

## **GRADES/EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

### **I. Philosophy of Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting**

The ongoing assessment of student progress, meaningful evaluation of that progress, and reporting in a manner which communicates clearly between school staff and students and parents are critical components of successful educational programs. The quality of information gained through assessment determines the quality of evaluation. Instructional and curricular decisions will be based on the data gathered through assessment and evaluation.

Therefore, assessment and evaluation must be centered in the classroom, tied directly to adopted content standards and current curriculum, consistent with district goals, and consistent with what we know about learning. Assessment and evaluation must be comprehensive and include both objective measures and professional judgments about academic performance and personal growth. Reporting must reflect an educational program that teaches the whole child, preparing him/her to function in a rapidly changing world. The progress report is a summary of student growth and progress for each reporting period.

### **II. Core Beliefs**

It is our belief that...

- Parents and students should be clearly informed of areas to be assessed and of expected student outcomes. Their active participation in the assessment and evaluation process is crucial.
- The quality of information gained through assessment determines the quality of evaluation and reporting.
- Assessment, evaluation, and reporting procedures and instruments should be selected based on identified district, building, classroom, and individual learner outcomes, learning opportunities and classroom practices.
- Assessment, evaluation, and reporting must be free of gender and cultural bias.
- Assessment, evaluation, and reporting should document development and improvement, and identify areas for growth.
- Assessment, evaluation, and reporting should use both objective measures and professional judgments about academic performance and personal growth.
- Evaluation and reporting should include information about the student's learning processes, products and performances.
- Student progress should be reported in the context of the individual learner, as well as in relation to typical performance for students of the same age or grade level. However, it is not a ranking or competitive system.

- Informal reporting may include such activities as sending home examples of student work, informal exchanges, conferences, telephone calls, notes, anecdotal reports, and newsletters. The nature and frequency of this reporting are determined as the need arises. Informal reporting is recognized as essential in fostering successful home-school partnerships.
- Formal reporting includes conferences and progress reports which are issued on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Parents should be encouraged and invited to respond and initiate communication in both the formal and informal reporting processes.
- The heart of Monrovia Unified School District's philosophy is that learning is an ongoing developmental process, unique to each child. As teachers, our responsibility is to record what the child can do and his/her patterns of growth over time.

### **III. Elementary School**

The board recognizes that the developmental levels of young children vary a great deal. Students in grades K-5 shall receive trimester reports that focus on the student's progress towards mastery of established content standards. These reports may include narrative evaluations, as well as rubric scores, in order to give parents/guardians more information about their children's developmental levels and also promote students' self-esteem and experiences of success.

In kindergarten through fifth grade, teachers shall use the designated MUSD standards-based report cards for trimester reporting to parents/guardians. Teachers are encouraged to include narrative descriptions of the student's level of achievement and may also furnish examples of student work.

Standards-based report cards provide information about a student's progress toward attainment of content standards. A performance standard should not be equated or translated to a "letter" grade. The report card evaluates the student's level of mastery of the taught content standards up to the end of that grading period.

The report cards use the following markings:

- 5 = Advanced: This is the highest mark that a student may receive. If a student receives a 5, it means that he or she performs at a higher level than what is expected at that time of the year.
- 4 = Proficient: The student who receives a 4 has mastered the material that has been taught.

- 3 = Basic: A student who receives a 3 has mastered the simpler parts of a standard, but has not consistently shown mastery of the more complex parts of the standard. With a little intervention, the student should become proficient.
- 2 = Below Basic: A student who receives a 2 indicates that the student has a partial understanding of some of what has been taught. Intervention will be necessary in order to enable the student to reach proficiency.
- 1 = A student who receives a 1 has shown limited understanding of what has been taught. Even with help, the student has been unable to perform the standard. A student who receives a 1 needs intensive intervention – both at home and at school.
- \* = Not Assessed this Term

#### Effort Marks

- (E) Excellent: Indicates the student is highly motivated, is a positive role model for other students, and often demonstrates leadership qualities.
- (S) Satisfactory: Indicates the student is generally focused on the work at hand and rarely requires teacher intervention to correct inappropriate behaviors.
- (N) Needs Improvement: Indicates the student requires teacher prompting to remain focused or to correct behavior.
- (U) Unsatisfactory: Indicates the student's unwillingness or inability to participate in the learning process. The student seldom completes or attempts to complete work assigned.

#### English Language Development (ELD) - (English Learners Only)

This instruction is offered to students who are learning to listen, speak, read, and write English as their second language, receive English language instruction until they demonstrate skills that are similar to native English speakers.

The following marks report the progress a child is making in learning English:

- E: The student is exceeding his/her expected rate of acquiring English.
- S: The student is making satisfactory or average progress in developing English skills.
- N: The student is not making satisfactory or average progress and needs more time or instruction to improve his/her English skills.

The *California English Language Development Test (CELDT)* is given at the beginning of each year to measure the student's growth in learning English. There are five levels:

Levels 1-2: Indicate a student has limited English skills.

Level 3: Indicates a student uses everyday English but needs help with more difficult academic English.

Levels 4-5: Indicate a student is very fluent in English and needs only minimal assistance with academic English.

#### **IV. Middle School and High School**

A. Student achievement reports are sent to parents/guardians quarterly. Machine generated report forms are used with an A-F grading scale and prepared comments that are selected by teachers as appropriate. School staff are required to review comments annually and to revise when necessary.

Criteria for determining grades for achievement may include, but are not limited to:

1. Preparation of assignments, including accuracy, legibility, and promptness.
2. Contribution to class discussions.
3. Demonstrated understanding of concepts in tests.
4. Applications of skills and principles of new situations.
5. Organization and presentation of written and oral reports.
6. Originality and reasoning ability when working through problems.

***For each student in grades 9-12, the Superintendent or designee shall maintain a transcript recording the courses take, the term that each course was taken, credits earned, final grades, and date of graduation.***

B. Grading Scale: Teachers at middle and high schools are expected to outline the specific criteria for earning grades in courses they teach. These outlines are to be made available to parents and students during the first two weeks of instruction.

The grade given in any course represents the teachers considered judgment of the degree to which the student has mastered the content standards and course expectations, and has achieved goals of the course. Grades are not based on comparisons of individuals.

The following grading scale is illustrative and reflective of the specific course requirements:

“A” = 4 grade points: Student demonstrates excellent mastery of the content standards in the subject and assignments; regularly exhibits higher order thinking skills; can use abstract ideas logically; is creative; participates constructively; is self-directed and responsible.

“B” = 3 grade points: Student demonstrates above-average mastery of the content standards in the subject and assignments; exhibits higher order thinking skills; can use abstract ideas logically and be creative; participates, tends to be self-directed and responsible and follows directions.

“C” = 2 grade points: Student demonstrates average mastery of the content standards in the subject and assignments; needs direction and encouragement; can follow directions and be responsible.

“D” = 1 grade point: Student demonstrates below-average mastery of the content standards in the subject; needs constant encouragement and special help; does not consistently follow directions; does not do assignments well. Student will need additional support and time to achieve the content standards by the end of the school year.

“F” = 0 grade points: Student demonstrates a serious lack of mastery and/or content standards; is inattentive and shows little or no effort; may be frequently absent; fails to follow directions; does not do assignments. Significant support and time will be necessary to achieve the content standards by the end of the school year.

“I”: Incomplete - Grade postponed because of student illness or other unusual circumstance. (An “incomplete” is given only when a student’s work is not finished because of illness or excused absence. If not made up by the end of the following academic semester, the incomplete will become an F.)

Plus and minus signs may be used at the option of the teacher.

#### Grades for Physical Education

No grade of a student participating in a physical education class may be adversely affected due to the fact that the student, because of circumstances beyond his/her control, does not wear standardized physical education apparel.

Student performance in high school physical education courses shall be based upon evaluation of the student's individual progress, attainment of goals in each instructional area, tests designed to determine skill and knowledge, and physical performance tests.

#### Grades for Citizenship and Effort

Grades for citizenship and effort shall be reported each marking period as follows:

O: Outstanding

S: Satisfactory

N: Needs Improvement

#### **V. Advanced Placement and Pre-AP Courses (High School)**

The District wishes to encourage students to take advanced placement and pre-advanced placement courses. Because of the extra work involved, the evaluation system shall be weighted to reflect the more rigorous nature of these courses. Grades received in these courses will be counted on the following scale:

A = 5 points

B = 4 points

C = 3 points

D = 1 point

F = 0

#### Pass/Fail Grading

The Superintendent or designee may identify courses or programs for which students may, with parent/guardian permission, elect to earn a Pass or Fail grade instead of an A-F grade.

Students who receive a Pass grade shall acquire the appropriate semester units of credit for the course. The grade shall not be counted in determining class rank, honors list, or membership in the California Scholarship Federation. Students who receive an F grade shall not receive credit for taking the course.

#### Peer Grading

At their discretion, teachers may use peer grading of student tests, papers and assignments as appropriate to reinforce lessons.

### Repeating Classes

With the approval of the principal or designee, a student may repeat a course in order to raise his/her grade. Both grades received shall be entered on the student's transcript, but the student shall receive credit only once for taking the course.

The highest grade received shall be used in determining the student's overall grade point average. "Repeat classes" are those classes that cover the same content standards, but vary in level of difficulty and instructional strategies (e.g. AP English II, English II, RSP English III, SDC English III).

### Withdrawal from Classes

A student who drops a course during the first three weeks of the term for high school and first six weeks for middle school may do so without any entry on his/her permanent record card. A student who drops a course after the first three weeks of the term for high school and first six weeks for middle school shall receive a WF F grade on his/her permanent record, unless otherwise decided by the principal or designee because of extraordinary extenuating circumstances outside of the students control.

### Absences from School

Teachers who withhold class credit because of excessive unexcused absences shall so inform the class and parents/guardians at the beginning of the semester.

When an unexcused absence occurs, the student and parent/guardian shall again be notified of the district's policy regarding excessive unexcused absences and that work not made up will affect the student's grades. The student and parent/guardian shall have a reasonable opportunity to explain the absences, and the student will have reasonable time to make-up the missed work.

If a student receives a failing grade because of unexcused absences and failing to complete make-up work, the student's record shall specify that the grade was assigned because of excessive unexcused absences.

Grades for a student in foster care shall not be lowered if the student is absent from school due to either of the following circumstances:

1. A decision by a court or placement agency to change the student's placement, in which case the student's grades and credits shall be calculated as of the date the student left school; or

2. A verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity.

#### **VI. Parent Notification of Possible Failing Grade**

A mid-quarter “Unsatisfactory Notice” or “Progress Report” must be sent if a student appears to be in danger of receiving a failing grade (“F”) or a grade of “D”.

If and when it becomes evident to a teacher that a student is in danger of failing a course and the mid-quarter point has passed, the teacher must notify the student’s parent/guardian in writing and attempt to arrange a conference with the parent/guardian at the earliest possible time.

Teachers are encouraged to notify parents whenever a student’s grade is falling substantially below prior levels or expected levels, so that working together they can intervene to help the student improve. This notification must occur no later than two weeks prior to the end of the grading term.

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