

Instructional Practices Grading and Assessment Subcommittee agenda/notes  
8/15/2023

**AGENDA:**

- 1) Designate student representative(s) for the upcoming year
- 2) Review feedback on [“Purpose of Grading” Statement](#)
  - a) Steering committee (ref. steering committee minutes, linked)
  - b) Board review (ref. board notes, included)
- 3) Identify next priority (ref. steering committee minutes, linked)
  - a) Assessment Statement
  - b) Term weights
  - c) Midterms and finals
- 4) Schedule next meeting

*\*resource shared by Tom Solon: [Grading and Reporting for Educational Equity](#)*

**NOTES**

***Attendance:***

Allie B, Gina B, Yolanda F, Tim G, Lori B, Justin B, Amanda Z, Martha D, Jordan C, Sue C

**1) Student representative options:**

*A few names were offered and will be invited—names will be added when they are able to attend*

**2) Review of board discussion of statement of the purpose of grading**

Gina gave some insight about the tone of feedback—that this was a good first step and they are interested in the next steps.

**3) Next steps:**

- a) **A review by staff at HBMS and HBHS of current practices as viewed through the lens of the purpose of grading statement**
  - i) **Review structured by a chart**—this was a format suggested by several members of the group as a structured way to review current grading practices and how they may align with the points expressed in the statement; the group worked through several layers of how to structure the discussion to be productive and positive (not an accusation of what someone may not be doing)
  - ii) **Discussion structured by a question-driven approach (aka, “Justin’s 5 questions”)**—this was a format suggested by the school board discussion and feedback, which Justin suggested might drive small group staff discussions if presented as key questions derived from the minutes of the board meeting discussion (4/12/23)
- b) **Subcommittee work on moving to “assessment”**

This can be our next step as a subcommittee, so we are moving forward into our next task as we are getting feedback from the staff review

**Working Doc: Purpose of Grading**

**Discussion/review task for staff at both HBMS and HBHS**

***Documents referenced:***

- 1) [“Purpose of Grading” Statement](#)
- 2) [Steering Committee notes 2/21/23](#)
- 3) Relevant section of 4/12/23 [Board meeting minutes](#):

Member Solon spoke of the purpose of the grading statement, and questioned the impact of making the statement, e.g., does this become a starting point for additional activity. Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted this was presented to the Instructional Practices Steering Committee. Asked if the steering committee word smithed the document, she stated it did not.

Member Whalen stated her belief the intent is to put it in the student handbook so students can see it, and the staff handbook so that staff will be using this as a guideline for when they are setting up their grading.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked there was a lot of back and forth conversation. It took some time for the committee to find direction. Step 1 was why do we grade; define that first, identify some core beliefs that would be part of both the student and staff handbooks, and then from there assess how we are doing in comparison to the purpose, what changes do we need to implement, how far are we from where we say we would like to be, and then what is the timeline and steps that need to be taken. The next step would be assessment; where does assessment fall into all of this?

The easiest point to consider is “Application of grading practices will be consistent by course and provide a wide range of data points.” For example if looking at accelerated Algebra II, all of the accelerated Algebra II courses should have the same grading practices meaning if we allow retakes then we allow retakes for all of the sections regardless of the teacher. That might be different for an Algebra II class because the agreement will be the same for a course but not necessarily for all of the versions of that course. A math course could have a very specific grading practice that is agreed upon and that could and should look very different from a humanities course.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock corrected her prior statement noting the Instructional Practice Committee did wordsmith the document slightly. Principal Girzone commented to go along with what was stated around practicality and use and implementation into the handbooks was also the efficacy of certain assessment practices like mid-terms and finals, why they stand the way

they do, and is there room for improvement. Part of the feedback from the Steering Committee to the Grading and Assessment Subcommittee was to look at some of our practices to include how we grade quarters, semesters, mid-terms, finals. Asked if the statement is intended to pertain primarily to quarterly or reported grades or if it is on the level of assignment grades, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented this is sort of when the committee was getting caught in the weeds; there is a grade, there is grading, there is assessments, assessments are graded, and what is the purpose of that report card or transcript. That is a communication tool, and the finality of it, if it is a semester long course it is the end of the semester that we are looking toward. With quarter 1 and quarter 2, it should be a continuum of learning so that both the student and teacher can assess what needs to be done to continue to help that student meet that targeted end goal. This is really that grade as opposed to grading, which is an important step that we also have to look to and the committee has to do that. She believes there had to be a starting point identified. Member Solon stated his understanding of the remarks is that it is viewed as essentially taking some snapshots at periods through the year and looking at how that progresses. That relates to the third bullet in the statement “inform teachers and educators about the next steps for appropriate and successful instruction.” that is where that connection occurs, e.g., the student did great in the first and second quarter, but the 3rd quarter the grade was poor, which indicates there is some change in the performance of a student in the continuum. Asked if that is an accurate understanding of that, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated it is; what do we have to do to ensure that learning takes place because if we have a set of standards, we are trying to teach for a course the student should learn them by the end of the course. Member Whalen spoke of the surveys put out to students, staff, and parents, and how everyone looks at this differently. The subcommittee was trying to take all the information and everyone’s perspective and put it into a summary that everyone could easily understand. They want to put it in places where everyone sees it and can refer to it. Member Solon noted the language “Application of grading practices will be consistent by course” and a further statement “Variation in grading practices and assessment methods will be allowed between subjects”. Those two seem to be a little disconnected in that the second implies a broader scope of consistency versus what was addressed by the Assistant Superintendent; the two different levels of the same subject matter may have different methodologies. He suggested that language be reviewed to gain alignment believing it sends a mixed message. More importantly is the question of how that can be monitored and ensured.

Member Whalen responded she believes by courses what was meant was for example an Algebra II course which would stay consistent. A subject would be math, science, etc. Member Solon replied the second one seems to say you are going to allow variation by subject which to him says that within a subject it will be consistent but the prior one says that within a subject it may not be consistent. Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated she reads that as a variation between subjects meaning that the math assessment and grading process might look very different than a humanities grading and assessment process. Asked how she interprets the prior statement, she stated she is interpreting that across a course in a subject area. The course will have a consistent grading mechanism meaning when a teacher lays out their grade book the teacher of an Algebra I course will have the same percentage grades and the same look and policies about grading as another teacher teaching the same course, but the math department, in

general, may have a different way of looking at grading and breaking down grades than a humanities class.

Asked if she thinks Algebra I should be graded and assessed differently than advanced Algebra I, Member Whalen noted that to be two different courses. Member Solon provided the example of Honors English versus AP English. When his children were in school the uproar was that AP English got you a whole bunch of benefits, but Honors English was graded with so much more difficulty and there was an assumption of a hierarchy in difficulty. Some students avoid the AP thinking it would be a much higher workload. If course to course within the same subject matter does not have consistency of grading that needs to be understood. He questioned how you can ensure consistency within a course when having inconsistency course to course especially when having a staff member teaching both courses. Member Solon stated his belief that the statement is not clear with those two different paragraphs. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented that you get lost in some of the words sometimes trying to clean it up and make it clear, but now that she is hearing Member Solon's interpretation, not having been part of all of those conversations, we say grading practices twice. We are using a consistent term but mean something different. She does think additional clarity is needed.

Notes for the meeting:

Reviewed that statement had been presented to board, check in with Gina about the tone of that:

Looking to apply across middle and high school—departments at both to

Justin: suggested a question-driven approach, give focus questions for teams/departments to discuss

Common assessment

Role of HW

Types of assignments

What to provide for the work:

-provide purpose of grading statement—

Working doc

Presented to the board (whole process with steps and stakeholders)--link to board minutes when discussed

Student connection/focus

-goal of process, "Grading and assessment, but starting grading" --to align and focus on common values, factors

Discussion points for teachers and departments to review current practice:

STEP ONE:

identify current practice according to purpose statement

-HOW DO WE BREAK DOWN THE STATEMENT IN ORDER FOR TEACHERS TO

DISCUSS CURRENT PRACTICE

-Committee identifies topics, then correlate the topics with different aspects of statement

-layers: class, course, department

-apply a few each meeting on all layers

STEP TWO:

-discussion questions based on the board feedback

Action steps:

Create "chart" approach with topics aligned to statement, divided into the three layers (class, course, department)

Topics:

Include "other"