
Report on Grading Practices

Board of Education
Presentation, August 27, 2019

A Brief History

In June of 2016, under the direction of then Deputy Superintendent Karen Parks, the HS Admin team set the following goals for the 2016-2017 school year:

1. Start the conversation with teachers regarding reforming grading practices
 2. Establish the “purpose of the grade” and pursue mastery based approaches to reporting grades
 3. Separate behavior/work habits from summative scores
 4. Conduct thorough research review
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A Brief History

Observations of Teacher Gradebooks informed us:

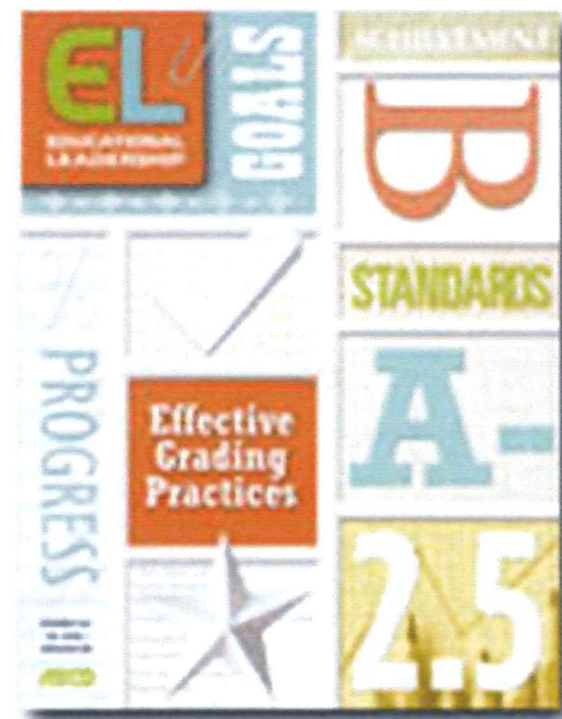
1. Students could have as many as 5-6 different approaches to how category percentages broke down for Summative, Formative, Homework, Participation, other.
 2. Consistency varied not only across content areas, but also within departments or even within different sections of the same course
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A Brief History

2016-17

Research review conducted,
including many articles from the
Association for Supervision and
Curriculum Development (ASCD)
journal, *Educational Leadership*,
November 2011 | Volume 69 |
Number 3 -

Entitled, “Effective Grading Practices”



Purpose of a Grade Established:

A grade communicates an individual student's achievement of the performance standards (learning goals) as defined by the district curriculum.

Survey of Teacher Opinions -

Some Results from the Winter of 2017

A student's course grade should reflect the student's performance content and skills standards in the curriculum.	94% Agree 6 % Don't Know 0% Disagree
Student behavior should be reflected in the overall grade.	53% Disagree 24% Don't Know 23% Agree
Students who don't do Homework but do well on Summative assessments deserve a lower grade (usually created by zeros on HW assignments)	75% Disagree 17% Don't Know 8% Agree

Defining the separate initiatives implemented in the 2018-19 school year:

1. Cumulative Grading
 2. Summatives counting 100% of student grade,
Formative and Behavior counting 0%
 3. Final Assessments counting 20% (and eliminating
midterms)
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1. Cumulative Grading

A system for calculating a student's grade in a class that counts each new assessment at its assigned weight in a cumulative fashion throughout the year.

It eliminates the skewing of grades that comes with averaging quarterly grades and allows students and parents to know EXACTLY what a student grade is for the course after each task is assessed.

Lessons Learned from Cumulative Grading

1. Students knew where they stood at all times
 2. Less student stress before the end of a term.
 3. In some cases, students waited too long to fix low grades/zeros – (more frequent reminders needed)
 4. More careful weighting of assessments: consider what they are “worth” in the picture of the overall school year.
 5. Consider how to space out assessments and the impact of when they occur in the school year.
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Lessons Learned from Cumulative Grading

6. Consider opportunities for re-takes and re-do's.
 7. Parents needed more explanation of the “snapshot” versus a new quarterly grade.
 8. Greater need for “milestone” formatives for larger projects and more frequent summatives.
 9. Help students see the impact that there is more “movement” early in the year when there are fewer grades. Start strong!
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2. Summatives counting 100% of student Grade - (Formatives and Behavior Counting 0%)

Lessons learned about student behaviors:

1. Less completion of Homework (felt it didn't "count") in some subject areas
 2. Little understanding that PRACTICE (i.e. Homework) led to increased performance on summatives
 3. Over-emphasis on what students thought impacted the GRADE (extrinsic reward), but did not focus on LEARNING (intrinsic reward)
 4. High correlation between homework completion and better grades
 5. When students saw homework as meaningful, there was higher completion
 6. Other areas in which homework never counted (AP classes, performance areas like Art, FCS, PE) saw little to no change
 7. Difficulty conducting class when students were not prepared
 8. Not enough feedback on Formative and Behavior categories
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Data: Comparing Grades from 2019 to previous years

Grade	End Year	A	B	C	D	F
09	2017	45.6%	37.0%	13.1%	3.2%	1.2%
	2018	46.7%	34.8%	12.8%	3.5%	2.2%
	2019	41.7%	35.2%	14.8%	5.9%	2.4%
10	2017	46.5%	34.8%	13.0%	4.6%	1.0%
	2018	46.5%	37.2%	12.3%	3.0%	1.1%
	2019	42.7%	34.8%	14.4%	6.1%	2.0%
11	2017	39.6%	38.2%	15.5%	5.0%	1.7%
	2018	38.7%	37.8%	16.0%	5.2%	2.3%
	2019	35.0%	38.0%	17.5%	6.9%	2.6%

Percentage of "A" grades decreased in grades 9-11 (3 to 5 %)

Percentage of "D" and "F" grades increased slightly in all grades (1 to 3%)

Data: Comparing Grades from 2019 to previous years By School- Grade 9:

Grade	Score Group	School Number	2017	2018	2019
09	A	Green	1,119	1,148	1,227
		Purple	1,224	1,285	1,037
	B	Green	1,030	912	1,093
		Purple	874	899	818
	C	Green	359	310	425
		Purple	314	357	380
	D	Green	84	92	117
		Purple	79	90	205
	F	Green	26	60	31
		Purple	34	56	98

Data: Comparing Grades from 2019 to previous years By School- Grade 10:

Grade	Score Group	School Number	2017	2018	2019
10	A	Green	1,190	1,114	1,081
		Purple	1,256	1,209	1,254
	B	Green	876	984	950
		Purple	956	874	955
	C	Green	332	333	402
		Purple	353	283	385
	D	Green	105	63	164
		Purple	136	85	172
	F	Green	24	21	47
		Purple	29	32	61

Impact of 100% summative

Student GPA's were slightly lower, likely from the fact that they did not see homework as affecting their grade, so they performed less practice, and performed more poorly on assessments.

Results of
teacher survey
of preference of
grading scale.

Summative/ (formative, behavior, HW, Participation)	# of respondents	
100/0	17 (21%)	75%
98/2	4 (5%)	
95/5	5 (6%)	
90/10	34 (43%)	
85/15	1	13%
80/10/10 or 80/20	4	
70/20/10	5	
<p>A progression from freshman to senior year with gradually decreasing % counting for formative/HW</p> <p>For example 85/15 as freshmen to 100/0 for seniors and AP courses</p>		10 (13%) ←

In 2019-20, Gradebooks will have two categories:

90%

Summative

10%

Formative/Homework/ Work Habits

3. Final Assessments counting 20% (and eliminating midterms)

Midterms - "Mixed Reviews"

Many students and teachers said there was reduced stress without midterms, more time for projects and instruction, flexibility for scheduling assessments increased.

Some students and teachers saw equal stress:

- Large scale summatives were still given in January due to obvious break points in the delivered curriculum for many years;
 - Many AP teachers would use the midterm as mini-prep for AP Testing, so they continued that practice;
 - Students felt the work was "too spread out" instead of during a designated week.
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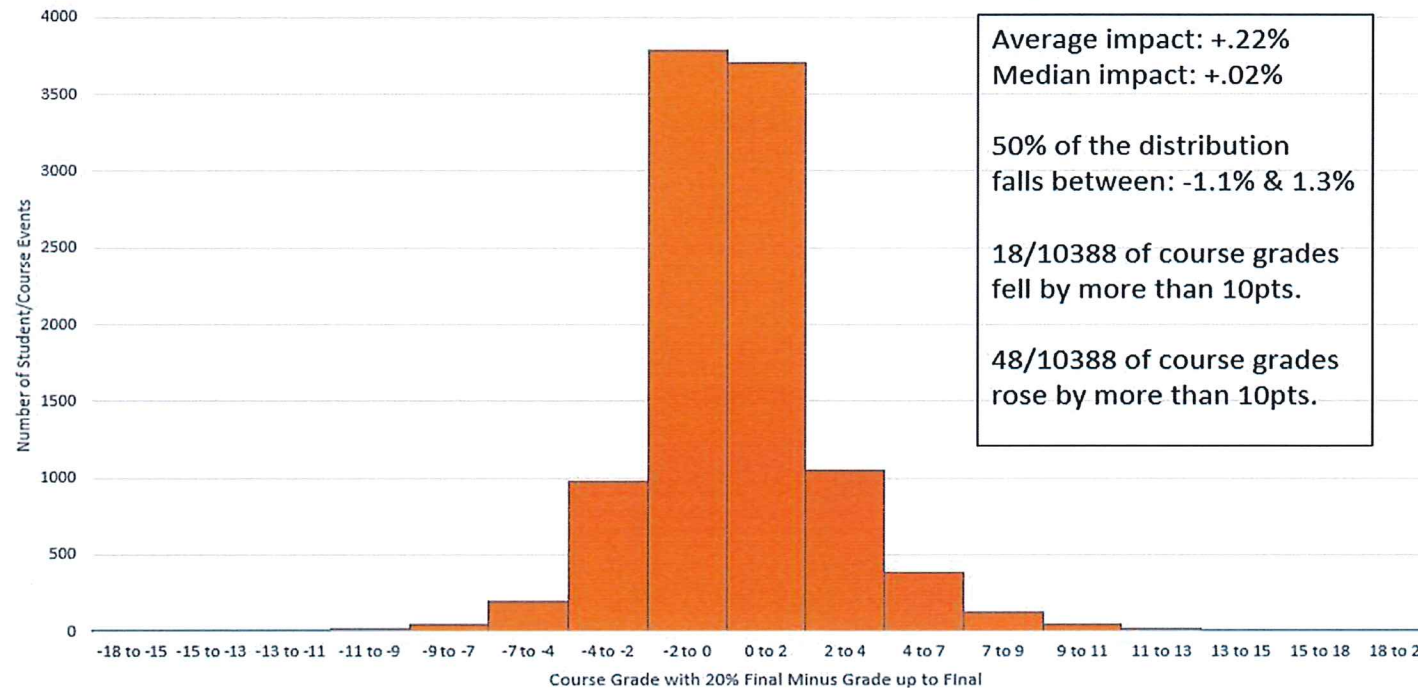
Final Assessments counting 20% (and eliminating midterms)

Finals

- Saw a shift from “Final Exam” to “Final Assessments”
- Meaningful and rigorous new performance based tasks created (portion of Final Assessment)
- Not all “Exams” counted 20%

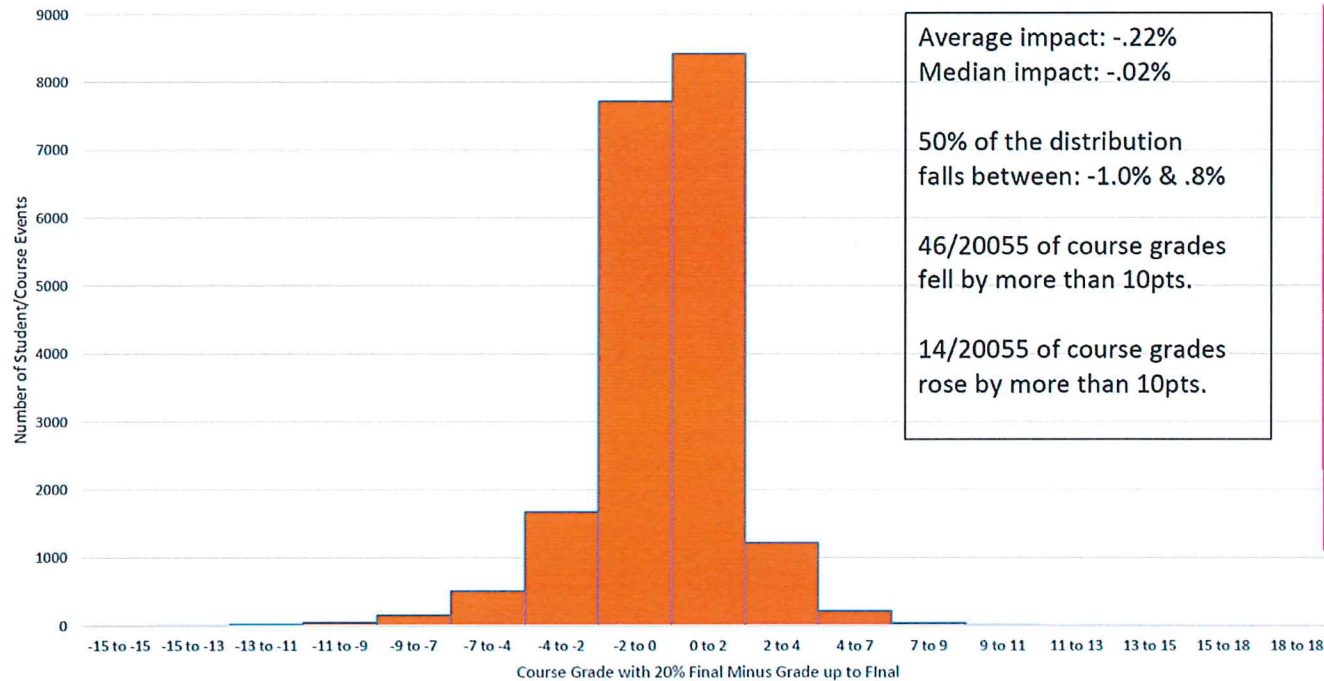
Some students felt increased pressure around preparing for a Final.
Particular concern for freshmen who had not experienced a large exam before.

Distribution of the Impact of a 20% Final on the Course Grade
How Much Course Grade was Increased or Decreased by Final Exam Grade



Impact of 20% Final - Using 2016-17 Data – FLHS students
(removing all zero grades on finals)

Distribution of the Impact of a 20% Final on the Course Grade
How Much Course Grade was Increased or Decreased by Final Exam Grade



Average impact: -.22%
Median impact: -.02%

50% of the distribution
falls between: -1.0% & .8%

46/20055 of course grades
fell by more than 10pts.

14/20055 of course grades
rose by more than 10pts.

Average impact: +.22%
Median impact: +.02%

50% of the distribution
falls between: -1.1% & 1.3%

18/10388 of course grades
fell by more than 10pts.

48/10388 of course grades
rose by more than 10pts.

From Previous Slide

Impact of 20% Final - Using 2018-19 Data – FLHS and FWHS students
(removing all zero grades on finals)

Final Assessments counting 20% (and eliminating midterms)

Lessons learned:

- Overall school-wide impact of final assessments is negligible on Final Mark.
 - In general, for every student whose Final Mark grade dropped because of the Final Assessment, there was another student whose grade increased about the same amount.
 - Shift occurred from very slightly positive to very slightly negative from 2018-19 to 2019-20.
 - This trend is more easily explained by the homework completion problem rather than the 20% final assessment.
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Final Assessments counting 20% (and eliminating midterms)

Adjustments/Review needs to include -

- Pacing the curriculum and assessments, spiraling skills throughout the year
 - How first semester courses take their Final Assessments.
 - Reviewing and helping students prepare for the final assessments.
 - Ensuring high quality performance-based tasks and “sit-down” exams.
 - Students focusing on content and skills throughout entire year (better learning) to build toward demonstration of mastery
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Lessons Learned, Next Steps

More preparation for students and staff in implementing the changes.

By:

Applying the lessons learned from last year (explained in each section) and increasing checks during school year.

Lessons Learned, Next Steps

Implement Homework Policy.

By:
Establish 90/10 Categories in Gradebooks

Reflect change in syllabus/
course descriptions

Lessons Learned, Next Steps

Refining the work to get better.

By:
Establishing a Grading Practices Committee

Continuing to research, attend conferences

Gather feedback from students, parents and teachers.

Thank you

