



Guidance on District Grading Procedures

August, 2018

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Introduction

This guidance document has been prepared to share key information related to the timely and accurate reporting for students' academic records. The policy has been developed collaboratively by a representative group of staff members, the Grading Policy Task Force. The Task Force reviewed research from multiple sources and policies from across the United States.

This policy is intended to add clarity and promote consistency in grading practices across the district. The expectation is that all Oak Park Public Schools will adhere to the district level grading policy. To this end, all stakeholders are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of the policy. Staff are further expected to communicate timely and meaningful updates to parents, so that there is an ongoing, shared understanding of a student's achievement relative to course/class expectations.

To avoid confusion, we use the following definitions throughout this document:

- A *mark* (or *score*) is the number (or letter) given to any student test, assignment or performance that may contribute to the later determination of a grade.
- A *grade* is the symbol (number or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance.
- *Summative assessments* are measurements *of* a student's learning intended to allow a student to demonstrate what he or she knows and is able to do. The most typical summative assessments are **unit tests, exams, common assessments, quizzes** and **individual projects**, however, a wide variety of classroom activities may be summative if the teacher is using the activity to accurately measure a student's mastery of content.
- *Formative assessments* are measures *for* learning. These types of activities are meant to provide feedback to students and guide a teacher in adjusting instruction to meet the needs of students. Typical examples of formative assessments include **exit tickets, homework, quick writes, quizzes** and **do-nows**, however, a wide variety of classroom activities may be formative including assignments and individual projects.

In keeping with the mission of Oak Park School District,

The mission of the Oak Park School District is to provide quality education in which we respect students' individual and cultural differences, educate all students to meet or exceed the District's academic standards, and ensure they possess college and career readiness skills necessary to become lifelong learners and productive citizens.

the Grading Policy Task Force has identified the following criteria against which the contents of this policy have been evaluated. Our grades and marks will be:

Accurate	Based on achievement of prescribed learning targets and standards.
Supportive of Learning	Grades send the message to students and parents that success lies in the learning, not accumulating points. With limited exceptions, summative assessments determine grades and students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning.
Timely and Meaningful	Communicate useful information to students and stakeholders in time for improvements to be made.
Equitable	Based on fairness, inclusion, and opportunity despite personal or social circumstances, such as gender, ethnic origin, or family background.

Purpose of Grades

Grades and marks assigned to a student’s work product shall be a direct reflection of the student’s understanding and achievement on the aligned learning target(s) or standard(s). This document clarifies some of the practices that are necessary in order for grading to reflect mastery.

For example, a student’s misbehavior shall not result in a grade reduction. However, in cases/classes where a demonstrated expectation for participation is directly aligned to a content/course standard during a period of instruction, such as participation in a performance, debate, or discussion, teachers may consider student participation, as defined by relevant standards, as a portion of their grade for that assignment/project/assessment.

Similarly, great care must be taken when assigning marks to homework, group projects and work that occurs outside of the classroom, to ensure grades accurately reflect what each individual student knows and is able to do.

Weightings

Overall grades reported for each making period will be weighted as follows:

	Formative	Summative
PK – 1	Standards Based	
Grades 2 – 5	20	80
Grades 6 – 12	10	90

Although these will be the only 2 categories available in MiSTAR, each teacher will provide students with a variety of means and methods to demonstrate learning including, but not limited to, assignments, tests, quizzes, projects, performances and presentations.

Semester course grades (secondary only) will be weighted as follows:

Semester 1			Semester 2		
Q1	Q2	Exam	Q3	Q4	Exam
40%	40%	20%	40%	40%	20%

Yearlong courses will be weighted 40% 1st semester, 40% 2nd semester, and 20% final exam. For yearlong courses without final exam marks, the final weighting will be 50% First Semester Grade, 50% Second Semester Grade.

Homework

Homework is meant to be meaningful, offer feedback, reinforce skills taught in the classroom or extend learned concepts. Homework may be graded according to teacher's discretion, and should require students to apply what they have learned. Homework shall be used as a reinforcement of academic learning, and not as a penalty. Any marks assigned for homework shall be **entered into the Formative category** in MiSTAR.

Extra Credit

Extra credit shall not be offered. Teachers may utilize other incentives for non-content related activities, but may not award extra credit.

The Extra Credit option in MiSTAR should not be enabled for any assignment, and the number of points a student earns on an assignment should not exceed the number of points possible.

Retakes/Re-Dos

The opportunity for re-dos must be afforded to all students, regardless of score, throughout each marking period on all (and only) summative work. There is no penalty assessed to redone work, and the more recent score shall replace the former. Students will have no more than two weeks from the original due date to attempt their redo; however, that timetable can be truncated, as necessary. Teachers are not required to accept late work or re-done work after one week prior to the end of the card marking.

Students are allotted **one re-do opportunity**, and each building will provide supports so that all students have equitable access to re-do opportunities. The re-do must encompass the same standards / learning targets as the original, and it is recommended that the new summative activity be different from the original. *In order to receive a re-do, students are encouraged to take advantage of additional instructional supports* (ex. interventions, resources, tutoring, reteaching, etc.) before attempting a re-do.

Zeros

A student will not earn below 50% of the point value for any assignment unless the teacher is piloting equal interval bands for grading (i.e., a 4 point scale) with administrative approval. For missing assignments, the MiSTAR mark should be **left blank**, indicating **inconclusive evidence** is available to enter a score.

For any score left blank, students will have normal make up opportunities (see Retakes/Re-dos, Absences/Attendance) to demonstrate evidence of learning on those targets/standards, and the appropriate score should be entered when the work is completed. MiSTAR will average the blank scores as 0's until another value is entered. If a teacher wishes to pre-enter an assignment and not have a 0 averaged into students' grades, the teacher should **uncheck the Assignment Graded box**.

Prior to the end of the card marking, any blank mark must be converted by the teacher to 50% of the point value for that assignment, unless the teacher is piloting the 4 point grading scale. When converting blanks to 50%, teachers should use the appropriate MiSTAR code to indicate 50% was automatically given.

Absences/Attendance

Attendance is a behavior issue that can become an academic issue. The remedy involves fixing student absences separately from achievement. This is an ongoing concern the district will address through a comprehensive attendance policy and supports to families. In all cases, students must be provided an opportunity to make-up work.

When a student returns after an absence, it is the student's responsibility to make-up all missing work.

- Teachers will have forty-eight hours from the date the work is requested to provide make-up work.
- In the event no request for work is received while the child is absent, the work shall be provided for the student upon his/her return to class.

- In the case of suspension, the child shall leave school with his/her work for the day and every effort will be made to provide additional work, when possible.

Once students receive their make-up work, they will have the amount of days absent to turn in the make-up work, i.e. a student that was absent four days will have four days to make-up the work.

Late Work

Although formative work is typically not scored, in limited instances where it is, there may be students who are unable to complete the assignment within the specified time frame. In those cases, **for formative assignments only**, the student will have an additional 48 hours to turn it in with no penalty. If the assignment is turned in after the 48 hour window, half of the earned points may be awarded, and the teacher should use the appropriate MiSTAR code to indicate the assignment was late.

Late assignments may not be submitted after one week prior to the end of the marking period. If the assignment remains missing until the end of the marking period, the 50% rule applies.

Special Populations

Oak Park Schools is committed to all students receiving high quality instruction in a safe and supportive learning environment that embraces diversity. Grading procedures for students who receive specialized services shall conform to the district's criteria. The grades will be accurate, supportive of learning, equitable, timely and meaningful. We would like to thank and credit our colleagues in Washington DC Public Schools, who drafted the original text for this section.

Students with Disabilities

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004, special education is "specially designed instruction" designed to "meet the unique needs of a child with a disability." IDEA also requires students receive instruction in the "least restrictive environment (LRE) possible." This means that children with disabilities are taught alongside their nondisabled peers, accessing the same grade level curricula, to the greatest extent appropriate, and are removed from these settings only when the nature of their disability prevents them from learning with their nondisabled peers.

When students have the opportunity to be involved and make progress in the same curriculum as their non-disabled peers, we say they have access to the curriculum. However, sometimes a student's disability can prevent him or her from accessing the curriculum. When this happens, teaching methods, materials, classroom settings and/or assignments must be modified to meet the

student's needs. These modifications and accommodations give students the opportunity to access their education.

Students with 504 Plans

The Section 504 program is named for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law that requires public schools to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities so that these students can access the school's general education curriculum and learning opportunities. Unlike special education, Section 504 does not prescribe specialized instruction for eligible students. Instead, the Section 504 program ensures that eligible students with disabilities get the reasonable accommodations or services they need to access the OPSD curriculum and learning opportunities.

Teachers will implement the accommodations that have been documented in the student's IEP or 504 Plan. Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student's instructional level and must be used consistently for daily instruction and local and state mandated assessments. Content area teachers and Special Education teachers must collaborate throughout the quarter to determine instructional modifications as appropriate.

Students who are present in the general education classroom for socialization only will receive marks and grades from their special education teachers. In other cases, students receiving Specialized Instruction through an IEP, or Section 504 plan will:

- Have a course of study designed to meet their specific needs,
- Receive marks and grades from the general education teacher of record when the student attends general education instruction,
- Receive marks and grades from the special education teacher in self-contained classrooms,
- Receive marks and grades based on their knowledge of applicable content standards,
- Have access to instructional modifications and assessment accommodations in both the general education classroom and full-time classrooms, as specified in the IEP or 504 Plan, to allow them to make academic progress in both settings,
- Receive a report card outlining progress on scheduled courses.

English Language Learners

Students who receive ELL English proficiency instruction are expected to develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and to meet the same challenging district academic content and student academic standards as all children are expected to meet. Teachers will implement the accommodations that have been documented in the student's Accommodations Document for ELL Students. Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student's English

proficiency level and must be used consistently for daily instruction and local and state mandated assessments.

Students receiving ELL services will:

- Have access to instructional modifications and assessment accommodations, in both the general education classroom and ELL classroom, as specified in the Accommodations Documentation for ELL Students, to allow them to make academic progress in both settings,
- Receive grades based on performance on activities and classroom assessments appropriate to the language proficiency level of the student,
- Receive the same report card as is used in general education,
- Be assessed by collaboration between the content area teachers and ELL teachers throughout the quarter, according to instructional modifications determined to be appropriate by these teams.

Acknowledgements

Oak Park Schools wishes to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for their contributions to this policy document.

Michael Adamisin	Oak Park Freshman Institute	9th Grade Conceptual Physics OPEA President
Keturah Brinson	NOVA Discipline Academy	6th - 12th Multi Subject
William Boyer	Oak Park High School	10th - 12th Civil Rights and Economics
Karla Browning	Central Office	Director of Secondary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Peggy Carr-McMichael	NOVA Discipline Academy	6th - 12th Multi Subject
Anthony DeGrazia	Oak Park High School	Assistant Principal
Dr.Chelsea Harris-Hugan	Central Office	Director of Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Sandra Heller	Einstein Elementary School	4th Grade
Shana Holden-Murphy	Central Office	District Data Specialist
Sarah Jones	Key Elementary	1st Grade
Al Kattola	Oak Park Preparatory Academy	7th and 8th Grade Physical Education
Suzanne Lallier	Central Office	Elementary Instructional Specialist
Kathryn Locano	Oak Park High School	10th and 11th Grade English Curriculum Coordinator for ELA
Ravi Smith	Oak Park High School	Algebra II
Dawn Sommers	Einstein Elementary School	1st Grade
Shalana Stewart	Oak Park Preparatory Academy	6th Grade ELA
LaTonya Thomas	Key Elementary School	3rd Grade
Vernon Williams	Oak Park High School	10th - 12th Special Populations

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Grading Policy Documents from our colleagues in
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Dallas Intermediate School District, Texas
District of Columbia Schools, Washington DC
Pflugerville Intermediate School District, Texas
Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland