Grading

The primary purpose of grading (or determining grades) is to communicate student achievement to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders with an educational interest. Achievement, in this context, is understood as performance measured against accepted and established standards & learning outcomes.

Secondary purposes might include providing teachers with data for instructional planning, or for providing educators with information necessary for program participation or student placement.

Both school success and student success hinge on these purposes of grading being understood and shared by all participants in the educational process.

Gradebook Expectations

The Gradebook is the primary tool that allows a teacher to monitor and track student achievement & progress over time. To that end, it is the repository of items that allow teachers and others to perform that function. Two key ideas need to be distinguished:

- **Grading**: all tasks/activities that students are asked to perform or complete need to be graded in one manner or another – for at least the purpose of communicating achievement against a standard or outcome, and so they should be included in the gradebook. Even formative assessments get graded so that both the student and the teacher know to what degree the student is mastering the skill/content: +, /, or – are quick descriptors of mastery.
- **Contributing to a grade**: while numerous items can and should be included in the Gradebook, that is not meant to imply that every item should contribute toward a student's grade in that subject. Practice and other purely formative assessments are solely for the intended purpose of letting the student (and the teacher) know if she/he is on track to master the skill/content. This is why category weighting is crucial in determining achievement grades that are accurate, fair, and reasonable.

Teachers are expected to collect, record, analyze, and disaggregate data in their classroom on a regular and on-going basis. It is no longer enough to say that "Data Drives Instruction": it has to be "Informed Data Drives Instruction" This means that teachers have to utilize tools to collect data and use the results collected to take meaningful steps to improve both teaching and learning in the classroom.

General Gradebook Expectations:

- There must be alignment between what students are expected to know, how that content will be presented to students , and how students will demonstrate their understanding of that content (activities, assignments, projects, assessments)

  Standards ➔ Curriculum ➔ Curriculum Map ➔ Lesson Plans ➔ student learning

- Assessments that appear in lesson plans should appear in the Gradebook
- Gradebooks must be updated **WEEKLY**, although teachers are encouraged to update gradebooks more frequently.
- School administrators are permitted to examine class record books at any time as part of their job functions. Gradebooks will be reviewed by either the instructional coach/data coach and/or the school leader. Teachers can expect feedback after gradebooks are reviewed.
- Items in a gradebook must be categorized based on the purpose for that item: classwork, homework, quiz, test, etc. Categories must contain a sufficient number of items within a marking period so that the data provided is both accurate and reliable: the more items taken into consideration (i.e. the larger the sample size), the more accurate the grade will be.
- The Writing Gradebook must include items that involve writing tasks: such as responding to a prompt, writing to a topic, a persuasive argument, suggestions for improving a writing sample, etc. Grammar and spelling are elements of writing, not the entirety of it.
- Pre-tests are given prior to the start of a unit of study. These are used to gauge prior knowledge, determine individual and group needs, and to plan appropriate differentiation. Pre-tests are not calculated into a student's grade.
- Grade Frequency:
    - Summative Assessments should occur at least every 2 weeks; if units of study are longer than 2 weeks, the mid-unit assessments should be created. Teachers should not wait for extended periods without determining student achievement levels.
    - Students should demonstrate their mastery of content on a frequent basis in ways other than end of unit tests: quizzes, independent classwork, writing activities, etc. A minimum of 2 of these should be assigned per week per content area (Science and Social Studies may require 1 each).
- Mastery of content on most assessments is normally set at a **minimum** of 75% (meaning that students should have a grasp of at least 75% of the content being assessed). Mastery below 75% on tasks that focus on achievement (i.e. summative assessments) must be retaught or remediated in some way.
- All entries must contain a reference to a standard, such as: *W.2.3*, *RL.7.*, *4.OA.A.1*, *RH.9-10.2* and brief label description. *Ex. Unit 2 Polynomials, Persuasive Essay: Smoking, Place Value Test.*

Academic Practice vs. Academic Achievement

Definitions:

- **Academic Practice (Formative Data)** is work conducted when a student is still learning the material. It is designed to provide direction for improvement and/or adjustment to instruction for individual students or for a whole class. This may also be referred to as formative work.
- **Academic Achievement (Summative Data)** is work conducted when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to be responsible for the material. It provides information to be used in making judgments about a student's achievement at the end of a period of instruction. This may also be referred to as summative work.

	Academic Practice	Academic Achievement
Purpose:	to monitor	to judge
Time:	during process	end of process
Types:	informal	formal
Use:	to improve	judge process/product

Academic Practice and Academic Achievement may include the following types of assessments. Please note, however, that the definitions provided above are the best guide for determining if an assessment is Academic Practice (formative) or Academic Achievement (summative), since the items below may be used differently between subjects and grade levels.

Academic Practice

· Journals / responses
· Some quizzes
· Some homework
· First drafts of writing
· Teacher questions during instruction
· Some worksheets (in class assignments)
· Informal observations
· Pre-testing
· Reading logs
· Cooperative group work
· Small projects
· Group presentations
· Brainstorming activities
. Spelling Tests

Academic Achievement

· Tests (written, oral, and performance)
· Some quizzes
· Portfolios
· Writings (term papers, essays, stories, etc.)
· Early / rough drafts
· Reading responses
· Projects
· Presentations
· Spelling Tests

Gradual Release of Responsibility (I – We – You): the aim of instruction is to get students to the point where they can demonstrate their understanding of the material on their own (whether it is applying knowledge, creating something, or solving some problem). Teacher modelling is imperative in this process: I will show you how to do it, then We will do it together, and then You will do it on your own. Where an activity falls in this continuum can determine if an item is practice or achievement; so classwork can be formative (if it is guided, directed, or group work) or it can be summative (if the student is independently demonstrating their understanding).

Grade Weighting

A student's final grade is rarely ever based on a simple average of each item that contributes to the grade: some items (e.g. end of unit test) should count more heavily (i.e. should carry more weight) in determining the overall grade than other items (e.g. homework or participation).

Weighting Scale:

Category	Possible Weight
Assessment	60%
Classwork / Projects	30%
Spelling (as part of Writing)	10% max.
Homework (if graded)	5% max.

Weighting Scales must be entered for each individual marking period and must follow the calculations above.

Reporting Grades

Grades are reported to parents a minimum of eight times during the school: four end of term Report Cards and four mid-term Progress Reports. These reports are generated through PowerSchool, of which PowerTeacher is a component. Teachers are responsible for knowing the last day of a marking period (which signals the end of assessing for that term) and the date and time that grades are due for submission to the office.

Collaboration between general education and special education teachers is required for both progress reports and report cards: case managers collaborate on grades and the social worker collaborates on conduct and work/social habits. Classroom teachers cannot assign final grades in any term until after they have consulted with the collaborative teachers.

Particular students may require reporting on a more frequent basis, as determined by means of a conference between the teacher, the parent(s), and other necessary stakeholders. The type and frequency of such reports is determined on a per case basis.

Students receiving a grade lower than "C" (74%) – or is "Unsatisfactory" or "Developing" -- must include a comment as to <u>why</u> the student received that grade.