

Purpose

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

Definitions

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

Advanced Placement/Early College/Dual Enrollment Grade: A numerical value assigned to a letter grade awarded in Advanced Placement/Early College/Dual Enrollment course work will be as follows: A=5, B=4, C=3, D=1, and F=0.

Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AAAS): A small group of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be unable to achieve the standards that apply to all students, even with the provision of extensive and intensive specially designed instruction, supports, and accommodations. These students require instruction and standards that are modified to focus on essential grade level skills and allow for intensive direct instruction and repeated practice of skills. Educational attainment is measured through an Alternate Assessment that is based on the MCCRS but aligned to alternate academic achievement standards that reflect reduced complexity, breadth, and depth. Instruction and assessment based on this Alternate Education Framework may not allow the student to earn course credits and acquire the skills necessary to receive a Maryland High School Diploma. The skills measured through the alternate academic achievement standards are components of the grade-level MCCRS and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS); they do not represent a separate set of standards.

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.

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.

Curricular Expectations: The written set of learning expectations that outline the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn and apply by the end of a grade or course

English Language Learner (ELL): An ELL is a student who communicates in a language other than English; or whose family uses a primary language other than English in the home; and whose English language proficiency falls within the range established by the state for an English language development program.

Extra Credit: Extra credit work related to course objectives used to improve grades or make up for missing assignments.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment, also referred to as formative evaluation, formative feedback, or assessment for learning, including diagnostic testing, is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student achievement outcomes. The purpose of formative assessment is to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback that can be used to improve teaching and learning.

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.

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

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A program 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.

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCR): A set of clear, high-quality academic expectations in English/Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics that define the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level.

Maryland State Fine Arts Standards (MSFAS): A PK-12 framework that defines age-appropriate artistic skills and knowledge for Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theater Arts, and Visual Arts.

Maryland State Standards: Standards are defined as rigorous performance expectations for each level of school that define what students should know and be able to do in a core content area such as ELA, math, social studies, and science.

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.

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.

Section 504 Plan: To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that includes accommodations, to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Student Information System: The district wide system for students' records (currently ASPEN).

Summative Assessment: The purpose of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include a midterm exam, a final project, a written paper, or a performance or recital. 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.

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 State Standards for the content areas. 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 Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) and other content area Standards and Frameworks.
3. Achieve consistency within content areas and among schools.
4. Be an accurate reflection of student achievement compared to curricular expectations outlined in the MCCRS and Content Area Standards.
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. Include formative and summative assessments.
8. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate progress toward mastery of grade level curricular expectations through a variety of methods.
9. Make current information available to students and parents about the student's academic performance through the district's Student Information System.
10. Hold high expectations of all students across all courses and programs. Ensure that an equity lens is used for lesson planning and instruction, instructional materials, and assessment design. Individual student circumstances should be taken into consideration.
11. Include professional development for teachers to achieve consistent and comprehensive grading practices in accordance with this policy and accompanying regulations.

Legal Reference			
Policy Cross Reference JED	Adopted	Reviewed	Revised July 12, 2007, 1 st Reading Aug. 14, 2007, 2 nd Reading Sept. 11, 2007, 3 rd Reading Feb. 12, 2013, 1 st Reading Mar. 12, 2013, 2 nd Reading April 11, 2023, 1 st Reading May 9, 2023, 2 nd Reading Aug. 15, 2023, 1 st Reading Sept. 12, 2023, 2 nd Reading Oct. 10, 2023, 1 st Reading Nov. 14, 2023, 2 nd Reading May 27, 2025, 1 st Reading June 10, 2025, 2 nd Reading