



Superintendent's Circular

NUMBER:
CAO-08
Version 01

GRADING REQUIREMENTS

This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.

The spirit of this policy is to move away from the practice of grading non-academic behavior and to the timely provision of meaningful feedback to every family on every student's academic progress. This policy is a critical part of propelling all students toward the Strategic Plan and School Committee goals centered on college, career, and life readiness. As well, it will ensure that grading practices are accurate, bias-resistant, motivational, and coherent in the district, which will in turn ensure the ability of our stakeholders to trust the district's commitment to equity. This policy will provide accurate, dignifying feedback to every student about where they are academically and what they need to be successful. As a vehicle for closing opportunity and achievement gaps, the grading policy will provide clear and comprehensive guidance that aligns to our teaching practices, family engagement, and student experience, grounded in equity and research. With the School Committee's approval of this policy, the Academics and Schools divisions will work in collaboration with our stakeholders this spring to finalize and enact an implementation plan that focuses on the adaptive work ahead.

The Boston Public Schools will at all times maintain Superintendent's Circulars that: (1) outline procedures for

maintenance of grades to ensure that they are accurate, timely, and aligned to DESE standards; (2) outline a common report card structure and timeline for schools by grade span and program; and (3) outline allowable flexibilities.

Separately, as a companion to this policy, the district will develop and maintain detailed implementation processes in the form of Superintendent's Circulars ensuring:

1. Implementation of MassCore graduation requirements and waivers
2. Common GPA calculation and transcription processes
3. A common process for promotion to the next grade level
4. A common process for retention at the current grade level
5. A common and public course catalog that details for students and families course of study options for all secondary schools as well as course descriptions, credit, and governance
6. An updated process and calendar for course creation.

ADOPTION OF A COMMON GRADING POLICY FOR THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The School Committee of the Boston Public Schools is responsible for creating policies and practices that support the preparation of every student to be college, career, and life-ready and remove barriers that interfere with students graduating from BPS ready to succeed in the next stage of their lives. If we support BPS educators to effectively use culturally responsive practices, provide high levels of support, and adopt coherent grading practices that are mathematically accurate, bias-resistant, and motivational for students, then we will see

increased student engagement, and grades that reflect student learning.

BPS will adopt the following policy for all students in the district. Specifically, the following practices will be required of all educators in the district.

PROPOSED:

Grading Practice	Why is it more equitable?
Accuracy and timeliness	Educators will ensure that term grades follow the practices laid out in the BPS Grading Policy and are posted in Aspen by the closing date according to the district grading calendar.
"No Credit" grades will no longer be given.	As an alternative, schools may mark a student with an "incomplete" to enable equitable learning recovery. In all cases, a student not earning a passing grade must be given the opportunity and responsibility to equitably recover any learning loss or make up for the work missed within one marking period.
No penalties will be given for late work.	Deadlines will be given for work, and we expect students to meet these expectations. Deadlines will be explained to students. When a student turns in the assignment, it will be graded, and the grade in ASPEN/SMS will reflect student mastery (not the tardiness of the work).

Grading Practice	Why is it more equitable?
A minimum grading (50 for an assignment on a 0-100 scale) will be used.	Teachers will determine minimum grades for assignments where the lowest possible grade is balanced with the value of the highest grade. Best practices would include the implementation of a consistent numerical grading scale (0-4, 1-7, etc.) that aligns to GPA scale.
Demonstration of competency in summative tasks must make up at least 80% of term grades.	Grades for assignments should be representative of what students have demonstrated in terms of their learning, and not non-academic behaviors.
Students will receive consistent feedback on assignments before students are formally assessed.	Teachers are intentional about taking time to give students clear and actionable feedback. Students understand what the criteria for success are for any given assignment and have clear actions steps for getting there. We understand the importance of coherence in the ways we provide feedback and are committed to making this an instructional focus for the upcoming school year to better support our staff.

Grading Practice	Why is it more equitable?
Middle/High School: A consistent, agreed-upon number of assignments per grade; and consistent intervals for grading updates in Aspen/SMS.	Teachers are expected to post at least one visible grade on ASPEN/SMS every week for middle and high school students.
Elementary School: A consistent approach across all content areas (including speciality classes) for providing students and families formative feedback routinely.	Schools serving elementary grades are required to have a consistent approach for providing students and families formative feedback weekly. Students are required to receive term grades for Language Arts, Math, History/Social Studies, Science, and any specialty classes offered.
All grade levels	Students may only receive a composite grade for "Humanities" or "STEM" or equivalent if the course is offered at the equivalent of a double block. As well, students must receive formative and summative feedback on both grade level language arts and history/social studies or math and science concepts and meet all the requirements above.

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