Grading and Reporting

Grades 1–12

Communicating Student Achievement
Increasing Student Success
Effective August 2006
**What is standards-based grading and reporting?**

**Academic Meaning**
In a standards-based grading and reporting system, grades reflect what a student knows and can do, as outlined in the Montgomery County Public Schools curriculum. This idea often is referred to as *academic meaning of the grade.*

Teachers in Grades 1–12 will base report card grades on academic achievement only. Teachers in Grades 1–5 will report information about effort and behavior separately on the report card as learning skills. Teachers in Grades 6–8 will report information about effort separately on the report card as learning skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Skills</th>
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**Grading to Standard**
In a standards-based grading and reporting system, grades also reflect what students know and can do in relation to grade-level or course expectations. This idea often is referred to as *grading to standard.*

**Clearly Defined Procedures**
In a standards-based grading and reporting system, grading practices are fair and manageable and they support effective teaching and learning. Required procedures for grading are defined, used consistently, and explained clearly to students and parents in writing at the beginning of a semester or school year, or when grading procedures change.
Why is MCPS implementing standards-based grading and reporting?

Standards-based grading and reporting helps to improve student achievement by focusing on four critical questions:

- What do students need to know and be able to do?
- How will we know that they have learned it?
- What will we do when they haven’t learned it?
- What will we do when they already know it?

Grades based on curriculum standards become triggers for action. Standards-based grades help teachers plan their instruction so they can challenge and support all students. They help parents know the academic areas in which a student meets or exceeds expectations, needs challenge, or needs support.

How does the grading and reporting system affect students in special populations?

Students receiving services for limited English proficiency, special education, or 504 disabilities will be afforded all accommodations and modifications, as documented by English Language Learner (ELL) plans, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), or Section 504 plans. Students who plan to earn a diploma are held to grade-level or course expectations.
How does the grading and reporting system work?

At the end of a nine-week marking period, teachers record grades on the report card for each student in Grades 1–12, as they have in the past.

**Grade for achievement:** In Grades 1–12, the report card grade summarizes achievement on many tasks or assessments during a marking period. These tasks/assessments may take different forms, including tests, quizzes, compositions, exhibits, products, presentations, graphic displays, performances, discussions, and simulations.

**Grades 1–8**
Teachers in elementary and middle schools report two kinds of information on the report card:
- academic achievement
- learning skills

**Learning skills:** In Grades 1–8, teachers observe students’ learning skills and talk to them about how to improve or maintain these skills. Teachers report learning skills on interims and progress reports, in parent conferences, and on report cards. When reporting learning skills, teachers use the chart listed below.

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<tr>
<th>Grades 1–5</th>
<th>Grades 6–8</th>
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<td>Independently</td>
<td>Consistently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited Prompting</td>
<td>Often</td>
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<td>Frequent Prompting</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Enough Information</td>
<td>Not Enough Information</td>
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**Grades 9–12**
Teachers in high schools report only grades for achievement on the report card.
What will happen in elementary schools this year?

Report Cards

Grades 1–3

- In selected elementary schools, the report card for students in Grades 1–3 will look different from the report card used in all other elementary schools. Parents in these schools will receive information about this report card at Back-to-School Night, parent meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.
- In the remaining elementary schools, the report card for students in Grades 1–3 will look the same as the report card used previously. Academic achievement will be reported using O, S, N in Grades 1 & 2 and A, B, C, D, E in Grade 3.

Grades 4–5

- In all elementary schools, the report card for students in Grades 4 and 5 will look the same as the report card used previously.
- Academic achievement will be reported using A, B, C, D, E.

Homework

Teachers in Grades 1–5 assign homework as an important part of instruction.

- Homework for practice is not part of the academic grade.
- Teachers provide feedback on homework that is assigned to practice new skills.
- Homework evaluated for learning may be included as part of the academic grade.
- Teachers give feedback in writing and/or by talking with students individually or in groups.

Extra Credit

- Extra credit is not used.
What will happen in secondary schools this year?

Report Cards
- Academic achievement will be reported using A, B, C, D, E.

Homework
- Homework for practice or preparation for instruction may account for up to 10% of the marking period grade. When turned in by the deadline, this homework is given full credit.
- Homework evaluated for learning may count toward the remaining portion of the marking period grade.

Extra Credit
- Extra credit is not used.

Reteaching/Reassessment
- Reassessment opportunities are identified by the teacher before the original task/assessment and occur within an instructional unit. Only one reassessment is offered per task/assessment.
- When reassessment is offered, all students may be reassessed, regardless of grade on original task/assignment, if they meet the following requirements:
  - Complete the original task or assessment
  - Complete required assignments
  - Complete the reteaching/relearning activities
- The reassessment grade replaces the original grade.

Grading
- Teachers may use letters, numbers, or other symbols on individual tasks/assessments to indicate what students know and can do.
- Teachers will record grades for individual tasks/assessments with the highest degree of precision.
- When using points or percentages, teachers assign a grade no lower than 50% to the task/assessment. If a student does no work on the task/assessment, the teacher will assign a zero.
- Teachers will establish due dates and deadlines.
  - Work turned in after the due date and by the deadline may be lowered no more than one letter grade, or 10% of the grade.
  - Work submitted after the deadline will be recorded as a zero.
How will student achievement be communicated to students and parents?

Teachers will provide students and parents with information about achievement throughout the marking period. This feedback may take several forms, including the following:

- **Report cards**: Issued on a quarterly basis, report cards show academic grades and learning skills separately in Grades 1–8 and show only academic grades in Grades 9–12.
- **Interims/progress reports**: Many schools send interim or progress reports for all students. Grades 6–12 teachers send interim reports midway through the quarter to parents of students who are in danger of failing or dropping more than one letter grade during the marking period.
- **Online grade reports**: Many schools use Edline to report grades on individual tasks and assessments. These reports are available on a password-protected Web site that may be accessed by parents and students on any Web-enabled computer.
- **Parent conferences**: Teachers of Grades 1–8 schedule parent conferences during the first semester. Teachers and parents may request additional conferences to discuss student progress and/or concerns, as needed. In both middle and high school, parent conferences are encouraged for students who are in danger of failing or dropping more than one letter grade during the marking period.
- **Informal methods**: Teachers also may use a variety of methods to report achievement and learning skills to students and parents, such as telephone calls, e-mail, observation records, and feedback sheets.
- **Teacher feedback**: Teachers give feedback on class work and homework to ensure that students learn. This feedback may be oral, as in reviewing assignments and assessments in class. The feedback may be written, as in writing comments on assignments. Teachers may provide feedback to individual students, small groups, or the whole class.

**Parents are encouraged to talk to their child’s teachers about specific questions concerning grades.** Each school will develop a process for discussing and responding to general questions about the grading policy or procedures. This process will include staff and parents.
How will students and parents know about individual classroom or course-specific grading procedures?

Grading and reporting procedures require teachers to inform students and parents in writing at the beginning of a year or semester, or when grading procedures change, about the following:

- Class or course expectations
- What is included in the grade
- How grades are determined, including weights and proportions

In Grades 1–5, this information should include details about homework and learning skills.

In Grades 6–12, this information should include details about course-specific processes for homework, reteaching/reassessment, and any other grading processes specific to the course.

All schools communicate schoolwide decisions about grading processes to students and parents before and during the school year through summer mailings, school newsletters, Web sites, and meetings.

Additional information about grading and reporting is available to students, parents, community members, teachers, and administrators on the MCPS Web site www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading.