

Adopted:

Revised: 2012, 2015

618 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish effective grading and reporting practices that reflect a student's academic achievement of the course standards for grades K-12.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Hutchinson Public Schools' grading and reporting system shall provide students, parents, teachers, and the community with a framework for accurately reporting student achievement. The District will establish a clear and accurate system of grading and reporting academic achievement.

This system can serve as an open communication link between the school, home, and the community. It will provide all parties with awareness of student work and an understanding of how the grade reflects the student's achievement. Students and parents will be able to use this data for future course selection and post-secondary plans.

When the student graduates from Hutchinson Public Schools, the summary of these grades, the academic transcript, will provide a permanent and accurate accounting of the student's achievement of academic course standards, attendance, and academic dispositions or habits also known as character. Employers and post-secondary institutions will be able to count on the accuracy of this historic document.

Hutchinson Public Schools is committed to supporting a system of guiding principles that will be used to arrive at a clear and accurate grading and reporting policy and procedures. In order to realize these goals, the grading and reporting system must:

- Be based on the most appropriate academic standards available to the instructor, department or school. These standards may be local, state, or national.
- Reflect academic achievement, attendance, and academic disposition or habits also known as character.
- Provide meaningful feedback during the learning process.
- Be honest, fair, transparent, credible, useful, and user-friendly.

- Be criterion-referenced.
- Align with the Hutchinson Public Schools curriculum.
- Reflect consistency within and among courses, grade levels, departments, and/or schools.
- Communicate information to parties in a clear and timely manner.
- Reflect high expectations of all students across all courses and programs.
- Be developmentally appropriate for all students.

III. DEFINITIONS

Accommodation: a change that does not alter the rigor of the standard. Examples include: large print materials, extended testing time, and small group administration.

Assessments: multiple tools used to gather information about the student's performance on the standards taught.

Benchmark or Essential Learning Outcome (ELO): a clear, specific description of knowledge or skills the student should acquire by a particular point in the student's schooling.

Career and College Ready: a high school graduate has the knowledge, skills, and competencies to successfully pursue a career pathway, including postsecondary credit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or industry-recognized credential and employment. Students who are career and college ready are able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit-bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation.

Common Assessment: An assessment typically created collaboratively by a team of teachers responsible for the same class/course standards.

Computer-adaptive Assessments: An assessment that continually modifies the difficulty level based on the students responses.

Cultural Competence: the ability and will to interact effectively with people of different cultures, native languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Grade Point Average (GPA): the student's numerical average for all courses taken. It is computed by adding the total number of the letter grades' point values and dividing it by the number of credits completed.

Curriculum: a written plan including standards, benchmarks, essential learning outcomes, an assessment plan, instructional resources and strategies, and time allocations for emphasis and pacing for the content to be taught.

Formative Assessments (Academic Practice): diagnostic testing including a range of formal and informal assessment procedures employed by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.

Grade (to): the act of evaluating the student's academic work based on a set criteria and the assignment of a grade to it.

Grade (the): a number, letter, or symbol indicating the level of achievement relative to the grading scale.

Grade (product/academic): the demonstration of course standards that students are expected to know or be able to do after they have spent time and effort learning the content.

Grade (process/character): the dispositions, skills, habits, or character the student demonstrates in the process of learning the course content. These are recorded and reported separately from the academic (product) grade.

Grade Weighting: the assignment of a greater value to the letter grade's numeric point value to reward a student for completing an Advanced Placement (AP) course or University of Minnesota College in the Schools (CIS) course.

Grading Scale: a description for what each letter grade represents relative to the percentage of the student's mastery of subject goals.

Homework: Academic practice that is assigned to master course content. Students may complete this practice during non-class hours, most often at home. Homework may be formative or summative in nature depending on the intent. Homework is not intended for learning new material.

Instruction: a teacher-led process, which transforms well-planned curriculum into student learning. Instruction is standards-focused teaching for the purpose of providing meaningful learning experiences that enable all students to master academic content and achieve personal goals.

Modification: a curricular change that alters the standard or the rigor of the standard.

PSEO: Post Secondary Education Opportunity.

Standard: a statement of what the student will be able to know and/or do.

Summative Assessments (Academic Achievement): assessment conducted when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to master the material. It is designed to provide evidence in making judgments about a student's achievement after instruction. Examples include: final drafts/attempts, tests, exams, assignments, projects, and performances in determining a final grade for a unit or a course.

Syllabus: a document outlining the standards, assessment criteria, and procedures for the class/course.

IV. GRADING PARAMETERS FOR GRADES K-12

- A. **Purpose of grading.** The primary purpose of grading is to communicate the academic achievement status to the students, their families, and post-secondary institutions. Additional purposes for grading may include providing information to students for self-evaluation, teachers for planning and modification of instruction, and to schools for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs.
- B. **Grading for teachers of the same course.** Teachers of the same course will emphasize the same essential learning outcomes/standards, will have the same major summative assessments (i.e. chapter tests and finals), and will have common formal formative assessments. These common assessments, either formative or summative, are critical to improving teacher practice and student learning. Classroom activities to achieve these essential learner outcomes/standards may differ from teacher to teacher.
- C. **Course grades will reflect the level of the student's academic achievement.** While nonacademic factors may be highly valued and often contribute to the student's academic achievement, they should be reported separately from an achievement grade. Relying upon these factors, if merged with achievement evidence, can mask important learning problems and contribute to miscommunication about the student's knowledge. The following are examples on non-academic factors.
1. Attendance reporting facts of tardies or absences.
 2. Behavior - attitude, certain class participation, and effort.
 3. Homework and formative assessment based solely on completion.
 4. Other evidence of student dispositions, characteristics, and habits.
- D. **Calculation of term grades.** The term grade for a course can be calculated solely based on summative assessments or it may be calculated based on a combination of

summative and formative assessments. The definitions provided in part III of this policy are the best guide for determining if an assessment is Academic Practice (formative) or Academic Achievement (summative).

1. The combination of the academic practice and academic achievement grades will be based on embedded standards, course rigor, and/or grade level. The following calculation provides a framework for grades K-12.

Academic practice grades: a maximum of 20% of the term grade.

Academic achievement grades: a minimum of 80% of the term grade.

2. Individual departments and grade levels in collaboration with the building administration will determine what assessments are included in the Academic Practice and Academic Achievement categories.
- E. **Power of Zero.** As the purpose of grading is to reflect the student's academic achievement, there needs to be a sufficient number of assessments to determine the level of achievement. To accomplish this, effort shall be taken to hold students accountable for completing the work. A zero will be used in the last resort if the student chooses to make no effort to complete an assessment.
- F. **Course Modifications (High School only).** Through the process of developing a course plan for a student, be it through an IEP, 504 plan, or through an intervention for any student, a team may determine that a student needs modified course content. In this event, a notation indicating modified content will appear on the student's academic transcript.
- G. **Final Testing 9-12 Criteria.** Clear criteria will be used to calculate a trimester and/or year-long final course grade. It will be based on a combination of the formative and summative grades and final summative assessments. The teacher will communicate this in writing to parents and students at the start of the trimester/year. Final assessments in courses of the same title will be identical in format and content, although different questions may be used for appropriate variation and to promote authenticity.
1. **Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Option:** The satisfactory/unsatisfactory option is for unusual personal circumstances and requires building principal approval. If a student is taking the course satisfactory/unsatisfactory, the student must have passing work to receive credit for the course. A subject taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis will not affect a student's class rank or honor roll standing. If the student passes the class, the student will receive a "S" (satisfactory) and full trimester credit on his/her report card for that class. If the student fails the class, the student will receive an "U" (unsatisfactory) on the report card and will not be given credit for the course. A student may not exceed a total of 7.0 satisfactory/unsatisfactory credits in grades 9-12.

V. GRADE POINT SCALE (GRADES 6-12)

To calculate grades, the following scale is used. The letter symbols give a description of the student's academic achievement.

Grading Scale: minimum percent

93 = A	89.5 = A-	86.5 = B+
83 = B	79.5 = B-	76.5 = C+
73 = C	69.5 = C-	66.5 = D+
63 = D	59.5 = D-	Below = F

VI. HUTCHINSON HIGH SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

A. Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated according to the following set of rules.

- All courses for which the student receives a grade from an A to an F are included in the GPA.
- Both a Term GPA and a Cumulative GPA are calculated.
- An official transcript is maintained for grades 9-12.
- Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades are not included in the GPA calculation, but do count for graduation credit.

B. The following grade point scales are used to assign point values to each letter grade in order to compute the GPA. Advanced Placement (AP) and University of Minnesota College In The School (CIS) courses will use weighted scales to differentiate from regular courses. AP and CIS courses shall be weighted +1.0 if the student earns a C or higher.

Letter Grade	Non-Weighted Value	Weighted Value
A	4.00	5.00
A-	3.67	4.67
B+	3.33	4.33
B	3.00	4.00
B-	2.67	3.67
C+	2.33	3.33
C	2.00	3.00
C-	1.67	2.40
D+	1.33	1.80
D	1.00	1.20
D-	0.67	0.67
F	0.00	0.00

- C. Other courses considered for weighting must meet similar standards of academic rigor and have a comparable AP or CIS end-of-course examination.
- D. Weighted courses shall reflect collegiate expectations. Weighted courses shall reflect higher rigor in reading/writing/understanding, as well as significant increases in effort.
- E. A six-member panel (Director of Teaching and Learning, High School Principal, one High School Counselor, two Teachers and the Student Council President) will be convened to evaluate courses that may meet the expectations of weighted grading. The student is a non-voting member of this panel.
- F. PSEO or transferred-in courses will be given the same weights if the curriculum and expectation are equal to or above a similar weighted courses and have been approved by the six member panel.
- G. Honor status will be based on the weighted system.

	2015-2016	2016-2017
<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>	4.1	4.20
<i>Magna Cum Laude</i>	3.9	3.90
<i>Cum Laude</i>	3.5	3.50

- H. Students will have the option of sending in college transcripts on the weighted scale or the non-weighted scale.

VII. COMMUNICATION

A shared understanding between the District staff, students and parents of the grading and reporting system is essential for effective communication. In order for all parties to understand and trust the student achievement data, the District will provide all parties with the following:

- a clear purpose for the grading and reporting system;
- a valid and accurate assessment of the student's achievement;
- timely reporting; and
- a comprehensive and multifaceted communication system (i.e. conferences, phone calls, electronic messages, classroom websites, report cards, and mid-term reports) and a clear explanation of all symbols used.

VIII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development program is necessary to enhance a teacher's ability to deliver high quality instruction and to design and use assessments that are purposeful, assess appropriate learning targets, and to assign grades consistent with this policy. To ensure this goal, the professional development program must be focused on the two themes of assessing accurately and using assessment to benefit students, not merely to grade and sort students. Teachers must understand the relationship between assessments and student motivation and craft assessment experiences to maximize motivation.

Professional development activities must be an integral part of broad school-wide and District-wide educational improvement goals. Effective professional development must be school-based, collaborative, and differentiated in its delivery. District and site professional development plans for effective classroom assessment and grading must include research-based training components of theory, demonstration, guided practice, feedback and coaching. Professional Learning Communities will be essential to this process.

IX. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The School Board is accountable, in its governance capacity, for the instructional program and delegates responsibilities as follows:

- A. The Superintendent, through designees, shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of the Assessment of Student Achievement Policy and for development and implementation of procedures and practices for grading and reporting student achievement.
- B. Principals shall be responsible for assuring implementation of the District's beliefs, procedures and practices of effective grading and reporting.
- C. Teachers shall be responsible for effectively implementing classroom assessments and for applying the principles of effective grading and reporting practices.
- D. Parents are a vital link to successful home/school communication about student learning. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in all available components of the District's grading and reporting system.
- E. Students are responsible for their own learning. All students shall actively participate in understanding the District's grading and reporting system. Students are able to use the Academic Practice (formative) grade to identify strengths and weaknesses with a particular topic and, as a result, seek additional

help. Students are able to know that the Academic Achievement (summative) grade reflects a true level of understanding of a particular topic/unit/course. This information can help the student plan for future course selection and post-secondary options.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. 123B.02, Subd. 2 (General Powers of School Districts)

Minn. Stat. 123B.09, Subd. 8 (School Board Responsibilities)

Cross Reference:

Policy #601: School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals

Policy and Procedures P-6 Pupil Promotion