Welcome

Community Committee on Grading & Homework

Entry Activities:

Sign in using QR Code

Grab some pizza, drink

Find one of your school's tables

Fill out a name tag and meet your table mates

ISSAQUAH
SCHOOL DISTRICT 411

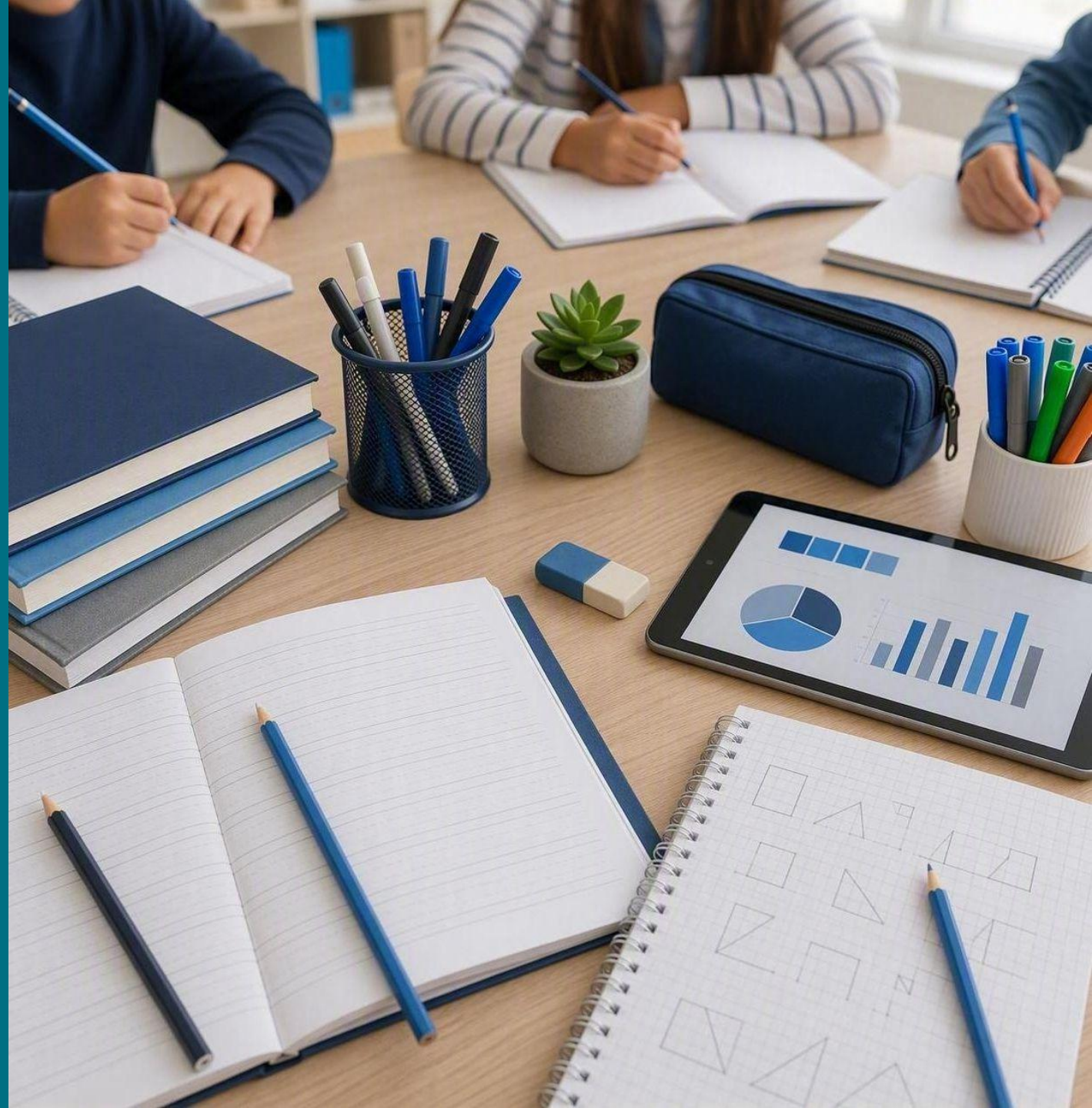
Community Committee on **Grading & Homework**

Meeting 1: October 13, 2026

Facilitators:

Will Paananen
Executive Director of Secondary Schools

Rich Mellish
Executive Director of Teaching & Learning Services



Today's Objectives

- To **introduce and launch** the committee and process we will follow, and how it connects to previous work and feedback
- To start **exploring our ideals** with regard to grading and homework
- To establish and launch a plan to **gather information** from our broader community

Meeting 1 Agenda



Welcome & Agenda



Purpose, Process, Product



Exploring our ideals



Planning for Listening

Starter – 5 minutes

1. **Table introductions**
   - **Name**
   - **Role** (parent, teacher, student, admin…)
   - **Where you went to high school** [adult] or **Where you hope to be in 5 years** [student]

2. **As a table, come up with 1-3 things** you have experienced with respect to a homework or grading you have engaged with at your school that you think was **so good** it would be amazing **if it happened with every class** in some way…

Meeting Norms and Agreements

- **Assume Positive Intent**
- **Focus on Systems and Patterns**
- **Listen to Understand**
- **Share Your Experience, and make Space for All Voices**
- **Stay Curious**
- **Respect Confidentiality**
- **Honor the Purpose of the Group**

This advisory group is designed to explore broad themes, experiences, and potential improvements related to grading and homework. It is not intended to resolve immediate concerns involving individual students, staff members, classrooms, or schools.

ISD Problem of Practice

In our district we are not yet providing learning experiences that eliminate pervasive disproportionate differences in academic outcomes and sense of belonging for students by race, ability, language, and income.

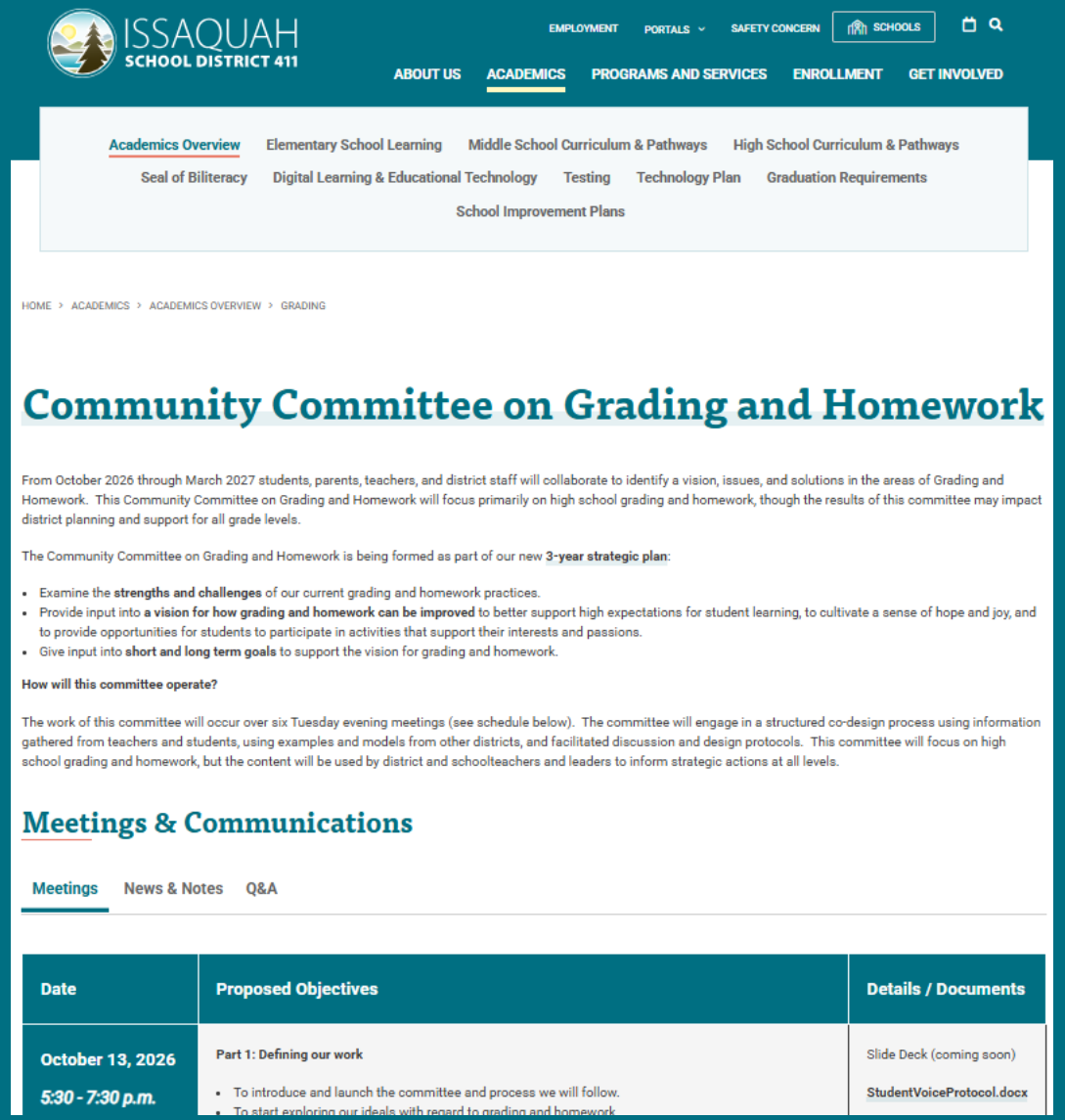
Committee Resources

All resources and meeting notes will be kept on our committee web page

HOME > ACADEMICS > ACADEMICS OVERVIEW > GRADING >

Community Committee on Grading and Homework

*Includes a **Q&A** using questions in the meeting follow-up feedback form.*



Leadership & Workgroup Structure

Who is leading and organizing improvements in grading and homework?

Project Leaders	Will Paananen & Rich Mellish	
Leadership Team	**Project Leaders** & Jaqueline Downey	3 Large High School Principals
Workgroup	**Leadership Team**	Grading Practices Advisory Committee (GPAC)
Advisories & Feedback Loops	Community Committee on Grading & Homework	Sectionals (administrators)	Department Leads (teachers)	Student Feedback Loop TBD

Our Charge

Strategic Plan: Strategy 3

Cultivate a sense of hope and joy for learning, and provide more room for students to grow and explore passions and interests.

Action:

Clarify, align, and improve homework and grading practices to support students to learn, fail forward, and participate in activities that support their interest and passion.

Operational Expectation 12 (link)

Grading practices should be equitable and homework should meaningfully contribute to overall student learning.

Determination of student grades should reflect the student's understanding of course learning objectives.

Students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate and achieve a grade that reflects a high-level of understanding of course learning objectives.

Grading and Homework practices should be consistent across grades and secondary departments. Departmental practices should be consistent across schools.



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Target Outcome

Consistency

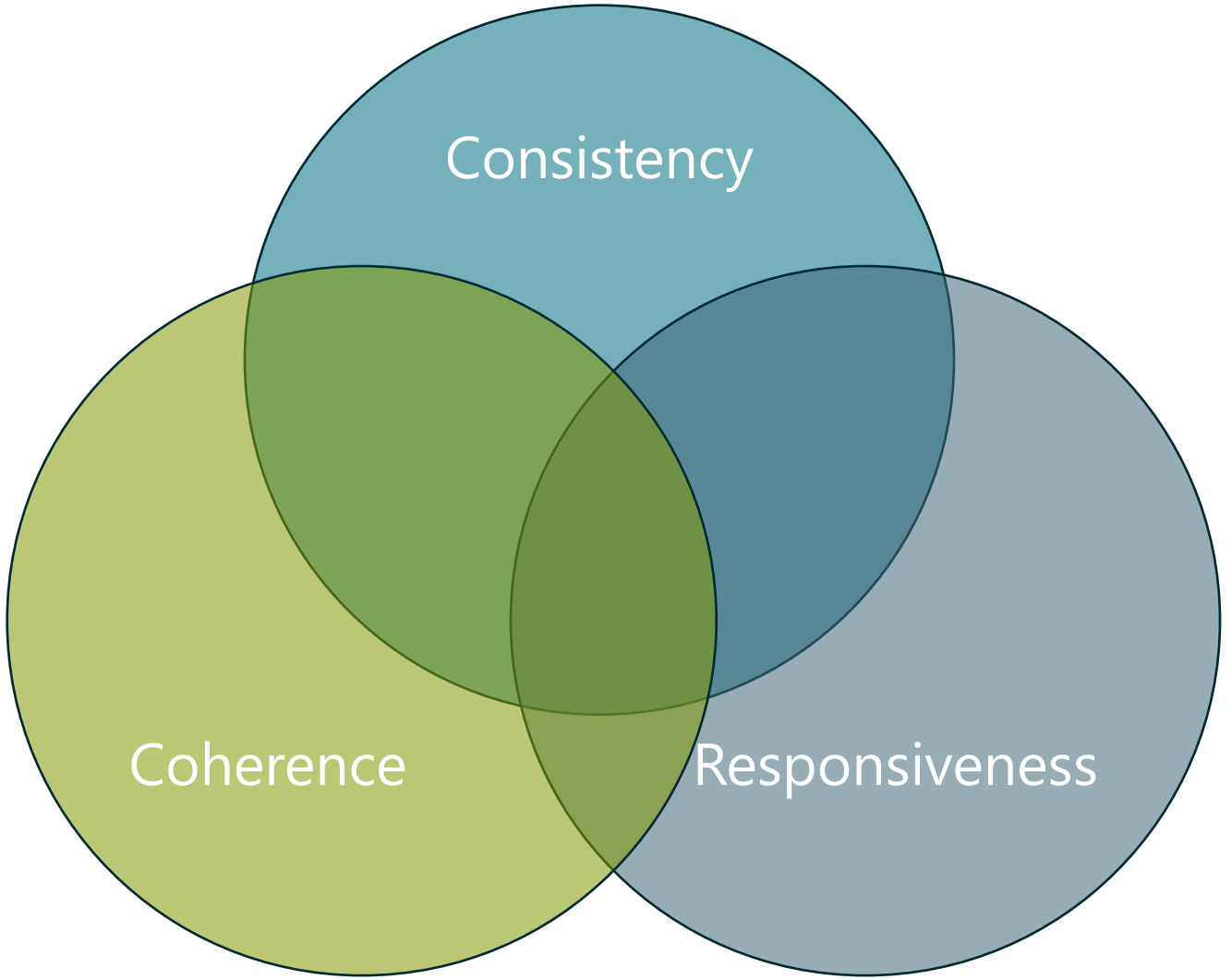
What should be the same? Clearly articulated systems, structures, and predictable patterns of behavior

Coherence

How do we ensure practices make sense and are aligned to our values? Practices that make sense across settings AND are adapted to the context AND aligned to our mission, vision, and Portrait of a Graduate

Responsiveness / Relevance

What should vary? Flexibility to meet the unique needs of groups and individuals



What work are we building on?

Fall 2020	Fall 2026
Grading & Homework practices were managed at school level.	Structured district wide engagement includes: • Annual grading & homework structured collaboration for all staff • Grading Practices Advisory Committee (GPAC)
Calibration across teachers on grading practices was voluntary	Require calibration and reporting of practices at the school-course level • Same weights & categories • Same Recovery Plan • Same rounding rules
Retesting / recovery was determined at individual teacher discretion	Require minimum retesting/recovery for any student receiving below C+, must be able to earn up to a C+ on recovery
Grading scales mostly the same but not required	Grading scales must be district standard options (2 standard options + IB Scale)
AP Grade bump at teacher discretion	AP Grade Bump district-wide course consistency
Issues regarding grading were solved individually through district complaint process	In addition to individual complaint process, established a means through GPAC to address district-wide grading calibration issues that are identified (by community or administrators)

What unresolved or unaddressed issues have already been identified that this committee may work on?

- **How homework is part of the grade**
  What should be the same and what should be different based on the course type?
- **Workload / Homework – volume**
  How do we help student manage their workload across classes, find healthy life-school-work balance? How much work out of class is reasonable based on the type of course? What types of work outside of class is beneficial?
- **Recovery boundaries and consistency**
  How can we improve the guidelines around Recovery for greater consistency, greater equity, in ways that are intentional, purposeful, manageable, sustainable?
- **Grading scale**
  In what ways should we consider adjusting the district grading scales? (ex: how many gradations are appropriate?, LWSD not using the A-...)
- **Student guide to grading and homework**
  What other grading and homework practices should a student be able to count on across classes? What grading and homework practices should a student expect to vary based on the course type or as responsive to students (and why)?

Problem Solving Process

Based on the PELP Problem Solving Process

Harvard Business School & Graduate School of Education



Definition	Data Collection	Problem Identification & Prioritization	Vision & Goals	Strategy & Tactics
October	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec	Jan*-Feb	Feb-March

* Teacher Non-Student Day Engagement

What are grades for?

Ranking students	College admissions
Motivating learning	Feedback to students and parents

Process: 10 dots table activity

Products

What will this committee produce?

Through discussion and consensus, this committee will make recommendations to the superintendent on the following:

- **Content to be included in a parent guide to grading and homework**, articulation what students and parent can expect in ISD classes. (Update/replace ISD Principles for Secondary Grading.)

- **Practical strategies and approaches to grading and homework** that support students to learn, fail forward, and participate in activities that support their interest and passion.



Welcome & Agenda



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Exploring our ideals



Planning for Listening

Why applicants want to participate

Applicants see grading and homework as daily forces shaping learning, opportunity, and well-being.

1

Lived experience

Students and families described inconsistent expectations, heavy workloads, and the challenge of balancing advanced courses with life outside school.

2

Voice & representation

Applicants want student and family experiences, including quieter voices, to directly inform district decisions.

3

Equity & access

Many highlighted neurodivergence, disability, 504 plans, varied resources, and different learning needs.

4

Relevant expertise

Parents, educators, public-sector professionals, coaches, researchers, and technology leaders offered practical and comparative perspectives.

Shared motivation: contribute firsthand experience to decisions that directly affect students.

What applicants want the committee to accomplish

The clearest request is a shared framework that improves coherence without lowering expectations.



Applicants consistently framed the goal as better alignment, not simply easier grading or less work.

Quotes-Student

"I hope the committee can develop greater consistency and clarity while preserving high expectations for learning."

Quotes-Student

I am interested in joining the committee because as a 10th grader past the transition-shock of 9th grade, I have experienced the current homework load and grading school systems of this district and I'd want to help first-hand in constructing constructive and balanced solutions. I would also like to represent one of the many students who have faced academic-burnout of high academic standards that are inscribed in them.

Quotes-Students

I found that grading and homework practices affect not only your academics but also every other part of a students' life. It is never purely about one's performance in class, it now has the added pressure of college preparation, peer judgement, and you own self esteem. This committee seemed like the best way to advocate for those students who feel overwhelmed by the pressure academics have placed on them. Especially because, most students feel like they do not have an outlet to voice their frustration of the education system that is currently in place. By being an active participant of this committee, I hope that we, as a community, are able to find ways to relieve some of that weight on students, without placing more burdens on teachers or administrators. The committee gives a rare chance where students and teachers are able to work alike towards the same goals and communicate to make sure both parties are comforted by the effort these discussions put in.

Quotes-Parents

"My hope is that the committee can identify best practices that promote fairness, transparency, and consistency in grading, while also ensuring that homework reinforces learning without creating unnecessary stress.

I would like to see policies that support both academic excellence and student well-being, preparing students for success in college, careers, and life beyond high school."

Current Guiding Principles

- Operational Expectation 12 (OE 12)
- Secondary Grading
- Regulation 2422 - Homework
- ISD Portrait of a Graduate

The Board believes that every student should have access to all academic and social-emotional learning supports that are necessary for them to achieve their full potential. Grading practices should be equitable and homework should meaningfully contribute to overall student learning.

The Superintendent shall establish and maintain a learning environment that is characterized by support and encouragement for high student achievement.

The Superintendent will:

12.1 Ensure that grading practices are equitable and based on a comprehensive and objective review of best practices research.

a. Determination of student grades should reflect the student's understanding of course learning objectives.
b. Students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate and achieve a grade that reflects a high-level of understanding of course learning objectives.
c. Grading practices should be consistent across grades and secondary departments.
d. Departmental grading practices should be consistent across schools.

12.2 Ensure that homework practices are equitable and based on a comprehensive and objective review of best practices research.

a. Homework practices should be consistent across grades and secondary departments.
b. Homework practices should be consistent across schools, not necessarily including elementary special programs and accelerated offerings such as AP, IB, and high school courses at middle school.

12.3 Solicit regular feedback from stakeholders on grading and homework practices, with consideration for overall student workload.

2422 - Homework

The District believes that homework is a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement but also develop self-discipline and associated good working habits. Homework, as an extension of the classroom, homework must be planned, purposeful, and clear.

Homework may be assigned for one or more of the following purposes:

1. Practice -- to help students increase competency with specific skills which have been presented in class.
2. Preparation -- to help students gain the maximum benefits from future lessons.
3. Extension -- to provide students with opportunities to transfer specific skills or concepts to new situations.
4. Creativity -- to require students to integrate many skills and concepts in order to produce original responses.

Homework may not be assigned as a disciplinary measure.

The purpose of homework assignments, and the guidelines and/or expectations should be made clear to the student at the time of the assignment.

Although the District relies on research based practices regarding time allotment guidelines for student homework, students vary in their ability levels, learning styles, home resources, and need for additional work at home. Courses also differ in kinds of material presented, equipment requirements, and degrees of supervision needed for assignments, making it inappropriate to state specific time requirements.

Principles for Secondary Grading

+ A student's grade should represent academic proficiency.
+ Assessments and other evidence of student's academic proficiency are rooted in common learning standards.
+ Learning goals, and how they will be assessed are shared with students before learning begins.
+ Students are provided multiple opportunities to show proficiency.
+ The collection of evidence that demonstrates academic proficiency is determined through a teacher's professional judgment in conjunction with other teachers in their content area.
+ Success indicators such as work habits, initiative, citizenship and collaboration (WICC) are monitored and recorded separately from a student's grade.
+ Student exceptionalities are an important consideration when determining a student's academic grade.

Portrait of a Graduate

ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT 411

Our Vision: All students thrive as they engage in meaningful learning that unlocks their passion and potential to positively impact the world.

Our Mission: Our students will be prepared for and eager to accept the academic, occupational, personal and practical challenges of life in a dynamic global environment.

Agency to Learn



Graduates demonstrate passion, persistence, growth mindset, executive functioning and resiliency in their learning to adapt to changes and prioritize wellness.

Critical Thinking



Graduates show inquiry, creativity and systems thinking to solve complex problems and develop new opportunities to better the world.

Effective Communication



Graduates communicate with purpose across different audiences and modalities to foster discourse and human connection.

Collaboration & Influence



Graduates participate on teams in different roles, cultivate effective teams and build inclusive social networks to accomplish shared goals.

Interpreting Information & Data



Graduates gather, analyze and synthesize various types of data, leveraging emerging technology to maintain integrity in the context and use of information.

Every ISD Student. Every Day.

Exploring Our Ideals

- Step 1
  - Gallery walk of questions and principles of grading and homework
    - *Walk and read, silently for 3 minutes*
    - *Use post it notes to share thoughts or address questions on the poster*
    - *Add a check mark if you agree with a statement*

Gallery Walk

- Step 2:
  - Gather around a quote that you would like to discuss:
  - *What do you think this means for students, teachers and families?*
  - *How have you seen this in your own experience? (in school or career?)*



Welcome & Agenda



Purpose, Process, Product



Exploring our ideals



Planning for Listening

Data Collection: Listening

Why? *Get an accurate picture of current state of grading and homework*

Strengths

Challenges

Scope

Scale

Priorities

Data Collection: Listening

Students	Teachers	Parents / Caregivers
• 1:1 Interviews • Class discussions	• Surveys • Meetings	• Listening Sessions • Surveys

Currently planning initial listening / gathering information, after initial analysis we may want more information...

Strategic Planning – Student Voice Themes

How are we doing in making sure students see the learning as personally **meaningful**, **enjoyable**, or **supportive** of their life and learning goals?

How are we doing in making sure **student workload is appropriate** for their goals and allows time for healthy life choices such as clubs, sports, community activities?

How are we doing in making sure students have the chance to **try** new learning, and **get feedback** so that they can **learn from their mistakes** before major graded tasks and tests?

How are we doing to make sure that your **grade reflects how well you learned** the essential learnings of the class, and are not overly impacted by the process of learning such as early stumbles?

Process

Table Discussion

Mark up or comment on a theme

Add a theme

Breakout Groups

Group 1: Students

- How can our student reps contribute to gathering student voice?

Group 2: Teachers

- How can our teacher reps contribute to gathering student voice?
- How can our teacher reps contribute to synthesizing teacher voice?

Group 3: Parents / Guardians

- How can our parent reps contribute to gathering parent voice?

Framing for Breakouts: Protocol

Representation: Gathering diverse perspectives

- Advanced/Standard Level/ Remediation; Race & Cultural Diversity, Economic Diversity...

Strengths, Challenges, and Aspirations

- Ask about what is working, what are stress points, what is their goal

Scope & Scale

- In how many classes is it working well and in how many is it not
- Any subject specific issues?

Feedback and Q/A form

Please use the following form – also being emailed to you, to give us feedback on this meeting and the planned process

AND

to surface any questions you have that you hope are answered in future meetings and/or on our Committee Site Q&A.

Breakout Group: Teachers

Goal: For teacher representatives to help build the story of current practice, current strengths, current challenges.

Resources:

Student Input Form, LID Day Teacher Summary

More: (AI Homework survey analysis, AI Grading Calibration survey analysis, full data available if needed)

Options for discussion: How would you like to help build out the stories and voices contributing to the next steps. *What do teachers want students and parents of this committee to know about grading and homework?*

A. Conduct some student 1:1 interviews
B. Hold class discussions with your own classes (add to student input form)
C. Do some listening sessions with other teachers in their building
D. Process the LID teacher data

Breakout Group: Students

Goal: For student representatives to help build the story of current practice, current strengths, current challenges.

Resources: Student Input Form,

Student Voice Protocol

Considerations when adding students voice:

- Representation – how to get diverse student voice?
- Confidentiality – importance of permission and avoiding names

Breakout Group: Parents

Goal: For parent representatives to help build the story of current practice, current strengths, current challenges.

Resources: Student Input Form,

- Student Voice Protocol

Have a specific conversation with your student about these topics

- *"What grading and homework experiences best support student learning, motivation, clarity, and well-being?"*
- *What follow up questions and data gathering will be helpful?*

Parent Session

- **Technical Questions:**
  - What do you know about your student's workload, due dates, assessments and grades?
  - How do you know?
    - Canvas? Syllabi? Conversations?
  - What else do you want to know?

- **Adaptive Questions:**
  - What are effective practices or assignments that you have seen that we should replicate/learn from?
  - What practices or issues have had a negative impact or caused problems?
  - How much of the effort that your child spends on school leads to more learning?

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