ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

This policy and accompanying *K-12 Assessment and Grading Common Guidelines* for Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) staff are based on the belief that assessment of student learning is an essential component of the teaching and learning process and assessment has the potential to motivate students and improve learning. Additionally, this policy seeks to establish a consistent approach to assessment and grading in all Loudoun County Public Schools.

A. **Philosophy.** Assessment and grading of student progress are based on the premise that students have diverse capabilities and individual patterns of progress and learning. Teachers and principals are responsible for developing instructional plans based on frequent and varied assessments of the students' needs, abilities, and progress. Grades shall not reflect behavior but rather, a student's mastery of content or competencies of the curriculum. Assessment and grading activities should:

1. Communicate academic achievement and social-emotional growth on a regular basis to students and parents.

2. Reflect individual differences and rates of learning.

3. Address the unique needs of special population students including, but not limited to, gifted, English learners (EL), and students with disabilities.

4. Ensure IEP and 504 accommodations are followed in relation to assessment and grading.

5. Make adjustments for transitional periods in students' lives including elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school.

6. Reflect expectations for student learning.

7. Provide for student self-evaluation.

8. Encourage students to take an active role in setting goals and assessing progress toward an identifiable and measurable set of standards that are in alignment with the stated learning objectives.

9. Foster student reflection, agency, and ownership through a growth mindset toward learning.

10. Inform all participants about the purpose, philosophy, and procedures of the grading and reporting system.

11. Be aligned with a school-wide system of interventions and supports for teachers and students.
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12. Ensure grades reflect student learning, through multiple efforts which include re-assessment opportunities, and student growth within a grade level or subject area.

13. Ensure Dual Enrollment (DE) courses meet their unique grading and withdrawal policies as specified by the accrediting college or university.

14. Promote consistency and predictability in grading and assessment through instructional staff adhering to common grading expectations set forth in LCPS K-12 Assessment and Grading Guidelines.

B. Definitions.

1. Grading. Grading is the process of assigning value to a student’s mastery of content or competencies. Grades communicate a measure of a student’s mastery of content or competencies as compared to state standards and local curricula.

2. Assessment. Assessment is the process of identifying the extent of learning that has occurred during or after the learning process. It determines whether the learner has reached the target objective(s). It measures the degree of mastery of content or competencies (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creating and contributing). Assessment is used to inform next steps in teaching and learning. Assessment may be formative or summative.

3. Formative Assessment. Formative assessment occurs during the learning process and is designed to guide next steps toward mastery. The goal of formative assessment is to monitor learning, provide feedback, and set goals to move learning forward. Information gathered during formative assessment is used to inform next steps in instruction. Formative assessments will not be used to determine final grades.

4. Summative Assessment. Summative assessment occurs at the end of a learning cycle and is designed to determine a student’s level of mastery of specified content or competencies. Summative assessments become the source of information for grading. A major summative assessment is 10% or more of the quarter grade.

C. Homework. When assigned, homework will be a natural extension of the school day where homework is practice for reinforcement and application of previously learned concepts. Any homework that is assigned to students must be something the students are able to complete successfully on their own in a reasonable amount of time. If homework is to be used successfully, teachers, students and parents/guardians must assume certain responsibilities to include the following:
1. **Teacher Responsibilities.**

   a. Teachers will assign homework with specific directions and consider individual differences by tailoring assignments to match the instructional level of the student, learning style, readiness, primary languages, and home support systems.

   b. Teachers will use homework as an opportunity for teachers to learn more about the instructional needs of each student and use it to provide feedback for growth and learning.

   c. Teachers should generally consider homework as practice and/or application with an opportunity for feedback and therefore is considered a formative assessment.

   d. Middle and high school teachers may assign long-term assignments such as reports and projects that are completed outside of the classroom, and they may be considered summative assessments and are therefore graded. When used as a summative assessment, homework cumulatively will not be graded more than 10% of the quarter grade.

   e. Teachers will base all homework on one or more of the following purposes:

      (i) To prepare for, relate to, build upon, reinforce and/or enhance learning in the classroom.

      (ii) To practice skills that have been introduced and developed in class.

      (iii) To relate understandings and skills developed at school to everyday life.

      (iv) To enrich the school program by pursuing activities that can be shared with classmates the following day.

      (v) To provide for independent study or projects.

      (vi) To complete unfinished classroom assignments or projects.

   f. Teachers will consider the resources available to all students when assigning homework.
2. **Student Responsibilities.**

   a. Students will view homework as an opportunity to practice their skills and will complete all homework assignments by their due date.

   b. Students will request additional help and/or clarification of assignments from the teacher in order to complete assignments to the best of their ability and in a timely manner.

   c. Students will obtain and complete assignments missed due to being absent.

3. **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities.**

   a. Parents/Guardians are not expected to provide instructional support to their child in order for the child to complete homework assignments.

   b. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to support the completion of homework by providing a learning environment conducive to completing homework such as a quiet location, necessary resources, and the expectation that homework will be completed.

   c. Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to seek help from the teacher when homework assignments are too difficult to complete, or expectations are unclear.

4. **Homework Time Allocation Guidelines.**

   a. **Elementary:** When assigning homework, the teacher will consider each student's ability to work independently. The amount of homework that a teacher assigns will vary from day-to-day. As a general rule, students in grades 1-3 should spend no more than thirty (30) minutes daily doing homework; children in grades 4-5 should spend no more than sixty (60) minutes doing homework.

   b. **Middle and High School:** Homework assignments vary by subject matter and reflect the expectations and level of the course. Honors level courses may require more time and effort. Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement courses are college level courses that include extensive reading, writing, and critical thinking and generally require additional time.

D. **Dishonesty in Assigned Work.** Students are expected to perform honestly on schoolwork and tests. Any student who turns in work that is not their own as their own from whatever source, or who assists or gives their work to another student will receive a consequence aligned with the LCPS disciplinary guidelines as described in the
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If dishonesty is determined, students must complete an alternate summative assessment to demonstrate learning. An academic recovery plan will be created for the assessed content standards and competencies, involving any of the following parties: counselor, administrator, teacher, parent and student. Any academic recovery plan may include a parent-teacher conference, retaking the assessment, an alternative assessment, a lowering of the grade, or receiving a failing grade.

1. **Student Responsibilities.** The following actions are prohibited:

   a. Cheating on a test or assigned work by giving, receiving, offering and/or soliciting information.

   b. Plagiarizing by copying the language, structure, idea and/or thoughts of another.

   c. Falsifying statements on any assigned schoolwork, tests, or other school documents.

2. **Teacher Responsibilities.** The following actions should be taken:

   a. Clearly define expectations regarding collaborative and independent work.

   b. Reinforce behavioral expectations regarding dishonesty in assigned work.

   c. Provide feedback throughout the learning process or the assignment timeline.

   d. Take reasonable actions to maintain assessment and test security.

E. **Best Practices.** Best practices for assessment and grading in LCPS are outlined in the *K-12 Assessment and Grading Common Guidelines*. These practices include the following:

1. **Reassessment.** Reassessments encourage a growth mindset in students and allows them to demonstrate mastery. Teachers will provide opportunity for reassessment of major summative assessments to students who score below an 80%, and remediation may be required prior to reassessment. The teacher should provide the opportunity for reassessment within two weeks’ time, whenever possible, and give clear communication on when those opportunities are reasonably available (i.e., time, dates, and location). The student should make the effort to coordinate with the teacher.
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to schedule any reassessment. The student will be given the higher grade between the original assessment and the reassessment up to an 80%. Teachers, in consultation with the student support teams and parents, will provide students who demonstrate a pattern of repeated reassessments with an appropriate intervention, including limiting future opportunities for reassessment.

2. **Late Work.** It is important that teachers accept late work to document learning. Reasonable and consistent guidelines for accepting late work must be set and communicated to students. Deadlines may be required for submitting late work.

   a. If a student has made a reasonable effort to complete an assessment, a grade of no lower than 50% will be assigned in order to provide the student an opportunity to recover from the grade. It is important that students feel there is an opportunity for success if they work hard.

   b. Teachers, in consultation with student support teams and parents, will provide students who demonstrate a pattern of repeated late or missing work with an appropriate intervention, including assigning a grade less than 50%.

F. **Assessment/Grading and Quarter Grades.** An assessment and grading system must be designed to motivate students and promote a growth mindset. Students who receive a grade below 50% often feel they have no chance of recovery and give up on achieving success in a course. For this reason, LCPS supports a floor of 50% when assessing student achievement in quarter and final grades. In high school courses, the floor of 50% does not apply to the final quarter of a course.

1. Teachers, in consultation with student support teams and parents, will provide students who demonstrate a pattern of disengagement or a lack of participation in the learning process with an appropriate intervention, including assigning a quarter or final grade less than 50%.

2. Summative assessments may be administered in courses to evaluate student learning, skill attainment, and achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period; typically, at the end of a unit, course, semester, program, or school year.

   a. Standardized Summative Assessments. To enhance fair grading practices for students, standardization of major summative assessments is critical within a school. Grade level and subject area teams should establish common, standardized summative assessments whenever possible.

   b. There are no formal midterm or final exams.
3. An individual summative assessment will be limited to no more than 20% of the quarter grade. This revision only applies from 8/20/2020 through 1/19/2021, at which time it will revert to 20%. Each summative assessment will have at least one opportunity for formative feedback.

4. Extra credit may be permitted if connected to course content and cumulatively does not exceed 3% of the quarter grade. Extra credit must be available to all students.

G. Elementary Grading Procedures. Students in grades K-2 are assessed using progress indicators based on their performance in relation to specific state standards. In grades 3-5, students receive more traditional letter grades in addition to the progress indicators based on performance tied to each standard. Elementary teachers look for trends in each student’s performance instead of averaging numerical scores to determine a grade. The Elementary Report Card Manual describes additional grading procedures for grades K-5.

H. Grading Scales for Middle and High School Students. Since grades are reported in order to communicate student performance, it is important that a standard system be used. All grades given to middle and high school students will reflect the alphabetic and numeric values indicated below, and this scale is to be used in reporting grades on report cards and other scholastic records.

The LCPS grading scale is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98 – 100</td>
<td>An “A” generally designates the status of a student who consistently demonstrates accurate and complete knowledge of content and competencies specified in the course curriculum and applies that knowledge in a variety of settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 97</td>
<td>A “B” generally designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of content and competencies specified in the course curriculum with some improvement needed in accuracy and/or consistency in performance and applying that knowledge in a variety of settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
<td>A “C” generally designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of basic content and competencies specified in the course curriculum but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire skills necessary to apply that knowledge in a variety of settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69</td>
<td>A &quot;D&quot; generally designates the status of a student who needs significant practice and instructional interventions to acquire the knowledge of basic content and competencies specified in the course curriculum necessary to apply that knowledge in a variety of settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59</td>
<td>An “F” generally designates the status of a student who has not demonstrated the basic knowledge of content and/or competencies specified in the course curriculum and requires additional practice and instructional interventions in order to succeed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Reference: Student Rights and Responsibilities, Policy 8215