



February 11, 2016

Principals and Teachers,

This year DCPS implemented a new grading policy for grades 6 through 12. Our goal in implementing this new policy was to make sure that students across the district are held to the same standard, and expectations and weights of grades would not vary from teacher to teacher. Previously, many details around grading were inconsistent across the district. This included the weighing of particular grading categories (student practice and assessments as examples), real time grade transparency for families, and returning student work. Having consistent expectations and standards ensures that students across the district have an equal and fair opportunity to earn excellent grades in a transparent way. We apologize for any confusion that these changes may have caused and I am writing to you today to share how final grade calculations will work for 2015-16 semester and final grades.

Accompanying this letter is a document that outlines the finalized method that DCPS will use to calculate final marks in grades 6-12. Most importantly, the midpoint of earned letter grades will be used to determine a student's final grade. For example, all A grades will be 96.5 in the system. The exception is for a failing grade, as we will use a 59 so that a failing grade does not unfairly punish a child, but also ensures that the child still has the ability to pass the course with appropriate effort and remediation. Using the midpoint is different from past practice when teachers determined final grades on their own. Past practice allowed the same term and exam grades to result in quite different final grades. While using the earned letter grade midpoint allows for complete consistency for students' final grades, we will review this practice at the end of the year to determine if using numbers is feasible and more precise.

We want to thank DCPS educators who provided input to refine the grading calculation so that it fairly represents the final grade, and for being patient as we have worked through this new policy and system. While this system provides for fair and consistent grades, if teachers believe that individual grades are not being calculated in the manner outlined in the attached document, they should work with their principal and send the concern to olivia.stitilis@dc.gov for review by the Deputy Chief of Secondary Schools.

Sincerely,

John Davis
Chief of Schools