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Rescinds Policy Number: 3415

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## INTRODUCTION

The goal of assessment and grading is to provide sustained, constructive feedback for students' academic progress and at the same time provide parents/guardians and teachers with a meaningful description of the learner's educational development. Assessment and grading representations of students' academic achievement reflecting their progress toward meeting proficiency standards. Grading and assessment are essential for student learning and for the improvement of the overall instructional program. Meaningful assessment and grading practices also aid the teacher in determining students' strengths and needs, making instructional decisions, and in deciding on promotion or retention.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment and evaluation should provide clear information to students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators. This information should help students improve performance, help teachers improve instruction, and assist administrators in planning the overall instructional program.

Assessment involves an ongoing examination of a student's performance on specifically defined objectives and standards set by the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* (criterion-referenced), performance when compared to similar students within her/his developmental range (norm-referenced), and the progression of student achievement within a certain span of time.

Assessment tools are not limited to standardized and teacher-created tests, as they should also include a variety of opportunities to allow students to demonstrate proficiency through such activities as portfolios, projects, peer and self-assessment opportunities, written and oral presentations, labs, and other appropriate measures.

## GRADING

Grading is directly linked to the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*. Grades are symbols that represent student performance, growth and progress. The main purpose of grading is to communicate the results of the assessment process to students and parents/guardians. This is accomplished through report cards, interim reports, and conferences.

## GUIDELINES IN GRADING PRACTICES

Grades are a means of reporting student progress relative to the established curriculum goals and objectives. Teachers use their professional judgment to determine the weight of tests, assignments and daily performance in arriving at the grade a student earns. Grades earned on homework will not solely determine whether a student passes or fails a course/subject. The relative value attached to any activity should be determined by the importance of the activity toward achieving the course objectives. This value should be communicated to the students and parents/guardians before the activity occurs.

1. Grades should be based on multiple assessments and performance samples over time. Failure or success on one test or one assigned task (e.g. a book report or notebook) will not be sufficient basis for failing or passing the course/subject or grading period.
2. Grades may be obtained using a combination of sources such as the following:

Tests	Research or library work
Portfolios	Drawings (maps, charts etc.)
Written reports	Class discussions/participation
Oral reports	Group/individual reports
Demonstrations/projects/presentations	Homework
Other classroom performances/activities	Self-evaluation

3. Grades should reflect a student's progress toward a determined level of proficiency that is related to the standards set by the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*.
4. Grades should reflect the teacher's professional judgment of student achievement in meeting proficiency standards. Daily grades are a function of teacher evaluation and take into account that numerical grades cannot be assigned to every piece of work.
5. Some assignments may not be graded because they are a part of student work in progress. For example, daily homework may be designed to allow practice for students to reinforce a specific skill and to identify areas for additional assistance from the teacher.
6. Grades should indicate actual academic performance; they do not include attendance or behavior.
7. Teachers should be very clear about their grading expectations before assignments are given, especially at the start of each grading period. Middle and high school teachers will provide students and parents with course descriptions and grading practices/standards.
8. Quizzes, tests, examinations, essays, homework, projects, or papers are evaluated and/or graded. They are returned promptly and reviewed with the student before the next related test is administered.
9. Any system or curve which predetermines the distribution of grades should not be used.
10. Performance levels (as indicated on the elementary report card) are related to the proficiency standards set by the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*.

#### ASSESSING AND GRADING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The grades of students receiving exceptional education services should reflect the progress of students based on the level of their ability and achievement.

1. Students receiving services through the Exceptional Services Program will be assessed in terms of progress toward meeting objectives stated in the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
2. Whenever appropriate, exceptional education students in regular classes, full-time or part-time, will receive the same report cards as other students. A report of progress based on standards outlined in the IEP will accompany the regular report card each marking period.

Classroom teachers are responsible for issuing grades to students in their classes. It is recommended that the resource teacher collaborate on the grades given and attend the parent/guardian conference.

#### PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

The Board of Education believes that clear communication between parent/guardian and teacher is critical in the educational process. Student progress will be reported in a manner that is useful and understandable to students and parents/guardians. To maintain positive parent/guardian-student-teacher relationships, reporting contacts between the parent/guardian and teacher should be varied and frequent. All appropriate forms of communication may be utilized, including parent/guardian-teacher conferences, mail, e-mail, telephone, and school visitation by parents/guardians.

1. Elementary report cards indicating the student's academic progress toward state identified proficiency standards, successful learner behaviors, and attendance will be issued at the end of four nine-week grading periods during the school year. The first report card for grades kindergarten through five will be given at a parent/guardian-teacher conference at the end of the first grading period. If the parent/guardian-teacher conference was held just prior to the end of the grading period parents may pick up their child's report card or request that it be sent home with their student.
2. Middle and high school report cards indicating the student's academic progress, conduct and attendance will be issued at the end of each nine-week grading period. The first report card will be issued directly to parents/guardians at the end of the first grading period. If a parent/guardian-teacher conference was held just prior to the end of the grading period, parents may pick up their child's report card or request that it be sent home with their student. Second and third nine weeks report cards will be issued directly to students. Fourth nine weeks report cards will be issued directly to parents/guardians or mailed.
3. District-wide and school dates for report cards, interim reports, parent/guardian conferences, retention/failure notices, waiver recommendations, summer school recommendations and testing will be published in the media and school communications for parents/guardians and teachers.
4. Interim reports (mid-nine weeks) will be sent to parents/guardians of all students in grades K-8 during the first grading period. An interim report will be sent to all students in grades K-5 who are achieving below proficiency expectation or students earning a C or below in grades 6-8 during each of the remaining grading periods. In grades 9-12, all students will receive an interim report at the midpoint (4.5 weeks) of each nine week grading period. More frequent reports will be provided for students at risk of failure with grades below C. The teacher will report to the parents/guardians any marked decline in the quality of student work, regardless of grading period timelines. Parents/guardians may request interim reports at any time during the grading period.
5. Conferences will be held as needed and can be initiated by teachers, parents/guardians, or students. Conferences for positive reinforcement are encouraged as well as conferences relating to decline in achievement or problems in social adjustment. All conferences related to student performance will be documented.
6. A Personalized Education Plan (a written plan with goals for student improvement) will be developed and monitored closely for all K-12 non-proficient students. This plan will be developed and signed by teachers, parents/guardians and students.

#### GRADING SCALE

Grading scales and report cards are designed to be appropriate at each grade level/grade span. Report cards are designed specifically for the following grades or grade spans: K-2 and 3-5 or K-5. Grades are reported in middle and high school through SIMS (computerized Student Information Management System).

1. Grading scales for grades K-2 should reflect the *North Carolina Public Schools Grades K-2 Literacy and Math Assessments*, as well as classroom performance; while scales for grades 3-5 will reflect a student's progress in meeting state proficiency standards in reading, writing, science, and mathematics.
2. Grade scales are consistent system-wide in grades 6-12.
  - A 93-100
  - B 85-92
  - C 77-84
  - D 70-76
  - F 69 and below

3. In grades 9-12, percentage grades will be used on report cards, cumulative folders, and transcripts. Percentage grades will receive the corresponding number of quality points as required by Senate Bill 1028:

96-100%=4.0	90%=3.25	84%=2.50	78%=1.75	70-72%=1.00
95%=3.88	89%=3.13	83%=2.38	77%=1.63	0-69%=0.00
94%=3.75	88%=3.00	82%=2.25	76%=1.50	
93%=3.63	87%=2.88	81%=2.13	75%=1.38	
92%=3.50	86%=2.75	80%=2.00	74%=1.25	
91%=3.38	85%=2.63	79%=1.88	73%=1.13	

4. In grades 9-12, academic course levels will be weighted as follows:
- Standard courses receive standard quality points as outlined above in #3.
  - For honors courses, one quality point is added to standard points earned.
  - For advanced placement courses, two quality points are added to standard points earned. All students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses are expected to take the AP exam.
  - Failing grades of 69 and below will receive no points (weighted or non-weighted).
  - Weighted grades appear on the student’s final transcript at the end of the senior year.

5. North Carolina End-of-Course tests will count 25% of the student’s final course grade.

**RIGHT TO APPEAL ACADEMIC GRADES**

Parents/guardians and students shall have the right to review/appeal any final grade given to a student. Such an appeal should proceed as follows:

1. The student and/or parent/guardian should arrange a conference with the individual teacher whose assessment or evaluation is in question to discuss the teacher’s rationale for the grade. If the student or parent/guardian is not satisfied with the outcome of the conference, he/she may appeal to the school principal for a second review of the teacher’s assessment and evaluation of the student. A conference shall be arranged with the teacher, parents/guardians, and the student. The principal may include other participants in the conference.
2. The decisions of the principal, based on the findings of such a conference, shall be final.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -81.