

GRADES/EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student grades within the Vacaville Unified School District shall be given in a manner that is fair, accurate, specific and timely. Fairness in grading pertains to consistency, the same grade for the same performance when compared to a standard (scoring students who demonstrate the same performance with the same grade). Accurate grades are valid; they measure what we state they are to measure. Specific and timely refers to grades that are understandable and provided quickly enough so that students have an opportunity to improve.

A student’s academic grade represents individual achievement according to evidence gathered through meaningful, quality assessments and consistently-applied, standards-based criteria. End-level mastery demonstrated through summative assessments is utilized to determine final grades. Formative activities, for the purpose of practice or deepening understanding, should not be included in the determination of a final grade. Evidence of mastery should be measured over time with the most recent evidence emphasized as demonstration of developmental learning.

Homework is practice and formative in nature. It should be meaningful and prepare students for the final performance. Best practice not only includes homework, but also coaching, guidance, and immediate feedback.

Measurements of student behavior, such as effort, participation, adherence to class rules, attendance, etc., shall not be included as factors in determining a student’s final academic grade. Teachers may report additional grade/grades for each course/report card that will reflect a student’s progress in these areas.

Grade Definitions

For elementary grade levels the Progress Toward Standard grade is a measure of how a student is progressing toward meeting the grade level standards as follows:

<u>Achievement</u>	<u>Effort</u>	<u>Progress Toward Standard</u>
A Exceptional	O Outstanding – Consistently demonstrates	4 Standard Exceeded
B Good	S Satisfactory – Usually demonstrates	3 Standard Met (At Grade Level)
C Average	U Unsatisfactory – Seldom demonstrates	2 Standard Nearly Met
D Below Grade Level		1 Standard Not Met Yet
F Far Below Grade Level		* Not Tested

For secondary grade levels, the following rubric represents progress towards meeting the course/grade level standards:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Definition</u>
A	Demonstrates evidence of a complete mastery of the standards.
B	Demonstrates evidence of a nearly complete mastery of the standards.
C	Demonstrates evidence of a partial mastery of the standards.

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- D Demonstrates evidence of a minimal mastery of the standards.
F Demonstrates evidence of no mastery of the standards.

At the high school level (9th – 12th grade), semester grades represent the cumulative progress of students over the preceding two quarters. At the middle school level (7th – 8th grade), quarter grades represent student progress for that particular quarter, except for Integrated Math 1. For this course, grades will be cumulative by semester because these courses meet high school requirements. At the elementary level, trimester grades represent the progress of students for the particular trimester.

Adaptations

May be made for special needs students, i.e., students who receive special education services, English learner services, Section 504 accommodations, or Gifted and Talented Education services.

1. Accommodations are instructional adjustments made to provide equal access to instruction and opportunity to demonstrate knowledge. Accommodations do not change course expectations and/or content and are not reflected in a student's grade.
2. Modifications are instructional adjustments that alter course expectations and/or content or establish an altered performance standard based on a student's special learning needs. Instructional modifications may be made only if recommended by the education team and with parent notification and consent. Grades are a measure of the student's success in meeting his/her individual goals in a modified curriculum.
 - a. The expected goals, behaviors, modifications and basis for grading of students receiving special education services are written by the Individual Education Program Team.
 - b. The goals, behaviors, modifications and basis of grading special needs students not receiving special education services are written by the Student Study Team.

Courses without State Standards

In the rare occasion that a course does not align to a set of national or state standards, students grades should be determined based on student mastery of agreed upon course objectives and goals, outlined in the course description approved by the board.

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Report cards will be issued each trimester in grade K-6 for students enrolled for a minimum of 20 instructional days. Report cards will be issued quarterly in grades 7-12 for students enrolled for 20 or more instructional days and for students enrolled less than 20 instructional days if transfer grades are available. Teacher shall schedule conferences for parents of all students following the close of the first reporting period. Teachers may also schedule additional conferences following the close of the second trimester in grades K-6 or at parent request.

Parent Notification

The teacher shall send a written, documented parent notification (progress report) of the student's possible failure to the student's parent/guardian and may request a conference with the student's parent/guardian. If the student is receiving a modified curriculum, a referral will be made to the student's educational planning team.

1. No student shall be failed in a subject unless his/her parent/guardian has been sent notification of the possible failure.
2. In the primary grades, whenever it becomes apparent to the teacher that a student is to receive "1", the teacher will notify the parent in writing. (Education Code 49067)

It is essential to include parents as partners in a student's education. Best practice indicates consistent communication between home and school supports student success. The consistent use of school loop, email, and phone calls home are all effective ways in which to communicate progress with a parent/guardian. By notifying a parent/guardian when it becomes apparent that the student is in danger of failing a subject, teachers build partnership and become proactive in supporting student success.

Grade Change

A grade given by a teacher shall be final and cannot be changed by others unless it was given by mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency (Education Code 49066). When instances of alleged mistakes are brought to the principal's attention, the principal then has the responsibility of making a determination as to whether or not a mistake has been made. The teacher who determined such grade shall be given, to the extent practicable, an opportunity to state orally, in writing, or both, the reasons for which such grade was given and shall be, to the extent practicable, included in all discussions relating to the changing of such grade. If a teacher is unwilling to change a grade after it has been determined that a mistake has been made, the principal has the authority to change the grade. When instances of alleged fraud, bad faith, or incompetency are brought to the principal's attention, the principal shall refer the matter to the Superintendent.

GRADES/EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (continued)**Other Grade Indicators**

Incomplete (I)	This grade is to be used only when student work is incomplete because of illness or other extenuating circumstances, e.g., legal excused absence. A first semester one must be made up one week prior to the end of the following semester.
No Mark (NM)	This grade is to be used for students who have been enrolled fewer than 20 instructional days and have not yet had grades transferred; it is also used in PE if a student has been out of class on a medical excuse for an extended period of time.
Plus/Minus (+/-)	Quarter, semester or trimester academic grades may indicate a high (+) or low (-) level of achievement within the letter grade range. This indication is not included in the calculation of grade point averages.
Pass/Fail (P/F)	With parental approval, students may elect to earn a Pass or Fail grade instead of an A-F grade in all courses taken in the Special Education Program. Students who receive a Pass earn the appropriate semester units of credit for the course. Students who receive a Fail grade do not receive credit for the course. A Pass grade is counted as a "C" in determining grade point averages and academic eligibility.

Newcomer Students

Newcomers may earn an A, B, C or a Pass/Not Pass.

- If the student receives an A, B, C they receive the credit for the class and/or college prep credit. These students can receive the comment NN (newcomer) if appropriate.
- Students who receive a Pass (P) with a comment NN (newcomer) gets credit for the class but this serves as an indicator to the counselors that the student had appropriate modifications that focus on essential assignments.
- Students who receive a Not Pass (NP) with a comment NN (newcomer) have severe education gaps and indicate to the counselors they need to take the class again. They do not receive credit for the class.

Allowing P/NP for newcomers will eliminate D's and F's and encourages high school newcomers to continue their efforts to learn English and acquire the needed education to catch up with their grade level, preventing discouragement and drop outs.

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Reference Materials

A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades, Ken O' Connor
Fast Grading: A Guide to Implementing Best Practices, Douglas Reeves

Regulation

Approved: September 1, 2005

Revised: October 6, 2011; October 27, 2011; June 15, 2017

VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Vacaville, California