

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Procedures for Implementing the Secondary Gradebook in Grades 6–12

PREAMBLE

Student achievement depends on the dynamic interaction between teachers and students as they engage in the day-to-day efforts of teaching and learning. Teachers identify learning goals, assess students' strengths and needs, and plan instruction. Students practice skills and refine concepts, applying the timely and specific feedback teachers provide to help them improve student performance. Teachers continually gather information about student learning and adjust their instruction accordingly to ensure student success on tasks and assessments that synthesize the content and skills addressed during instruction.

The methods and processes teachers use to gather evidence of student learning are ruled by two Board of Education policies:

- Board Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, identified by the Board of Education as the governance policy for system Goal 1, Ensure Success for Every Student.
- Board Policy IFA, *Curriculum*, identified by the Board of Education as the governance policy for system Goal 2, Provide an Effective Instructional Program.

Procedures for implementing the electronic gradebook, therefore, are closely linked to the mission of our school system, “to provide a high-quality, world-class education that ensures success for every student through excellence in teaching and learning,” and to the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) vision: “All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.”

Our Call to Action: Strategic Plan for the Montgomery County Public Schools identifies among the guiding tenets of MCPS, four critical questions.

1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know they have learned it?
3. What will we do when they haven't?
4. What will we do when they already know it?

Questions one and two directly relate to the expectation that teachers will collect evidence of and report on student achievement of the MCPS curriculum.

In order to implement the electronic gradebook in all secondary schools so that its use aligns with Board Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, consistent procedures and processes must be established within and among schools, grading practices and criteria must be communicated in advance to students and parents, grades must be based on multiple and varied measures over time; and those grades must reflect student achievement of the MCPS curriculum.

In September 2007, the deputy superintendent of schools and chief operating officer charged the chief technology officer to convene a group of students, parents, teachers, principals, and central services administrators to develop procedures for implementing the electronic gradebook in

Grades 6–12. The group followed an interest-based, problem-solving process in biweekly work sessions spanning 22 hours between September 2007 and February 2008.

MCPS leadership staff and organizations representing high school and middle school principals, teachers, parents, and students reviewed draft language and provided feedback on more than one occasion. The procedures that follow reflect the consideration of all feedback provided by these groups and is supported by all members of the writing team.

The writing team developed procedures that strike a balance between the desired and current states. The procedures are designed as an interim step to bring more consistency and clarity to grading and should be reviewed for possible revision after at least one full year of implementation. Staff in the Office of the Chief Technology Officer will monitor school practices and collect data to inform this review.

In addition, the writing team recognizes the need to provide comprehensive communication, support, and professional development to build awareness, understanding, and consistent application of the procedures. The appendices of the attached document provide a communication and training plan, and detailed information to include in support documents.

Electronic Gradebook Writing Team:

Bob Bastress, facilitator

Billie Jean Bensen, principal, Hoover Middle School

Carol Blum, director of high school instruction and achievement

Betsy Brown, director of curriculum development/grading and reporting

Vic Caroscio, instructional specialist, High School Instruction and Achievement

Betty Collins, director of staff development initiatives

Lance Dempsey, principal, Shady Grove Middle School

Bob Domergue, principal, Damascus High School

Linda Ferrell, director of middle school instruction and achievement

Beth Kennington, vice-president, Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations

Hollis Krotchko, supervisor of instructional management technology

Chris Lloyd, teacher, John T. Baker Middle School

Stephen Miller, teacher, Walter Johnson High School

Sylvia Morrison, principal, Northwest High School

Becky Nelson, instructional specialist, Middle School Instruction and Achievement

Logan O'Farrell, student

David Orkin, student

Christine Oxenford, staff development teacher, Shady Grove Middle School

Doug Prouty, vice president, Montgomery County Education Association

Robyn Solomon, parent

Elton Stokes, director of the division of student data management

Sally Thomas, notetaker

Jennifer Wingate, teacher, Robert Frost Middle School

Summary of Procedures for Implementing the Electronic Gradebook for School Year 2008–2009

	Names and Number of Categories	Category Weights	Scaffolding for Use	Category Grade Calculation Method
	<i>Course Team, Department, or School Chooses an Option for Category Names and Number</i>	<i>Course Team, Department, or School Applies Category Weights According to the Category Option Chosen</i>	<i>Teachers on Course Team Apply Scaffolding for Category Option Chosen</i>	<i>School Chooses One Method Only</i>
Option A: Three weighted categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework for Prac/Prep (5% or 10%) Formative Assessments Summative Assessments 	Course teams, departments, or schools will— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree upon category weights so that each teacher on the course team or department is using the same category weights, not assign any one task/assessment that counts more than 25% of the marking period grade, have at least one task/assessment in each category and will use multiple tasks/assessments when possible, and use category weights in increments of 5% so that more clarity can be provided to students and parents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers in the course team will follow the plan. A disproportionate amount of the grade should not be concentrated in too few tasks/assessments. In a course team where few summative assessments are given in a marking period, the team will consider carefully the weight of each category and tasks/assessments within categories. Course teams will determine and communicate to students and parents in advance the number and weight of categories. If a team changes the plan during the marking period, the team will communicate to students and parents how this changes the proportion of categories. By the end of a marking period, each category will have at least one task/assessment. 	Summation Percentage OR Raw Score Conversion to Percent
Option B: Three-to-five weighted categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework for Prac/Prep (5% or 10%) Homework Evaluated for Learning Compositions Unit tests Quizzes Projects Presentations Displays Essays Journals Labs Demonstrations Course-specific category name (must be approved in advance by school leadership team) 			
Option C: Two weighted categories (variation of total points – Option D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework for Prac/Prep (5% or 10%) All Tasks/Assessments (95% or 90%) 	Course teams, departments, or schools will— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree upon category weights so that each teacher on the course team or department is using the same category weights, not assign any one task/assessment that counts more than 25% of the marking period grade, have at least one task/assessment in each category and will use multiple tasks/assessments when possible, and use category weights in increments of 5% so that more clarity can be provided to students and parents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers in the course team will follow the plan. A disproportionate amount of the grade should not be concentrated in too few tasks / assessments. In a course team using one category, the team will consider carefully the number of tasks/assessments in a marking period and the points possible. Course teams will determine and communicate to students and parents in advance the number of tasks/assessments and the points possible. If a team changes the plan during the marking period, the team will communicate to students and parents how this changes the proportion of tasks/assessments. 	Summation Percentage
Option D: One category (total points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Tasks/Assessments (100%) 			

FULL TEXT
Grading Calculation Workgroup
Procedures for Implementing the Secondary Electronic Gradebook in 2008–2009

Background

In 2006–2007, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) field tested a systemwide electronic gradebook in four secondary schools and expanded its use to all secondary schools in 2007–2008. As a result of implementing this gradebook, several aspects of grading that previously had been obscured became transparent. This transparency revealed inconsistency with policy and published procedures and resulted in the need to clarify grading procedures in the context of gradebook use. A goal of Board of Education Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, is that students' grades accurately reflect achievement of the MCPS curriculum. Four topics were identified as requiring clarification in order to implement the policy in Grades 6–12:

- Number and name of categories
- Combination of category weights
- Category grade calculation method
- Course grade calculation

In the fall of 2007, a workgroup of stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, students, central services staff, and association representatives convened to develop recommendations on the four topics. The workgroup discussed questions related to the following:

I. Number and name of categories

There are a large number of categories being used with a variety of names. What is the purpose of categories in grading and how are categories aligned to grading and reporting? Should MCPS limit the number of categories and decide what the categories are called?

II. Combination of category weights

The weight of each category differs from school to school, from department to department, and from course to course. Should MCPS determine category weights?

III. Category grade calculation method

Multiple methods of calculating grades in secondary schools raises these questions: Is there one calculation method that provides a more accurate picture of student learning? Should MCPS limit the number of methods that schools can use?

IV. Course grade calculation

Marking period grades are reported as letter grades, not percentages. Do we want to use percentages for course grade calculations and then report the percentages as letter grades on the report card?

Shared Interests

The workgroup used an interest-based problem-solving process, one-text, to develop recommendations. The workgroup agreed upon the following shared interests.

Guidelines for secondary grading must:

1. Align with Board of Education policy and published procedures.
2. Support consistency in a course team, department, school, cluster, or district.
3. Honor the professional judgment of teachers and school administrators.
4. Result in grading practices that can be explained by teachers and are clearly understood by parents and students.
5. Support deliberate grading practices that are fair and manageable.
6. Promote grades that
 - carry consistent meaning within the district,
 - reflect student achievement of MCPS curriculum,
 - reflect student learning as assessed on a variety of measures, and
 - reflect student learning as assessed on multiple measures over time.

Recommendations

I. Number and Name of Categories

In order to attain the goal of consistency as established in Board of Education Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, and published procedures for Grades 6–12, course teams or departments within a school will use the same categories as approved by the local school leadership team, and these categories will reflect the MCPS curriculum for that course. Teachers will thoroughly describe a task/assessment by giving the task/assessment a specific name within a category. Grading procedures will be applied consistently within and among schools. Local schools will ensure school-level processes, as approved by the school leadership team. Course teams or departments will determine grading processes, including weights and proportions, and apply them consistently. The processes will be communicated in advance and in writing to students and parents. Course teams or departments may choose one of four options as listed below.

- Graded Categories: Option A—three weighted categories

Course teams or departments may choose this set of three categories as their grading categories.

- Homework for Practice and Preparation (5 percent or 10 percent)
- Formative Assessments
- Summative Assessments

- Graded Categories: Option B—three to five weighted categories

Course teams or departments may select three to five categories from the list of categories below. Each category selected must have at least one task/assessment within the category during each marking period.

- Homework for Practice and Preparation (5 percent or 10 percent)
- Homework Evaluated for Learning
- Compositions
- Unit tests
- Quizzes
- Projects
- Presentations
- Displays
- Essays
- Journals
- Labs
- Demonstrations
- Course-specific category name (must be approved in advance by the school leadership team)

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Graded Categories: Option C—two categories (variation of total points)

Course teams or departments may choose this set of two categories. The structure of this option is virtually identical to Option D below. All task/assessments other than homework are combined in one category, and weights or proportions of tasks/assessments recorded within this category are not set.

- Homework for Practice and Preparation (5 percent or 10 percent)
- All Tasks/Assessments (95 percent or 90 percent)

The marking period grade calculation method for Option C differs from Option D, which uses Summation Percentage.

- Graded Categories: Option D – one category (total points)

Course teams or departments may choose to have only one category which is equivalent to using total points. This option may be used only by schools utilizing the category grade calculation method Summation Percentage (earned points divided by total points). See Appendix C for more details.

- One category—total points
- The category will be named All Tasks/Assessments

Guidelines for Implementing Any of the Options for Graded Categories

Local schools will implement school-level procedures that ensure school-level consistency by using the scaffolding provided in Figure 1 and the following process:

1. Course teams or departments in a school choose one of the four options for graded categories above.
2. If the course teams or departments choose Graded Categories Option A, C, or D, the team/department preapproves the choice.
3. If the course teams or departments choose Graded Categories Option B, they first apply for approval of the option chosen and selected categories as follows:
 - a. The course teams or departments take the option chosen and selected categories to the resource teacher for review.
 - b. The resource teacher takes the categories to the local school leadership team for review and approval.
 - c. If one or more of the categories are not approved, the local school leadership team provides a reason for its decision to the course teams or departments via the resource teacher.

4. Whatever option is chosen, the course team will design the template for each marking period aligned with the MCPS curriculum and in accordance with MCPS grading procedures, especially the requirement that Homework for Practice and Preparation counts no more than 10 percent of the grade.
 - a. The course teams or departments take the template(s) to the resource teacher for review.
 - b. The resource teacher takes the template(s) to the local school leadership team for review and approval.
 - c. If the template(s) is not approved, the local school leadership team provides a reason for its decision to the course teams or departments via the resource teacher.
 - d. The local school leadership team will communicate the approved templates for each course to the Gradebook Advisor.
5. Each category must have at least one task/assessment in order to preserve the category percentages as originally approved by the school leadership team.
6. The local school leadership team is responsible for monitoring the consistent implementation of the categories, percentages, and templates by each teacher.

**Scaffolding for Implementing Category Options as Required by
Board Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, and MCPS Grading Procedures in Grades 6–12**

	<p>Weighted Categories The <i>weighted categories</i> method provides a framework for consistency and transparency. Weighted categories establish weights and proportions. It is possible, therefore, for different teachers in the same course team to have a number of tasks/ assessments different from another teacher in the same team.</p>	<p>Two Categories The <i>two category method</i> requires a team to develop a framework for consistency and transparency regarding weights and proportions of tasks / assessments and to communicate it in advance to students and parents.</p>	<p>One Category The <i>one category method</i> requires a team to develop a framework for consistency and transparency regarding weights and proportions of tasks/assessments and to communicate it in advance to students and parents.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Option A Three Weighted Categories (Team uses three preselected categories.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Option B Three–Five Weighted Categories (Team selects categories from a list.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Option C Two Categories (Team uses two preselected categories.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Option D One Category (Team identifies no categories.)</p>
Multiple and varied tasks/ assessments over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A disproportionate amount of the grade should not be concentrated in too few tasks/assessments. ▪ By the end of a marking period, each category will have at least one task/assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A disproportionate amount of the grade should not be concentrated in too few tasks/assessments. 		
Team determines weights/ proportions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In a course team where few summative assessments are given in a marking period, the team will consider carefully the weight of each category and tasks/assessments within categories. ▪ All teachers in the team will follow the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In a course team using one category, the team will consider carefully the plan of tasks/assessments in a marking period and the points possible. ▪ All teachers in the team will follow the plan. 		
Consistency, communication, clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course teams will determine and communicate to students and parents in advance the number and weight of categories. ▪ If a team changes the plan during the marking period, the team will communicate to students and parents how this changes the proportion or weight of categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course teams will determine and communicate to students and parents, in advance, the plan for tasks/assessments and the points possible. ▪ If a team changes the plan during the marking period, the team will communicate to students and parents how this changes the proportion of tasks/assessments. 		
Accurate reflection of student achievement of MCPS curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definitions and examples for formative and summative assessments are provided in Appendix A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definitions and examples for formative and summative assessments are attached. 		

Figure 1

Ungraded Categories (no change to current practice)

In addition to graded categories, course teams or departments in high schools and middle schools have one category available called “Ungraded Tasks/Assessments.” This category will be unweighted (i.e., weight = 0) and used for recording ungraded tasks/assessments such as:

- Pre-assessments
- Record keeping items (fee collection, signed paperwork, book numbers)
- Work checked for completion

Middle school course teams or departments have two additional ungraded categories for tracking learning skills. These categories will be unweighted (i.e., weight = 0) and used to record “Assignment Completion” and “Participation”.

II. Combination of Category Weights

Consistent with MCPS *Grading Procedures for Grades 6-12*, course teams, departments, or schools will make decisions about category weights. The school leadership team will apply the following to guide decision-making:

Course teams or departments—

- will agree upon category weights so that each teacher on the course team or department is using the same category weights,
- will use category weights in increments of 5 percent,
- will not assign any one task/assessment that counts more than 25 percent of the marking period grade,
- will have at least one task/assessment in each category,
- will use multiple tasks/assessments whenever possible, and
- will analyze past grading practices for the purpose of making improvements.

III. Category Grade Calculation Method

The gradebook provides two category grade calculation methods for graded tasks/assessments.

Each school will select one category grade calculation method—Summation Percentage or Raw Score Conversion to Percent.

A school with any course team using Graded Categories Option D (one category/total points) will use only Summation Percentage.

Both methods are fair and accurate if used correctly and thoughtfully. Summation Percentage may be more familiar to teachers, students, and parents.

1. Summation Percentage—sum of earned points divided by sum of maximum possible points
2. Raw Score Conversion to Percent—Each score converted to a percentage and divided by number of scores

Regardless of which category grade calculation method is used, staff will make deliberate decisions about task/assessment design (e.g., number of items, point value of items, weighting, maximum possible points, and category designation) and its impact on student grades.

IV. Course Grade Calculation

Course (full year and semester) final grades are calculated in the MCPS report card system and not in the electronic gradebook. They are based on a 4-point scale (A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1, E-0) and the trend of the student's grade over the duration of the course.

Stakeholders have expressed a desire to evaluate whether course final grades should be calculated based on the actual numeric grade and not on the letter grade, thus eliminating the use of trending marking period or semester grades.

As this topic is not related to the electronic gradebook and because additional stakeholder input is needed, it is recommended that this topic be referred to the Grading and Reporting Implementation Team (GRIT). GRIT members will be asked to develop a process to collect and consider stakeholder input and make a recommendation.

Appendix A

Definitions and Examples

Formative task/assessment: an assessment used during the course of instruction that measures student mastery of specific indicators and is used by teachers to inform and guide subsequent instruction. Graded formative assessments may include but are not limited to the following:

- Art—painting, photograph, drawing, sculpture
- Multimedia—Web sites, videos, CDs, brochures
- Presentations—multimedia presentations, panel discussions, symposia, skits, speeches
- Compositions—graphic, written, spoken, musical, physical, computer programs
- Displays—graphic organizers, concept maps, graphs, tables, charts, formulae
- Records—journals, logs
- Quick Writes—brief written assignments to assess understanding
- Projects—research, experiments, investigations
- Reports—written, spoken, multimedia presentations that synthesize concepts
- Essays—extended written assignments in which the audience, purpose, topic, and form are selected by the student or teacher to assess writing or understanding or both
- Quizzes—may include selected response and constructed response (short answer)
- Tests—may include selected response, constructed response (short answer), and essays

Summative task/assessment: an assessment that measures student mastery of all indicators included in a unit or other instructional period at the end of that instructional period. Examples of summative assessments/tasks include but are not limited to the following:

- End-of-course exams
- Assessments that end an instructional unit or period of study (e.g., tests)
- Final research papers, reports, or essays
- Culminating projects or performances

Appendix B

Professional Development for Implementing the Secondary Electronic Gradebook

The workgroup proposes the following timeline for professional development activities and school/department/team decision-making associated with implementing proposed recommendations.

Content/ Topic Description	Audience	Venue	Target Date	Status
<i>Steps in Decision-Making</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Grading and Reporting • Background of One-Text – issues/ concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number/ Name of Categories ○ Category Grade Calculation Method ○ Combination of Category Weights ○ Course Grade Calculation 	Central Services Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCIP Instructional Specialist • OSESS Instructional Specialist • OOD Content Specialist • OOD Technology Consultants 	Training of Trainers (TOT)	06/01/08	
Overview of Grading and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCTO Staff • Help Desk • ITSS 	Team Meeting	06/01/08	
Overview of Grading and Reporting and Grade Calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSP • DSP • AAS 	Team Meeting	06/01/08	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Grading and Reporting • Background of One-Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number/ Name of Categories ○ Category Grade Calculation Method ○ Combination of Category Weights ○ Course Grade Calculation 	School-Based Administrators, including Gradebook Advisors/SDT	Information Meeting	06/16/08	
	School Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School based LT meetings • Principal /SDT Trainer 	06/12/08	
<i>Preliminary decision-making in course teams and departments</i>	<i>Course teams and departments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT Meetings 	July, 7–9, 2008	
<i>Decision-making in school leadership teams</i>	<i>School leadership team</i>		<i>May 2008– June 2008</i>	
			<i>July14–18, 2008</i>	

Appendix C

Explanation and Examples of Grade Calculation Methods

1. Summation Percentage

- a. Sum of earned points (A) divided by sum of maximum possible points (A1)
- b. $(A+B+C)/(A1+B1+C1)$
- c. $(8+15+28)/(10+20+30)=51/60=85$ percent
- d. The significance of a task/assessment is represented by the task/assessment's maximum possible points. For example, a task/assessment with 40 maximum possible points counts for twice as much as a task/assessment with 20 maximum possible points
- e. The weight of a task/assessment is always set at 1 in electronic gradebook

2. Raw Score Conversion to Percent

- a. Convert each score to percentage divided by number of scores
- b. $(A/A1 + B/B1 + C/C1)/3$
- c. $(83/100 + 34/40 + 43.5/50)/3 = (83 + 85 + 87)/3 = 255/3 = 85$ percent (all assessments/asks have a weight of 1 in this example)
- d. The significance of a task/assessment is represented by weighting the task/assessment since the maximum possible points does not carry an inherent weight since each score is converted to a percent
- e. The weight of a task/assessment may be more than 1 in the electronic gradebook to represent the significance of a task/assessment