

César Chávez Academy Middle School
2014-2015 Grading Policy

As we discussed in departments and collectively in August, we have concluded that everyone seems to be on board with standards-based grading but we are all a little apprehensive to take the plunge. With that being said, we are going to take the next two years to roll out a three-step plan to get us there. (Please remember homeroom “grades” will be based on citizenship – see below).

“Grading on achievement is a key element of ‘standards-based grading,’ a practice that is gaining in popularity. This model focuses solely on students’ proficiency on well-defined course objectives” (Scriffiny, 2008).

As a reminder, the following Vision and Goals will drive our grading policy:

- César Chávez Academy Middle School’s vision places high standards and expectations on students to inspire all toward excellence
 - ✓ Our vision will be met through collaborative and continuous improvements made by both students and staff;
 - ✓ Teachers will use data driven instruction, authentic assessments, and streamlined grading processes in order to ensure academic growth and overall improvement;
 - ✓ Students at CCAMS will take an active role in their education and accept responsibility for their own learning.

Step 1 (focus for this year): This year grades will strictly be derived from summative assessments, which directly correlate to the content standards for your particular grade and subject.

Some general guidelines:

- Summative assessments are the demonstration of understanding that follows all the practice
 - This makes it essential that all assignments and assessments tightly align with the standard(s) taught.
 - ✓ Standards-based assessments do not have to be lengthy. It is recommended that there are no more than 3-5 questions per standard.
- Formative Assessment is practice and guiding work that shows the teacher where students are at, and it is the foundation upon which data-driven instruction is based
 - This is the point in which you know what intervention needs to occur for your students who are not showing understanding of the content
 - ✓ If they are lacking the background knowledge to be successful on the test, formative assessments serve as information to determine which students need more help
 - You should keep track of this in PowerTeacher (PT) just be sure to exempt it from being calculated in the grade
 - No fewer than **one** formative assessment per week will be recorded in PT
 - See below for further explanation
- Sharing with Students – many of you have expressed how pleasantly surprised you were about how receptive students are to our grading changes. When students know what is expected of them they are more likely to rise to the challenge. I realize there was some initial hesitation surrounding students refusing to do classwork or homework “because they aren’t being graded for it”. As multiple staff members have shared with me, they are experiencing the exact opposite. Student attitudes have changed and they are more willing to take risks and share their struggles because they are *practicing and given explicit feedback ensuring they are better prepared for their test – which directly links to their grade.*
 - Therefore, if you haven’t already done so, please share this with your students. It is imperative that we have these conversations to ensure full understanding.
 - I would also share one of our goals this year, which directly pertains to them...