

School Year 2020-21 Pre-K- 12 Grading Policy: Updated 8.6.20

Purpose and Scope

This policy guidance conveys requirements related to pre-K-12 grading for school year 2020-21 as a response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The grading requirements contained in the DCPS Secondary Grading and Reporting Policy that are not addressed in this policy guidance remain in effect.

Background and Context

Outlined below is the grading policy for SY20-21. This policy is rooted in our grading philosophy and values and intended to norm all stakeholders on grading that is equitable and genuinely based on students' learning. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has prompted us to think deeply on how we're supporting all students equitably and to create grading guidance designed to operate in any context: at-home learning, virtual or fully in-person.

Philosophy: DCPS believes that grades are in the service of ongoing learning, to provide timely feedback and plan for personalized instruction, while making a record of growth and development over a student's school career.

Values:

Grades are:	Grades are not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A measure of a state of skill and knowledge of content taught and learned based on CCSS and the DCPS Curriculum • Based on standards-based evidence of student learning demonstrated in foundational course engagement, assignments and assessments • A tool to grow intrinsic motivation • Transparent and consistent among all schools, within set parameters • Accessible and available for revision and improvement throughout the term • Provided frequently and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reward and punishment behavior management tool • Based on institutional compliance or compatibility • Arbitrary and capricious • Closed or final before the end of a term • A mechanism used to sort students and perpetuate opportunity gaps • A tool for teaching accountability of consequential lessons to students

The general premise of this policy is to ensure that our grading system and expectations establish **high** expectations with strong support, so students regularly receive meaningful feedback to help them learn, grow, and succeed. Our expectation is that every student will be engaged this year, regardless of whether they are learning at home, at school, or some combination of the two. This year, for the first time, each DCPS course has a Canvas Course Companion which includes clear curricular expectations and required tasks for students (Appendix 1—*forthcoming*). All required tasks should be assigned and included in students' grades. With equity as our guidepost, we issue the following guidance for Elementary and Secondary teachers.

Elementary Grading

This section provides policy guidance that applies to elementary grades (PreK-5) for SY 20-21.

Pre-K

Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers will continue to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD system for documenting children's progress and development across developmental domains (language, literacy, cognitive, math, social emotional, physical). At each grading period children will receive marks for individual skills or expectations within each area of development indicating if children are below developmental expectations, meeting developmental expectations, or exceeding developmental expectations. Report cards will be generated through GOLD, and families will access children's report cards through the online GOLD portal.

K-5

Term grade calculations are based on Student Engagement, Practice and Application, and Assessment to reflect the diverse nature of student work. All student work must be scored objectively, and grades are supported with evidence and documentation. Exact percentages are up to the discretion of school staff.

In a virtual world, teachers should regularly communicate expectations to students and keep them abreast of their academic status. Teachers should share a grade a week, approximately, or two grades every 10 days. All foundational assignments are subject to revision work and teachers should provide qualitative feedback to students to support their mastery.

Grades are assigned based on achievement of the content area by term:

At the elementary level the degree of achievement by a student of the standards in each content area is recorded as follows:

- 4 = exceeds the standard (Advanced).
- 3 = meets the standard (Proficient).
- 2 = approaches the standard (Basic); and
- 1 = does not meet the standard (Below Basic).
- NM= no mark—this is for content that has not been offered during that term
- For skills or/expectations within subject areas, sub-marks are given as follows:
 - S = Secure.
 - D = Developing;
 - B = Beginning;¹ and
 - N = Not Introduced.

Term marks will be determined by the teacher. Final marks are calculated based on the standards in the final term. Elementary report cards do not include cumulative marks.

¹ Note: Currently DCPS uses "B = Basic." The proposed new report card would switch the language to "B = Beginning" per 5-B DCMR §2200.6.

Secondary Grading

This section applies to secondary grades (6-12).

Term Grades

Term grade calculations are based on Student Engagement (20%), Practice and Application (40%) and Assessment (40%) to reflect the diverse nature of student work. All student work must be scored objectively and consistently, and grades must be supported with evidence and documentation. Categories and weights are pre-populated into teachers' gradebooks and defined below:

Student Engagement (20%): (*Previously called student participation*): This category includes demonstration of active engagement in schooling through a variety of means, including students creating weekly work plans to manage their time and tasks and completing their work plans. Work plans may include personalized revision or extension work, as needed. In addition, credit for evidence of listening, speaking, writing, interacting, and/or leading during class discussions or group activities will be included in this category. Engagement contributes to student learning. Absences will not count against the engagement grade.

Practice & Application (40%): This category includes all student work products that practice and apply discrete and cumulative skills acquired from individual lessons throughout a unit. Assignments allow students to integrate skills successfully and to acquire content through application and practice. The Required Curricular Tasks in the Canvas Course Companions include assignments in this category. If students do not demonstrate proficiency on these tasks, they receive specific qualitative feedback to revise the tasks, raise the grade, and demonstrate increased proficiency. Work in this area should increase in complexity over the course of a unit, building toward cumulative assessments. These assignments are completed in class or outside of class. These assignments can be supported by teachers, peers, or resources.

Assessment (40%): This category includes all formal evaluations of individual student skills, knowledge, progress and mastery. Assessments in the Required Curricular Tasks in the Canvas Course Companions range from traditional tests and quizzes to performance-based tasks that demonstrate student skill and knowledge of an entire unit. Assessments are completed independently, within a set amount of time, honoring accommodations, in a formal testing environment (which can be established virtually). They can be administered by the district or by teachers. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on assessments receive specific qualitative feedback on revision and revise the assessment to raise the grade and demonstrate increased proficiency.

Requirements and Best Practices

- Teachers will post a *minimum of 2 grades every 10 days*. This is a floor and not a ceiling. Students should be given multiple opportunities to earn points.
- Teachers are prohibited from entering a Term grade if they have not submitted at least 9 assignments for the term.
- Gradebooks will be monitored weekly for the timely posting of assignment grades.
- All Required Curricular Tasks from the Canvas Course Companions are subject to revision work and teachers should provide feedback to students to support their mastery as they revise assignments. Teachers grade and enter revised assignments in a timely manner, updated at least every 10 days according to the minimum.

- Students are not penalized for late submission of work.
- Point values for assignments are 10, 20, 25, 50 or 100. All categories must have multiple assignments.
- Revision work may constitute a separate grade or be added to the original grade; either way, it should be included in a way that allows students and families to see the impact of the revision work on the original grade.

Final Grades

To calculate the final course grade, each term grade is assigned a value between 0 and 4 and averaged (as shown below). The earned final grade is based on the point value of the averaged term grades.

Please note, the only shift in this calculation for SY20-21 is that midterms and final exams are now calculated within term grades rather than separately. This chart is included to increase transparency and understanding of the final grade calculation.

Term Percentage Earned	Term Grade Assigned	Value Assigned to Grade	Final Grade Calculation Explanation	Calculated Point Value Range Represented	Earned Final Grade
92.5% to 100%	A	4.0	Single Term: In single term courses the term mark is the final mark.	Greater than 3.7 and less than or equal to 4.0	A
89.5% to 92%	A-	3.7		Greater than 3.3 and less than or equal to 3.7	A-
86.5% to 89%	B+	3.3	Two Term: In two term (semester) courses the two term mark values are added and divided by two to get the calculated point value and assigned a final mark based on the range represented.	Greater than 3.0 and less than or equal to 3.3	B+
82.5% to 86%	B	3.0		Greater than 2.7 and less than or equal to 3.0	B
79.5% to 82%	B-	2.7		Greater than 2.3 and less than or equal to 2.7	B-
76.5% to 79%	C+	2.3		Greater than 2.0 and less than or equal to 2.3	C+
72.5% to 76%	C	2.0	Four Term: In four term (yearlong) courses the four term mark values are added and divided by four to get the calculated point value and assigned a final mark based on the range represented.	Greater than 1.7 and less than or equal to 2.0	C
69.5% to 72%	C-	1.7		Greater than 1.3 and less than or equal to 1.7	C-
66.5% to 69%	D+	1.3		Greater than 1.0 and less than or equal to 1.3	D+
63.5% to 66%	D	1.0		Greater than 0.7 and less than or equal to 1.0	D
63 and below	F	0		Any exams given will be included in the assessment category during the term in which it is taken, and not calculated separately.	Less than or equal to 0.7

Once final grades are calculated in Aspen, the values above are stored in Aspen and they are published on students' transcripts and report cards according to the following:

Grade Earned on A-F Scale	Grade Published on Transcript	Rationale
A	A	Students who earn an A or B will have the benefit of this grade published on their transcript and the associated GPA weight.
B	B	
C	P	Students who earn a C or a D will not be penalized for this lower grade being published. Instead they'll be assigned a "P" (for passing) and it will be GPA neutral.
D	P	
F	I	Students who are earn a failing final grade will be assigned an "I" for incomplete.

- Students are assigned an "I" for Incomplete in first semester may repeat the course in second semester to pass the course.
- Students who are assigned an "I" will have until the end of summer school 2021 to earn a passing grade in the course. If they have not done so by that date, the "I" will convert to an "F" and the student will need to repeat the course.
- Students who wish to have C and D letter grades published as is (instead of "P") or wish to have A and B letter grades published as "P" (instead of A or B) may request this modification to their transcript by reaching out to their school counselor.

Opportunity Academies and Credit Recovery

Opportunity Academy Grading

Opportunity Academies will continue to operate with single term grading. Once a student completes a course, the final grade should be entered into Aspen and will appear on the transcript as shown above. Students who are assigned an "I" will have until the end of summer school 2021 to earn a passing grade in the course. If they have not done so by that date, the "I" will convert to an "F" and the student will need to repeat the course.

Credit Recovery Grading

Credit recovery courses should be offered throughout SY20-21. Because these classes are already designed to be competency-based and self-paced, the grading expectations will stay the same and will differ from the modified weights and calculations above. As always, grades should be based on the following:

- 50% Student practice & application
- 50% Assessment

Final credit recovery grades will be published as follows:

Grade Earned on A-F Scale	Grade Published on Transcript	Rationale
A	A	Students who earn an A or B will have the benefit of this grade published on their transcript and the associated GPA weight.
B	B	

C	P	Students who earn a C or a D will not be penalized for this lower grade being published. Instead they'll be assigned a "P" (for passing) and it will be GPA neutral.
D	P	
Students who are unable to complete a credit recovery course will be assigned a "W" (withdrawn).		

- If a student is taking a credit recovery course to make up for a class they previously received an F in, the new grade will not replace the F that has already been published on the students' transcript.
- If the student is taking a credit recovery course to resolve an "I" (incomplete), the student may earn a "P" that will replace the "I".

Reporting and Supporting Student Progress

Notification

Parents and students will be informed, in writing and on a regular basis (minimally at progress report and report card time), of the progress students make toward achieving the content standards. To that end, principals are responsible for ensuring parents are notified by the end of September of the name and contact information for the school staff member they should call about concerns impacting their child's academic, social, or behavioral progress.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are to be issued to all students at the midpoint of each term. Teachers should provide grades and comments on the progress report to indicate any change in progress toward achieving the content standard or to encourage students to continue their satisfactory progress. Teacher comments are required for students who receive a C or below. The comments must specifically state why the student is struggling or failing and what he/she needs to do to pass or improve his/her progress in the class.

In addition to progress reports, teachers must notify the parents in writing when their child is in danger of failing at any time during the term period and, if appropriate, refer the student to the Student Support Team (SST). All students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement after progress reports are issued, even if they are failing when they receive their progress report. Teachers must work with designated staff, the student's parent(s), and the student to identify appropriate interventions

Report Cards

Report cards for secondary schools will be distributed at the end of each term and will include the student's final term grade for each class. Report cards shall be distributed no later than twelve (12) school days after the end of the term.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled meetings between the parent of the student and the teacher of the class, course, or subject in which the student is enrolled. It is best practice to include the student at these conferences. These meetings or conferences are designed for the parent and student to be informed of the student's progress and for the parent and teacher to discuss strategies, supports, and plans for student success. Topics to be discussed at a conference can include academics, attendance, and behavior. Parent-teacher conferences must be held within two weeks of report card distribution for students who receive an F (I) for the term. If a student has an F (I) in multiple classes, teachers can hold

a joint conference with the parent.

Supports for Students with Failing Grades

Instructional support plans must be developed for all students with failing grades or in danger of failing. These plans should

identify what each student needs to do to improve his/her grade and how they will be assessed.

Students with an IEP or those on a 504plan can also have a support plan. Instructional support plans will range in duration and intensity and should be aligned with current school practices, intervention planning, and the SST process. While all plans are to be documented and approved by teachers, students should be given the opportunity to draft their own plans. Teachers must also maintain written documentation of all efforts taken to communicate the plan with the student and parent. Copies of plans should be provided to the student's parent(s) and retained in the student's file. Each adult student, or the parent of a student who is a minor, shall be informed in writing no later than 12 school days after the close of the third term of the student's promotion or graduation status. Any student who has not met the standards in a course or grade shall be notified no later than the last day of school to ensure timely enrollment in summer school. Guidance on promotion and graduation is forthcoming.

Attendance and Grading

Poor course attendance can certainly result in a student not adequately progressing; as such, teachers are expected to monitor student engagement regularly. However, because DCPS has a waiver in place for course-level attendance, automatic course failure will not be associated with attendance for SY 20-21.