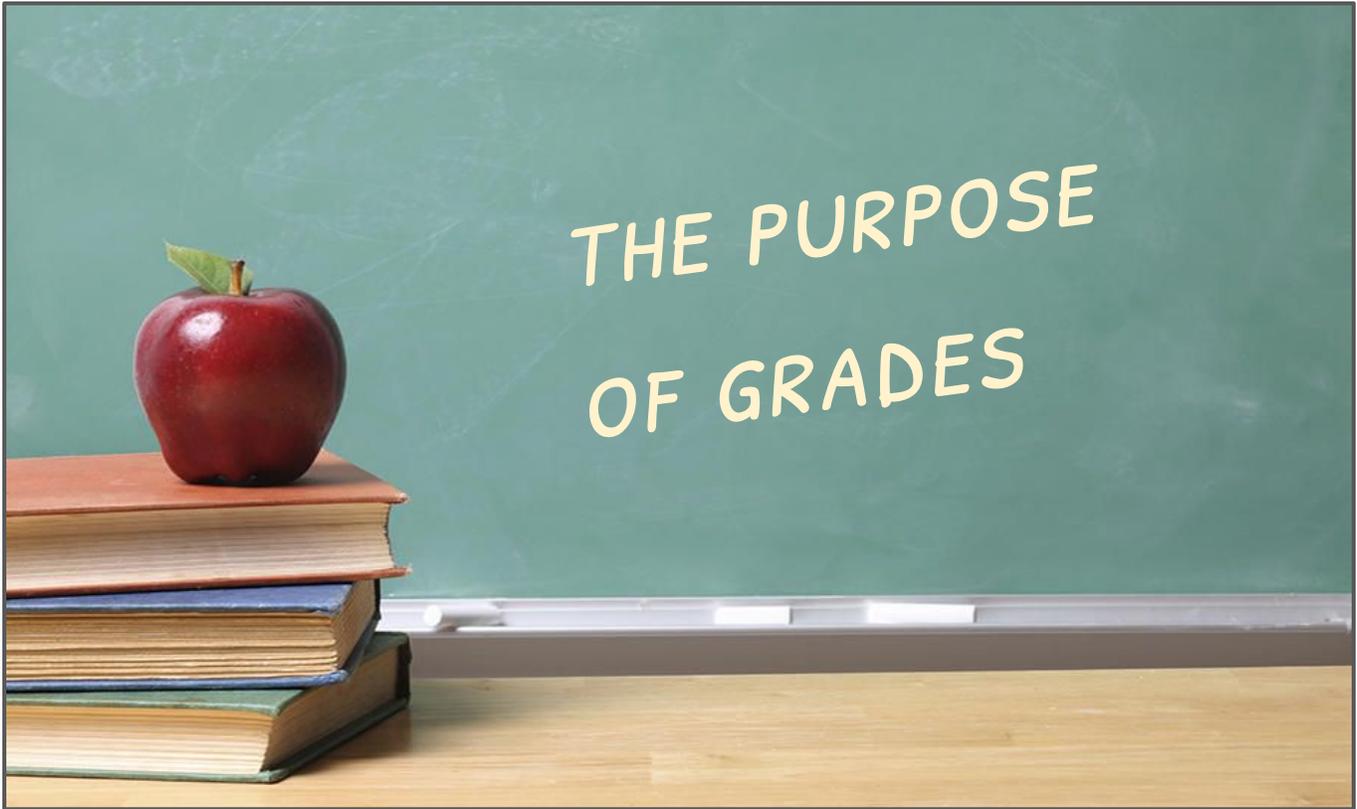


SECONDARY GRADING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Parent & Student Information



THE PURPOSE OF GRADING

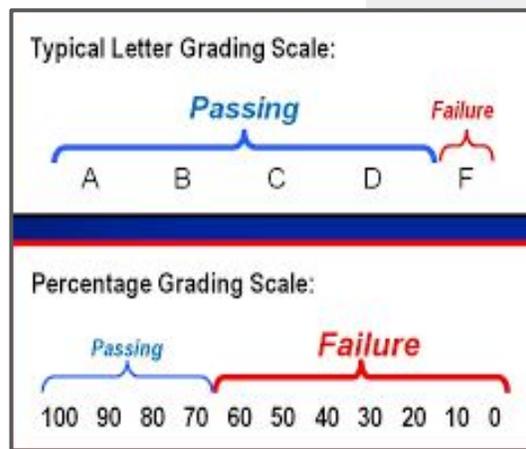
Grading is intended to measure student understanding and progress toward specific standards and goals. Grading should also be used to inform and drive teacher instruction.

Through discussion, collaboration, and research, the Smyrna School District adopted a new grading scale in order to give students as many authentic opportunities to succeed. The existing 100-point scale has more opportunities for failure than it does for success, leading it to be an inequitable measure of student achievement.

USING LETTER GRADES

Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, teachers will not put numbers into the gradebook. Instead, students and families will notice letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F) being used for all assignments and assessments. These grades more accurately measure student understanding and progress toward specific standards and goals. This letter grading system closely aligns with the 4.0 scale that is already used at the secondary level to determine GPA. Additionally, it offers students more opportunities for success rather than failure. Further, it allows students to remain intrinsically motivated because

recovery is never out of their reach.



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CATEGORIES AND WEIGHTS

While the grade book will, undoubtedly, be filled with letters under each column, it is important to note that not all letters will carry the same "weight." The chart below demonstrates that the following categories and weights will be used in grading. Products of Learning are major assessments and projects that are summative measures of student learning, and will, therefore, be counted the most with a weight of 5. That means that the grade on a Product of Learning will be counted five times. Likewise, Practices of Learning are formative assignments that students practice the skill and develop understanding and shall carry a weight of 3; meaning that this grade will be counted three times. Small assignments and activities will be placed in the Preparation for Learning category and only count one time.

Category	Weight	Examples
Preparation for Learning	1X	Warm-ups, Check-ins, Exit Tickets, Minor Assignments
Practices of Learning	3X	Skill Practice, Comprehension Questions, Short Writing Assignments, Mini-labs, Quizzes
Products of Learning	5X	Tests, Projects, Essays, Major Labs, Research Projects, Benchmarks

LATE WORK / MAKE-UP WORK

Through this shift in grading practice, the district is emphasizing student knowledge; measuring each student's progress towards specific standards and goals. The goal is eliminate the "game of school" in which students chase points and teachers feel compelled to dole out consequences (zeros) to those students that do not turn in their work on time. Work ethic will still be addressed and communicated to parents (see side panel), but it will not be done through grades. Students will be allowed to make up most work for full credit. Using the categories described above the following guidelines are as follows: Practices of Learning can be turned in any time prior to corresponding Products of Learning activity in which the skills will be assessed. Products of Learning can be made up at anytime within the marking period. For assessments given at end of marking period, an extension can be given, not to exceed the mid-marking period.

CALCULATING GRADES

As the grades are calculated, the students will see a "running grade" in eSchool based on the 4.0 scale previously described. At the end of the marking period student grades will be determined using the chart to the right.

CUT SCORES	
A	3.3 - 4.0
B	2.5 - 3.2
C	1.6 - 2.4
D	0.8 - 1.5
F	0.0 - 0.7

WORK ETHIC COMMENTS

These changes in grading practices in our district reflect a shift in focus; prioritizing the learning and the accurate reflection of what students can do. In doing so, many of the "effort" grades have been taken out of the gradebook. Our teachers, however, still feel it is important to communicate the worth ethic and soft skills required for our students to be successful. As a result, students will receive a comment about the effort and work ethic on every report card and interim progress report. This is designed to provide students and families with information about the student's performance and class while still accurately reporting on their understanding and abilities.

EXCELLENT WORK HABITS

Student regularly attends class; arriving prepared and ready to work. While in class, student is actively engaged while maintaining attention to tasks and participating in most class activities. Student has completed most if not all of the assignments and/or assessments for the marking period.

GOOD WORK HABITS

Student attends class; usually prepared to work. While in class, student is engaged and participating in most class activities. Student has completed many if not all of the assignments and/or assessments for the marking period.

INCONSISTENT WORK HABITS

Student attends class; mostly prepared to work. While in class, student is often engaged; though attention and participation may be inconsistent at times. Students may also be missing a few assignments and/or assessments for the marking period.

POOR WORK HABITS

Student may be often absent from class; usually unprepared and not ready to work. While in class, student is not engaged with limited attention to task and minimal participation. Student may also be missing many assignments and/or assessments for the marking period.

The major research supporting the change in grading practices can be attributed to Thomas R. Guskey, Douglas Reeves, and Joe Feldman.

Anyone wanting additional information should reach out to the Director of Curriculum, Kelly Holt kelly.holt@smyrna.k12.de.us