

# PCSD Grading Practices

**The Pittsford Central School District** Grading Philosophy supports practices that result in grades that are meaningful, accurate, consistent, and supportive of learning. After several years of providing opportunities for teachers to learn more about the Grading Philosophy and associated practices, there are three practices that all teachers are expected to follow. These three practices represent important steps in a continuing journey to achieve our goal of implementing more equitable grading practices, district-wide, that align with the Belief Statements in [our Grading Philosophy](#).

## Agreed upon practice #1

**We believe this:** *Grades will reflect a student’s individual academic achievement. Learning behaviors are important but they should be reflected separately, not in an individual’s academic grade.*

**Therefore, we agree that:** *No extra credit will be awarded.*

Grades should not be used to award extra credit to students. Working within teacher parameters, students may be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning of essential academic standards, but this is not to be confused with students doing “extra credit work” to boost their academic average. Some examples to consider:

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Not Allowed</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">This is extra credit which <i>is not aligned</i> with our Grading Philosophy or our agreed upon grading practices.</p>            | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Allowed</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">This would not be considered extra credit as this <i>is aligned</i> with our Grading Philosophy and supports student learning.</p>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Not Allowed:</b> Awarding additional points in the grade book for attending an after school club meeting, or an evening concert as a spectator or audience member, or any similar event, on a specific date.</p> | <p><b>Allowed:</b> Expecting students to attend or participate in an activity outside of class time that is directly aligned to the essential learning of the course; all students have access to this activity either through district provided transportation or due to multiple opportunities over the duration of the course; students are expected to demonstrate learning related to the academic standards as a result of this experience.</p> |
| <p><b>Not Allowed:</b> Completing an extra activity in order to “raise their grade” or get “extra credit”</p>  | <p><b>Allowed:</b> Giving students another opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of essential learning standards.</p>  |
| <p><b>Not Allowed:</b> Awarding points in the grade book for meeting with a teacher to do “test corrections” without any additional learning being demonstrated.</p>   | <p><b>Allowed:</b> Giving students an opportunity to re-do all or a portion of an assessment after demonstrating additional learning.</p>   |
| <p><b>Not Allowed:</b> Awarding additional points in the grade book, or receiving any academic award, for bringing in supplies, contributing to a food drive, wearing spirit wear, etc.</p>                            |   |
| <p><b>Not Allowed:</b> Awarding bonus or challenge points on an assessment.</p>  |   |

*Teachers are encouraged to communicate with students, parents, and administrators about learning behaviors that are positively contributing to a student's academic success, including times when a student has chosen to go "above and beyond" in their efforts to be successful.*

## Agreed upon practice #2

**We believe this:** *Grading policies will be set up to support student motivation to learn. A student should never reach a place where there is no point in doing any more work because failure is inevitable.*

**Therefore, we agree that:** *No grade representing anything lower than a 50% will be used in grade calculations.*

For teachers who use a **0 to 100-point grading scale** in their grade books, any score below a 50% must be converted to a 50% before the quarterly average is calculated and posted. This does not apply to grades that are not calculated into a student's quarterly average.

For teachers who use a **rubric scale** (1-4, 1-5 or similar) in their grade book, the lowest possible score on their rubric should automatically convert to nothing lower than a 50%; no additional conversions would be needed before posting grades.

For teachers who use a **cumulative point system** in their grade book no score representing less than half of the maximum points for an assignment should be factored into the quarterly grade. Assignments/assessments that originally received fewer than 50% of the maximum points possible will need to be converted before the grades are posted. This does not apply to grades that are not calculated into a student's quarterly average.

For teachers who keep track of **grades by standard or skill** in their grade book, they should continue to do this as a non-calculated score but should also record a "cumulative" score for each task that will be calculated into the quarterly average. Any cumulative score below 50% must be converted to a 50% before the quarterly average is calculated and posted.

For work that has not been turned in, or has not been completed satisfactorily, **teachers retain the following options, subject to adjustment at the end of each marking period:** \*

- **Enter an "M" for Missing:** This will calculate as a "0" in the rolling average. Since no grade lower than a 50% will ultimately be calculated in the quarterly average, it is important to understand that the rolling average may be lower than the final quarterly average grade.
- **Enter an "INC" for Incomplete:** Since an INC will not be calculated in the rolling average, the rolling average may not accurately reflect what the quarterly average grade will be.
- **Leave the grade blank:** This will carry the same implications as the INC.
- **Enter a score of 0-49%, reflecting the actual score on an assessment, to be converted later:** Since no grade lower than a 50% will ultimately be calculated in the quarterly average, the rolling average may be lower than the final quarterly average grade.
- **Enter a 50% and use the comments to indicate "missing" or the actual grade on the assignment:** This choice may result in the most accurate representation of how this grade will impact the quarterly grade, unless an "INC" is posted at the end of the quarter.

\* The teacher always has the discretion to change the grading notations within the marking period.

**At the end of the marking period**, for the purposes of reporting quarterly grades, the following notation may be used in the place of a numeric or alphabetic grade:

## Incomplete (INC)

- If tasks that are considered essential\* have not been completed by the end of the marking period, the grade should be posted as **INC**. *When the student has had the opportunity to provide sufficient evidence of learning, this can be appropriately adjusted.* \*Please refer to the Consistent Grading Practices FAQ for a description of “essential tasks”.
- **INC** should also be used at the end of a marking period to denote a situation where a student has not had the opportunity to complete the necessary assignments due to an extended absence, medical condition, or other situation that is beyond their immediate control. *When the student has had the opportunity to complete the work, this can be appropriately adjusted.*

Teachers should never feel that the responsibility of pursuing work from a student is theirs alone, or that it is the teacher’s INC. It is the student’s grade. While it is each teacher’s responsibility to communicate clearly with students and families, all secondary building administrators are committed to assisting students in the completion of missing work. Administrative strategies might include such things as a simple conversation, requiring a structured study hall, or removal of privileges. Please refer to the flowchart “Resolving Missing Essential Tasks Prior to the End of the Marking Period” for the agreed upon processes to follow in these instances.

Teachers may reach out to administrators any time during a marking period, and as soon as they feel it would be appropriate, for support in working with students around any potential issues related to missing or incomplete work.

***At the conclusion of a course (semester or year-long), administrators and teachers will collaboratively resolve outstanding INCs on a case-by-case basis.***

## Agreed upon practice #3

***We believe this: Grades will reflect a student’s individual academic achievement. Learning behaviors are important, but they should be reflected separately, not in an individual’s academic grade.***

***Therefore, we agree that: All teachers will report on four identified learning behaviors quarterly, using a consistent process embedded in the grade book; learning behaviors should not be calculated into a student’s academic grade.***

We recognize the important role that learning behaviors play in a student’s success and value the ability to provide stakeholders with a more complete picture of each student’s academic journey. Our intention is to put into practice a system and structure that provides for the **consistent, manageable, and meaningful** sharing of information about each individual student’s learning behaviors.

Four essential learning behaviors have been identified that all secondary teachers are required to report on for every student, every marking period. Those four learning behaviors are:

- **Is prepared for learning**
- **Engages in classroom learning experiences**
- **Meets learning task deadlines**
- **Utilizes opportunities for feedback, reflection, and growth**

Students who consistently demonstrate these four learning behaviors tend to also achieve better academic outcomes, however that may not always be the case. Some students will consistently demonstrate these four essential behaviors but will still struggle to understand and demonstrate mastery of the academic content. Others will have no difficulties with the academic content but may struggle with the consistent demonstration of one or more of the learning behaviors. By clearly separating the learning behaviors from the acquisition of academic content, and reporting on both, we are able to gain a much more complete

picture of each student as a learner and what they may need in terms of additional supports, interventions, or challenges.

For each of the four learning behaviors, teachers will report the degree to which each student demonstrates the behavior:

**Consistently** – the student demonstrates this behavior most of the time; the pattern established is one of consistency (not necessarily perfection); as the teacher you can pretty much count on the student to display this behavior;

**Inconsistently** – the student is just as likely to demonstrate this behavior as not; the pattern established is one of inconsistency; as the teacher you are unable to predict whether on any given day the student will successfully display this behavior or not;

**Rarely** – the student almost never displays this behavior.

## Implementation

Within the Infinite Campus gradebook, teachers will be able to easily, with just a couple of clicks, “Fill All” four learning behaviors for all students in a course section with “consistently”. Teachers can then go back and adjust the reporting for individual students/behaviors for whom “consistently” is not the appropriate mark.

This video link demonstrates the process from start to finish: [ScreenCapture 1-5-2024 9.18.35 AM.wmv](#)

Teachers will still have the ability to include comments on a student's report card that pertain to that child's academic performance and/or their learning behaviors HOWEVER, comments about the learning behaviors are not necessary as the marks for those four learning behaviors should be able to stand on their own as a form of communication.

In order to further support the delineation between a student's academic grade and their learning behaviors, any comments a teacher chooses to make about a student's academic performance should be placed in the comment field associated with the academic grade. Comments about a student's learning behavior(s) IF ANY, should be placed in the comment field associated with the learning behavior.

Like the academic grades, the feedback on the four learning behaviors will be visible to students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, and administrators. Unlike academic grades, the information about student learning behaviors will NOT be part of a student's transcript or other documentation requested to be sent to colleges, camps, or grantors of scholarships.

Reporting on student learning behaviors in a way that is consistent, manageable, and meaningful should help us, as a system, reinforce those behaviors that contribute to students' academic success. It provides teachers with a quick and easy way to communicate formative feedback about learning behaviors while clearly separating those behaviors from the academic grade. Having the same behaviors reported on by all teachers in a way that is consistent and easily visible to other stakeholders, allows patterns of behaviors to be seen and responded to. Students who struggle with any of these behaviors can be encouraged, with the support of their parents/guardians, counselors, and/or teachers to set goals for improvement. Finally, this provides us with the opportunity to reinforce and celebrate the consistent demonstration of essential learning behaviors that we want students to take with them into their future endeavors.