

Webster City Community Schools

Grading & Reporting Guidelines and Practices

Approved by the School Board on May 9, 2011

The Webster City Community Schools' grading and reporting policies and practices are intended to improve consistency in academic grading among teachers and subject areas for grades 5-12 and focus on student's academic achievement. The primary purpose of a grade is to communicate the academic achievement of students for grades 5 – 12.

In order to realize these goals, the grading and reporting system must:

- Reflect academic achievement
- Contain meaningful feedback
- Be honest, fair, transparent, credible, meaningful and user friendly
- Be criterion referenced (What students will be able to know, understand, and do.)
- Align with the Webster City Community School District's curriculum (standards/benchmarks)
- Reflect consistency within and among courses, grade levels, departments and schools

The new grading guidelines use a uniform percentage grading scale and place greater weight on final products of learning in calculating the grade with less weight on the academic practice involved in learning.

Definitions

Academic Practice (formative): work conducted when a student is still learning the material. These are assessments that are designed to provide feedback and direction for both students and teachers. For the students, the adjustment may mean review of material, additional practice, or confirmation that they are ready to move forward. For the teachers, it may mean changing instructional strategies, providing additional practice, or being ready to move forward. (e.g. teacher observation, practice tests or checkpoints, daily work, rough drafts, peer editing, notebook checks, etc.)

Academic Achievement (summative): work conducted when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to be responsible for the material. It is designed to provide information to be used in making a judgment about a student's achievement at the end of a sequence of instruction, (e.g. final speech/research paper/project, tests, exams, performance assessments, semester test, etc.)

Assessment Guidelines

1. Teachers will assess student learning in a variety of ways within a grading period.

2. Within Infinite Campus, these are the categories in which assessments may be categorized: Academic Achievement (Summative), Semester Test (high school), and Academic Practice (Formative).

-Middle School

Academic Achievement (summative) will be 75% of the trimester grade.

Academic Practice (formative) will be 25% of the trimester grade.

-High School

Academic Achievement (summative) will be 70% of the semester grade.

Semester Tests (summative) will be 10% of the semester grade.

Academic Practice (formative) will be 20% of the semester grade.

3. Number of Academic Achievement opportunities:

Middle School:

For each trimester, there will be a minimum of 3 assessments in the Academic Achievement category (summative).

High School:

For each semester, there will be a minimum of 4 assessments in the Academic Achievement category (summative).

4. Teachers who teach the same course will use the same number of Common Academic assessments including weights and proportions, and apply them consistently.

5. **Second Chance Testing:** A second opportunity to retest will be available for all students. The second test will not be the exact same original test.

When requesting a retake, the student will be required to document what additional learning is needed before they take the test. Students are not permitted to simply show up for a test retake and hope for a better result. The teacher may require the student to complete additional practice, attend a tutoring session, complete another activity or complete any previously assigned daily work.

The higher of the two scores is placed into the grade book (not the average of the two scores.)

6. If the scores on assessments are generally low, a teacher should not simply add points onto the grade for all students. The practice of using the top student score as the maximum for points possible (i.e. 100 point test and the top score is 88; therefore, the test is taken out of 88) is not an acceptable practice.

General Procedures

1. To better prepare students for each Academic Achievement Assessment (summative test), teachers will begin each class with a review of the learning targets (incorporating homework), today's targets to be learned, provide students with engaging learning instructional activities, and conclude each class with a review of the essential learning's from that day.

2. All grading and reporting should be based on the standards and be criterion-referenced—not using any type of grade curve. Students are not in competition with each other for the highest score.

3. **Course grades** will reflect the level of the student’s academic achievement.

While non-academic factors may be highly valued and often contribute to the student’s achievement, they should not be included in the student’s grade.

The following are examples of non-academic factors and may not be included in the course grade: behavior, attendance, attitude, punctuality, effort, ability, improvement, or participation, (certain class participation such as PE or music is exempt); daily work based solely on completion (i.e. there must be some assessment of the student’s work.)

4. **Homework or daily work** is considered practice that is necessary to achieve the targeted student learning goals. It should be focused, meaningful, and brief enough to learn the expected outcomes. It should provide immediate feedback to students about their learning.

5. **Late work:**

Effort will be made to hold students accountable for completing all formative or all summative work in a reasonable amount of time (up to approximately 5 days). Due to the dramatic impact of a zero (M=missing) on an overall grade, an M will be used as the last resort if the student chooses to make no effort to complete an assignment.

Academic Practice (Formative)

includes all daily work, homework, checkpoints, practice tests, etc. These are to be completed by the due date. Late work will be accepted with up to a 10% penalty (at the teacher’s discretion) until the day of the test and/or the end of the unit.

After the test, any late work is marked as missing. At the discretion of the department, grade level or teachers who teach the same course; they may allow late work to be turned in up to two weeks before the end of the course.

Students who are absent will have an additional day to complete work for full credit. Additional days are at the discretion of the teacher.

All work must be completed before Second Chance Testing is to be given.

Academic Achievement (Summative)

includes a test, exam, final research paper, final class project, final speech, etc. Any student who misses the final Academic Achievement assessment must complete it without penalty. Not taking an assessment is not an option.

If the student has not completed all summative assessments for the trimester or semester, the teacher may assign a course grade of incomplete. A course grade of incomplete must have the Principal's written approval. The students will have two weeks after the end of the trimester/semester to complete course requirements.

6. Extra credit for students will not be available. Students are expected to complete all Academic Practice and Academic Achievement assessments. Students also have Second Chance Testing available.

At a teacher's discretion, bonus points may be included in a specific Academic Achievement Common Assessment grade (tests, final projects, final research paper, semester test, etc.) and should be related to the academic content standards being evaluated in a given class. Bonus points cannot affect more than 5% of the grade on a given assessment. These rigorous questions shall be related to the standards of a course.

7. High school Semester tests are required for all courses. Teachers who teach the same course will give a final common semester assessment that represents the essential learnings of the course. Example assessments may include but are not limited to, a final oral presentation, an in-class essay, short answer questions, or multiple choice / true false assessments. All high school students are required to complete all semester tests for the courses enrolled. The final assessment shall be recorded as a separate grade and shall count 10% of the semester grade.

8. Grade Updates:

Middle School will collect student grade updates 3 times each trimester.

High School will collect student grade updates 4 times each semester.

These grade updates are provided to students/parents on the Infinite Campus Portal available from our school web site.

9. The District Grade Scale is used for all classes:

97-100=A+

93-96 = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-79 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

67-69 = D+

63-66 = D

60-62 = D-

00-59 = F

For courses designed as Pass/Fail

P = Passing

F = Failing

10. At the end of the trimester/semester, teachers are expected to assign the most appropriate grade, based on the body of evidence of the student's academic achievement.

11. Professional Development and Instructional Responsibilities:

A comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development program is necessary to enhance a teacher's ability to deliver high quality instruction, to design and use formative and summative assessments that are purposeful, assess appropriate learning targets, and to assign grades consistent with this policy. District and site professional development plans for effective classroom assessment and grading must include research-based components and best practices.

12. Areas of Responsibility

The School Board is accountable, in its governance capacity, for the instructional program.

The Superintendent, through designees, shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of the Grading and Reporting Policy and for development and implementation of procedures and practices for grading and reporting student achievement in Webster City Schools.

Principals shall be responsible for teacher evaluations to insure the successful implementation of the District's beliefs, procedures and practices of effective grading and reporting. *In extenuating circumstances, building principals may use discretionary judgment in applying exceptions to these policies. These exceptions must be written, dated and signed by the teacher(s), building principal and superintendent.*

Teachers shall be responsible for effectively implementing classroom procedures and assessments utilizing the Professional Learning Community teams and for applying the principles of effective grading and reporting practices and procedures.

Parents are a vital link to successful home/school communication about student learning. Therefore, parents are strongly urged to encourage and support their student's learning achievement.

Students are responsible for their own learning. All students shall actively participate in understanding the Webster City School's grading and reporting system. Students are able to use the Academic Practice (formative) grade to identify strengths and weaknesses with a particular topic and as a result, seek additional help. As well, students are able to know that the Academic Achievement (summative) grade reflects a true level of understanding of a particular topic/unit/course.