

Proposal to Eliminate Semester and Final Examinations

It is my recommendation to eliminate the use of traditional semester and final examinations for high school students at Elida High School, with the exception of dual-enrollment courses offered through Ohio's College Credit Plus (CCP) program. This change aligns our academic practices with evolving educational standards, maximizes instructional time, and promotes more equitable and meaningful measures of student learning.

Rationale

1. Abundance of Assessments

Our students are already required to take multiple high-stakes standardized assessments, including the Ohio End-of-Course (EOC) exams in key subject areas. These assessments are rigorous, cumulative, and used to measure both student progress and school performance. In addition to this testing, they are subject to continued assessments through progress monitoring. As juniors, they are also given the option to take the ACT test to measure college readiness. With the abundance of testing that is already occurring, students have ample experience with high-stakes assessments. Retaining the practice of semester and final examinations places unnecessary stress on students.

2. Loss of Instructional Time

Currently, our school dedicates approximately two full instructional days each semester to administer exams, for a total of four days each school year. In addition to these four testing days, teachers commonly use several days of examination preparation and review due to the cumulative nature of the assessment. These are days that could be used for instructional enrichment, collaborative learning, interventions, or culminating projects that deepen understanding. In a time when every instructional minute counts, reclaiming these days offers a significant opportunity to enhance the educational experience for our students.

3. Disproportionate Weight on a Single Assessment

Our existing policy assigns 20% of a student's semester grade to the semester examination. This practice places a high-stakes weight on a one-day performance, which may not accurately reflect a student's overall understanding or learning throughout the course. It also disadvantages students who may struggle with test anxiety, illness, or other factors on the day of the exam.

4. Shift in Assessment Practices

Colleges and universities are increasingly moving away from traditional final examinations in favor of authentic assessments such as capstone projects, research papers, and application-based assignments. These alternative assessments promote critical thinking, real-world application, and long-term retention of knowledge. While some courses or universities still retain a traditional examination, we feel that our college-bound students are adequately prepared for successful completion of these assessments.

Exception – College Credit Plus (CCP) Courses

Courses offered through Ohio's College Credit Plus program may still require final examinations or cumulative assessments, depending on the policies of the partnering institution of higher education. In such cases, our school and teachers will maintain compliance with the expectations of the university.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Darren S. Sharp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Darren" and last name "Sharp" clearly legible.

Darren S. Sharp, Principal
Elida High School