



*Pottsgrove School District
Grading Guidelines
June 2015*

Board approved June 16, 2015

Pottsgrove School District

Grading Guidelines



Exploratory Phase: June 2014 - June 2015

Adoption: TBD

Implementation: September 2015

Introduction

Over the past four years, the Pottsgrove School District has been immersed in efforts to create and implement a clearly articulated K-12 curriculum, common and balanced assessments, and a shift in response to student needs from remediation to intervention. With implementation of these efforts in progress, common district-wide grading practices were identified as an essential district initiative within the Comprehensive Plan.

In Spring of 2014, the Board of Directors voted to move from a 7-point scale to a 10-point scale. This expedited the work of researching, studying, and wrestling with effective grading practices. The Pottsgrove School District began its Grading Practices Inquiry with a community survey. The results of this survey overwhelmingly supported the move to the 10-point scale. In the Fall Of 2014, the Pottsgrove School District created a K-12 Grading Practices Committee. This group worked for many hours studying effective grading practices, reading many articles, developing possible strategies, facilitating staff development, and making recommendations. This group worked together, but also formed two sub-committees to honor the differences in elementary and secondary education. The charge of the Committee was to lead the district in examining grading practices and developing guidelines.

We have developed the *Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines* through collaboration and dialogue that involved the following:

- PGSD Grading Committee
- Building Committees
- Collaborative meetings among professional staff and administrators
- Surveys of staff, parents, and students
- Review of educational best practices as identified in research
- Examination of current practices in grading at Pottsgrove School District and districts across Pennsylvania and the United States
- PGSD Board of School Directors
- PGSD Key Communicators

The intent of these guidelines is to promote a district-wide consistent grading system that is supportive of student learning and that communicates student achievement clearly, accurately, and fairly as appropriate to grade level. All PGSD teachers will use these guidelines to arrive at a student's final grade upon adoption and implementation for the 2015-2016 school year.

Pottsgrove School District

Grading Guidelines



Implementation Plan

The Pottsgrove High School Academic Profile will reflect 2015-2016 phase in of grades. This change will also be highlighted on transcripts.

Graduating Class	Years with 7-Point Scale	Years with 10-Point Scale
2016	3	1
2017	2	2
2018	1	3
2019	0	4

Honor Roll

The honor is based upon quarterly grades. The following are honors:

- Honor Roll:** B average in every course per quarter
- Distinguished Honors:** A average in every course per quarter
- Honor Graduate:** A average or 90% cumulative average
Calculated in the third quarter of the senior year

Purpose Statement

We recognize that some variation in grading practices among grade levels is appropriate but believe that the primary purpose of grading is to measure student achievement and to clearly communicate that achievement to students, parents, and teachers. We believe that grading should be criterion-referenced, (based on content-specific learning goals), and not norm-referenced, (based on comparisons to other students' achievement).

K-12 Purpose Statement:

We believe the purpose of grading is to measure and communicate student performance, progress, achievement, and mastery of core concepts and skills to students, parents, and teachers while providing students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of learning.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



The PGSD Grading Guidelines were designed through research of effective practices related to grading. This document is centered by four grading practices.

1. Only include scores that relate to the achievement of standards.
2. Use a variety of assessment methods to collect high quality, organized evidence of achievement.
3. Use appropriate grade calculation.
4. Use grading and assessment procedures that support learning.

Each of these practices identifies several guidelines to follow. Given the complexity of the practices and guidelines, and the professional learning required to assist teachers in adapting classroom environments to this model, it is recommended that the guidelines be implemented over a period of two years. In addition, specific tasks need to be accomplished in order to prepare for these transitions.

The timeline for guideline implementation is outlined below. The "To be Accomplished" column delineates tasks that need to be accomplished. These tasks will require professional learning and teams of teachers working to provide definition. In some instances, systems will need to be identified and implemented.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



Grading Practice 1

<i>Only include scores that relate to the achievement of standards.</i>		
Guideline	Meaning	Implementation
1	Be clear about what students must know and be able to do.	2015-2016
2	Homework should be defined in terms of its purpose, task, and worth.	2015-2016
3	Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.	2015-2016
4	Apply other consequences for academic dishonesty other than reduced grades/scores.	2016-2017
5	Have a clear understanding of what each level of performance looks like before students begin work by utilizing rubrics.	2016-2017
6	Ensure that questions are tied to essential standards to verify that assessments measure what is intended.	2016-2017
7	Data collected on non-academic factors (efforts, participation, attitude, adherence to class rules, late work, etc.) should be reported separately.	2016-2017

Be clear about what students must know and be able to do.

Teachers will...

1. Establish performance criteria to be shared with students when providing an assignment to students.
 - a. Performance criteria should determine the expectations for completion as well as the performance levels.
2. Delineate the concepts and skills with which students must be familiar for all summative and formative assessments.
3. Communicate the standards on which learning will focus for each class period.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



Homework should be defined in terms of its purpose, task, and worth.

Teachers will...

1. Provide multiple opportunities for students to experiment and practice newly-acquired skills prior to any homework or assignments being graded.
2. Count homework as no more than ten percent (10%) of a student's overall grade for a marking period/trimester.
3. Identify any extenuating circumstances that may exist for a missing homework assignment.
4. Determine any other causes for a missing assignment within the student's life.
5. Establish clear timelines for completion of the missed homework assignment.
6. Ensure that the expectations for tasks and assignments are clearly established and understood.
7. Provide remediation in any skills or concepts with which the student is having difficulty in order for the student to complete the homework assignment successfully.
8. Require the student to complete the missing work at school, such as during Pride Period (HS), study hall, lunch, before school, after school, a free period, during class, or Period 9 (MS).

Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.

Teachers will...

1. Not provide extra credit for any circumstance.
2. Allow students to provide evidence of learning through a variety of means.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



Grading Practice 2

<i>Use a variety of assessment methods to collect high quality, organized evidence of achievement.</i>		
Guideline	Meaning	Implementation
1	Use multiple measures to determine student achievement. Include more than one kind of assessment to examine the same kind of knowledge or skills (ex: paper/pencil assessments, essay assessments, performance assessments, lab assignments, and personal communication) to evaluate student achievement on grade/course level standards.	2015-2016
2	Compare each student's performance to preset standards, not based on student's achievement compared to other students.	2015-2016
3	Gather evidence using quality assessments.	2015-2016
4	Provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate they have acquired the knowledge or skill expected with proficiency on a standard.	2016-2017
5	Organize and report evidence of learning by standards/learning goals.	2016-2017
6	Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations and mark each assessment on clear, pre-established criteria.	2016-2017

The following definitions are provided for clarity about the potential types of assessments.

- A **summative assessment** is an activity completed when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to learn the material. It provides information to be used in evaluating a student's achievement at the end of a period of instruction. The purpose of a summative assessment is to uncover what students know and are able to do after a period of instruction. This may be referred to as a summative assessment. Examples include unit tests, essays, projects, and presentations.
- A **formative assessment** is a task or assignment within a unit of study given to students to enable learning and provide practice in required content and skills. These assessments may or may not be graded. It is designed to monitor and evaluate student learning and provide direction for adjustment of instruction for individual students or for a whole class within a

Pottsgrove School District

Grading Guidelines



unit of study. Examples include in class activities, such as quick-writes or worksheets, or informal assessments, such as teacher questioning and observation.

- A **performance task** is a task that allows students to demonstrate evidence of learning through performance. Its purpose can be to allow students to demonstrate understanding through a different means or to provide the teacher with information so that instructional decision-making can occur. Example include plays, role playing, and/or labs.

Use multiple measures to determine student achievement. Include more than one kind of assessment to examine the same kind of knowledge or skills (ex: paper/pencil assessments, essay assessments, performance assessments, lab assignments, and personal communication) to evaluate student achievement on grade/course level standards.

Teachers will...

1. Ensure assessment types throughout a marking period/trimester are varied.
2. Allow students to demonstrate evidence of learning through an alternative method if it is believed that the assessment type is interfering with the student's ability to show understanding.
3. Communicate the standards, concepts, and skills that will be represented on each assessment.
4. Establish clear timelines for the completion and submission of all assignments.
5. Ensure all summative assessments are completed since they are course requirements.
6. Ensure assessments are made up by the student within a two week period from the date of absence.
7. Provide an "I" for the course grade if a student fails to complete a summative assessment.

Compare each student's performance to preset standards, not based on student's achievement compared to other students.

Teachers will...

1. Identify the standards, skills, and concepts for which students must demonstrate evidence of learning prior to each lesson, marking period/trimester, and assignment.
2. Ensure assessments and assignments measure student's performance of the standards; not other skills or concepts.
3. Create rubrics, when necessary, to delineate performance criteria and levels for achievement for assignments.
4. Not compare one student's work against another student's work.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



Gather evidence using quality assessments.

Teachers will...

1. Identify the standards, skills, and concepts for which students must demonstrate evidence of learning prior to each lesson, marking period/trimester, and assignment.
2. Communicate the standards, skills, and concepts that will be included on each assignment/assessment with students in preparation for the assignment/assessment.
3. Ensure assessments and assignments measure student's performance of the standards; not other skills or concepts.
4. Examine performance of students on question types to identify and remove any questions that many students miss.

The following guidelines must be followed to assist a student in completing work due to absence:

1. Urge any student who knows that he/she will be absent from class to see the teacher(s) in advance about school work to be missed.
2. Set clear timelines for assignments.
3. Ensure that the expectations for the task/assignment are clearly established and understood.
4. Support the students who will predictably struggle with the task without intervention.
5. Identify any extenuating circumstances that may also be occurring within the student's life.
6. Provide support in any skills or concepts with which the student is having difficulty.
7. Require the student to complete the missing work at school, such as during Pride Period, study hall, lunch, before school, after school, a free period, or during class.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



Grading Practice 3

<i>Use appropriate grade calculation.</i>		
Guideline	Meaning	Implementation
1	Use appropriate calculation methods (mode, mean, most recent) and professional judgement based on evidence of learning.	2015-2016
2	Ensure that students are not punished through grades and have multiple opportunities to recover from one poor performance.	2015-2016
3	Eliminate zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence.	2016-2017

Use appropriate calculation methods (mode, mean, most recent) and professional judgment based on evidence of learning.

Teachers will...

1. Utilize evidence of student performance over time.
2. Analyze student's progression of learning.
3. Utilize professional judgment with data to make decisions about student grades.
4. Determine which assessments throughout a marking period/trimester test the same standards, skills, and/or concepts.
5. Utilize the most recent evidence to determine student understanding of standards, skills, and/or concepts.
6. Assign grades on an alphabetic scale according to quarterly class percentages as follows:

Percent	Grade	GPA
100%-97%	A+	4.33
96.9%-93%	A	4.00
92.9%-90%	A-	3.67
89.9%-87%	B+	3.33
86.9%-83%	B	3.00

82.9%-80%	B-	2.67
79.9%-77%	C+	2.33
76.9%-73%	C	2.00
72.9%-70%	C-	1.67
69.9%-67%	D+	1.33
66.9%-65%	D	1.00
64.9% or below	F	

Ensure that students are not punished through grades and have multiple opportunities to recover from one poor performance.

Teachers will...

1. Provide no grade less than 55% for a marking period. This will occur as a pilot during the 2015-2016 school year and will be re-evaluated at the completion of the year.
2. Provide remediation, meetings with teacher, or additional learning opportunities to students to help them improve performance.
3. Support the student who will predictably find the skills or concepts challenging.
4. Require the student to meet with teacher during Pride Period (HS), Study Hall, lunch, before school, after school, during a free period, during class or Period 9 (MS).

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



Grading Practice 4

<i>Use grading and assessment procedures that support learning.</i>		
Guideline	Meaning	Implementation
1	Use only evidence from assessments to determine grades.	2015-2016
2	Communicate with students and parents using a standards-based grading/reporting system.	2015-2016
3	Include students in the grading process. Students should track their own progress on identified standards.	2016-2017

Use only evidence from assessments to determine grades.

Teachers will...

1. Utilize summative, formative, and performance assessments to allow students to demonstrate evidence of learning.

Communicate with student and parents using a standards-based grading/reporting system.

Teachers will...

2. Ensure summative assessments and formative assessments are recorded separately in the grade book and are reported separately on mid-period progress reports.
3. Post assignments in progress book within timelines as indicated below:
 - a. Homework, quizzes, and tests will be posted within one cycle of the assignment due date.
 - b. Major projects and written work, such as essays or research papers, will be posted within two cycles of the assignment due date.
4. Issue mid-period reports four times a year at the mid-point of each nine week period for any student in danger of failing (any student with a D or an F). This will be printed and sent to the student's home.
5. If a student is in danger of failing (student has a D or an F) at any time between the distribution of mid-period reports and the distribution of report cards, the teacher will communicate with the student and parent(s) or guardian(s).
6. Distribute report cards at the end of each nine-week period for a total of four times a year. This will be printed and sent to the student's home.
7. Facilitate parent conferences twice annually and/or at the request of the parent or teacher.

Pottsgrove School District Grading Guidelines



-
8. Regularly update website to support student and parent understanding of class assignments as follows:
 - a. Information for Parents
 - i. Teacher email addresses
 - ii. Homework assignments
 - iii. Activity calendars
 - iv. Grades (PowerSchool's Parent Portal)
 - v. Online forms for field trips, etc.
 - vi. Resources to support learning at home
 - b. Information for Students
 - i. Ability to complete and submit homework online
 - ii. Teacher web pages with homework assignments and important class-related info, handouts, etc.
 - iii. Current class news and photos
 - iv. Opportunity to contribute to the website