



Shenendehowa Board of Education Policy 7214

Proposed Grading Policy Updates

The District's Grading Policy will be reviewed and updated in the 2015-16 school year, with implementation planned for the 2016-17 school year. Based on extensive review of educational research, feedback received from stakeholder group meetings and a community-wide survey garnering over 3,000 responses; the following essential elements are proposed for the inclusion in this policy:

The Board of Education supports the tracking and monitoring of academic performance as a critical component to the successful assessment of a student's growth and progress. Further, the timely and accurate communication of student progress is essential for students and parents to monitor learning.

Philosophy Statement: Grading is the measurement of student learning and should encourage student engagement with the learning process. It is not static, instead a continuous indicator of growth and progress. Grading provides a clear indication of a student's proficiency based on:

- **Specific grade level or course,**
- **Expected content or skill mastery, and/or**
- **Specific individual program goals (ex. IEP).**

Essential Elements of Effective Grading Practices:

Grading practices illuminate the District's commitment to excellence and each **educator's commitment to the success of every student**. As such, classroom grading practices will support students to experience academic success, build confidence in their abilities as learners, understand their own sense of significance within the classroom and feel a connection with the larger social/academic environment.

Grading practices will:

- Provide timely feedback to students about their learning, with marks for students in grades 3-12 posted in the SIS portal for consistency.
- Help parents monitor their child's learning.
- Provide consistency in grading procedures and weighting of grade components (i.e., tests, quizzes, projects, labs, homework) across the same courses.
- Strictly measure learning and, therefore, non-academic factors, such as effort and conduct, will be communicated in other ways.
- Reflect student learning, serving to inform and lending to the measurement of growth over time; and therefore will not be used in a punitive manner.
- Use standardized ranges (e.g., A=90-100, etc.) across levels of instruction (i.e., K-2, 3-5, 6-8) lending to consistency.
- Provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate what students have learned through multiple means.

Recognizing that student learning is the primary purpose of education and that learning is a continuous process, classroom practices should encourage continued student engagement with the learning process and grading practices must support a student's on-going growth and improvement.

Report card grades will be reflective of student learning over a period of time and therefore must reflect many assessments of student learning, such as tests, quizzes, projects, and class assignments.

At the secondary level, in cases where students typically demonstrate increased levels of proficiency as the course progresses along the learning continuum, grades in the second semester may be weighted more heavily toward the final course grade. In these cases, student performance on larger measures of learning (e.g., tests, finals, Regents, projects) may be weighted more heavily as key benchmarks of student learning and improvement in the course.



Shenendehowa Board of Education Policy 8440

Proposed Homework Policy Updates

The District's Homework Policy will be reviewed and updated in the 2015-16 school year, with implementation planned for the 2016-17 school year. Based on extensive review of educational research, feedback received from stakeholder group meetings and a community-wide survey garnering over 3,000 responses; the following essential elements are proposed for the inclusion in this policy:

The Board of Education recognizes that the assignment of homework is a potentially valuable and appropriate extension of activities begun in school. Meaningful homework assignments can improve student achievement and also help teach the habits of organizational skills and time management.

Philosophy Statement: The assignment of homework shall serve to extend student learning by reinforcing content and skills already taught in school. Homework should provide for extra practice based on previous lessons and/or prepare for future lessons (e.g., flipped classroom). Homework can be used to help improve study habits and promote self-direction. Assignments should be age appropriate and reflect the individual needs of students.

Essential Elements of Effective Homework Practices:

- Ensures directions for homework are clear and students are able to complete the work on their own.
- Establishes that homework should be directly related to the stated learning objectives for the course.
- Promotes short and frequent homework assignments. At the secondary level homework assignments may be longer and given less frequently to allow students the opportunity to balance assignments across multiple courses. Extended projects will include benchmarks for students to maintain timelines toward completion and receive feedback and support, as needed.
- Establishes that students should receive feedback on their work. Homework assignments for students in grades 3-12 shall be posted in the SIS portal for consistency.
- Prohibits the use of homework for punitive measures.
- Establishes reasonable time expectation guidelines based on student grade levels
 - (In Regulation) 10 minute rule per grade level, maximum across all subjects
 - K-1st grade – 10 minutes
 - 6th grade – 60 minutes
 - 12th grade - 120 minutes
 - (In Regulation) When assigning homework, teachers will:
 - Be mindful about the need for a carefully balanced approach to homework recognizing that homework, particularly in the core subject areas at the secondary level, helps to extend student learning while also recognizing that excessive homework can be detrimental to students and too much homework may lead to diminishing returns for learning and decreased motivation for school;
 - Provide models, video clips, examples, and/or resources for students to consult as they complete their homework to ensure the time spent practicing is effective;
 - Monitor how long assignments are taking for completion through open communication with both students and parents and modify accordingly;

- Recognize that students work at different rates and teachers will seek to find a balance among students in the class without creating an undue burden for students who work at a slower pace;
- Differentiate homework where appropriate to meet the needs of individual students;
- Recognize the time guidelines represent maximum times for all courses taken by students in Regents level and honors courses so as to ensure students have the time to participate in extracurricular and family activities while ensuring proper rest and downtime. Due to the breadth and depth of content required in Advanced Placement courses, students may occasionally have homework that exceeds recommended time guidelines so as to allow students sufficient time to learn the complex content; and,
- In-depth projects should not be assigned over school breaks.

References:

Best Practice in Uniform Grading by Level. (2010). *Hanover Research Council*.

Connor, K., & Connor, K. (2009). *How to grade for learning, K-12* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin.

Dueck, Myron. (2014). *Grading Smarter Assessment Strategies That Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn*. ASCD.

Effective Grading Practices in the Middle School and High School Environments. (2011). *Hanover Research Council*.

Effective Homework Policies and Regulations. (2013). *Hanover Research Council*.

Jung, LeeAnn, and Thomas R. Guskey. *Grading Exceptional and Struggling Learners*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin, 2012.

Homework Benefits and Practices. (2014). *Hanover Research Council*.

Reeves, Douglas B. *Elements of Grading: A Guide to Effective Practice*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2011.

Vatterott, Cathy. *Rethinking Grading: Meaningful Assessment for Standards-based Learning*. Alexandria: ASCD, 2015.

Vatterott, Cathy. (2009). *Rethinking homework best practices that support diverse needs*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wormeli, Rick. *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Portland, Me.: Stenhouse, 2006.