

## South Portland School Department Proficiency-based Learning Glossary of Terms

**Standards** are concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. Frequently these are broad descriptions that describe the desired learning at the end of span years such as K-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

A **learning progression** is the purposeful sequencing of teaching and learning expectations across multiple developmental stages, ages, or grade levels. These are more specific skills and knowledge to be learned at each level in order to achieve the learning described in the standards. In SPSD there are **Essential Learning Targets** (ELTs), which are the purposefully sequenced statements that describe what students will be expected to learn each school year. That is, ELTs are the skills, knowledge and understanding that students need, per grade level, to ensure that they are progressing toward meeting the more comprehensive Graduation Standards.

**Proficiency-based learning** refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. *[Note: A few of the more common synonyms include competency-based, mastery-based, outcome-based, performance-based, and standards-based education, instruction, and learning, among others.]*

In education, the term **assessment** refers to the wide variety of activities and tasks that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, and skill acquisition of students.

**Formative assessment** refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments help teachers make adjustments to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support. Formative assessment also provides a way to share feedback to students.

**Summative assessments** are tasks or activities that students complete as a way to evaluate their learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period—usually at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year.

**Trending calculations** are a way of calculating a student's score that is not an average of all scores but rather considers the more recent learning as a greater indicator of what the student is able to do at this moment.

The **Power Law** is a research-based trending calculation that is powerful when answering the question "*based on the evidence, what is the student's proficiency at this moment?*" Robert J. Marzano describes the use of this formula as a more accurate picture of student learning. The math behind the power law formula is

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quite complex, but all that's necessary for its use is that you know that the power law formula predicts what the student's next score will be based on scores already present.

The term **21st century skills** refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed—by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others—to be critically important to success in today's world, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces. Generally speaking, 21st century skills can be applied in all academic subject areas, and in all educational, career, and civic settings throughout a student's life.

**Habits of Work** targets are the skills and behaviors that are important for all students to have and exhibit to maximize their learning. Students are measured on the following: Preparation for Learning, Interactions with Peers, and Engagement for Learning. Teachers work with students to understand what each of these “look like” in the building and in their classroom.

South Portland School Department uses an electronic gradebook called **JumpRope** to track and report student's proficiency. To learn more about the tool visit the JumpRope page on the SPSD Curriculum website or visit [www.jumpro.pe](http://www.jumpro.pe)