



GRADING HANDBOOK

FOR FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

OUR PRACTICES



Accurate

Describes student achievement of knowledge and skills demonstrated in school settings



Consistent

Within and across students, teams, departments, courses, and schools



Support Student Learning

Encourages continuous engagement in learning

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Cover art provided by Ashlynn Shinault, Henley Middle School



Albemarle County Public Schools (“ACPS”) is committed to a balanced and equitable assessment system. Balanced assessment systems provide accurate and timely information about student learning and achievement. The crux of a balanced assessment system is equitable grading practices. Healthy grading practices encourage and support learning by helping students and teachers see that their continued efforts will result in success.

Grades (grading) are the representation of student achievement, either a letter or number score, and should accurately represent a student’s mastery of course standards. The purpose of a grade is to communicate student achievement at a point in time. Grades will be accurate, supportive of student learning, and consistent.

Assessment is gathering and interpreting information to determine where students are on a continuum of what they know, understand, and are able to do. It is the act of describing student performance, primarily for the purpose of enhancing learning. Teachers will develop balanced assessment plans that provide sufficient and useful evidence of the students’ needs, progress, and achievement.

In order for student assessment information to improve curriculum, instruction, and student learning, accurate analysis of assessment results must be followed by feedback. Teachers shall give feedback to students at various points of instruction and the students and teachers must take action that supports learning. This feedback cycle is critical for student achievement of learning targets and is part of the formative process of assessing and learning. Grades are assigned at the end of this process and represent a student’s achievement.

The crux of a balanced assessment system is equitable grading practices. Healthy grading practices encourage and support learning by helping students and teachers see that their continued efforts will result in success.

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Grading practices in the ACPS will be:

SUPPORTIVE

Reflect individual differences and rates of learning

Address the unique needs of special populations of students

Make adjustments for transitional periods (including elementary to middle and middle to high)

Encourage students to take an active role in setting goals and assessing progress

Foster a positive self-image for the student

Inform teaching practices and student learning

Promote practices that encourage continuous engagement in learning

Provide parents and students ongoing, credible, and useful feedback in a timely manner

ACCURATE

Accurately describe student achievement of knowledge and skills demonstrated in school settings

Align to standards for student learning

Separated from work habits

Impartial and fair, not influenced by a teacher's implicit bias or reflective of a student's environment

Utilize mathematically sound calculation

CONSISTENT

Within and across students, teams, departments, courses, and schools

For more information, see [School Board Policy IKBA, Grading Policy](#)





GRADING GUIDELINES

Grading guidelines ensure implementation of the grading policy. Teachers use them to inform the actions they take to support student learning and represent student achievement.

GRADING GUIDELINE #1

Use only student evidence of achievement; extra credit and bonus points should not inflate grades

* WHAT IT MEANS

Students shall not be awarded extra credit for behaviors, attendance to outside events, bringing items to school, or bonus questions on tests.

* WHY

Extra credit distorts grades; it is not a clear indication of what a student knows, understands, and is able to do.

GRADING GUIDELINE #2

Provide practice and formative assessments for learning; but do not include those scores in overall grades

* WHAT IT MEANS

Eliminating grades for practice means students have the opportunity to improve understanding through authentic practice (e.g. any work that increases or improves fluency of a skill or a process that is not yet fluent) without penalty for where they are in the learning. Practice comes after instruction, and should be followed by feedback, and potentially additional practice in areas of need.

* WHY

Practice sharpens students' skills; students should be able to practice without penalty. Teachers should provide feedback on skills, concepts, and/or processes students practice in order for them to improve their performance.

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

- Teachers may use a collected only indicator with no grade attached to an assignment
- Teachers may provide a score on an assignment, but mark the assignment or category as not counted in final grade

GRADING GUIDELINE #3

Use “missing” or “incomplete” for assignments in the gradebook in place of zero

* WHAT IT MEANS

Eliminating zero means discontinuing the practice of entering grades lower than 50. The minimum grade on the ACPS scale is 50% which creates a 10 point scale between each letter grade.

* WHY

Grades shall communicate what students know; the zero is an outlier on a 100 point scale. The zero also creates grades which prevent students from “catching” up in a class.

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

- The label MISSING is used for assignments not turned in and will automatically be calculated as 50% of the overall grade for the assignment.
- When a teacher enters any score less than 50, the grade will automatically be calculated as 50% for the overall grade for the assignment.

GRADING GUIDELINE #4

Grades report student achievement; remove extraneous information from grades

* WHAT IT MEANS

Examples of behaviors or work habits include participation, effort, attendance, classroom behavior, organization skills, preparedness, neatness, etc. The categories do not reflect student achievement and should not be included in student grades.

* WHY

Grades should represent student academic performance. Although other factors play a role in student grades, they should be reported through feedback or comments to be shared with students and families.

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

- No participation/attendance/organization categories that factor into grades
- The use of comments to share non-academic behavior feedback

GRADING GUIDELINE #5

Teachers provide opportunities and structures to implement the revision process as needed

* WHAT IT MEANS

Students and teachers will use the Revision Protocol in schools to support improved understanding. Since students learn at different rates, it is important that teachers acknowledge this and allow students to improve their understanding on an agreed to timeline.

* WHY

Making mistakes is part of the learning process and students should have the opportunity to correct those mistakes and/or show additional evidence of learning. Creating an environment that recognizes that mistakes are a part of the learning process fosters a growth mindset because it shifts the emphasis from the grade to the learning. Students have a variety of reasons for an initial poor assessment; however it is important that each student is given the opportunity to improve their understanding.

* REVISION PROTOCOL

- Teachers will identify and provide feedback on student evidence that did not meet learning targets.
- Students should only revise/show improvement on the portion(s) of the assessment that needs improvement
 - During class time, teachers will support students to address errors or show improvement on summative assessments and provide structures for “re-learning” and revision.
 - Students may also take advantage of additional support during intervention and enrichment time built into the school day as well.
- Students may be asked to complete tasks prior to revising an assessment (examples: complete assignments connected to misconceptions, error analysis, test reflections, meeting with the teacher, etc.)
- Teachers should use a reasonable timeline for students to show new evidence of learning (approximately 2 weeks from the time students receive initial feedback; reasonable deadlines are recommended)

GRADING GUIDELINE #5 - CON'T

Teachers provide opportunities and structures to implement the revision process as needed

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

The initial grade and revision grade shall be recorded in the gradebook

- If using the comments of the initial assignment to report revisions, the initial score should be included in the comment section of the assignment grade and the improved score should be listed for the assignment.
- If using a new assignment name to report revisions, the initial score should be marked "exempt" so as not to be included in the overall grade and the improved score should be listed as a new assignment with the title REVISION in the assignment name

GRADING GUIDELINE #6

Use Only Individual Achievement Evidence

* WHAT IT MEANS

Use only individual achievement evidence. Don't include group scores in grades.

* WHY

Group work is for learning, not assessment. Students are encouraged to work cooperatively, and develop social skills in the process; however they should not be graded on another students' understanding of content or behaviors.

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

- Students will receive individual scores/assessments for evidence of learning
- Teachers can provide comments about student's ability to collaborate, meet deadlines, etc regarding group expectations

GRADING GUIDELINE #7

Report student achievement towards learning goals

* WHAT IT MEANS

Assessments shall be aligned to student evidence towards predetermined learning goals. In grades K-8, the division will work towards a Standards Based Reporting System (currently implemented in Elementary school).

* WHY

Reporting students' grades as an aggregate of everything they have learned does not provide valuable information for students and families. By reporting student's progress towards reporting standards, students and families can see more clearly where students strengths and areas for growth are in each content area.

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

Teachers may:

- include the aligned learning goals in the assignment description
- name assessments by reporting standards/learning goals
- organize gradebook according to reporting standards/learning goals instead of assignment types

GRADING GUIDELINE #8

Collect multiple pieces of student data to show evidence of learning

* WHAT IT MEANS

Teachers should plan for multiple, varied ways for a student to provide evidence of what they know, understand and are able to do relative to a learning goal.


* WHY

Learning is developmental and will grow over time. This guideline supports the idea that collecting multiple pieces of evidence towards student learning (over time and within a “unit of study”) allows students to demonstrate understanding in more than one way, at different times during the cycle of learning.

“Grades should be based on a collection of evidence assembled over time. As with all assessment, grading is an evidentiary process. The quality of the evidence makes a great deal of difference,” (Learning Sciences, 2020).

* WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN THE GRADEBOOK?

- Multiple assessments linked to learning goals.



GRADING PRACTICES

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

The school division's academic achievement program recognizes all graduating seniors who earn an unweighted 3.0 grade point average (GPA) or better during their high school career. The primary objective of this program is to recognize students both for their consistently high performance throughout their four years of high school and for the contributions so many of them make to our high school communities.

We have three levels of academic honor recognition. The following designations are affixed to the student's diploma:

CUM LAUDE

Graduating With Praise for students whose unweighted GPA is from 3.0 to 3.4

MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Graduating With Great Praise for students whose unweighted GPA is from 3.5 to 3.7

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Graduating With Highest Praise for students whose unweighted GPA is 3.8 or higher

EXAMS

Exams are not required at the mid-term or end-of-course. Summative assessments will have a weight determined by the teacher/Professional Learning Community (PLC).

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

GPA is determined by dividing the total grade points received by the total number of credits attempted.

GRADING SCALE

The division's grading scale is as follows:

GRADE	RANGE
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	50-59

REPEATING A COURSE

All courses taken and grades earned are recorded on the transcript, including courses retaken. However, only the highest grade is calculated in the GPA.

TRANSLATION OF PASS/FAIL GRADES

Students receiving a "Pass" in a course designated as pass/fail are credited with completion of the course, but the grade from such a course is not included in the calculation of the GPA. Students receiving a "Fail" in a pass/fail course receive a grade point of 0, which is included in calculations of the GPA.

WEIGHTED GRADES

As part of the school profile, each high school will report class size. Class rank will only be reported for special circumstances: military academies, honors programs, and scholarship opportunities.

GRADE	UNWEIGHTED GPA	WEIGHTED GPA
A	4	5
B	3	4
C	2	3
D	1	2
F	0	0



VISION

Our learners are engaged in authentic, challenging, and relevant learning experiences, becoming lifelong contributors and leaders in our dynamic and diverse society.

MISSION

Working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through high-quality teaching and learning for all. We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds.

We will know every student.

VALUES

Equity: We will provide every student with the level of support necessary to thrive.

Excellence: We will mitigate barriers and provide opportunities for every student to be academically successful.

Family and Community: We will engage with and share the responsibility for student success with families and community partners.

Wellness: We will support the physical and emotional health of our students and staff.