
What Does the 2015-2016 Secondary Grading Policy Mean for Teachers?

Consistency in grading, posting, and returning student work

In the past, teachers were expected to provide feedback to students intermittently, comments at progress reports and grades at the end of a term. Starting in SY 15-16, teachers will grade, post, and return graded student work to students within ten working school days of the students' submitting the assignment. In addition to this, teachers will need to assign, grade and post at least two assignments every ten working days (pp. 9, 32). Any exceptions must be pre-approved by principals.

Consistency in use of progress reports

Previously, many teachers entered grades and comments on progress reports, but some teachers entered comments only. Now, all teachers enter grades for all students in all courses on progress reports, along with comments for students with a "C" or below. Comments for students with "A's" or "B's" are optional. (p. 12)

Consistency in grade book practices

Previously, although all teachers reported progress report and report card grades on line in Aspen, the practice of using an online grade book (such as EnGrade or Jupiter) to allow students and parents to monitor grades throughout the term varied. Starting in school year 2015-2016 all teachers will both maintain grade books online and provide progress report/final grades. Progress report/report card grades should be reported in Aspen, and the online grade book should be maintained in a system designated by their principal. To encourage parent and student use, the grade book system chosen should be the same system for the entire school. DCPS is exploring the use of the ASPEN gradebook feature in the future to eliminate the need for Engrade, and thus end double entry of grades.

Consistent responses to students failing at progress report grade

Starting in SY 15-16, all students failing a course or courses on their progress report grades must be given instructional support plans to help them recover their grades and/or pass their courses. All students should be given the opportunity to **earn** a passing grade even if they are failing when they receive their progress reports; however this **should not be construed to mean that teachers are required to pass all students**. Rather, they are responsible for giving students the **opportunity** to pass after progress reports. Students can draft their own Instructional Support Plans (pp. 62-63), subject to teacher approval. Collective plans can also be written for individual students by teams of staff, or staff can assist individual students in creating Assisted Support Plans (p. 65). These are time and task bound plans to help students improve their grades prior to term grades becoming final (p. 14-16).

Consistent grading factors

DCPS will use consistent grading factors for all secondary courses. For additional details, course specifics, and variations for AP and IB, see pp. 32-52 of the policy. It is important to note the following:

- No single assignment, task or assessment of any kind can account for more than 10% of any student's course, term or advisory grade.
- Teachers must offer at least the required number of assignments in each of the three categories in each content area; and each category can only be weighted as indicated in the policy (e.g. 10%, 50%, etc.). However, teachers may choose to offer more than the minimum number of assignments in each category.
- Teachers may also choose which actual tasks or assessments, or combinations of tasks (within a category) to assign as long as they are similar in nature to those listed. The ones given in the grading policy (tests, journals,

labs, etc.) are just examples. Teachers are free to choose other similar types of assignments or assessments to give. For instance in the student work category, a teacher may choose to assign one of each type listed (one journal, one research paper, one homework assignment, one composition, one lab) or may choose to offer six homework assignments, three Cornerstone-related tasks, and one composition. They could also choose three of the types listed, and eleven other similar assignments that are not listed.

Consistency in calculating grades

All four terms are now weighted equally to calculate the final grade. Final exams and midterm exams are optional, at the discretion of the principal or teacher but can each be up to 10% of the final grade. (p. 56)

Teachers can direct questions on the secondary grading policy to their building principal or his/her designee, who should compile those questions and submit them to the office of the Deputy Chief of Secondary Schools for a response.