

Adopted:

Revised: 2012, 2013

618 GRADING AND WEIGHTED GRADES

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. It is the District's responsibility to the community that all school members will work to challenge and support all students in the pursuit of their highest levels of academic and personal achievement. Therefore, the District, in order to stimulate achievement as measured by its extraordinary expectations, will establish a clear and accurate system of grading and reporting academic achievement. As well, such a 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 their student's achievement. Students and parents will be able to use this data for future course selection and post-secondary plans. In order to provide several formats to receive this vital information, the reporting system will be multi-faceted. 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. Employers and post-secondary institutions will be able to count on the accuracy of this historic document. The Hutchinson Public Schools is committed to support 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:

- Reflect academic achievement.
- Contain meaningful feedback.
- 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: a clear, specific description of knowledge or skills the student should acquire by a particular point in the student's schooling.

Common Assessment: An assessment typically created collaboratively by a team of teachers responsible for the same grade level or course.

Cumulative 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 questions, an assessment plan, instructional resources and strategies, and time allocations for emphasis and pacing for the content to be taught.

Formative Assessments (Academic Practice): work conducted when a student is still learning the material. It is an assessment that is designed to provide direction for both students and teachers. For the students, the adjustment may mean reviewing, additional practice, or confirmation that they are ready to move forward. For the teachers, it may mean changing instructional strategies, providing additional practice, or being ready to move forward. (e.g. teacher observation, quizzes, homework, rough drafts, peer editing, or notebook checks.)

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 or letter indicating the level of achievement relative to the grading scale.

Grade Weighting: the assignment of a greater value to the letter grade's numeric point value to reward a student for completing the Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) course(s) and taking the AP and IB assessments in the spring. See VI, number 2 for examples.

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

Syllabus: a document given to student and parents at the start of each course outlining the standards, assessment criteria, and procedures for the course.

Homework: includes learning tasks, assigned to students by teachers that are meant to be carried out. Students may also complete during non-class hours, most often at home. Homework may be formative or summative in nature depending on the intent of it.

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 substantive change that alters the standard or the rigor of the standard.

Reporting: the communicating of a student's achievement to the student and parents and, in turn, this information may be shared with employers and post-secondary institutions.

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

Summative Assessments (Academic Achievement): work conducted when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to be responsible for the material. It is designed to provide information to be used in making judgment about a student's achievement at the end of a sequence of instruction, e.g. final drafts/attempts, tests, exams, assignments, projects, performances.

Term Grade Point Average (GPA): the student's numerical average for a given term. It is computed by adding the total number of the letter grades' point values and dividing it by the number of courses for a given term.

IV. GRADING PARAMETERS FOR GRADES K-12

- A. **Purpose of grading:** The primary purpose of grading is to communicate the academic achievement status of students to the students, their families, employers, and post-secondary institutions. Additional purposes for grading include:
1. Providing information that student can use for self-evaluation.
 2. Providing information that teachers can use to modify planning and instruction.
 3. Evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs.
- B. **Grading for teachers of the same course:** Teachers of the same course will apply the grading parameters in the same manner.
- 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. Behavior (i.e. attendance, attitude, punctuality, certain class participation, effort)
 2. Homework based solely on completion
 3. Other evidence of student characteristics or 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 combinations of the Academic Achievement and Academic Practice grades will be based on embedded standards, course rigor, and/or grade level. The following calculations provide a framework for grades K-12.
 - a. Grade K-8
 - Academic Practice grades will count for a maximum of 20% of the term grade.
 - Academic Achievement grades will count for a minimum of 80%.

- b. **Grades 9-12**
 Academic Practice grades will count for a maximum of 10% of the term grade.
 Academic Achievement grades will count for a minimum of 90%.
 - 2. Individual departments will determine what assessments are included in the Academic Practice and Academic Achievement categories.
- E. **Extra Credit:** The purpose of extra credit is to provide additional academic work in order to enhance the learning of course standards. Extra credit, if used at all, should not exceed 5% of the Academic Practice grade. Every student should have an equal opportunity to earn the credit.
- F. **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.
- 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 term grades and final assessments. The teacher will communicate this in writing to parents and students at the start of the trimester/year.
 - 1. **Significant Change in Student Performance:** In the event that student performance changes significantly over the trimester/year of the course, and the teacher does not believe that the calculated grade fairly represents the student's performance, a teacher may include additional assessments (either formative or summative) in order to have a more accurate description of student achievement and record the grade accordingly.
 - 2. **Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Option (SU):** The SU option is for unusual personal circumstances, non-graded courses, and any other course determined to be SU by the building principal. If a student is taking the course SU, the student must have passing work to receive credit for the course. A subject taken on an SU basis will not affect a student's class rank or honor roll standing. If the student passes the class, the student will receive an S and full trimester credit on the report card. If the student fails the class, the student would receive a U on the report card. A student may not exceed a total of 6.0 SU credits in grades 9-12.
 - 3. **Credit Recovery:** Students have already taken a course during their high school career (for example, a student has taken English 10A but received an F in the class) and didn't receive credit for that course. Students will take a diagnostic test to determine what standards were not mastered. A course tailored to the student's needs will be created. Successful completion of that material will result in completion of the course for a grade of "S" or Satisfactory that holds no GPA weight. Not successfully completing the course will result in a grade of "U" or no

credit that holds no GPA weight. However, if the student would rather complete the whole course again to achieve a letter grade that holds GPA weight, he/she should inform his/her teacher of this desire.

V. HUTCHINSON HS GRADE POINT SCALE

In order to calculate grades, the following scale is used to assign grades. In turn, the letter symbols give a description of the student's academic achievement. Traditional HS 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 HS WEIGHTED GRADE POINT SCALES (GPA)

A. Grade Point Average (GPA) is based on grades earned in each of the following grade level groups:

Hutchison HS

- a. All courses for which the student receives from an A to an F are included in the GPA.
- b. Both a Term GPA and a Cumulative GPA are calculated.
- c. An official transcript is maintained for grades 9-12.
- d. Pass grades are not included in the GPA calculation, but do count for graduation credit.
- e. B-K apply only to high school grades 9-12.

B. The following grade points 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 use different, weighted scales to differentiate between AP and regular courses. All Advanced Placement courses have been determined to meet the standards of rigor established by the District.

C. Other courses considered for weighting must meet similar standards of academic rigor and have a comparable end-of-course examination Advanced Placement (AP) courses have.

Letter Grade	Non-Weighted	Value Weighted
A -----	4.0 -----	5.0
A- -----	3.7 -----	4.6
B+ -----	3.3 -----	4.2
B -----	3.0 -----	3.8

Letter Grade	Non-Weighted	Value Weighted
B-----	2.7 -----	3.4 -----
C+-----	2.3 -----	3.0 -----
C-----	2.0 -----	2.6 -----
C-----	1.7 -----	2.2 -----
D+-----	1.3 -----	1.8 -----
D-----	1.0 -----	1.4 -----
D-----	0.7 -----	1.0 -----
F-----	0.0 -----	0.0 -----

D. The weighted scales will be used beginning in 2012-2013. We will employ retroactive weighting for those students that may be affected – taking a course that is weighted prior to the system going to a weighted scale. Honor status will be based on the weighted system beginning in the 2013-2014 term.

Summa Cum Laude 4.10

Magna Cum Laude 3.90

Cum Laude 3.50

VII. COMMUNICATION

A shared understanding, between the District staff, students and parents, of the District's 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 common grading syllabus for all courses;
- A valid and accurate assessment of the student's achievement;
- Timely reporting;
- A comprehensive and multifaceted reporting system (i.e. conferences, phone calls, curriculum nights, electronic messages, classroom websites, report cards; 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 them. 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.

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 Grading and Reporting Policy and for development and implementation of procedures and practices for grading and reporting student achievement in Hutchinson schools.
- 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. Therefore, parents are strongly encouraged to participate in all available components of the Hutchinson Schools' grading and reporting system.
- E. Students are responsible for their own learning. All students shall actively participate in understanding the Hutchinson Schools' 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. As well, 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