

Learning Leadership Team District 86 Grading Practices

Board of Education
March 11, 2021

Agenda

- Setting Expectations ('Elephant in the Room')
- LLT Overview
- Accomplishments 2019-2020
- Review of Research / Discussion
- Common Grading Scale 2021-22
- Grading Terminology
- The Work Continues

Current Reality:

30 Different Grading Scales Used Across 8 Departments and Two Buildings

What's My Grade?		
Class Period	Assignment Score	Grade in HAC
Period 1	86	A
Period 2	50	D
Period 3	50	F
Period 4	75	B
Period 5	97	A
Period 6	12	A
Period 7	8	F

But...Talking about Grading is Hard...

Why...

- Grading is personal
- Grading is impactful
- Grading is misunderstood

Grading practices have been the subject of extensive research for decades, yet grading practices and policies are still most often guided by:

1. Policies and practices experiences as a student
2. Personal philosophies of teaching and learning
3. District, Building, Department, Grade level policies on grading and reporting
4. What was learned in undergraduate teaching prep programs

Guskey and Bailey (2001)

We have intentionally keep this 'cognitive dissonance' as part of the ongoing conversation as we read and discussed a wealth of research about grading.

We know that the work and recommendation of the LLT will not strike all families, teachers and students in the same way. Please know that this work is grounded in decades of research and has been vetted by teachers and curriculum leaders across this district.

Let's start with some context...

What is the LLT and why was it created?

- Impossible to ignore the discrepancy of grading practices and reporting systems across District 86
 - Inconsistent, Confusing, Difficult to Navigate
- LLT: 40 Teachers, Department Leaders, Administrators equally representing all academic departments at HC and HS

Charge:

1. Locate and study the most relevant, recent, and data derived research on effective grading practices
2. Facilitate learning sessions about the research with the staff as a whole (flex learning days 19-20)
3. Adopt a District 86 Grading Mission (Presented to BOE May 2020)
4. Determine a Common Grading Scale for District Use

Note: NO research supports the current grading practices of District 86

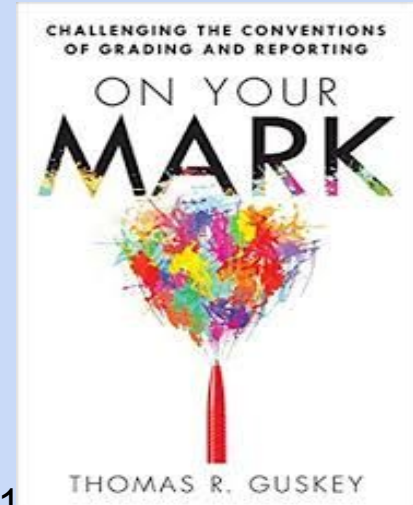
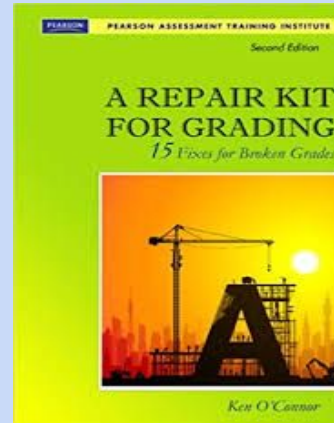
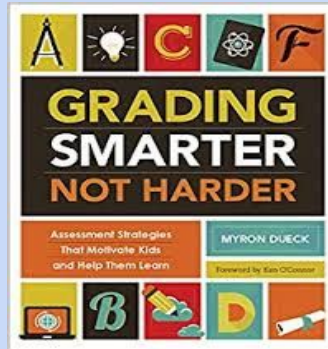
The Process

- Research
- Analyze and evaluate merits of different systems
- Express and revise our priorities in our own grading systems
- Vote on hierarchies in assigning and communicating grades (Fist to Five)
- Reconcile differences before moving on
- Make room to hear from all
- Reconciliation and final voting

Who is doing the Research?

The District 86 LLT studied the following researchers:

- **Thomas Guskey**
- Susan M. Brookhart
- **Myron Dueck**
- **Ken O'Connor**
- Rick Stiggins
- Rick Wormeli
- **Alex Bowers**
- Joe Feldman



Researcher from authors in bold were used on flex-learning days in 19-20 for District-wide conversations.

LLT Developed District 86 Grading Statement

Emphasis: Effective Communication of Achievement

Grades communicate achievement on course objectives and support meaningful student learning and growth.

LLT Work 2019-2020

- Extensive research and Flex-Day district meetings to discuss best practices in grading

GRADING IN HINSDALE DISTRICT 86

In District 86, grades communicate achievement on course objectives and support meaningful student learning and growth.

District 86 has established levels of grading consistency across the district. The designated group will determine the specific grading policy. District level decisions will be made by the D86 Learning Leadership Team.

DISTRICT We believe that when communicating about student performance, a district-wide consistency assists all stakeholders (parents, counselors, case managers, etc.) in understanding a student's grade.

- Academic Integrity
- Extra Credit
- Grading Scale
- Use of Zeros

DISTRICT COURSE TEAM WITH PARAMETERS

We believe in the unique needs of district course teams but within parameters set forth by the Learning Leadership Team, similar to the current final exam weight process (range of weights).

- Homework
- Gradebook Categories

DISTRICT COURSE TEAM

We believe in the unique needs of district course teams to establish consistency and access to curriculum in order to achieve academic success.

- Inclusion of Behavior
- Late Work Policy
- Method of Final Grade Calculations
- Retakes

First Principles: Accurate, Actionable, Accountable

1. **Accurate:** A grading system must accurately communicate a student's academic ability.
2. **Actionable:** A grading system must provide a student, parent, counselor, interventionist an indication of what the student needs to do to remediate, maintain, or enrich their coursework.
3. **Accountable:** A grading system must hold students accountable for demonstrating the knowledge / skill required to complete each course.

A Grading Scale/Practice must also:

- Meet the needs of different content areas (different assessment types)
- Allow teacher innovation and creativity when designing instruction/assessment
- Focus on achievement, not behavior

Learning Leadership Team Recommendation

Overview:

1. Nearly unanimous consent on a common grading scale for SY 21-22.
2. Reached consensus on alpha-indicators for missing work.
3. Began to discuss the role and responsibilities of District and Building course teams in the implementation process of the common grading scale - notably the identification of essential assignments by DCTs

Effective Communication

- Sharing specific information with common language
- Creating bridges in translation
- Supporting students
- Efficient use of intervention time
- Increasing academic responsibility and accountability

Definitions and Use of Grading Scale Terms

Grades A - F - These grades align with five categories of achievement, each with an equal interval separating them. There are two ways to arrive at one of these grades:

- A grade can be assessed based on the students attainment of points aligned to one of the grades
- A grade can be assessed based on the student's completion of work aligned to a skill-based rubric. In this case the rubric score is also aligned to an aligned numeric value.

EX stands for Exempt - Teachers can use this indicator to communicate that the student has been excused from completing an assignment. The grade calculates as if the assignment has no value. An exempt is most often used for individual assignments because of an illness or a conflict.

Definitions and Use of Grading Scale Terms

M stands for Missing - This letter is applied in a gradebook when a student has not turned in an assignment. The M communicates to the student, parent, and school support teams that an assignment has not been completed. It calculates in the gradebook as 50% of the total possible points for the assignment.

- The District Course Team will determine if, when, and for what value a (M)issing assignment can be turned in (but not less than 50%).

ME stands for Missing and Essential - This indicator is recorded in the gradebook when a student has not turned in or completed an assignment that the Course Team has determined to be essential to understanding a student's performance in the course. An example of this might be a unit assessment, a research paper, or an end of semester project.

- When this grade is entered, the teacher will switch grading scales from Standard to Incomplete. **This change will communicate the student's grade as Incomplete until the ME is resolved.** A student cannot pass the class with unresolved ME indicators in the gradebook. Once the student has completed the missing (ME) assignment, his or her grade view will return to standard and then he or she will be able to know their grade.
- **A student cannot receive a final or passing grade in the course with an ME in the grade book.**
- District Course Teams will identify and communicate 'Essential' assessments to students and families.

NYP stands for Not Yet Proficient - This indicator is recorded in the gradebook when a student has completed an assessment but has not yet achieved minimum skill or content proficiency. It calculates in the gradebook as 50% of the total possible points for the assignment. Depending on the department, students could be provided intervention and reassessment options. *The LLT has not yet come to consensus on this grade indicator.*

What's an Essential Assignment?

Essential Assignment - Any assignment, determined by the District Course Team (DCT), to measure content, skill or abilities essential to demonstrating basic proficiency in the course.

Think: If a student does not complete this assignment, is there enough evidence to say that they have passed the course?

Each DCT can use the following to facilitate the identification of essential assignments:

Essential Assignments:

- Often comprehensive or cumulative
- Measure higher order thinking skills (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Often found at the conclusion of a unit of study
- Ask students to draw connections to other areas of study
- Specifically taught

Essential Assignments are not:

- Used for practice
- Focused on single skills
- Focused on lower level thinking skills (remembering, simple understanding)
- Homework
- Reflective of academic behaviors

Common Grading Scale SY 2021-22

Grading Scale	Final Grade (Semester)	HAC/TAC	Assignment Letter Grade
100 - 90	A		A (95%)
89 - 80	B		B (85%)
79 - 70	C		C (75%)
69 - 60	D		D (65%)
59 - 50	F		F (55%)
Incomplete	IC		IC
Did Not Complete (Missing)		M	50%
Missing and Essential (course team determines essential)		ME	No in-progress or final grade shown Completion is Mandatory (CIM) Late work acceptance procedures determined by District Course Team
Excused		EX	N/A
Not Yet Proficient (Still in discussion with the LLT)		NYP	50%: Intervention and Retake Opportunities determined by the District Course Team

In Practice

Gradebook AP Biology (03740-1), MP: M4 Change

#	Name	Alerts	Grade	Average (83.59)	2.00	9.77	5.00
1		G	IC	31.82	2.00	ME	5.00
2			F	31.82	2.00	3.50	5.00
3			A	86.36	2.00	13.50	5.00
4			F	31.82	2.00	9.83	5.00
5			A	100.00	2.00	13.00	5.00
6			A	100.00	2.00	13.00	5.00

Surviving the Beginning of ... 1/19/2021 2.00
Obj 14A Exam 1/20/2021 15.00
CRISPR Discussion 2/4/2021 5.00

Accountability

- The consequence for not doing the work is...doing the work!

Accuracy

- A grade cannot be calculated without knowing a student's level of ability on essential assessments .

Actionable

- When a student or parent sees an ME (and an Incomplete for the class) they are immediately prompted to rectify the grade.
- An interventionist, counselor, case manager, or a coach can also see this and encourage the student to work to completion on the assignment

The Rationale

Zeros promote inaccuracies and misconceptions about student understanding.

Consider the average high temperatures from July 19 - 25, 2020:

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Avg
82	84	81	84	81	82	90	83.4

What if the thermometer was broken on Monday July 20th?

82	0	81	84	81	82	90	71
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The Rationale

Doesn't this scale reward students for not doing work?

- The scale communicates and assesses a failing grade for not doing work.
- This grade scale does not penalize a student 6 times more than any other grade (if range of F = 59 - 0 and all other grades are 10-point increments)
 - Encouraging a student to persist with coursework after an assignment is missed
- Penalty for not doing work should always be doing the work
- Grade of zero does not communicate to families or students a specific way to intervene/remediate
- Identifying essential assessments increases accountability, rather than relying on zero grades to scare students into compliance.

Common Concerns / Researched Responses

This scale does not reflect the responsibility / accountability in life outside of school?

- Grades should communicate a level of achievement, not a level of responsibility (though DCTs may decide that academic behavior can be assessed as a percentage of the overall grade)
- The consequence for not doing an assignment is, at best an F, and at worst mandatory completion to receive a passing grade in the course.

Next Steps for Teachers

- Opportunity for reflection on what are essential assignments
- Importance of district course teams and the alignment work going forward
- Possibility for a more effective use of supports and interventionists

What's Next for LLT

LLT Work

2020-21

- Discuss common grading scale implementation with department
- Discuss KPI(s) of a common grading scale
- Review research and discuss Academic Integrity and Extra Credit guidelines
- Multiple copies of grading research read by LLT available for community checkout at Admin. Center.

2021-22

- Review / Reflect / Report / Pivot