

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

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

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

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

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18 2. Reflect individual differences and rates of learning.

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

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

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

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29 6. Reflect expectations for student learning.

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31 7. Provide for student self-evaluation.

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

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

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

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43 11. Be aligned with a school-wide system of interventions and supports for
44 teachers and students.

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46 12. Ensure grades reflect student learning, through multiple efforts which
47 include re-assessment opportunities, and student growth within a grade level or subject
48 area.

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

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

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57 B. Definitions.

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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133 2. Student Responsibilities.
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135 a. Students will view homework as an opportunity to practice their
136 skills and will complete all homework assignments by their due date.
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138 b. Students will request additional help and/or clarification of
139 assignments from the teacher in order to complete assignments to the best of their
140 ability and in a timely manner.
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142 c. Students will obtain and complete assignments missed due to
143 being absent.
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145 3. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities.
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147 a. Parents/Guardians are not expected to provide instructional
148 support to their child in order for the child to complete homework assignments.
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150 b. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to support the completion of
151 homework by providing a learning environment conducive to completing homework
152 such as a quiet location, necessary resources, and the expectation that homework will
153 be completed.
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155 c. Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to seek help from
156 the teacher when homework assignments are too difficult to complete, or expectations
157 are unclear.
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159 4. Homework Time Allocation Guidelines.
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161 a. Elementary: When assigning homework, the teacher will consider
162 each student's ability to work independently. The amount of homework that a teacher
163 assigns will vary from day-to-day. As a general rule, students in grades 1-3 should
164 spend no more than thirty (30) minutes daily doing homework; children in grades 4-5
165 should spend no more than sixty (60) minutes doing homework.
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167 b. Middle and High School: Homework assignments vary by subject
168 matter and reflect the expectations and level of the course. Honors level courses may
169 require more time and effort. Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement courses are
170 college level courses that include extensive reading, writing, and critical thinking and
171 generally require additional time.
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173 D. Dishonesty in Assigned Work. Students are expected to perform honestly on
174 schoolwork and tests. Any student who turns in work that is not their own as their own
175 from whatever source, or who assists or gives their work to another student will receive
176 a consequence aligned with the LCPS disciplinary guidelines as described in the
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178 Student Rights and Responsibilities Guide and LCPS Policy 8215, In-School
179 Disciplinary Measures.

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181 If dishonesty is determined, students must complete an alternate summative
182 assessment to demonstrate learning. An academic recovery plan will be created for the
183 assessed content standards and competencies, involving any of the following parties:
184 counselor, administrator, teacher, parent and student. Any academic recovery plan may
185 include a parent-teacher conference, retaking the assessment, an alternative
186 assessment, a lowering of the grade, or receiving a failing grade.

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

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

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

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

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

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201 a. Clearly define expectations regarding collaborative and
202 independent work.

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204 b. Reinforce behavioral expectations regarding dishonesty in
205 assigned work.

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

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

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

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216 1. Reassessment. Reassessments encourage a growth mindset in students
217 and allows them to demonstrate mastery. Teachers will provide opportunity for
218 reassessment of major summative assessments to students who score below an 80%,
219 and remediation may be required prior to reassessment. The teacher should provide
220 the opportunity for reassessment within two weeks' time, whenever possible, and give
221 clear communication on when those opportunities are reasonably available (i.e., time,
222 dates, and location). The student should make the effort to coordinate with the teacher

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223 to schedule any reassessment. The student will be given the higher grade between the
224 original assessment and the reassessment up to an 80%. Teachers, in consultation
225 with the student support teams and parents, will provide students who demonstrate a
226 pattern of repeated reassessments with an appropriate intervention, including limiting
227 future opportunities for reassessment.

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

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

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

243
244 F. Assessment/Grading and Quarter Grades. An assessment and grading system
245 must be designed to motivate students and promote a growth mindset. Students who
246 receive a grade below 50% often feel they have no chance of recovery and give up on
247 achieving success in a course. For this reason, LCPS supports a floor of 50% when
248 assessing student achievement in quarter and final grades. In high school courses, the
249 floor of 50% does not apply to the final quarter of a course.

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

255
256 2. Summative assessments may be administered in courses to evaluate
257 student learning, skill attainment, and achievement at the conclusion of a defined
258 instructional period; typically, at the end of a unit, course, semester, program, or school
259 year.

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

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266 b. There are no formal midterm or final exams.

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268 3. An individual summative assessment will be limited to no more than
 269 20%25% of the quarter grade. This revision only applies from 8/20/2020 through
 270 1/19/2021, at which time it will revert to 20%. Each summative assessment will have at
 271 least one opportunity for formative feedback.

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

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

284
 285 H. Grading Scales for Middle and High School Students. Since grades are reported
 286 in order to communicate student performance, it is important that a standard system be
 287 used. All grades given to middle and high school students will reflect the alphabetic
 288 and numeric values indicated below, and this scale is to be used in reporting grades on
 289 report cards and other scholastic records.

290
 291 The LCPS grading scale is below.

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<p>A+ = 98 – 100 A = 93 – 97 A- = 90 – 92</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>B+ = 87 – 89 B = 83 – 86 B- = 80 – 82</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>C+ = 77 – 79 C = 73 – 76 C- = 70 – 72</p>	<p>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</p>

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	settings.
D+ = 67 – 69 D = 63 – 66 D- = 60 – 62	A “D” 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.
F = – 59 or lower	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.

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294 [Former Policies 5-5, 5-14, and 5-21]
295 Adopted: 12/10/85
296 Revised: 6/22/93, 6/12/2001, 9/22/09
297 Current Revision:
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300 Reference: Student Rights and Responsibilities, Policy 8215