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*BBE Policy 626*

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## **626 GRADING AND REPORTING OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish effective grading and reporting practices that reflect a student's academic achievement of the course standards for grades K-12.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

BBE Schools' grading and reporting system shall provide students, parents, teachers, and the community with a framework for accurately reporting student achievement. It is the District's responsibility to the community that all school members will work to challenge and support all students in the pursuit of their highest levels of academic and personal achievement. Therefore, the District, in order to stimulate achievement as measured by its extraordinary expectations, will establish a clear and accurate system of grading and reporting academic achievement.

When the student graduates from BBE Schools, the summary of these grades, the academic transcript, will provide a permanent and accurate accounting of the student's achievement. Employers and post-secondary institutions will be able to count on the accuracy of this historic document.

BBE Schools is committed to supporting a system of guiding principles that will be used to arrive at a clear and accurate grading and reporting policy and procedures. In order to realize these goals, the grading and reporting system must:

- Reflect academic achievement where an academic grade is posted, and behavioral and attendance performance where those are posted.
- Contain meaningful feedback at all levels of the learning process.
- Be honest, fair, transparent, credible, useful and user friendly.
- Align with the BBE Schools curriculum.
- Reflect consistency within grade levels, departments, and/or schools.
- Communicate information to parties in a clear and timely manner.
- Reflect high expectations of all students across all courses and programs.
- Be developmentally appropriate for all students.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Accommodation:** a change that does not alter the rigor of the standard. Examples include large print materials, extended testing time, and small group administration.

**Assessments:** multiple tools used to gather information about the student's performance on the standards taught.

**Formative (Academic Practice):** work conducted when a student is still learning the material. It is an assessment that is designed to provide direction for both students and teachers. For the students, the adjustment may mean reviewing, additional practice, or confirmation that they are ready to move forward. For the teachers, it may mean changing instructional strategies, providing additional practice, or being ready to move forward. (e.g. teacher observation, quizzes, homework, rough drafts, peer editing, or notebook checks).

**Summative (Academic Achievement):** work conducted when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to be responsible for the material. It is designed to provide information to be used in making judgments about a student's achievement at the end of a sequence of instruction, e.g. final drafts/attempts, tests, exams, assignments, projects, performances.

**Benchmark:** a clear, specific description of knowledge or skills the student should acquire by a particular point in the student's schooling.

**Curriculum:** a written plan including standards, benchmarks, essential questions, an assessment plan, instructional resources and strategies, and time allocations for emphasis and pacing for the content to be taught.

**Feedback:** This entire policy is about feedback. This comes in many forms. We want to communicate both academic feedback versus a standard, as well as the habits and behaviors the learner uses to achieve the standard.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** the student's numerical average for a given term. It is computed by adding the total number of the letter grades' point values and dividing it by the number of courses for a given term.

**Grading Scale:** a description for what each letter grade represents relative to the percentage of the student's mastery of subject goals.

**Homework:** includes learning tasks, assigned to students by teachers that are meant to be carried out. Students may also complete during non-class hours, most often at home. Homework may be formative or summative in nature depending on intent.

**Honors Points:** the assignment of a greater value to the letter grade's numeric point value to reward a student for completing the Honors course(s).

**Instruction:** a teacher-led process, which transforms well-planned curriculum into student learning. Instruction is standards-focused teaching for the purpose of providing meaningful

learning experiences that enable all students to master academic content and achieve personal goals.

**Modification:** a substantive change that alters the standard or the rigor of the standard.

**Process: (Growth)** describe student behaviors that facilitate or broaden learning. These may be things that *enable* learning, such as formative assessments, homework, and class participation. They also may reflect *extended learning* goals related to collaboration, responsibility, communication, perseverance, habits of mind, or citizenship. In some cases process criteria relate to students' *compliance* with class procedures, like turning in assignments on time or not interrupting during class discussions. ([Guskey](#))

**Product: (see Summative Assessment):** reflect how well students have achieved specific learning goals, standards, or competencies. These might be determined by students' performance on major examinations, compositions, projects, reports, or other culminating demonstrations of learning. Product criteria describe students' academic achievements; that is, what they have learned and are able to do as a result of their experiences in school. (Guskey)

**Progress: (see Formative Assessment)** It would be possible, for example, for students to make outstanding progress but still not be meeting course academic goals or achieving at grade level. It also would be possible for highly skilled and talented students to show they have achieved the product criteria without making notable progress or improvement. (Guskey)

**Standard:** a statement of what the student will be able to know, understand and do.

**Syllabus:** a document given to students and parents at the start of each course outlining the grading criteria and procedures for the course.

#### IV. GRADING PARAMETERS FOR GRADES K-12

- A. The primary purpose of grading is to communicate the academic achievement status of students to the students, their families, employers, and post-secondary institutions. Additional purposes for grading include:
  1. Providing information that the student can use for self-evaluation.
  2. Providing information that teachers can use to modify planning and instruction.
  3. Evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs.
- B. Course grades will reflect the level of the student's academic achievement. While non-academic factors may be highly valued and often contribute to the student's academic achievement, they should be reported separately from an achievement grade. Relying upon these factors, if merged with achievement evidence, can mask important learning problems and contribute to miscommunication about the student's knowledge. The following are examples of non-academic factors:

1. Behavior (i.e. attendance, attitude, punctuality, class participation & effort)
  2. Homework based solely on completion
  3. Other evidence of student characteristics or habits - Portrait of a Graduate skills
- C. The grade for a course can be calculated solely based on summative assessments or it may be calculated based on a combination of summative and formative assessments. The definitions provided in Part III of this policy are the best guide for determining if an assessment is Academic Practice (formative) or Academic Achievement (summative).
1. The combinations of the Academic Achievement and Academic Practice grades will be based on embedded standards, course rigor, and/or grade level.
  2. Individual teachers / buildings will determine what assessments are included in the Academic Practice and Academic Achievement categories.
  3. Individual courses will use the same percentages / course standards / assessments for each category.
- D. As the purpose of grading is to reflect the student's academic achievement, there needs to be a sufficient number of assessments to determine the level of achievement. To accomplish this, effort shall be taken to hold students accountable for completing the work. An incomplete will be used as the last resort if the student chooses to make no effort to complete an assessment.
- E. Clear criteria will be used to calculate a course grade. The teacher will communicate this in writing to parents and students at the start of the term.
1. In the event that student performance changes significantly, and the teacher does not believe that the calculated grade fairly represents the student's performance, a teacher may include additional assessments (either formative or summative) in order to have a more accurate description of student achievement and record the grade accordingly.
  2. The PASS/FAIL option is for unusual personal circumstances and requires building principal approval. If a student is taking the course PASS/FAIL, the student must have passing work to receive credit for the course. All "Pass-Fail" students in any course will take all tests and turn in all regular

class work along with other students. Only the final mark is a "Pass-Fail" mark. A subject taken on a "Pass-Fail" basis will not affect a student's class rank or honor roll standing. If the student passes the class, the student will receive a "P" and full semester credit on his/her report card for that class. If the student fails the class, the student would then receive an "F" (fail) on the report card. A student may have only one PASS/FAIL course per year except in very unusual circumstances as determined by the building principal.

- G. If modifications to rigor and/or standards cause coursework to be altered, the assessment and reporting system may reflect modifications. Modified grades should be noted on the transcript whether for general education or special education.

## **V. GRADING SCALE AND SYMBOL DEFINITIONS**

In order to calculate grades, the following scales are used to assign grades. In turn, the letter symbols give a description of the student's academic achievement. As our school district transitions to standards-based grading, we understand that traditional grading may still appear until our assessment systems and transcripts, as well as our recording software, are able to handle the transition.

- A. Traditional Grading

*93.4-100 = A*

*90-93.3 = A-*

*86.7 - 89.9 = B+*

*83.4-86.6 = B*

*80-83.3 = B-*

*76.7-79.9 = C+*

*73.4-76.6 = C*

*70-73.3 = C-*

*66.7-69.9 = D+*

*63.4-66.6 = D*

*60-63.3 = D-*

00.0-59.9 = F

<i>B. Standards-Based Grading</i>	<i>Out of 4</i>
<i>E -- 4.0 Exceeds Standards- Connecting beyond school</i>	<i>3.9</i>
<i>M -- 3.0 Meets Standards, Proficiency Met</i>	<i>2.8</i>
<i>P -- 2.0 Progressing to meeting most of the standards</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>B -- 1.0 Beginning-demonstrates Minimal understanding of the standard</i>	<i>1.2</i>
<i>I – Incomplete-- 0.0 Is meeting none of the standards</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Other aspects of performance reported separately such as Attendance, Behavior and Participation.</i>	

## **VI. GRADE POINT SCALES AND CALCULATIONS**

- A. Grade Point Average (GPA) is based on grades earned in each of the following grade level groups:

### Grades K-8

- 1) All students are getting feedback in each curricular area to reflect their progress academically and skills in individual curricula.
- 2) All students will also receive feedback on their behaviors and dispositions in a separate assessment area.

### Grades 9-12

- 1) All courses for which the student receives from an A to an F are included in the GPA.
- 2) Both a Term GPA and a Cumulative GPA are calculated.
- 3) An official transcript is maintained for grades 9-12.
- 4) Pass/Fail grades are not included in the GPA calculation, but do count for graduation credit.
- 5) We will post standards-based grading along with traditional grading in the same transcript during this transition period.
- 6) Our future standards-based transcript will provide feedback into the legends for both traditional and standards-based grades.

- B. The basis for giving Honors weighting to some courses shall be the determined rigor of each respective course to be weighted relative to other courses in the high school curriculum. Honors points are used to determine Honors students as well as to differentiate between Honors and regular courses. All Honors points will be assigned 1.0 for an A, 0.8 for a B, 0.6 for C and 0.4 for a D. The courses have been determined to meet the standards of rigor that supersede the basic education required for graduation. For courses that are beyond the rigor of Honors courses, similar points will be assigned.
- C. Annual audits of courses offered within BBE High School will be conducted by examining the course rigor to determine potential Honors status. Any course proposed for Honors points must be approved by the School Board, must be taught by a highly qualified instructor, must be of college-level rigor, and must significantly exceed Minnesota content standards. Honors courses that exceed rigor options must have at least one Honors course as a prerequisite for enrollment.
- D. Courses offered outside of BBE High School may be considered for Honors on a case by case basis. To be considered, a student taking the course outside of BBE HS must submit a syllabus and curriculum materials and provide such other evidence as required. The criteria for a grade to be considered Honors are that the course must be of a college level rigor in a core academic subject matter, and content must significantly exceed the Minnesota content standard.

## **VII. COMMUNICATION**

A shared understanding between the District staff, students and parents, of the District's grading and reporting system is essential for effective communication. In order for all parties to understand and trust the student achievement data, the District will provide all parties with the following:

- A clear purpose for the grading and reporting system;
- A common grading syllabus for all courses;
- A valid and accurate assessment of the student's achievement;
- Timely reporting;
- A comprehensive and multifaceted reporting system (i.e. conferences, phone calls, curriculum nights, electronic messages, classroom websites, report cards; mid-term reports) and,

- A clear explanation of all symbols used.

## **VIII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development program is necessary to enhance a teacher's ability to deliver high quality instruction and to design and use assessments that are purposeful, assess appropriate learning targets, and to assign grades consistent with this policy. To ensure this goal, the professional development program must be focused on the two themes of assessing accurately and using assessment to benefit students, not merely to grade and sort them.

Professional development activities must be an integral part of broad school-wide and District-wide educational improvement goals. District and site professional development plans for effective classroom assessment and grading must include research-based training components of theory, demonstration, guided practice, feedback and coaching.

## **IX. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The School Board is accountable, in its governance capacity, for the instructional program and delegates responsibilities as follows:

- A. The Superintendent, through designees, shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of the Grading and Reporting Policy and for development and implementation of procedures for grading and reporting student achievement.
- B. Principals shall be responsible for assuring implementation of the District's beliefs, procedures and practices of effective grading and reporting.
- C. Teachers shall be responsible for effectively implementing classroom assessments and for applying the principles of effective grading and reporting practices.
- D. Parents are a vital link and are strongly encouraged to participate in all available components of the BBE Schools' grading and reporting system.
- E. Students are responsible for their own learning and understanding the BBE Schools' grading and reporting system. Students are able to use the Academic Practice (formative) grade to identify strengths and weaknesses with a particular topic and, as a result, seek additional help. As well, students are able to know that the Academic Achievement (summative) grade reflects a true level of understanding of a particular topic/unit/course. This information can help the student plan for future course selection and post-secondary options.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. 123B.02, Subd. 2 (General Powers of School Districts)



Minn. Stat. 123B.09, Subd. 8 (School Board Responsibilities)