Purpose

To identify the Board’s position regarding the evaluation of student academic progress

Definitions

**Benchmark:** Assessment tools used to determine what students know and are able to do as a result of instruction delivered during a prescribed amount of time.

**Common Core State Curriculum (CCSC):** A framework of standards that identifies the essential skills and knowledge which a student would need in order to master grade-specific standards and be college and career ready.

**Core Learning Goals (CLG):** A framework of standards that define what students in grades 9-12 should know and be able to do in each course, preparing them for high school assessments in Algebra I/Data Analysis, Government, Biology, and English 2. CLGs were drafted for other content areas which are not assessed, including Geometry, Physics, Earth/Space Science, Chemistry, and Environmental Science.

**Curricular Expectations:** A written plan outlining what students will be taught by detailing directions or suggestions for teaching the content.

**English Language Learner:** A student whose first language is other than English and who is in a special program for learning English.

**Extra Credit:** Points accumulated by supplemental work or assignments. Extra credit work or assignments are not to be used to improve grades or make-up for missing assignments for the purpose of improving GPA or class rank.

**Essential Learner Outcome (ELO):** A framework of standards that defines what students in grades 9-12 should know and be able to do in Visual Art, Music, Theatre, and Dance.

**Formative Assessment:** Formative assessments are not a type of an assessment but the way in which the assessment results are used. Formative assessments are administered for the purpose of measuring progress toward a goal. Formative assessments should occur often enough so that teachers can discover when instruction has not been effective in time to correct it. This continual monitoring of progress prevents students from going too long before a weakness or conceptual misunderstanding is detected and addressed. A few examples of formative assessments are benchmarks, quizzes, and exit slips.

**Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA):** Cumulative GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points a student has earned by the total number of credits attempted (quality points for half-credit courses are worth 0.5 of the letter grade weight). Cumulative GPA is calculated and posted to the student transcript at the conclusion of each semester.

**Quality Points:** The designated numerical value of letter grades as noted above with regard to weighted and non-weighted scales. *Quality Points* earned in half-credit courses are worth .5 of the letter grade weight.

**Homework:** An assignment completed outside the classroom which is designed to promote attainment of positive work habits and study skills, practice material and skills previously taught, prepare for future lessons, study for future assessments, and extend students’ understanding of concepts.
**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** A plan developed by a multidisciplinary team for students with certain special needs as a legal requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Interim Report:** A report that a teacher can print from the online grading program that shows the student’s progress at the middle of each marking period or at any time a student is not demonstrating satisfactory progress.

**Marking Period GPA:** Marking Period GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points a student has earned during the marking period by the total number of courses attempted by the student during the given marking period. For marking period GPA calculations, quality points are worth the full credit of the letter grade weight, regardless of whether or not the class is a full or half-credit course. Marking Period GPA is not posted to the student transcript. However, Marking Period GPA is used at the school level for purposes not limited to but including eligibility for athletics and extra-curricular activities.

**Mastery:** A way of organizing instruction that tries to ensure that students have mastered each increment of a subject before going on to the next.

**Summative Assessment:** Summative assessment is administered for the purpose of obtaining a final, comprehensive evaluation of student knowledge and skills, often for accountability purposes, rather than for short-term instructional decision making. A few examples of summative assessments are course final exams, MSA, HSA, and SAT.

**Maryland State Curriculum (SC):** Standards identifying what students in pre-K – grade 8 should know and be able to do at each grade level in these content areas: Mathematics, Science, Reading/English Language Arts, Social Studies, World Language, Fine Arts, Health & Physical Education, English Language Proficiency, and Technology Education.

**Section 504 Plan:** A legal document that provides accommodations to regular education students with special needs in major life activities. The 504 Plan falls under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and is a regulation of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. Some examples of major life activities addressed are: caring for oneself, walking, seeing, hearing, and learning.

**State Curriculum Extended Content Standards:** Mastery objectives aligned with grade level Maryland State Curriculum Content Standards and Core Learning Goals. These objectives reduce the complexity of the standard State Curriculum and modify and/or adapt it to ensure student learning, while at the same time utilizing materials that are age and grade appropriate. These standards are designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities and are used as part of the ALT-MSA to ensure access to the general curriculum.

**Academic Grade:** A numerical value assigned to a letter grade as follows: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and F = 0.

**Honors/Early College Grade:** A numerical value assigned to a letter grade awarded in Honors or ACPS college courses as follows: A = 4.5, B = 3.5, C = 2.5, D = 1, and F = 0.

**Advanced Placement Grade:** A numerical value assigned to a letter grade awarded in Advanced Placement (AP) course work will be as follows: A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 1, and F = 0 for students who sit for the AP exam. For students who do not elect to sit for the AP exam a numerical value assigned to a letter grade awarded in Advanced Placement (AP) course work will be as follows: A = 4.5, B = 3.5, C = 2.5, D = 1, F = 0.

**Policy Statement**

It is the philosophy of the Allegany County Public Schools that grading promotes learning, achievement, and academic growth in a climate of encouragement and high expectations. ACPS strives for all students to be prepared for college and/or careers. Learning experiences, assignments, and assessments provide
challenge, growth, and feedback for improvement in order to foster opportunities for students to
demonstrate mastery of curricular expectations. Grades reflect the extent to which the student has
achieved the learning outcomes specified by ACPS and the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum.
The grading and reporting system will support the learning process and student success.

In consideration of this philosophy, the Board of Education is committed to maintaining rigorous
performance and achievement standards for all students and to providing a fair process for evaluating
and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and parents. Grades are an essential
way to communicate student progress and reflect what students know and are able to do in relation to
curricular expectations.

Therefore, grading and reporting practices must:

1. Provide meaningful feedback on student achievement to students, parents, teachers,
administrators, and the school system. This feedback should provide relevant information for
enhancing performance and achievement.
2. Be aligned with the State Curriculum (SC), Core Learning Goals (CLG), Essential Learner
Outcomes (ELO) and the Common Core State Curriculum (CCSC).
3. Achieve consistency within content areas and among schools.
4. Be an accurate reflection of student achievement compared to curricular expectations outlined in
the SC, CLG, ELO and the CCSC.
5. Be a fair and accurate representation of a student’s performance throughout the course on a
variety of measures as written in the syllabus for secondary schools and in the Elementary
School Progress Report Teachers Guidelines.
6. Provide clear communication at the beginning of each school year or course to parents and
students as to the grading criteria.
7. Reflect a commitment to school attendance as an essential component of a quality learning
experience.
8. Include formative and summative assessments.
9. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate progress toward mastery of grade level
curricular expectations through a variety of methods.
10. Make current information available to students and parents about the student’s academic
performance.
11. Hold high expectations of all students across all courses and programs.
12. Include professional development for teachers to achieve consistent and comprehensive grading
practices in accordance with this policy and accompanying regulations.

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