

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Reg. No. 500-05
SUBJECT: GRADING - SECONDARY	Issued: 8/25/82
Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent	Amended: 11/21/18

I. Policy 416

II. Procedures

A. Definitions

1. Essential Curriculum — Curriculum that includes the performance standards, indicators, and objectives that describe what students should know and be able to do in the course of study. The essential curriculum, where applicable, is aligned to the College and Career ready curriculum and relevant national standards.
2. Grade — A letter, number, or symbol that indicates student performance of the essential curriculum being studied.
3. Marking Term — The segment of the school year during which instruction is delivered, student progress is monitored, and grades are issued. There are four (4) marking terms of nine (9) weeks each.
4. Participation and Effort — The degree to which students are actively engaged in their own learning process.
5. Report Card — Document that records a student's grades, attendance, and other information for each of the four (4) marking terms.
6. Requirements — Those factors, in addition to the standards (essential curriculum indicators), that may be reflected in the grade (see Section II. C. below).
7. Semester — Two (2) terms of nine (9) weeks each totaling eighteen (18) weeks.
8. Standards — The essential curriculum indicators that tell what a student should know and be able to do upon completion of a course of study at each grade and/or content area.
9. Term Grade — A grade (letter or symbol) that indicates student mastery of objectives from the essential curriculum and requirements established by the classroom teacher. The term grade is recorded on the report card.
10. Final Exam – Cumulative, end-of-course tests that count as no more than a test grade for the marking term.
11. Benchmark Assessment — Approved, county-wide formative assessment that measures student mastery of the essential curriculum standards for a portion of the content taught in designated secondary school courses of study. The approved, county-wide formative assessment (referred to as the "Benchmark") counts as a regular test grade for the course.

B. Purpose of Grades

The purpose of grades is to provide feedback to students, parents, and educators about student performance and achievement in school courses of study. Grades help inform teachers, students, and parents about the academic areas in which students meet or exceed expectations, need additional challenge, or require substantial support to be academically successful.

To support students in meeting or exceeding expectations, classroom teachers organize and structure learning activities to challenge and support students. Principals also organize academic support during the school day that includes intervention support. And finally, parents, teachers, and school staff work as partners to provide support such as tutoring (before school, during lunch, after school, and peer tutoring), teacher/parent communication (meetings, conferences, teamings, etc.), and homework help (support at home, homework clubs, Homework Hotline, etc.).

Grades (letters, numbers or symbols) are assigned during the report card term for assignments, projects, quizzes, and tests. They are also assigned at the end of the report card term as a formal grade on the report card to represent achievement for the entire marking term. The guidelines in this grading regulation ensure that grades are determined in a consistent manner.

C. Factors that Help Determine Grades

Grades are a reflection of student achievement and study skills/habits necessary for success. As such, grading decisions at all levels reflect a student's achievement in achieving mastery of the essential curriculum, and also by meeting the requirements established by the classroom teacher. These requirements should focus on:

- Quality of work that demonstrates achievement of essential curriculum
- Progress in achieving mastery of essential curriculum
- Independent application of knowledge, skills, and processes
- Participation and effort

Determination of term grades should take into account all of these factors. However, the relative importance of these factors will vary according to differences in cognitive entry skills, developmental levels, and curricular demands. The design of classroom and homework activities should take into account the varied needs of students.

Regular school attendance is important for student achievement. Any impact on grades due to attendance should be in accordance with the guidelines in FCPS Regulation 500-25.

D. Responsibilities for Curriculum, Instruction, and Grading

1. The Board of Education (Board) approves the essential curriculum and course of study to be taught. The course of study includes a detailed program of study for a course that includes the essential curriculum for the course, an approved text resource for the course (if required), recommended hours/credits for the course, and expected outcomes for the course. The essential curriculum and courses of study may not be changed in substance or content without the approval of the Board.

2. Curriculum specialists and/or supervisors work with classroom teachers to develop curriculum instructional resources (planning tools, supplemental guidelines, units, and sample lesson plans) for the approved essential curriculum and course of study.
3. School administrators and teachers organize the instructional program in accordance with the approved essential curriculum and courses of study.
4. Teachers have flexibility in designing criterion-based grading requirements for individual classes in order to accommodate teaching styles, academic levels, and developmental differences.
5. Prior to the beginning of each school year or semester, each teacher shall establish the class requirements to be used in each class for the purpose of assigning term grades. These requirements should reflect guidelines for grading provided at both the system and school level. Information about the course of study and class requirements for grading shall be provided to students, in writing, ¹ within the first week of the school year or semester. Students should be asked to review the information and requirements with their parents.
6. Teachers are expected to provide frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate progress, including both formative and summative evaluation feedback.
7. Teachers monitor and informally evaluate student work daily and provide ongoing oral and written feedback throughout the learning process. Teachers shall maintain a formal written record of each student's work and progress on a regular basis. The record (either paper grade book or electronic grading system) must contain an average of one grade per week.
8. Written work or production should be evaluated and returned to the student as soon as possible. Once the student has examined this work, the teacher may retain it for record purposes. Upon request of the student, such retained work shall be available during the current school year for review under teacher supervision.
9. Teachers are expected to review their assignment of grades for student work and tests, recognizing that when using a 0-100 scale, assigning a grade of "0" for missing work can have a significant negative impact on the overall student grade when "averaging" is used to determine a grade.
10. Teachers shall not use grades as a means to correct student misconduct. While student conduct and behavior may have direct influence on achievement in the classroom, misbehavior is to be handled according to school system and school discipline policies and procedures.
11. Teachers shall assign homework as appropriate at all levels for all students. The weight of homework activities in determining term grades shall not exceed 10%. Homework should be assigned in accordance with the guidelines in FCPS Regulation 500-15.
12. Teachers are responsible for assigning grades for student work during the marking term.

¹For purpose of this regulation, "in writing" may include hard copy or electronic copy.

- 13. Teachers are responsible for issuing interim reports to notify students and parents of unsatisfactory or failing student performance. Interim reports should be issued in accordance with the guidelines in FCPS Regulation 500-13.
- 14. Teachers are responsible for assigning term grades for the report card. Report cards are issued on specified dates four (4) times during the school year.

E. Special Education

- 1. Determination of report card grades in response to a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be a collaborative process among general educators and special educators.
- 2. In addition to report card grades, special education case managers, in collaboration with all service providers, are required to report progress on the student’s IEP goals by attaching the quarterly progress report to the student’s report card.

F. Term Grades for the Report Card

In middle and high school, students receive letter term grades on the report card evaluating success in meeting curriculum standards and requirements.

- 1. In grades 6-12, letter grades are used. Plus and/or minus are not used. The percentage scale that guides the awarding of letter grades is listed below. Teachers have discretion to consider a variety of performance factors before awarding the letter grade, and exceptions to the percentage scale may be made with principal approval.

90-100 A	80-89 B	70-79 C	60-69 D	0-59 F
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- 2. Explanation of term grades used in grades 6-12 (without plus or minus):

A	Exemplary Performance	Consistently meets and/or exceeds curriculum standards and class requirements
B	Skilled Performance	Frequently meets and/or exceeds curriculum standards and class requirements
C	Satisfactory Performance	Generally meets curriculum standards and class requirements, though some curriculum standards and class requirements may remain as yet unmet
D	Minimally Acceptable Performance	Meets some curriculum standards and class requirements, though many curriculum standards and class requirements remain as yet unmet
F	Unacceptable Performance	Meets few, if any, curriculum standards and class requirements

- 3. An incomplete grade of "I" may be given in a course in which a student has not completed the prescribed work by the end of the grading period. The building principal must approve all incomplete grades.
 - a. Normally, the grade of "I" (incomplete) will remain on the report card for no longer than two (2) weeks from the end of the marking period. At the end of two (2) weeks, the teacher will change the "I" to another appropriate grade and notify the student and parent.
 - b. Extenuating circumstances such as prolonged illness may cause a teacher to grant an extension of the two (2) week period. The building principal shall approve such an extension.

G. Timelines

- 1. Report cards will be issued on specified dates four (4) times during the school year.
- 2. Interim reports should be issued in accordance with the interim procedures as detailed in FCPS Regulation 500-13.

H. Credit and Final Grade Computations

Use the following information when determining the final course grade:

<u>HIGH SCHOOL Quality Points</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL Grade Point Range</u>
A = 4	3.50 - 4.00
B = 3	2.50 - 3.49
C = 2	1.50 - 2.49
D = 1	.50 - 1.49
F = 0	0.00 - 0.49
<u>MIDDLE SCHOOL Quality Points</u>	<u>MIDDLE SCHOOL Grade Point Range</u>
A = 4	3.50 - 4.00
B = 3	2.50 - 3.49
C = 2	1.50 - 2.49
D = 1	.50 - 1.49
F = 0	0.00 - 0.49

1. Computation of Final Grades for Middle School Courses and High School Courses

- a. In a two (2) semester schedule, the final grade for a one (1) credit course is calculated by multiplying the term grade by 25% and adding the product of each. A student must pass two (2) of the four (4) terms in order to pass the course.

Example:	Term 1	grade of B =	3 x .25	=	.75
	Term 2	grade of C =	2 x .25	=	.50
	Term 3	grade of B =	3 x .25	=	.75
	Term 4	grade of A =	4 x .25	=	<u>1.00</u>
					3.00 = B

(Refer to the Quality Point/Grade Point Range charts)

- b. The final grade for a one-half (1/2) credit course is calculated by multiplying the term grades by 50% and adding the product of each. A student must pass one (1) of the two (2) terms in order to pass the course.

- d. A student's class rank shall be calculated annually (unweighted and weighted) in accordance with the guidelines in FCPS Regulation 400-13.

3. Exceptions to the Grade Computations

- a. A student who fails the second term of a one (1) credit semester course due to lack of acceptable effort may be failed for the course regardless of total quality points earned. Failure for lack of an acceptable effort shall be approved by the principal and shall be preceded by ample notification to the parent/guardian.

A student who fails the third and/or fourth terms of a one (1) credit semester course because of lack of acceptable effort may be failed for the year regardless of total quality points earned. Failure for lack of acceptable effort shall be approved by the principal and shall be preceded by ample notification to the parent/guardian.

- b. A student who fails the second term of a one-half (1/2) credit semester course due to lack of acceptable effort may be failed for the course regardless of total quality points earned. Failure for lack of an acceptable effort shall be approved by the principal and shall be preceded by ample notification to the parent/guardian.

A student who fails the third and/or fourth terms of a one-half (1/2) credit semester course because of lack of an acceptable effort may be failed for the course regardless of the total quality points earned. Failure for lack of an acceptable effort shall be approved by the principal and shall be preceded by ample notification to the parent/guardian.

- c. With the exception of students enrolled in an intervention course or an IEP related program (e.g., Learning for Life), on those occasions when a middle school student has a course change, the grade from the previous course will be evaluated and assessed at the discretion of the principal and teacher. Report cards will reflect courses in which the student is currently enrolled.

- 4. A high school student may repeat courses for one of two reasons: (1) to earn credit toward graduation in the instance where the student originally failed; or (2) to improve subject mastery and/or the grade in a previously passed course.

- a. In no instance may a student earn graduation credits more than once for the same course.

- b. The final grade to be listed on the transcript shall be the highest grade earned.

- 5. Students who pass designated high school courses in middle school are automatically granted high school credit. Students may repeat the course if they wish to earn a higher grade.

6. Procedures for Grade Changes

- a. Teacher Initiated Grade Change - On those occasions where a teacher feels the final mark does not fairly reflect the final achievement of the student, the teacher may award a higher letter grade. The following documentation is required within 30 school days after the report card has been issued:

- Name of teacher requesting the grade change
- Reason for the grade change
- Signature of the person approving the grade change
- Reason for approval
- Date of approval
- Signature of the Principal

b. Parent Appeal of a Grade – On those occasions where a parent feels the final grade does not fairly reflect the final achievement of the student, the following procedure should be followed:

- All questions about a student's grade should be directed first to the classroom teacher within 10 school days after the report card has been issued.
- If the matter remains unresolved, a student and/or parent/legal guardian may file a complaint with the principal indicating the reason for the dispute and the remedy sought. The principal will evaluate the complaint and provide a written response within 10 school days of receiving the complaint. With the exception outlined in Board Policy 105 (described below), the principal's decision is final in all matters concerning student grades.
- The timeline for final grade changes must not exceed 30 school days after the report card has been issued. *
- A student and/or parent/legal guardian may appeal the principal's decision for alleged violations of procedures or violations of a student's due process in accordance with Board Policy 105.²

*Appealing the grade of dual enrollment courses occurs with the institution of higher learning and does not apply to FCPS procedures

Approved:

original signed by

Theresa R. Alban
Superintendent

²The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) has consistently held that the merits of students' grades should be kept within the school building and are to be made by the persons most able to evaluate the situation from personal knowledge and the State Board will only hear appeals if there are specific allegations that procedures were not followed or due process rights violated. (See *Barbara P. v. Anne Arundel Co. Board of Education*, MSBE Op. No. 14-66)