

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of grading is to measure student learning, based on the essentials/standards established by the District/State.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Plattsmouth Community School District's grading and reporting system shall provide students, parents, teachers, and the community with a framework for accurately reporting student achievement. It is the District's responsibility to the community that all school members will work to challenge and support all students in the pursuit of their highest levels of academic and personal achievement. Therefore, the District, in order to stimulate achievement as measured by its extraordinary expectations, will establish a clear and accurate system of grading and reporting academic achievement.

As well, such a system can serve as an open communication link between the school, home, and the community in and outside of Plattsmouth. It will provide all parties with an awareness of their student's work and an understanding of how the grade reflects their student's achievement. Student and parents will be able to use this data for future course selection and post-secondary plans. In order to provide several formats to receive this vital information, the reporting system will be multi-faceted.

When a student graduates from the Plattsmouth Community School District, the summary of these grades, the academic transcript, will provide a permanent and accurate accounting of the student's achievement. Stakeholders will be able to count on the accuracy of this historic document.

The Plattsmouth Community School District is committed to support a system of guiding principles that will be used to arrive at a clear and accurate grading and reporting policy and procedures. In order to realize these goals, the grading and reporting system must:

- Reflect academic achievement.
- Contain meaningful feedback.
- Be honest, fair, transparent, credible, useful, and user-friendly.
- Be criterion-referenced.
- Align with the Plattsmouth Community School District curriculum.
- Reflect consistency within and among courses, grade levels, departments, and/or schools.
- Communicate information in a clear and timely manner to parties.
- Reflect high expectations of all students across all courses and programs.
- Be developmentally appropriate for all students.

III. DEFINITIONS

Accommodation: a change that does not alter the rigor of the standard. Examples include large print materials, extended testing time, and small group administration.

Assessments: multiple tools used to gather information about the student's performance on the standards taught.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA): the student's numerical average for all courses taken. It is computed by adding the total number of the letter grades' point values and dividing it by the number of credits completed.

Curriculum: a written plan including standards, essential questions, an assessment plan, instructional resources and strategies, and time allocations for emphasis and pacing for the content to be taught.

Essential: a clear, specific description of knowledge or skills the student should acquire by a particular point in the student's schooling.

Formative Assessments (Academic Practice): work conducted when a student is still learning the material. It is an assessment that is designed to provide direction for both students and teachers. For the students, the adjustment may mean reviewing, additional practice, or confirmation that they are ready to move forward. For the teachers, it may mean changing instructional strategies, providing additional practice, or being ready to move forward (e.g. teacher observation, quizzes, homework, rough drafts, peer editing, or notebook checks).

Grade: a number or letter indicating a student's level of achievement relative to the grading scale.

Grading: the act of evaluating the student's academic work based on a set criteria and the assignment of a grade to it.

Grading Scale: a description for what each letter grade represents relative to the percentage of the student's mastery of subject goals. *See section V for examples.*

Grading Syllabus: a document given to students and parents at the start of each course outlining the grading criteria and procedures for the course.

Homework: includes learning tasks, assigned to students by teachers that are meant to be carried out. Students may also complete during non-class hours, most often at home. Homework may be formative or summative in nature depending on the intent of it.

Instruction: a teacher-led process, which transforms well-planned curriculum into student learning. Instruction is standards-focused teaching for the purpose of providing meaningful learning experiences that enable all students to master academic content and achieve personal goals.

Modification: a substantive change that alters the standard or the rigor of the standard. Used when appropriate for students receiving special education services, per their Individual Education Plans.

Reporting: the communicating of a student's achievement to the student and parents and in turn, this information may be shared with employers and post-secondary institutions.

Standard: a statement of what the student will be able to know, understand, and do.

Summative Assessments (Academic Achievement): work conducted when a student has received adequate instruction and practice to be responsible for the material. It is designed to provide information to be used in making judgment about a student's achievement at the end of a sequence of instruction (e.g. final drafts/attempts, tests, exams, assignments, projects, performances).

Term Grade Point Average (GPA): the student's numerical average for a given grading term. It is computed by adding the total number of the letter grades' point values and dividing it by the number of courses for a given grading term.

IV. GRADING PARAMETERS

GRADES K-5

Grades are recorded on report cards for kindergarten through fifth grade, as noted below.

A = Advanced
 P+ = Proficient
 P = Progressing
 B = Beginning

Special area grades are as follows:

E = Excellent
 S = Satisfactory
 N = Needs Improvement
 I = Improvement Shown

GRADES 6-12

A. The primary function of grading is to communicate the academic achievement status of students to the students, their families, and post-secondary institutions. Additional functions of grading include:

1. Providing information that the student can use for self-evaluation.
2. Providing information that teachers can use to modify planning and instruction.
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs.

B. Teachers of the same course will apply the grading parameters in the same manner.

C. Course grades will reflect the level of the student's academic achievement. While non-academic factors may be highly valued and often contribute to the student's academic achievement, they should be reported separately from an achievement grade and will be addressed in other policy areas.

The following are examples of non-academic factors:

1. Behavior, if not part of the essentials/standards for the course (i.e. attendance, attitude, punctuality, certain class participation, effort)
2. Homework based solely on completion
3. Other evidence of student characteristics or habits

Combining these factors with achievement evidence can mask important learning problems and contribute to miscommunication about the student's knowledge.

- D. The term grade for a course can be calculated solely based on summative assessments or it may be calculated based on a combination of summative and formative assessments. The definitions provided in part III of this policy are the best guide for determining if an assessment is Academic Practice (formative) or Academic Achievement (summative).
1. The combinations of the Academic Achievement and Academic Practice grades will be based on embedded standards, course rigor, and/or grade level. The following calculations provide a framework for grades 6-12.
 - a. Grades 6-8
Academic Practice grades will count for a maximum of 20% of the term grade.
Academic Achievement grades will count for a minimum of 80%.
 - b. Grades 9-12
Academic Practice grades will count for a maximum of 30% of the term grade.
Academic Achievement grades will count for a minimum of 70%.
 2. In concert with the Instructional Services Director and building administrator, individual departments will determine what assessments and percentages are included in the Academic Practice and Academic Achievement categories.

- E. Reassessment opportunities may be made available to students at the discretion of the department. Students must have an acceptable reason to request a retake, and mastery must be shown before this opportunity is given. The student may be asked to take the second test on his or her own time (i.e. before or after school), or at the convenience of the teacher. The time from the initial assessment to the retake may not exceed two weeks.

Teachers may offer other options for the student to master the topic and for the student to improve his or her grade. These options can include, but are not limited to, test corrections, an essay over the topic of the test, or an additional project relating to the test.

- F. As the purpose of grading is to measure student learning, there needs to be a sufficient number of assignments to determine the level of achievement. To accomplish this, students will be held accountable for completing the work. Holding students to deadlines will help them succeed in college and their work life. If a student chooses not to complete an assignment by a given deadline determined by the teacher, a zero will be earned.

If a student feels that he or she has a valid reason for turning in a late assignment or for requesting a re-test, and that request is denied by the teacher, the student may fill out an appeal form and turn the form into the principal. After consulting with the teacher and the student, the principal will make the final decision regarding the late assignment or re-test.

- G. Clear criteria will be used to calculate a term and/or year long final course grade. It will be based on a combination of the term grades and final assessments. The teacher will communicate this in writing to parents and students at the start of the term/year.

1. In the event that student performance changes significantly over the term/year of the course, and the teacher does not believe that the calculated grade fairly represents the

student’s performance, a teacher may include additional assessments (either formative or summative) in order to have a more accurate description of student achievement and record the grade accordingly.

2. The PASS/FAIL option is for unusual personal circumstances and requires building principal approval. If a student is taking the course PASS/FAIL, the student must have passing work to receive credit for the course. All PASS/FAIL students in any course will take all tests and turn in all regular class work along with other students. Only the final mark is a PASS/FAIL mark. A subject taken on a PASS/FAIL basis will not affect a student’s class rank or honor roll standing. If the student passes the class, the student will receive a “P” and full semester credit on his/her report card for that class. If the student fails the class, the student would then receive an “F” (fail) on the report card. A student may have only one PASS/FAIL course per year except in very unusual circumstances as determined by the building principal.

V. GRADING SCALE AND SYMBOL DEFINITIONS

In order to calculate grades, the following scale is used to assign grades. In turn, the letter symbols give a description of the student’s academic achievement.

Classes Other Than Advanced Placement, Honors, and Dual Credit

GRADE	PERCENTILE RANGE	GPA
A	93-100	4.00
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.00
D-	60-62	0.67
F	0-59	0.00

Advanced Placement, Honors, and Dual Credit Courses

GRADE	PERCENTILE RANGE	GPA
A+	97-100	4.00
A	90-96	4.00
A-	87-89	3.67
B+	83-86	3.33
B	80-82	3.00
B-	77-79	2.67
C+	73-76	2.33
C	70-72	2.00

C-	67-69	1.67
D+	63-66	1.33
D	60-62	1.00
F	0-59	0.00

***A middle school student that completes a high school course as a middle school student shall earn high school credit and the student's grade for such course shall be counted toward the student's high school grade point average (GPA) and class rank.**

VI. GRADE POINT SCALES AND CALCULATIONS

A. Grade Point Average (GPA) is based on grades earned in the following grade level group:

Grades 9-12

- a. All courses for which the student receives from an A to an F are included in the GPA.
- b. Both a Term GPA and a Cumulative GPA are calculated.
- c. An official transcript is maintained for grades 9-12.
- d. Pass grades are not included in the GPA calculation, but do count for graduation credit.

B. Annual audits of courses offered within Plattsmouth High School and taught by qualified teachers will be conducted by examining the course rigor to determine potential grade weighting. The criteria for a grade to be weighted are that the course must be of college level rigor. Content must significantly exceed the Plattsmouth content standards.

VII. COMMUNICATION

A shared understanding, between the District staff, students, and parents, of the District's grading and reporting system is essential for effective communication. In order for all parties to understand and trust the student achievement data, the District will provide all parties with the following:

- A clear purpose for the grading and reporting system;
- A common grading syllabus for all courses;
- A valid and accurate assessment of the student's achievement;
- Timely reporting;
- A comprehensive and multifaceted reporting system (i.e. Conferences, phone calls, curriculum nights, electronic messages, classroom websites, report cards, mid-term reports) and,
- A clear explanation of all symbols used.

VIII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development program is necessary to enhance a teacher's ability to deliver high quality instruction and to design and use assessments that are purposeful, assess appropriate learning targets, and to assign grades consistent with this policy. To ensure this goal, the professional development program must be focused on the two themes of assessing accurately and using assessment to benefit students, not merely to grade and sort them. Teachers must be able to craft assessment experiences to maximize motivation.

Professional development activities must be an integral part of broad school-wide and District-wide educational improvement goals. Effective professional development must be school-based, collaborative, and differentiated in its delivery. District and site professional development plans

for effective classroom assessment and grading must include research-based training components of theory, demonstration, guided practice, feedback, and coaching.

IX. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Education is accountable, in its governance capacity, for the instructional program and delegates responsibilities as follows:

- A. The Superintendent, through designees, shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of the Grading System and for development and implementation of procedures and practices for grading and reporting student achievement in the District.
- B. Principals shall be responsible for assuring implementation of the District's beliefs, procedures, and practices of effective grading and reporting.
- C. Teachers shall be responsible for effectively implementing classroom assessments and for applying the principles of effective grading and reporting practices.
- D. Parents are a vital link to successful home/school communication about student learning. Therefore, parents are strongly encouraged to participate in all available components of the District's grading and reporting system.
- E. Students are responsible for their own learning. All students shall actively participate in understanding the District's grading and reporting system. Students are able to use the Academic Practice (formative) grade to identify strengths and weaknesses with a particular topic and, as a result, seek additional help. As well, students are able to know that the Academic Achievement (summative) grade reflects a true level of understanding of a particular topic/unit/course. This information can help the student plan for future course selection and post-secondary options.

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