



**Edmonds  
School District**

# **Grading Practices Study Session**

April 29, 2025

# Agenda

- Task Force Meeting Summaries
- Learning from within the district
- Purpose of Grading Statement
- Developing Short-Term & Longer-Term Implementation Recommendations
- Additional Action Steps



# Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this place, the Sdohobsh people and their successors the Tulalip Tribes, who since time immemorial have taken care of, hunted, fished and gathered on these lands.

We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water.

By acknowledging these homelands, we commit to working with tribal nations to further the education aims they have identified in our classrooms and schools.

# The Resolution

# Resolution Action Items



- Form a district task force...to develop a plan that will lead to a set of district wide grading practices for grades 7-12 that are fair, accurate, and standards-based
- The Task Force will address the need for:
  - The development of a Purpose of Grading Statement
  - An equal-interval grading scale
  - A system for separating academic achievement grades and non-academic aspects of student performance
- Quarterly updates to the school board
- A set of recommendations presented to the Board by May, 2025 laying out a plan for phased-in implementation

[Link to full resolution](#)

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# Task Force Meeting Summaries

# Task Force Representatives

| <u>Total Members</u>    |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Teachers                | 41 |
| Building Administration | 6  |
| District Administration | 3  |

| <u>Teachers by Level</u> |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Middle School            | 17 |
| High School              | 24 |

| <u>Teachers by School</u>     |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Alderwood Middle School       | 1 |
| Brier Terrace Middle School   | 1 |
| College Place Middle School   | 7 |
| ESC                           | 3 |
| EHK12                         | 1 |
| Edmonds-Woodway High School   | 6 |
| Lynnwood High School          | 4 |
| Madrona K-8                   | 2 |
| Meadowdale High School        | 4 |
| Meadowdale Middle School      | 5 |
| Mountlake Terrace High School | 7 |
| Maplewood K-8                 | 1 |
| Scriber Lake High School      | 1 |

| <u>Teachers by Content</u> |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| CTE                        | 3  |
| Digital Learning           | 3  |
| ELA/English                | 6  |
| Social Studies             | 8  |
| Math                       | 10 |
| Multilingual               | 3  |
| Music                      | 1  |
| PE                         | 3  |
| Science                    | 5  |
| World Language             | 1  |
| Special Education          | 3  |

# Meeting 1

This meeting was discussed during the February study session. During the meeting, the Task Force:

- Reviewed both the Resolution, results of the teacher grading practices survey, and the draft of the Task Force Plan.
- Crosswalked the two documents to ensure alignment.
- Began work on drafting a Purpose of Grading Statement.

# Meeting 2

During the meeting, the Task Force:

- Reviewed survey agreements from the previous meeting to establish a definition of consensus for group decision making.
- Discussed and considered drafts of Purpose of Grading Statements and provided feedback that led to a single, concise statement.
- Discussed different models of equal-interval grading as outlined in the book *Grading for Equity*.
- Dr. Katims presented to the group and ran an exercise that highlighted discrepancies in grading practices.

# Meeting 3

During the meeting, the Task Force:

- Teachers reviewed the second draft of the Purpose of Grading Statement.
- Teachers were tasked with giving an update to their full staff about the progress of the Task Force and to collect feedback from staff and students regarding the Purpose of Grading Statement.
- Joe Webster, principal of Meadowdale Middle School, shared his school's grading guidelines, the process to arrive at consensus in implementing the guidelines, and the ongoing grading work at his school.
- The Task Force - sitting in school groups - created posters regarding practices they thought could be implemented next year and those that would need a longer timeline.
- Closed with a Gallery Walk with teachers leaving comments on the posters with additional thoughts.

# Following Meadowdale's Lead

# Presentation by Joe Webster, Principal of MMS

Joe Webster spoke to the group regarding the ongoing work at his school to develop, implement, and maintain school-wide grading guidelines. This work began in the spring of 2017 and was reviewed and amended in 2023-24.

Meadowdale Middle staff agreed to develop and maintain:

- A set of Core Ideas
- Norms for recording student progress in Skyward
- Setting common gradebook structures
- A school-wide policy on late work
- [Link to the MMS 'Grading and Canvas, Q Use Guidelines' document](#)

# Purpose of Grading Statement

# Draft 1 Format Option A

In Edmonds, the purpose of grading is:

- To provide students, families, educators, and higher education or future employers with clear and accurate information about student progress toward mastery of academic standards.
- To help students reflect on their learning, set goals, and identify areas for improvement while encouraging a growth mindset.
- To serve as a tool for teachers to adjust instruction, personal support, and create learning environments where all students thrive.
- To prepare students for the next level of learning which leads to success in school, career, and global citizenship.
- To provide a fair and transparent reflection of academic student achievement free from factors such as behavior, compliance, or access to resources outside of school.

# Draft 1 Format Option B

Grading provides students, families, educators, and future stakeholders with clear, accurate information on student progress toward mastery of academic standards. It serves as a communication tool, offering meaningful feedback that helps students reflect, set goals, and develop a growth mindset. Grades guide teachers in adjusting instruction and personalizing support while signaling readiness for the next grade, course, or career pathway. Grades must be fair, transparent, and focused on achievement, free from factors like behavior, compliance, or external resources.

# Draft 2: Updated with Task Force Suggestions

In Edmonds, the purpose of grading is:

- To provide students, families, educators, and higher education or future employers with clear and accurate information about student progress toward mastery of academic standards.
- To help students reflect on their learning, set goals, and identify areas for future growth.
- To provide a transparent and unbiased reflection of academic achievement.

Formative grades guide teachers in adjusting instruction. Summative grades signal student readiness for progression toward the next level of learning.

Draft 2: February 28, 2025

# Purpose of Grading Statement

During the meeting, teachers were given a [slideshow](#) to walk staff through the actions of the Task Force and give the opportunity to all teaching staff to provide feedback on the Purpose of Grading Statement Draft.

- All secondary schools dedicated 10 minutes of time on either Wednesday, March 19 or Friday, March 21 during building-directed time for this purpose
- 114 teachers provided feedback on the form
- Comments fit into three main categories listed on the next slide

# Purpose of Grading Feedback Categories

| <u>Category</u>                                                                                                   | <u>Responses</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Left a comment, but did not provide feedback (i.e. “Looks good”)                                                  | 41               |
| Specific Feedback (wording suggestions, seeking clearer definitions of bias and summative assessment were common) | 22               |
| Skeptical of entire process                                                                                       | 16               |

Less common comments pertained to teacher training (7), questions about how this looks for SPED, ML, Intervention (5), addressing potential impact on students (4), Canvas/Skyward and other Comms systems (4), importance of consistency in practices and timely uploads (4), grades as incentives (3), grades for participation (3), thoughts specific to standards-based grading in general (3), disconnecting grading practices from grad requirements (2).

[All feedback can be viewed at this link](#)

# Student Feedback on Purpose of Grading

Task Force teachers were given the option to collect feedback from their students about the Purpose of Grading Statement.

- 24 students (and one teacher) provided feedback on the student survey
- Most student comments did not provide constructive feedback, however several comments are worth further consideration

# Student Comments

The comments below are pasted exactly as they were written on the feedback form. You can view all comments by [clicking this link](#).

- Grading scales differ from AP, Honors, and regular classes which I think should be the same. However, there is variability between each of them which doesn't make much sense. For example, an A in AP Language & Composition was a 94.5% while an A in AP Calculus is a 93%. I believe these grades differ in the same subject as well. I also don't think having no submission means getting a 50% on an assignment. If you don't do the work, you shouldn't be getting the points. I know this relates back to graduation rates, but what about the people actually putting in the work?
- The consistency between High School classes have especially been unreliable in terms of the grading criteria and quotas. I would limit the high school teacher ability to create their own grading system that is designed to benefit the students in as many ways as possible. I had a teacher my sophomore year that went by their own 9 point grading system for all assignments that was very confusing to me and especially my parents when they would check on my grades and see a temporary B- because they did not put in the grades or update things. Also, when students take tests/quizzes on canvas, they should always get the results after they finish the test. Some teachers have the setting where it does not show the score and you have to go to the Grades Page of canvas to see, I think it would be easier if that setting was default to showing the scores. Thanks!
- i think grads are bad because all it does show how much of a failer you are and it bings
- It's a good system, but I feel like it's too harsh, like what if somebody is trying their hardest for a test or school work/home work and still gets a bad grade? I think working with noticeable attention and production should give you at least a passing grade if you are really trying your best, as someone who had bad grades when trying my very best, it left me at a place thinking I shouldn't try because I'm not going to pass anyways. I think there should be a system to be able to tell your teacher if you are really trying to do your best.

# Draft 3: Updated with Full Staff Suggestions

In Edmonds, the purpose of grading is:

- To provide students, families, educators, and higher education or future employers with clear and accurate information about student progress toward mastery of academic standards.
- **To promote student engagement with their learning via self-reflection which includes reviewing their progress to identify successes and set goals for future growth.**
- To provide a transparent and **bias-resistant** reflection of academic achievement.

Formative grades guide teachers in adjusting instruction. Summative grades signal student readiness for progression toward the next level of learning.

# Justification of Changes

- The updated second bullet gives more ownership of the grades to students.
- Replacing the word 'unbiased' with 'bias-resistant' signals a recognition that bias exists, but that strategies are in place to mitigate it. It makes the statement more transparent, credible, and realistic.
- Language addressing modifications and accommodations was *not* added as we felt it was covered under the third bullet and adding further definitions risks complicating the entire statement.
- Definitions of formative and summative assessments was also *not* added as we felt that would also risk complicating the entire statement. Those definitions will be shared when introducing the statement to the broader community.

# Adopting Purpose of Grading Statement

In alignment with the Board Resolution, which called for the development of a Purpose of Grading statement, the Task Force will vote to adopt the statement at the April 28 meeting.



[Link to Updated Grading Statement](#)

# Developing Short-Term & Longer-Term Implementation Recommendations

# Implementation Recommendations

During the March meeting, the Task Force began making recommendations for short-term and long-term implementation suggestions. The chart on the following slide shows recommendations from smaller, school-based groups within the larger task force condensed into one graphic organizer.

Because school-based groups were working independently, some suggestions are present in both columns.

# Implementation Timeline Suggestions

| <u>Top Categories for Earlier Implementation</u>                  | <u>Top Categories for Longer Timeline</u>       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Update Skyward grades regularly (6)                               | Consistency across schools and the district (4) |
| Consistency in classes/departments including retake policies (5)* | Standards-based grading (3)                     |
| Grading academic progress, not behaviors (4)                      | Equal-interval grading scale (2)                |
| District-aligned late work policy (3)*                            | District-aligned late work policy (2)*          |
| Limit grading categories in Skyward (3)                           | District-aligned retake policy (2)*             |
| Power standards (2)                                               |                                                 |
| Chunking assignments (2)                                          |                                                 |

Numbers in parentheses represent the number of posters the suggestion was written upon. For example, “updating Skyward grades” was present on 6 posters.

\*Indicates overlapping categories

# Short-Term Goals



The Task Force will discuss each of these items and recommend what is moved forward.

- Consistent grade ranges district-wide
- Limit Skyward categories
- Late work/retake policy is included in all syllabi
- Teachers are to accept late work when reasonable and within established boundaries
- Teachers will not use unexcused absences as a reason for not accepting late work
- Allow at least one day for each missed day to make up work for full credit
- Additional guidelines in Meadowdale Middle's grading document we could recommend for district-wide guidance [Link to Meadowdale's document](#)

[Link to Short-Term Goal Update](#)

# Long-Term Goals

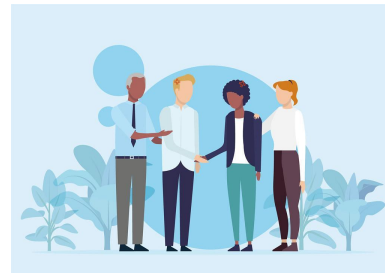


The Task Force will review these potential long-term goals and map out a timeline for implementation and training needs.

- Defining Priority Standards
- Establishing district-wide policy on retakes and late work
- Identifying classes where participation grades are required (i.e. music, cooking, PE, etc.) and how that grading will be done
- Addressing the need for an equal-interval grading scale
- Addressing the need for ensuring academic achievement grades are separated from non-academic aspects of student performance

# Next Meeting

# Upcoming Meetings



During the *upcoming meetings* the Task Force will:

- Review feedback left on the Purpose of Grading Statement and vote to adopt it.
- Find common ground within the short-term implementation goals for which grading practices will be implemented next school year.
- During the next meeting, the group will approve final short-term recommendations and specific timeline that will be brought to the board.
- During the final meeting, the group will review longer-term goals and consider a timeline and training needed to implement them along with recommendations to bring to the board.

# Additional Action Steps

# Additional Action Steps



Work with the Grading Practices Task Force has surfaced additional areas of concern that will need to be addressed to move the needle on continued student achievement improvement processes. While secondary grading practices will continue to be a main focus, the following actions will work toward improving system-wide instructional practices.

- Refocus Student Learning TOSA roles and responsibilities toward defining priority standards and coaching on differentiation including depth and complexity and rigorous instruction.
- Make a strong push toward standards-focused instruction at all grade levels.
- Reintroducing content-integration instructional models in elementary with a focus on knowledge-building instruction.
- Push instructional methods that expose all students to quality Tier 1 grade-level instruction.
- Continue to encourage and promote teaching at a “perky pace” to ensure all grade-level standards are taught to each student.

# Delivering on the Board's Directive

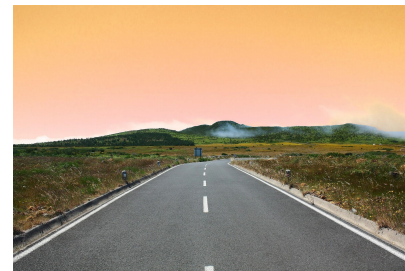
The Grading Practices Task Force has taken meaningful steps to address the core requirements outlined in the Resolution.

| <u>Resolution Requirement</u>                                                                                                                     | <u>Task Force Action</u>                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop a plan that will lead to a shared understanding, definition, and agreed upon set of fair, accurate and standards-based grading practices. | Created and refined a Purpose of Grading Statement with input from staff and students.                |
| Engage stakeholders in examining and improving grading practices.                                                                                 | Conducted surveys, gathered teachers and student feedback, and collaborated across schools.           |
| Create a timeline and plan to move toward more consistent grading practices across secondary schools.                                             | Identified short-term and long-term implementation goals with action steps and training needs.        |
| Report progress and recommendations to the board.                                                                                                 | Continued updates throughout study sessions and during board meetings as part of the ongoing process. |

# Where We're Headed

Continuing the work this spring and into next school year...

- Adoption of the Purpose of Grading Statement (April)
- Short-term and long-term implementation plans reviewed, short-term recommended (April)
- Long-term implementation plans, training, and timelines recommended (May)
- Board review of recommendations (May)
- Begin planning for short-term implementation in the fall and long-term workstream (June)
- Launch of long-term workstream (Fall 2025)



# Questions?

