4	11	4/19/2004

Student

Contacts

Medical History

Documents

5 Authorizations

6 Final Data Confirmation

Confirm and Continue

Last Confirmed: 7/22/2015 10:54:24 AM

**Documents**

**Student Handbook**

Please download and review the updated Student Handbook.

## **Fix 9: Don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students; compare each student's performance to preset standards.**

Compare each student's performance to present standards only. Don't grade on the curve and don't present percentile or class ranks in standards-based grading. Under these conditions, students quickly see that if they help their peers they could easily be threatening their own chances for success. Aeries Gradebook rules allow for different methods that can be used that are transparent easy to follow along.

## **Fix 10: Don't rely on evidence from assessments that fail to meet standards of quality; rely only on quality assessments.**

Utilize assessment conditions and fairness that can produce results of maximum quality for minimum effort. This will achieve a greater level of understanding not only from your students but also from the evidence of achievement provided. Make sure that the assessments chosen are appropriate and have clear targets. Make sure they have a clear purpose and sound design. O'Conner points out the 5 General Commandments for a well-written assessment.

Thou Shall Not

1. Provide opaque directions about how to respond
2. Employ ambiguous statements in your items
3. Unintentionally provide students with clues
4. Employ complex syntax in your items
5. Use vocabulary that is more advanced than required

Popham,J. *Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know*, Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA , 1995,98

A well-written assessment can be the difference in getting a good sampling and avoiding any bias. Aeries partners with companies like SchoolCity and EADMS to provide districts the best-in-breed choice of quality assessments for almost any situation.



## Fix 11: Don't rely on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment.

Use your professional judgment when creating your grading method. Averaging as a grading method falls short of the goal. Grading by the median provides more opportunities for success. Be creative, consistent and consider other methodology in the industry before you adopt the norm. Aeries Gradebook allows for many avenues to achieve grading. We allow functionality and ease-of use for creating your own method if you choose to do so.

The screenshot shows the 'Options' tab in the Aeries Gradebook interface. The menu bar at the top includes 'Edit Gradebook', 'Options', 'Categories', 'Assignments', 'Manage Students', 'Final Marks', 'Narrative Grades', 'Rules', 'Backups', and 'Restore'. The 'Options' section contains several settings:

- Weight scores of assignments by Category?** (checked) - This allows you to give more precedence to one category over another. Examples would be 'Tests' and 'Homework.'
- Apply Assignment Scores Immediately?** (checked) - If checked - Scores will be averaged into the student's Total Grade as you enter scores for each student. If unchecked - Scores will wait to be averaged until you've marked the assignment as 'Scoring Completed.'
- Filter Assignments by** - If Assignment Due Date is selected, Assignment Due Date will be used to filter which assignments are included in the calculation of the Total Grade or displayed on the Scores By views. Otherwise, Assignment Number will be used to filter. (Dropdown menu set to 'Assignment Due Date')
- Calculate the Total Grade based on Assignments that fall within this date range** - Only the assignments that fall between these two dates will be counted towards the total grade for each student. (Date range: 8/4/2014 to 8/28/2015)
- Display Assignments that fall within this date range** - Only the assignments that fall between these two dates will be displayed. (Date range: 8/4/2014 to 8/28/2015)
- Include the Overall Mark with the Overall Score?** (checked)
- Apply weighting to Formative & Summative assignments?** - This allows you to weight formative assignments (those that form knowledge - ex. homework or projects) and summative assignments (those that measure a student's progress - ex. tests and quizzes) so that one group takes more precedence in the final grade. (unchecked)
- Use a Rubric Grading Scale to Compute Total Grade** - The total grade will be calculated by doing a simple average of all assignment scores. (unchecked) **Applies to all linked gradebooks**
- Scale Min/Max Assignment Values in Total Grade** - When calculating the total grade, each assignment's score will be restricted to be within the defined min/max range. (unchecked)

A 'Copy Options to Gradebooks' button is located at the bottom right of the options section.

## Fix 12: Don't include zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real level of achievement or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient evidence.

This serves as punishment for missing work that students identify with as impossible to come back from. This theory is used in Aeries Gradebook options because we allow for a number to be set as the least amount of points a student can receive for failing or missing assignments. Using a Min/Max in Aeries Gradebook can also result in motivating a student to turn in work late and/or turn in additional assignments for a better source of evidence toward achievement.

This screenshot shows the 'Scale Min/Max Assignment Values in Total Grade' option. It includes a checkbox that is checked, indicating that the feature is enabled. Below the checkbox, it specifies the 'Min Assignment Value' as 50 and the 'Max Assignment Value' as 150, with up and down arrows for adjustment.

**Scale Min/Max Assignment Values in Total Grade**  
When calculating the total grade, each assignment's score will be restricted to be within the defined min/max range. ☒ Min Assignment Value 50 to Max Assignment Value 150

### Fix 13: Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades; use only summative evidence.

The proper use of summative vs. formative assessments is critical. Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades. Only summative evidence should be used to determine this. Aeries allows specific Gradebook creation to utilize this feature while strictly prohibiting the use of summative assessments in creating certain kinds of Gradebooks like Rubric Gradebooks. See example below

Formative Percentage

Summative Percentage

20

80

Use a Rubric Grading Scale to Compute Total Grade

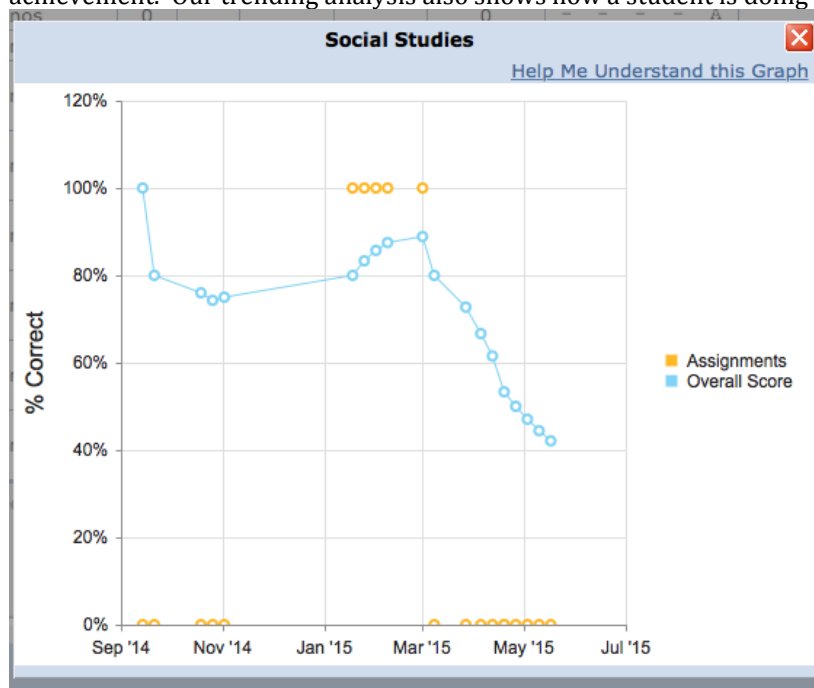
The total grade will be calculated by doing a simple average of all assignment scores.

☐

**Applies to all linked gradebooks**

### Fix 14: Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities; in those instances emphasize more recent achievement.

Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time. Instead, look at the most recent achievement. Aeries Gradebook allows for the 10 most recent assignments to be used as evidence toward achievement. Our trending analysis also shows how a student is doing over time by each assignment.





## Fix 15: Don't leave students out of the grading process. Involve students; they can - and should - play key roles in assessment and grading that promote achievement.

Involving students and parents as key stakeholders in the achievement process will empower the students and promote achievement. Giving the responsibility to students as an expectation for achievement allows for greater understanding of the grading process and the expected outcomes. Using Aeries Student and Parent Portals can give real-time insight into how students are progressing and how their behavior. Parents and Students can elect to be pro-active rather than passive in receiving a weekly progress report at a scheduled date so that they can analyze the progress on their own.

**Progress Report For Jesse Gruettner (1036)**  
Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Grade Summary	Overall
<b>Algebra (Year) - Acosta</b>	<b>0/0 = 0</b>
Assessments	0/0 = 0
Final	0/0 = 0
Responsibility	0/0 = 0
Assignments	0/0 = 0
Missing Assignments	0
<b>Earth P1 (Year) - Acosta</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Summative (80%)</b>	<b>0 F</b>
Labs (20%)	0/0 = 0
Tests (50%)	0/0 = 0
Homework (20%)	0/0 = 0
participation (10%)	0/0 = 0
<b>Formative (20%)</b>	<b>0 F</b>
Labs (20%)	0/0 = 0
Tests (50%)	0/0 = 0
Homework (20%)	0/0 = 0
participation (10%)	0/0 = 0
Missing Assignments	0
<b>IB US Hist (Spring) - Acosta</b>	<b>262/304 = 86.18 B</b>
Classwork	79/79 = 100 A+
DBQ	51/70 = 72.85 C-
Essay	46/56 = 82.14 D+
Homework	86/87 = 98.85 A+
Missing Assignments	0
<b>IBHistAm2/HECv (Spring) - Acosta</b>	<b>86.96 B</b>
Homework (10%)	80/90 = 88.88 B+
Test (25%)	0/0 = 0
Quiz (20%)	86/100 = 86 B
Presentations (25%)	0/0 = 0
Reports (20%)	0/0 = 0
Missing Assignments	0
<b>new (Year) - Acosta</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Summative (80%)</b>	<b>0 F</b>
Labs (20%)	0/0 = 0
Tests (50%)	0/0 = 0
Homework (20%)	0/0 = 0
participation (10%)	0/0 = 0
<b>Formative (20%)</b>	<b>0 F</b>
Labs (20%)	0/0 = 0
Tests (50%)	0/0 = 0
Homework (20%)	0/0 = 0
participation (10%)	0/0 = 0
Missing Assignments	0

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Gradebook Summary											
Name	Per Teacher	%	Avg	Current Mark	Trend	Missing Assignment	Past 5 Day's Att			Last Updated	
							F	M	Tu		
Behavior - Year	0	Enos	100				0	-	-	-	Jul 22
Citizenship - Fall - Year	0	Enos	0				0	-	-	-	
Homework - Year	0	Enos	100				0	-	-	-	Jul 22
Language Arts - Year	0	Enos	63				0	-	-	-	Mar 30
Math - Year	0	Enos	24				0	-	-	-	Sep 10
Physical Education - Year	0	Enos	100				0	-	-	-	Sep 10
Reading - Year	0	Enos	44				0	-	-	-	Sep 10
Science - Year	0	Enos	96				0	-	-	-	Sep 10
Social Studies - Year	0	Enos	42				10	-	-	-	Sep 10

- Nominal change

- Predicted increase of 1% or more

- Predicted decrease of 1% or more

[Help Me Understand the Trend](#)

Most Recent Test Results			
Test	Taken	Result	
CST			
Eng/Lang Arts Total	05/2014	Below Basic	
General Math	05/2014	Below Basic	

Students You Have Access To		
Student	Grade	School
Abel Alavez	4	Golden Eagle Elem
Allan Abbott	12	Screaming Eagle HS
Alice Abdelnour	9	Screaming Eagle HS

[Sign Up](#) to receive weekly status updates for these students

Backpack				
My Assignments				
PD	Assignment Name	Files	Due	Submitted Files
You have no assignment due from 7-22-2015 to 7-29-2015				

My Uploaded Files			
File Name	Files	Size	Date Uploaded
<a href="#">Upload New Files</a>			

O'Connor, K., *A Repair Kit for Grading*, Pearson ATI, 2007, 109

O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards*, Second Edition, Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002, 135

McTighe, J., "What Happens Between Assessments", Educational Leadership, Dec. '96 - Jan. '97, 11

Reeves, D.B., "The Case Against the Zero," *Kappan*, December 2004, 324-325