

## INSTRUCTION

### Assessment and Grading Practices – Middle

(This regulation takes effect for the school year 2018-19)

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is committed to continuous improvement in the use of research-based assessment, feedback, grading, and reporting best practices to promote success for all students.

#### I. Assessment Practices

- A. Academic assessments are a means of gathering evidence of student learning of the PWCS curriculum and state standards for a specific purpose, including to:
  - 1. Pre-assess or diagnose a student's current state of knowledge or skill;
  - 2. Check for understanding of new learning;
  - 3. Provide feedback to increase student learning; and
  - 4. Evaluate student performance in a specified domain.
- B. The purpose of giving any academic assessment should be clearly communicated by the teacher and understood by the student.
- C. Professional educators and educational leaders shall ensure that assessments are aligned with required learning outcomes.
- D. Professional educators shall construct learning objectives for their lessons that identify the conditions and criteria that shall be used to assess student learning.
- E. Professional educators shall provide students with an explanation of the desired learning outcomes and how their performance shall be measured, in clearly worded, student-friendly language.
- F. Professional educators and educational leaders shall ensure that assessments used in the Division provide adequate evidence to measure for their intended purpose.
- G. Frequent formative assessments shall be used to provide students with practice opportunities to build knowledge and skill.
- H. Summative assessments shall be used when students have had sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their readiness through formative assessment.
- I. Feedback on assessments shall be timely, whether it is graded or not, to enhance student learning.

- J. Staff shall ensure time for instruction is protected from excessive use of assessment measures.
- K. Assessments shall be graded using the practices outlined in this regulation.

## II. Grading Practices

- A. Graded tasks shall be aligned with the PWCS curriculum and state standards, and shall support student learning.
- B. Academic achievement grades shall not include measures of student behavior.
- C. Types of Graded Assessments: Professional educators are encouraged to use a wide variety of evidence to determine level of mastery of the desired learning goals. Evidence may include, but are not limited to observations, labs, essays, unit assessments, works of art, performance, problem-based learning, multimedia productions, oral examination/verbal responses, discussion, presentations, quizzes and tests, and culminating activities or projects.
- D. Rubric Scoring: Teachers are encouraged to mark/score assignments using rubrics that are aligned with the “Grade Scale” or “Simplified Grade Scale” used in Attachment I or II of this regulation, rather than the 101-point percentage-based scale, which is subject to distortion.
- E. Percentage Grades: Difficulties in accurately distinguishing between 101 different levels of achievement are caused when using the 101-point scale (0-100). Using fewer, more precise measures articulated in a rubric can help to more accurately assess student mastery of a standard(s).
- F. Titles of Assignments in Gradebooks: Grades shall be recorded by learning objectives and standards, using descriptive titles rather than type/category descriptions (e.g., 6.4 causes of the American Revolution, rather than homework 1, quiz #2, chapter 4 test, or class participation).
- G. Number of Graded Assignments: Teachers shall use professional judgement in determining how much evidence is necessary to evaluate student performance on a standard(s). To ensure sufficient evidence to evaluate student achievement, a minimum of nine assignments shall be given in a grading period. A single assessment shall not count for more than 20 percent of a marking period grade.
- H. Group Grading: Cooperative learning can be an effective learning strategy. Students shall be assessed for their contribution to a group assignment when their roles and assignment expectations are clearly articulated.

- I. Weighting Formative and Summative Assessments: Grading categories and/or weights may be used in the electronic gradebook program to distinguish formative from summative assessments.
1. Grade level subject areas shall collaborate on weighting decisions pertaining to how much weight to give formative and summative tasks to promote consistency in professional practice.
  2. The system devised shall be communicated in advance and in writing to students and their families.
- J. Categories and Weights: Due to the potential for error in measurement, the use of categories and weights for purposes other than identifying formative and summative assessments is generally discouraged.
1. However, a teacher may find it helpful to group types of assignments to inform their teaching practice. Establishing unweighted categories for this purpose is acceptable.
  2. Whenever a teacher decides to use grading categories and weights those categories, they must clearly communicate their system of categorization and weighting to students and parents at the start of the school year and maintain a consistent use of that system for all subsequent marking periods for the school year.
- K. Weighting Individual Assignments: To prevent distortion in measurement, if a teacher has established category weighting in the electronic gradebook, they are not permitted to give weight to individual assignments.
- L. Multiple Opportunities: Research demonstrates that assessment and grading can effectively promote continuous learning when students receive descriptive feedback on their work and are provided second chances. Such practices increase student motivation and persistence in the face of challenging work. Providing students with new learning opportunities prior to making a second attempt on assessments holds the greatest potential to improve student learning when using retakes.
1. All students benefit from the opportunity to reassess their level of mastery, after demonstrating reflection on previous practice and demonstrating additional preparation for reassessing their knowledge and skill.
  2. Grade levels shall collaborate on reassessment opportunities they provide to students, using the professional judgement of the staff.
  3. Setting appropriate deadlines for reassessment shall be done collaboratively by the school grade level teams.

M. Grade Replacement: Earlier evidence of learning on previously graded assignments may be marked exempt in the electronic gradebook when new evidence of student achievement demonstrates improvement, in accordance with the professional judgement of the teacher.

N. Late Work and Missed Assignments: Late work and missed assignments shall be accepted to document student proficiency on the standard(s).

1. Grade levels shall work together with their educational leaders to set reasonable guidelines for turning in late work and encourage the completion of missing assignments.
2. Teachers shall report patterns of late work to parents.

### III. Reporting Grades

- A. Graded tasks shall be returned promptly to maximize the impact that timely feedback has on improving student learning.
- B. Grades shall be updated using the Division's reporting system at least once per week.
- C. The report card grading scale can be found in Attachment II to this regulation.
- D. The final yearly grade shall be calculated by summing the point values of the four nine-week grading periods and dividing the total number of grading periods.
- E. To ensure the final grade represents the level of a student's achievement and progress, the final yearly grade may be modified by the teacher to improve the student's grade when the calculation by average inaccurately communicates the teacher's assessment of student performance and improvement over time.

### IV. High School Courses Taken in Middle School

- A. All Carnegie unit courses taken in middle school shall adhere to the high school assessment and grading practices outlined in Regulation 661-3.
- B. In accordance with Virginia regulations, a high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school may be omitted from the student's high school transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course. Requests may be made by submitting the "PWCS Request to Expunge High School Courses Taken in Middle School" form and following the process outlined in Attachment III to this regulation.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Attachment I

**Descriptive Simplified Grading Scale for Tasks**

Achievement Level	Simplified Scale	Letter Grade	Overall Descriptor Performance	Overall Student Statement
<b>Exceeds</b>	4.0	A	Exceeds grade-level standards.  Consistently meets requirements for exceptional work.  Demonstrates high level of knowledge and understanding.	I know (and can do) it well enough to make connections that were not taught.
<b>Proficient</b>	3.0	B	Meets grade level requirements.  Consistently meets requirements for proficient work.  Demonstrates acceptable level of knowledge and understanding.	I know (and can do) everything that was taught without making few mistakes.
<b>Basic</b>	2.0	C	Approaching grade level standards.  Meets some requirements for proficient work.  Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding.	I know (and can do) all the easy parts, but I do not know (and cannot do) the harder parts.
<b>Not Yet Attained</b>	1.0	D	Consistently requires teacher direction and assistance to demonstrate partial knowledge or understanding.	With help, I know (and can do) some of what was taught.  I do not know (and cannot do) any of it.

Attachment II

**Descriptive Grading Scale for Middle School**

Level of Mastery	Grade Scale	Letter Grade	Percent	Teacher Description of Performance	Student Statement of Performance
Above Standard (Advanced-High)	3.50-4.00	A	90-100	In addition to Advanced-Low level performance, in-depth inferences and application that go beyond what was taught.	I know (and can do) it well enough to make connections that worked and I'm right about those connections.
Above Standard (Advanced-Low)	3.30-3.49	B+	87-89	In addition to Proficient-High level performance, partial success at inferences and application that go beyond what was taught.	I know (and can do) it well enough to make connections that were not taught but I'm not always right about those connections.
Meets Standard (Proficient-High)	2.50-3.29	B	80-86	No major errors or omissions regarding any of the information and/or processes (simple or complex) that were explicitly taught.	I know (and can do) everything that was taught (the easy parts and the harder parts) without making mistakes.
Meets Standard (Proficient-Low)	2.30-2.49	C+	77-79	No major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes and a partial knowledge of the more complex ideas and processes.	I know (and can do) all the easy parts, and some (but not all) of the harder parts.
Approaching Standard (Basic-High)	1.50-2.29	C	70-76	No major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes, but major errors and omissions regarding the more complex ideas and processes.	I know (and can do) all the easy parts, but I don't know (can't do) the harder parts.
Approaching Standard (Basic-Low)	1.30-1.49	D+	67-69	Partial knowledge of the simpler details and processes, but major errors or omissions regarding the more complex ideas and processes.	I know (and can do) some of the easier parts, but I make some mistakes.
Beginning (Below Basic-High)	0.50-1.29	D	60-66	With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes.	With help, I know (and can do) some of the harder parts and some of the easier parts.
Well Below (Below Basic-Low)	0.00-0.49	F	.01-59	With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes but not the more complex ideas and processes.	With help, I know (and can do) some of the easier parts but not the harder parts.

Attachment III

**Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS)  
Request to Expunge High School Courses Taken in Middle School**

In accordance with Virginia state regulations, PWCS Regulation 661-2, Section VII, permits parents of students who take a high school credit-bearing course in middle school to request that the grade be omitted from the student's high school transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course. The guidelines and procedures for expunging grades for high school courses taken in middle school are available by contacting your child's school. If your student wishes to expunge a grade for a course completed during seventh or eighth grade year, submit the form no later than the first day of the student's 10th grade year. Requests may not be submitted prior to completion of the course. The information below must be completed, printed, and submitted to the appropriate principal. Once received, school staff will omit the grade for the designated course from the student's transcript.

**First Name:**

**Middle Name:**

**Last Name:**

**Home Address:**

**Six-digit PWCS Student Identification Number:**

**Current Grade Level:      Current Counselor:**

**High School Student Plans to Attend or is Attending:**

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**Course(s) Taken in PWCS**

**Middle School at Which Course was Taken:**

**Course You Would Like Expunged: Grade Earned in Course:**

**Reason for Request:**

**Middle School at Which Course was Taken:**

**Course You Would Like Expunged:**

**Grade Earned in Course:**

**Reason for Request:**

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**Course Taken Outside of PWCS**

**School at Which Course was Taken:**

**Course You Would Like Expunged: Grade Earned in Course:**

**Reason for Request:**

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**Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

- *If completed after student's eighth-grade school year, submit this form to student's high school principal.*
- *If completed after student's sixth- or seventh-grade school year, submit this form to student's middle school principal.*