

Student Assessment, Grading, and Reporting of Grades

I. PURPOSE

To publish the procedures for grading and reporting student progress

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Instructional objectives* are general statements of what the student should attain and represent the purposes of instruction for all students in a course.
- B. *Assessment Measures* are indicators that are used to provide evidence of the attainment of instructional or performance objectives. The degree to which each student has attained these objectives is determined by performance on assessment measures. The nature and numbers of these measures necessary to demonstrate attainment are an integral part of evaluating student progress and planning instruction.
- C. *Performance objectives* are specific statements of what the student should be able to do. These objectives, contained in curricula guides or formulated by teachers, assist the student in the attainment of the instructional objectives. Performance objectives are used for planning classroom instruction and are assigned based on a student's progress in the subject. Those appearing in the curriculum guides are suggestions of ways to attain the instructional objectives.
- D. *Grading*, in accordance with the policy on Grading, is used in these procedures in a broad sense to include the assignment of any symbols for evaluation as well as the related comments, conferences, and reports. Where emphasis is on the comments or the conference or the report, the word "evaluation" is sometimes used.

III. PROCEDURES

The Sayreville school district recognizes that no one method of student assessment and grade reporting system can be all encompassing. The information outlined below is a starting point for the multi-faceted, comprehensive reporting system that we strive to achieve because it is a critical piece for students, parents, and staff in the overall educational process.

Student assessment and grade reporting is considered a positive tool to measure growth, progress, and the development of the student. One of several important components of student assessment and grading systems is the student's report card. This is mentioned specifically because it is the traditional and most often used format for providing information about student progress and performance. One of the goals of this grading regulation is to allow for consistency of grading practices between teachers teaching the same course, among all teachers within a school, and between teachers in the different schools in the district.

A. Criteria for Grading and Reporting Student Progress

The Sayreville Public Schools Curricula, New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, and supporting materials represent the basic framework or reference source for the validation of student reporting practices. Grading and reporting of student progress are based on performance on assessment measures identified for the instructional and performance objectives in accordance with the Sayreville Public School curricula documents that are appropriate to the subject offering, grade, or age level. Students will be informed of the general objectives of each course or unit and of the basis upon which students' performance will be evaluated. Parents will be informed of the general objectives by the school.

B. Grading Practices

Grading is based on performance on assessment measures identified for the instructional objectives of the curriculum. All assessment measures for the objectives of the unit of instruction in the course will be considered when a letter grade is determined. At all grade levels, assessment activities selected by teachers for each objective will be used to establish standards of acceptable performance for students in their schools or departments. Grades should not be used as a behavior/discipline consequence. For students with disabilities receiving special education services, grading is based on instructional and performance objectives assigned to the student. All appropriate and documented curricula modifications and accommodation for both instruction and assessment will be available and implemented.

Each teacher is charged with the responsibility of using valid and reliable grading procedures. All teachers must have a clearly defined and written grade system that is approved by their supervisor and/or principal within the first two weeks of school. Teachers should assess outcomes beyond the routine recall of facts. The professional staff should work together to develop common and fair standards for evaluating student work.

Teachers are to grade students on mastery of objectives. When relatively large numbers of low letter grades are noted in the distribution of grades for a class group, the instructional program should be reexamined and/or there should be a consultation with the immediate supervisor to find ways of improving the learning experience of students who are not achieving.

In special education programs, K-12, the evaluation of student progress by teachers and specialists will be based on the attainment of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) objectives.

C. Assessment

School personnel shall not use tests, procedures or other guidance and counseling materials that are differentiated or stereotyped on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or socio-economic status.

The frequency and appropriateness of student assessment is crucial to fairness in the grading of students and has direct implications for their graduation. Types of assessment devices may include, but is not limited to, tests, quizzes, homework, written reports, notebooks, class participation, projects, portfolios, and group work. The following assessment guidelines should be adhered to:

1. Students should be graded on the basis of a minimum of eight assessment devices per marking period for those classes that meet daily. The issuance of assessment devices should be fairly evenly distributed throughout the marking period.
2. Student evaluation and marking period grades should be arrived at through the use of a variety of assessment devices.
3. All teachers who teach a particular subject should use approximately the same number and similar types of assessment devices within a marking period.
4. Assessment devices should be aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in both content and wording whenever possible.
5. Homework will account for a minimum of 10% up to 20% of each marking period grade in core curriculum courses. Homework should be meaningful and be of an appropriate length determined by the teacher according to the needs and ability of his/her pupils. Homework is due when and as specified by the teacher. Pupils absent for valid reasons will be provided the opportunity to make up work. This will be done in accordance with district/school policy and regulations and teacher developed procedures.
6. Extra credit should be issued judiciously, if at all. Extra credit must be relative to the subject matter being taught and assessed. The spirit and intent of extra credit should be for the student who wants to go above and beyond and should not be viewed as a replacement for regular assignments. Extra credit should not count for more than 5% of a student's total marking period grade.

D. Evaluation Feedback

1. Student

- a) Course objectives and the teacher's grading system should be made clear to each student, and he/she should be given continuous feedback on the quality of his/her work. The purpose of such feedback should be to assist the student in attaining each objective of the unit of instruction, not to tell the student where he/she ranks in relation to others. When the student is experiencing learning difficulties, the teacher should confer with the student in advance of the end of the reporting period to bring about improvements and minimize the chances of a continuing problem. At that time, teachers should reexamine instructional strategies, request specialist consultation, or refer the student to the educational management team, as appropriate.
- b) Evaluation activities will be based on materials covered in the subject.

- c) All graded work will be routinely returned to students within a reasonable amount of time for reviewing achievement and progress. Any unreturned graded student work will be kept on file by the teacher for possible review for a minimum of one year.
- d) Students have the right and responsibility to be informed of their grade at all times. Teachers will be given reasonable time to respond to the student.

2. Parents

Parents will be informed of the general objectives of each subject by the school. Parents will be apprised of learning difficulties through the reporting system and by conferences as needed. A conference with the parent is encouraged when there is a marked difference in student achievement from the previous reporting period, such as a decrease of more than one letter grade. Conferring with parents is encouraged beyond the minimum conference provisions of this regulation so that parents may be aware of the student's progress at all levels.

3. Progress Report

Elementary, middle and high schools must also use a progress report form. This form must be sent to parents of each student who is in danger of failing or drops two or more grades. Progress report forms must be sent between the fourth and sixth weeks of each report period. If a student shows a marked decline in achievement later in the report period, the teacher will inform the parent of this decline.

E. Senior Exam Exemptions (High School)

Exemptions from final exams are a senior privilege. A senior must meet the following criteria to be exempt from taking a final exam: (1) he/she can not have any out of school suspensions, (2) he/she must have marking period grades of 90 or above in each of the four marking periods, and (3) he/she must have received a mid-year exam grade of 90 or above. When exempted, doubling the four marking period grades, adding the mid-year exam grade, and dividing this total by nine will calculate the final yearly average. Seniors who qualify for an exemption, however, may elect to take the final examination.

F. Grade Reporting System

The philosophy of the Board is to utilize a grade reporting system in which there is continuity between grade levels. Therefore, the Board adopted a letter grade reporting system that is based upon set numerical grade ranges. In grades two through twelve, the grades of sixty-five (65) to one hundred (100) are passing grades; in kindergarten and grade one, the grades of seventy (70) to one hundred (100) are passing. While it is the primary purpose of a reporting system to reflect accurately pupil achievement and progress, the system is also intended to be motivational. The Board therefore has established that for the first two marking periods only; the minimum failing average of 50 would be used in calculating the final average.