Updates on District Grading Practices

April 15, 2026

Purpose

Provide annual update on progress made to implement districtwide equitable grading practices, including brief background, actions taken this year, feedback from teachers and students, and next steps.

Brief Background

History

- Spring 2021: CVUSD Board of Education established a goal for equitable secondary grading policy
- Fall 2022: Introduction and initial implementation at secondary schools
- 2024-25: Introduction and training at elementary schools Grades 4-5
- On-Going: Training, collaboration, book studies

Pillars of Equitable Grading Practices

Accurate: Grading must use calculations that are mathematically sound, easy to understand, and correctly describe a student's level of academic performance.

Bias-Resistant: Grades should be based on valid evidence of a student's content knowledge, not based on evidence that is likely to be corrupted by a teacher's implicit bias or reflect a student's environment.

Motivational: The way we grade should motivate students to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset, and give students opportunities for redemption. Grading should be transparent and understandable, every student can know their grade at any time and know how to obtain the grade they want.

Key Board Policy, Administrative Regulations

- “The teacher of each course shall determine the student's grade. The grade assigned by the teacher shall not be changed by the Board or the Superintendent except as provided by law, Board policy, or administrative regulation.” (CVUSD Board Policy 5121)
- “The Superintendent or designee shall establish a uniform grading system based on standards that apply to all students in that course and grade level. Principals and teachers shall ensure that student grades conform to this system. Teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians how student achievement will be evaluated in the classroom.” (CVUSD Board Policy 5121)
- “The CVUSD Board of Education is committed to the exploration and implementation of mastery-based grading practices. In an effort to support mastery-based practices, the CVUSD Board of Education encourages teacher innovation and flexibility within Administrative Regulation 5121 “Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement” in the pursuit of assessment practices which are accurate, free from bias, and motivational.” (CVUSD Administrative Regulation 5121)

Actions Taken This Year

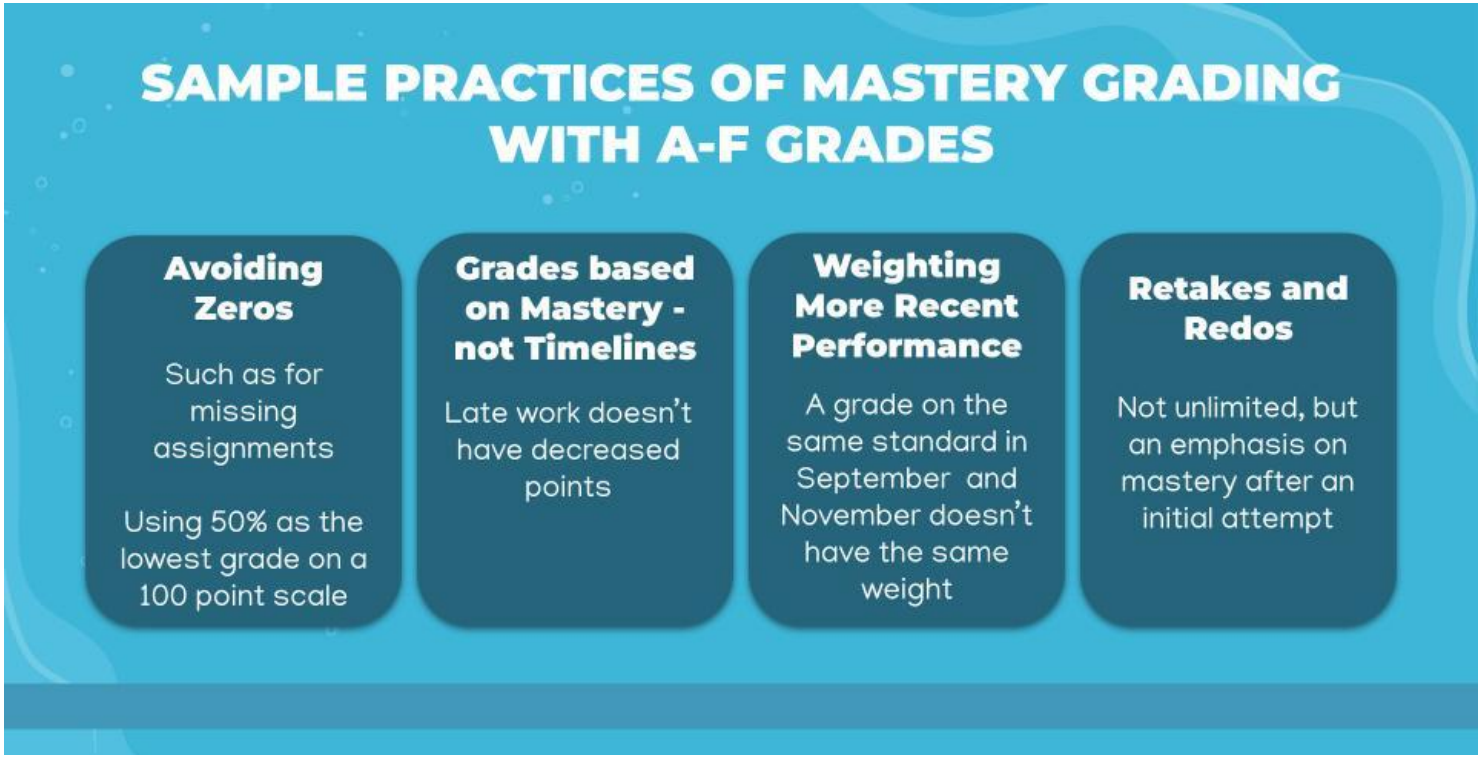
Elementary:

- Implementing new standards-based card for Grade 3
- Calibrating Grade 3 assessments created by committee last year that inform the report card
- Developing Writing Handbook with rubrics for each grade level

Secondary:

- Efforts to calibrate school site departments on common grading strategies for 25/26 school year
- Articulation meeting discussions and sharing out practices
- Both Professional Learning Community (PLC) training and IB training focus on grading practices

Elementary Evidence: Training



Secondary Evidence: Trends by Departments

Grading Practice	Math, Science, ELA, Social Science	PE, VAPA, CTE
Late Work	Accepted late within defined timelines (unit, quarter, grading period)	Accepted throughout grading period
Retakes / Revisions	Retakes and corrections tied to completion or mastery	Revisions and resubmissions to improve performance outcomes
Minimum Grades	Common use of 50% minimum score	Not as common in performing arts, PE, or CTE due to numerous opportunities for revision
Grading Approach	Assessment-driven, focused on demonstrating academic mastery, no extra credit	Skill-based, focused on performance, practice, and completion/mastery of skills

Teacher Survey: Most Common Grading Practices

Equitable grading practices are widely implemented and vary districtwide.

(Select All That Apply)	**Grades 4-12** n = 281	**Grades 4-5** n = 43	**Grades 6-8** n = 82	**Grades 9-12** n = 156
Accepting late work without penalty	82.6%	79.1%	80.5%	84.6%
Allowing for retakes and redos	70.5%	81.4%	79.3%	62.8%
Use of rubrics	60.9%	86.0%	63.4%	52.6%
No extra credit	43.1%	23.3%	47.6%	46.2%
Excluding student participation and effort	42.7%	27.9%	52.4%	41.7%

Teachers could select multiple responses; percentages reflect the percent of teachers selecting each practice.

Teacher Survey: Student Impact

Perceived student impact varies across measures and grade spans.

(Select All That Apply)	**Grades 4-12** n = 281	**Grades 4-5** n = 43	**Grades 6-8** n = 82	**Grades 9-12** n = 156
Students generally have the same motivation	48.0%	44.2%	57.3%	45.5%
Student letter grades have not changed much	41.6%	39.5%	40.2%	43.6%
Student letter grades are generally higher	36.3%	48.8%	30.5%	36.5%
Grades are more representative of student learning	35.2%	34.9%	41.0%	31.4%
Students are generally more motivated	22.8%	30.2%	20.7%	17.3%

Teachers could select multiple responses; percentages reflect the percent of teachers selecting each practice.

Teacher Survey: Consistency w/ Colleagues

Most teachers believe their grading practices are somewhat or highly consistent with other teachers in their school's grade level or department.

(Select One)	**Grades 4-12** n = 281	**Grades 4-5** n = 43	**Grades 6-8** n = 82	**Grades 9-12** n = 156
Somewhat consistent	52.0%	48.8%	54.9%	52.6%
Highly consistent	21.7%	32.6%	22.0%	18.6%
Not consistent	17.4%	11.6%	15.9%	19.2%
Unsure	8.9%	7.0%	7.3%	9.6%

Teacher Survey: Additional Supports

Additional clarity and collaboration are the most requested supports.

(Select All That Apply)	**Grades 4-12** n = 281	**Grades 4-5** n = 43	**Grades 6-8** n = 82	**Grades 9-12** n = 156
Department collaboration	48.2%	48.8%	45.0%	49.7%
Clear district guidelines	43.2%	60.5%	41.3%	39.4%
Examples/models from colleagues	32.7%	51.2%	28.8%	29.7%
Professional development	18.3%	34.9%	16.3%	14.8%

Teachers could select multiple responses; percentages reflect the percent of teachers selecting each practice.

Updated 4/13/2026

Teacher Feedback

Variation of Practices

- “There needs to be more consistency across teachers so students aren’t confused.”
- “Even within the same grade level, practices vary quite a bit.”
- "Students notice when grading is different from class to class.”

Concerns with Motivation

- “Some students are more motivated, but others are taking advantage of retakes.”
- “Students don’t feel the same urgency to complete work on time.”
- “Some students benefit greatly, but others struggle with the lack of structure.”

Improving Implementation

- “We need more opportunities to collaborate within departments.”
- “More training with specific examples would be very helpful.”

Student District Advisory Committee (SDAC) Feedback

- “Grades being based on summative assessments are the best, but very one-size-fits-all which can be bad.”
- “I prefer standards-based grading for language classes, (English, Spanish, French, etc.), as these classes should be evaluated on our growth. However, I prefer traditional grading for classes like math, science, and history, as the assignments in those classes require a strong amount of effort and I believe they should count fairly toward our grade.”
- “I have noticed how some teachers that teach the same type of class have different standards, grading methods, … causing students to have different grade averages with different teachers, but the same class.”

Planned Next Steps

Elementary:

- Finish Writing Handbook with resources and rubrics for all grade levels
- Work with Grades 4-5 on adjusting current Math and ELA assessments to resemble Grade 3 assessments

Secondary:

- Working on creating more continuity across teachers within content areas at each school
- Consistently agreed upon, written grading practices reflected in course syllabi for each secondary school's department

Questions, Discussion