

This DCPS Secondary Grading and Reporting Policy rescinds and supersedes all previous policy, memoranda, and/or guidance promulgated by DCPS on this subject matter.

Chancellor Approval:

Effective: August 13, 2018



DCPS Secondary Grading and Reporting Policy

I. Purpose

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is committed to ensuring every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to positively influence society and thrive in life by providing rigorous and inclusive learning environments for all students. DCPS is focused on accelerating growth for students of all identities and abilities by ensuring equitable access to opportunity and removing barriers to learning. This policy conveys DCPS requirements related to grading and reporting on student academic progress.

II. Authority¹

| Source | Citation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (Office of the State Superintendent of Education) | 5-A DCMR § 2103 - Absentee Intervention and School- Based Student Support Teams 5-A DCMR §2199 -Definitions 5-A DCMR § 2813.1 - Grades and |
| District of Columbia Municipal Regulations | 5-E DCMR § 2200 <i>et. seq.</i> - Grades, Promotion, and Graduation |

III. Key Terms and Definitions

- A. Advanced Placement:** College-level courses following The College Board guidelines and testing system.²
- B. Dual Enrollment Program:** High school students enroll in approved college courses, taken on a college campus, and earn both high school and college credit.³
- C. Excused Absence:** When school-aged students are absent from school with a recognized valid excuse in alignment with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) and DCPS Attendance Policy.
- D. Grade Point Average (GPA):** An average of a student’s grades accumulated during the term or school year.⁴
- E. High School Transcript:** The official record of the courses, grades, and GPA of any student pursuing a high school diploma.

¹ Nothing in this policy shall supersede federal, state, or local law.

² 5-E DCMR § 2200.7.

³ 5-A DCMR § 2400.1.

⁴ See 5-E DCMR § 2200.8.

- F. **Honors:** Courses which cover more content in greater depth than general courses of same subject.⁵
- G. **International Baccalaureate:** Program of study following requirements of the International Baccalaureate Organization.⁶
- H. **Late Entry:** Student entry into a course after 50 percent of the instructional time has passed.
- I. **Parent:** A natural or adoptive parent, a guardian (but not if the child is a ward of the District), a person acting in the place of a parent (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare), a surrogate parent or, in some cases, a foster parent.⁷
- J. **Unexcused Absence:** When school-aged students are absent from school without a recognized valid excuse in alignment with the DCMR and DCPS Attendance Policy, with or without parental approval.^{8,7}

IV. Required Activities

A. General Grading Regulations

5-E DCMR § 2200 provides detailed grading regulations. Relevant portions pertaining to secondary schools are reproduced below for context and clarity.

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| 2200.4 | The primary responsibility for evaluating the work of the student shall rest with the teacher. |
| 2200.5 | <p>All students shall receive instructions leading to the achievement of DCPS content standards as follows</p> <p>(a) English Language Learners (ELL) shall receive specialized instruction leading to the development of English language skills and the mastery of academic content. A student's mark (grade) in the content area shall not reflect the student's acquisition of English language skills but rather achievement of the content standards.</p> <p>(b) Students with disabilities shall receive instruction consistent with the DCPS standards. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, or student support teams in the case of 504 eligible students, shall determine appropriate accommodations and curricular modifications where necessary. A student's mark (grade) shall not reflect that accommodations have been made.</p> |

⁵ 5-E DCMR § 2200.7.

⁶ Id.

⁷ 5-E DCMR § 404.1.

⁸ See 5-A DCMR § 2102.

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At the secondary level, sixth (6th) grade through twelfth (12th) grade, marks/ grades of A through F shall be assigned by the teacher to indicate the degree of a student's of the content standards in each course. Results of the end of course exam will count for no more than 20 percent of the final grade. Marks (grades) shall be as follows:

| Grades | Numerical Equivalent | Credit | GPA | Grade Point Value | | | Additional Comments |
|--------|----------------------|--------|-----|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | On Grade (Unweighted) | Honors | AP, IB, or Dual Enrollment ⁹ | |
| A | 93% to 100% | Yes | Yes | 4.0 | 4.5 | 5.0 | |
| A- | 90% to 92% | Yes | Yes | 3.7 | 4.2 | 4.7 | |
| B+ | 87%to 89% | Yes | Yes | 3.3 | 3.8 | 4.3 | |
| B | 83% to 86% | Yes | Yes | 3.0 | 3.5 | 4.0 | |
| B- | 80% to 82% | Yes | Yes | 2.7 | 3.2 | 3.7 | |
| C+ | 77% to 79% | Yes | Yes | 2.3 | 2.8 | 3.3 | |
| C | 73% to 76% | Yes | Yes | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 | |
| C- | 70% to 72% | Yes | Yes | 1.7 | 2.2 | 2.7 | |
| D+ | 67% to 69% | Yes | Yes | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 | |
| D | 64% to 66% | Yes | Yes | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 | |
| F | 63% and below | No | Yes | | | | |
| W | Withdrawn | No | No | | | | |
| L | Late entry | No | No | | | | |
| I | Incomplete | No | No | | | | |

Converts to AUD (audit) at end of following advisory⁹ if coursework is not completed.

Converts to F after 10 school days (63%) if coursework is not completed.

⁹ 5-A DCMR § 2403.3.

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| | M | Medical | No | No | | |
| | P | Pass | Yes | No | | |
| | AUD | Audit | No | No | | |
| | S | Satisfactory | No | No | | For use in homeroom or other non-academic time. |
| | U | Unsatisfactory | No | No | | |
| 2200.8 | Marks (grades) in courses failed and retaken for credit in grades kindergarten through twelve (12) shall not replace previously earned marks (grades) for any given course, but are included in the student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA). Marks (grades) earned in extended education programs such as Summer School, STAY School and Evening Credit Recovery courses have the same credit and GPA value as standard year courses. | | | | | |

B. Grade Calculations

Term Marks¹⁰

Term marks are divided into three categories to reflect the diverse nature of student work: 10 % Student Participation, 50% Student Practice & Application, and 40% Assessment.

C. Reporting and Supporting Student Progress

1. Notification

Parents and students will be informed, in writing and on a regular basis, of the progress students make toward achieving the content standards.¹¹ To that end, principals are responsible for ensuring parents are notified by the end of September of the name and contact information for the school staff member they should call about concerns impacting their child's academic, social, or behavioral progress.

2. Progress Reports

Progress reports are to be issued to all students at the midpoint of each term. Teachers should provide grades and comments on the progress report to indicate any change in progress toward achieving the content standard or to encourage students to continue their satisfactory progress. Teacher comments are required for students who receive a C or below. The comments must specifically state why the student is struggling or failing and what he/she needs to do to pass or improve his/her progress in the class.

In addition to progress reports, teachers must notify the parents in writing when their child is in danger of failing at any time during the term period and, if appropriate, refer the student to the Student Support Team (SST). All students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement after progress reports are issued, even if they are failing when they receive their progress report. Teachers

¹⁰ DCPS divides its academic calendar into four "terms," each consisting of a nearly equal number of school days. An "advisory" period, as referenced in the DCMR, is equivalent to a DCPS "term."

¹¹ 5-E DCMR § 2200.9.

must work with designated staff, the student's parent(s), and the student to identify appropriate interventions.¹²

3. Report Cards

Report cards for secondary schools will be distributed at the end of each term and will include the student's final term grade for each class. Report cards shall be distributed no later than twelve (12) school days after the end of the term.¹¹

4. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled meetings between the parent of the student and the teacher of the class, course, or subject in which the student is enrolled. It is best practice to include the student at these conferences. These meetings or conferences are designed for the parent and student to be informed of the student's progress and for the parent and teacher to discuss strategies, supports, and plans for student success. Topics to be discussed at a conference can include academics, attendance, and behavior. Parent-teacher conferences must be held within two weeks of report card distribution for students who receive an F for the term. If a student has an F in multiple classes, teachers can hold a joint conference with the parent.

5. Supports for Students with Failing Grades

Instructional support plans must be developed for all students with failing grades. These plans should identify what each student needs to do to improve his/her grade. Students with an IEP or those on a 504 plan can also have a support plan. Instructional support plans will range in duration and intensity and should be aligned with current school practices, intervention planning, and the SST process.

While all plans are to be documented and approved by teachers, students should be given the opportunity to draft their own plans. Teachers must also maintain written documentation of all efforts taken to communicate the plan with the student and parent. Copies of plans should be provided to the student's parent(s) and retained in the student's file.

Each adult student, or the parent of a student who is a minor, shall be informed in writing no later than 12 school days after the close of the third term of the student's promotion or graduation status. Any student who has not met the standards in a course or grade shall be notified no later than the last day of school to ensure timely enrollment in summer school.¹³

6. Supports for Students with Absences

Teachers will provide students with an opportunity to make up work in the case that a student is absent from class. Teachers must provide written communication to students at the beginning of the course regarding the school-wide makeup work policy. Each school shall specify a reasonable period of time for completion of makeup work, which shall be no less than one full calendar day for each day missed. Teachers should follow standard grading procedures when grading makeup work.

D. Failure Due to Absence

5-E DCMR § 2103 provides explicit regulations on receiving a failing grade due to absences.

¹² 5-E DCMR § 2200.10

¹³ 5-E DCMR §2200.11

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| 2103.4 | D.C. Public School secondary students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any class shall receive an initial written warning that they are at risk of receiving a grade of “FA” (failure due to absences) in that subject upon accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences. |
| 2103.5 | D.C. Public School secondary students with fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences in any class shall receive a final written warning that they are at risk of receiving a grade of “FA” (failure due to absences) in that subject upon accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences. |
| 2103.6 | DCPS secondary students accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences in a course within a full school year shall receive a failing final grade in that course with a resulting loss of course credit. |

E. Appeals

2. Appeals for Failures Due to Absence

5-E DCMR § 2103 provides explicit regulations for the remedies available to students and parents who wish to appeal a failure due to absence.

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| 2103.7 | A written appeal may be filed by a parent or student on behalf of any student receiving a failing grade(s) due to unexcused absences. |
| 2103.8 | An appeal filed pursuant to § 2103.7 shall be submitted to the principal of the school involved or to a designee of the Chancellor within ten (10) school days after receipt of the failing grade(s). |
| 2103.9 | Upon receipt of an appeal, filed pursuant to § 2103.7, the principal or Chancellor’s designee shall appoint an Appeals Panel and shall forward all written appeal requests to the panel chairperson within three (3) school days. |
| 2103.10 | <p>The Appeals Panel referenced in § 2103.9 shall consist of not less than three (3) members to be selected from the following, one of which shall be from category (a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A person designated by the principal or Chancellor’s designee, who shall be the panel chairperson; (b) A guidance counselor; (c) A department chairperson; (d) A teacher, other than the one involved; (e) An attendance staff person, or (g) A representative from DCPS central office administration. |

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| 2103.11 | Substitutions in the Appeals Panel described in § 2103.10 may be made when necessary. |
| 2103.12 | The Appeals Panel shall hold a hearing within ten (10) school days after its appointment by the principal or Chancellor's designee. |
| 2103.13 | The student or his or her parent, guardian, or duly authorized representative shall appear at the hearing. One of these individuals shall be given the opportunity to present the student's case and, upon request, to question the involved teacher and to be duly informed of the panel's recommendations. |
| 2103.14 | Each appeals panelist, including the chair, shall have an equal vote. |
| 2103.15 | In the case of a tie vote, the Appeals Panel shall recommend that the initial grade be upheld. |
| 2103.16 | The Appeals Panel's recommendation shall be forwarded immediately to the principal or Chancellor's designee who shall issue the Panel's decision within ten (10) school days after the hearing. |
| 2103.17 | The student or his or her parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the Appeals Panel by writing to the Chancellor's official grade appeal designee within ten (10) school days after receipt of the decision. |
| 2103.18 | When an appeal is filed pursuant to § 2103.17, the Chancellor's official grade appeal designee shall review all documentation submitted and issue the final administrative decision in the matter. |
| 2103.19 | The following procedural guidelines shall apply to appeals reviewed pursuant to § 2103.18: (a) The burden to show why the grade(s) in question should be changed shall be on the student or his or her parent or guardian; (b) Strict rules of evidence shall not apply; and A written determination shall be issued within five (5) school days of the review and consideration of all submitted evidence. |

3. Other Grade Appeals¹⁴

A parent or student has the right to seek to amend educational records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. An initial grade appeal shall be in writing and shall be directed to the school principal within ten school days of receipt of the grade.

The school principal shall immediately notify, in writing, the affected teacher of the challenge and ask the teacher to provide all tangible, pertinent, detailed, and dated records to substantiate the grade

¹⁴ 5-E DCMR § 2602 provides regulations related to this process.

given.¹⁵ Within ten school days of receipt of the appeal, the principal shall review and consider all submitted records with the challenging party or representative and the teacher, and issue a determination in writing. *Please note that if any grade modifications are made pursuant to this grade challenge process, the principal must notify the affected teacher in writing prior to the grade modification and include the reasons for the modification.*¹⁶

A parent or student may appeal the principal's decision by submitting a written appeal to the Instructional Superintendent within five school days of receipt of the principal's decision.

When an appeal is submitted to the Instructional Superintendent, the Instructional Superintendent shall have ten school days within receipt of the appeal to review and consider all submitted evidence and issue a final determination in writing. The following procedural guidelines shall apply:

- The burden to show why the grade(s) in question should be changed shall be on the student or his or her parent; and
- Strict rules of evidence shall not apply.

V. Special Considerations

A. Students Who Transfer After a Course Has Begun or Leave Before It Is Complete

It is important to actively collect and analyze all data for students who transfer to ensure that student progress is not disproportionately impacted by high mobility. It is the responsibility of the school to request a student's prior records upon enrollment.¹⁷

If a student enters a course in which they were enrolled at another school, the grades should be transferred over, and the student should be permitted to continue progressing in the course.

If a student enters a course in which they were not previously enrolled within the first half of a term, they should be enrolled in the course, be provided the opportunity to make up the missed work for that term by the end of that term, and be permitted to earn a grade upon completion of the work.

If students enter a course in the second half of the term, they are considered a Late Entry. Students may enroll in the course and should be provided the opportunity to make up the missed work from that term until the end of the following term. If the coursework is completed by the end of the following term, the student should receive a grade to override the Late Entry code.

If students are not enrolled for a full term of a course but have participated in at least 25% of the scheduled class, they should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in the material that was covered and earn credit through a competency-based assessment.

VI. Requirements for Policy Implementation

All DCPS employees are required to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. In order to support its implementation, principals are expected to make all staff aware of required activities and timelines on an annual basis.

¹⁵ Collective Bargaining Agreement Between The Washington Teachers Union Local #6 of the American Federation of Teachers and The District of Columbia Public Schools; October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2019; Art. 19.1.1.

¹⁶ Collective Bargaining Agreement Between The Washington Teachers Union Local #6 of the American Federation of Teachers and The District of Columbia Public Schools; October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2019; Art. 19.1.2.

¹⁷ See 5-E DCMR § 2603.3.

Implementation of this policy will be reinforced through a central oversight process which includes regular data reviews, record sampling, reviews of underlying documentation, and, as needed, site visits.

This framework will ensure that together we build a system of continuous improvement and prevent noncompliance. For key guidance and support with questions, training, or implementation, please visit dcps.dc.gov.

DCPS is committed to serving every student with equity, excellence, transparency, and accountability. For any concerns about or violations of this directive, contact the Chief Integrity Officer by completing the [Online Referral Form](#) or sending an email to dcps.cio@dc.gov.