

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Reg. No. 500-06
SUBJECT: GRADING – ELEMENTARY	Issued: 8/25/82
Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent	Amended: 11/21/18

I. Policy 416

II. Procedures

A. Definitions

1. Alternative Curriculum – Curriculum that is changed to meet the demands of a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) as required by law for students receiving special education services. Students receiving an alternative curriculum are eligible for the Alt-MSA and are not diploma bound.
2. 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 approved Maryland state standards.
3. Essential Curriculum with Extension – Curriculum that includes and also extends beyond the essential curriculum to deepen and broaden the knowledge and skills listed. Extension is provided when students demonstrate mastery of the essential curriculum and readiness for advanced curricular study.
4. Essential Curriculum with Intervention – Curriculum that includes the essential curriculum as well as additional intervention supports. These supports are provided when students demonstrate significant deficits in essential skills needed to meet the standards and requirements for a course of study.

An “intervention” is defined as:

- Tier I – Instructional strategies and/or supports provided by the general educator during class time for English Language Arts and/or Mathematics devoted to the essential curriculum.
 - Tier II – Research based programs in which students are enrolled and will be completed in fewer than 18 weeks. Requires additional resources over and above the general education program for English Language Arts and/or Mathematics.
 - Tier III – Research based programs in which students are enrolled and require more than 18 weeks to complete. Requires additional resources over and above the general education program for English Language Arts and/or Mathematics.
5. Grade – A letter that indicates student performance of the essential curriculum.

6. Marking Term – The segment of the school year during which instruction is delivered, student progress is monitored, and grades are issued. There are four marking terms of nine weeks each.
7. Participation and Effort – The degree to which students actively engage in their own learning process.
8. Report Card – Document that records a student’s grades, attendance and other information for each of the four marking terms. Sample report cards are available on the FCPS Web site.
9. Requirements – Those factors, in addition to the standards (essential curriculum indicators), that may be reflected in the grade. (see Section II C below)
10. Standards – The essential curriculum indicators delineate what a student should know and be able to do upon completion of a course of study at each grade and/or content area.
11. Term Grade – A grade (letter) 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.

B. Purpose for Grading

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. 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) 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 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, each teacher will 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 the school system and school level. Information about the course of study and class requirements for grading will be provided in writing to students and 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 will 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 teachersupervision.
9. Teachers are expected to review their assignment of grades for student assignments 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 a 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 Regulation 500-15.
12. Teachers are responsible for assigning grades for student work during the marking term.
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 IEP should be a collaborative process between 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 elementary school, students receive term grades (letters) on the report card evaluating success in meeting curriculum standards and requirements as well as a number code evaluating student learning skills in the areas of effort and personal and social development.

- 1. In grades Pre-K– 5, the following evaluation code is used to indicate progress in student learning skills in the areas of personal and social development. The same evaluation code is used in the area of effort for grade 1-5.

- 4 = Consistently
- 3 = Most of the time
- 2 = Inconsistently
- 1 = Rarely
- 0 = Not demonstrating

- 2. Explanation of term grades used in grades Pre-K -1:

EE	Exceeding expectations of grade level standards	Consistently meets and/or exceeds curriculum standards and class requirements
ME	Meeting expectations of grade level standards	Frequently meets and/or exceeds curriculum standards and class requirements
AE	Approaching expectations of grade level standards	Generally meets curriculum standards and class requirements, though some curriculum standards and class requirements may remain as yet unmet
DE	Developing expectations of grade level standards	Meets some curriculum standards and class requirements, though many curriculum standards and class requirements remain as yet unmet
NE	Not evaluated	Standards were either not taught and/or assessed at this time

3. Explanation of term grades used in grades 2-5 (without plus or minus symbols):

A	Exemplary Performance towards meeting standards	Consistently meets and/or exceeds curriculum standards and class requirements
B	Skilled Performance towards meeting standards	Frequently meets and/or exceeds curriculum standards and class requirements
C	Satisfactory Performance towards meeting standards	Generally meets curriculum standards and class requirements, though some curriculum standards and class requirements may remain as yet unmet
D	Minimally Acceptable Performance towards meeting standards	Meets some curriculum standards and class requirements, though many curriculum standards and class requirements remain as yet unmet
F	Unacceptable Performance towards meeting standards	Meets few, if any, curriculum standards and class requirements
NE	Not evaluated	Standards were either not taught and/or assessed at this time

4. In grades K-5, teachers also record an instructional level on the report card each term for language arts and mathematics using symbols as follows:

- + Receives Essential Curriculum with Extension
- √ Receives Essential Curriculum
- / Receives Essential Curriculum with Intervention
- * Receives Alternative Curriculum based on IEP

5. Extenuating circumstances requiring principal approval:

- a. Incomplete Grades - 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 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. The building principal must approve all incomplete grades.
- b. Student with a Prolonged Illness - a teacher may grant an extension for a two (2) week period. The building principal shall approve such an extension before it is granted.

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 105.¹

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 detailed in FCPS Regulation 500-13.

Approved:

original signed by

Theresa R. Alban
Superintendent

¹ The 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)