


This 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 6, 2021

DCPS Secondary Grading and Reporting Policy

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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.

DCPS believes that grades are in the service of ongoing learning, provide timely feedback, and plan for personalized instruction, while making a record of growth and development over a student’s school career. As such, grades are a measure of a state of skill and knowledge of content that is taught, learned, and demonstrated based on the DCPS curriculum and are transparent and consistent among all schools, within set parameters. Grades are based on standards-based evidence of student learning demonstrated in foundational course engagement, assignments, and assessments and are accessible and available for revision and improvement throughout the term. Grades are not a mechanism used to sort students, perpetuate opportunity gaps, or manage students’ behavior. Grades are not based on institutional compliance or compatibility nor a tool for teaching accountability or consequence lessons to students.

This policy rescinds and supersedes all previous policy, memoranda, and guidance promulgated by DCPS on this subject matter.

II. AUTHORITY AND APPLICABLE LAW¹

Source	Citation
District of Columbia Law	DC Code § 38-781.01 <i>et seq.</i> – Student Promotion
District of Columbia Municipal Regulations	DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5-A DCMR § 2102 – Absences - 5-A DCMR § 2103 – Absentee Intervention and School-Based Student Support Teams - 5-A DCMR § 2199 – Definitions - 5-A DCMR § 2203 – Academic Requirements - 5-A DCMR § 2400 – Dual Enrollment Program - 5-A DCMR § 2403 – Receipt of High School Credit and Grades - 5-A DCMR § 2813 – Grades and Promotions DC Public Schools (DCPS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5-B DCMR § 2103 – Truancy

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5-B DCMR § 2200 – Reporting - 5-B DCMR § 2204 – Graduation Status of Students <p>Original Title 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5-E DCMR § 2201 – Promotion - 5-E DCMR § 2602 – Challenge to Contents of Official Records - 5-E DCMR § 2603 – Protection of the Right to Privacy and Student Records
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III. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Advanced Placement means college-level courses following The College Board guidelines and testing system.²

Dual Enrollment Program means high school students enroll in approved college courses, taken on a college campus, and earn both high school and college credit.³

Excused Absence means when a school-aged student is absent from school with a recognized valid excuse in alignment with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) and *DCPS Attendance and Truancy Policy*.⁴

Grade Point Average (GPA) means an average of a student's grades accumulated during the term or school year.

High School Transcript means the official record of the courses, grades, and GPA of any student pursuing a high school diploma.

Honors means courses which cover more content in greater depth than general courses of the same subject.⁵

International Baccalaureate means the program of study following requirements of the International Baccalaureate Organization.⁶

Late Entry means when a student enters into a course after 50% of the instructional time has passed.

Parent means a natural parent, adoptive parent, step-parent, other primary caregiver, or any person who has legal custody of a student by court order.⁷

² 5-B DCMR § 2200.7.

³ 5-A DCMR § 2400.1.

⁴ Available at <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/dcps-policies>.

⁵ 5-B DCMR § 2200.7.

⁶ 5-B DCMR § 2200.7.

⁷ See DC Code § 38-781.01(4).

Unexcused Absence means when a compulsory aged school-aged student is absent from school without a recognized valid excuse in alignment with the DCMR and *DCPS Attendance and Truancy Policy*,⁸ with or without parental approval.⁹

IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. Grading

Teachers shall have primary responsibility for evaluating the work of the student.¹⁰

All students shall receive instruction leading to the achievement of DCPS content standards, including English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities.¹¹ ELs shall receive dedicated instruction leading to the development of English language skills and the mastery of academic content. A student's grade in the content area shall not reflect the student's acquisition of English language skills but rather achievement of the content standards.¹² Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams or Section 504 teams shall determine appropriate accommodations and curricular modifications where necessary. A student's grade shall not reflect that accommodations have been made.¹³

1. Grade Entry

Teachers must record a minimum of two (2) grades for every five (5) school days in which the course meets.¹⁴ This requirement is intended as a floor, not a ceiling, and teachers are encouraged to regularly return graded work to provide ongoing, timely feedback to students and parents. Teachers are also encouraged to record a mix of Student Engagement, Student Practice & Application, and Assessment grades to provide varied feedback to students and parents throughout the term.

In the gradebook, assignments may be given possible point values of 10, 20, 25, 50, or 100 points depending on their significance (e.g., a homework assignment may be worth only 10 points, while a test may be worth 100 points). Gradebooks will be monitored weekly for the timely recording of assignment grades. Teachers are prohibited from entering a term grade if they have not submitted at least nine (9) assignments for the term.

Teachers must assign a minimum grade of "F" (calculated at 63%) to assignments in which a student began an assignment and submitted original work. If a student did no work on an assignment or did not turn it in, the assignment should be graded as "WS" (calculated at 50%). To receive an "F" rather than a "WS," the submitted assignment must include evidence of student input, response, effort, or attempt at the task, however minimal it may be. All assignments graded as an "F" should be viewed as incomplete, so that the student can revise and resubmit the assignment.

⁸ Available at <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/dcps-policies>.

⁹ See 5-A DCMR § 2102.

¹⁰ 5-B DCMR § 2200.4.

¹¹ 5-B DCMR § 2200.5.

¹² 5-B DCMR § 2200.5(a).

¹³ 5-B DCMR § 2200.5(b).

¹⁴ This requirement is intended as a continuation of current grading and recording practices and is meant to adapt expectations set for A/B course schedules to accommodate the semesterized schedule.

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Students must have the opportunity to revise substandard work, and teachers should provide feedback to students to support their improvement as they revise assignments. All Required Curricular Tasks from the Canvas Course Companions are subject to revision work, and teachers should follow standard grading procedures and timelines when recording revised grades in the gradebook. Grades for revised work may constitute a separate grade or be added to the original grade. In either case, it should be included in a way that allows students and families to see the impact of the revised work on the original grade, and schools must have a single policy for all courses that is shared with students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

2. Grading Scales

At the secondary level (i.e., sixth (6th) grade through twelfth (12th) grade), grades of A through F shall be assigned by the teacher to indicate the degree of achievement by a student of the content standards in each course.¹⁵ Final grades are the average of all term grades, with no additional weighting for midterm or final exams.¹⁶

Grades will be as follows:¹⁷

Grades	Numerical Equivalent	Credit	GPA	Grade Point Value			Additional Comments
				On Grade (Unweighted)	Honors	AP or IB	
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	1.3	1.8	2.3	
D	64% to 66%	Yes	Yes	1.0	1.5	2.0	
F	63% ¹⁸	No	Yes				
W	Withdrawn	No	No				
L	Late entry	No	No				Converts to AUD (audit) at end of following advisory ¹⁹ if coursework is not completed.

¹⁵ 5-B DCMR §2200.7.

¹⁶ See 5-B DCMR § 2200.7.

¹⁷ 5-B DCMR § 2200.7.

¹⁸ DCPS calculates a grade of "F" as a 63%.

¹⁹ 5-A DCMR § 2403.3.

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WS	Waiting for Submission	No	Yes		Note assignments that have not yet been submitted. Calculated at 50%.
I	Incomplete	No	No		Converts to F (63%) after 10 school days if coursework is not completed.
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		

Grades in courses failed and retaken for credit in grades kindergarten through twelve (12) shall not replace previously earned grades for any given course, but are included in the student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA). 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.²⁰

B. Term Grade Calculations

Term grades²¹ are divided into three categories to reflect the diverse nature of student work: 10% Student Engagement, 50% Student Practice & Application, and 40% Assessment. All categories must have multiple assignments recorded in them by the end of the term.

Categories and weights are pre-populated into teachers' gradebooks and defined below:

- Student Engagement (10%):** This category includes demonstration of active engagement in schooling through a variety of means, including students submitting work, revising work or creating weekly work plans to manage their time and tasks and completing their work plans. Work plans may include personalized revision or extension work, as needed. In addition, credit for evidence of listening, speaking, writing, interacting, and/or leading during class discussions or group activities will be included in this category. Engagement contributes to student learning. Absences will not count against the engagement grade.
- Student Practice & Application (50%):** This category includes all student work products that practice and apply discrete and cumulative skills acquired from individual lessons throughout a unit. Assignments allow students to integrate skills successfully and to acquire content through application and practice. Tasks leading to the Required Curricular Tasks in the Canvas Course Companions include assignments in this category. If students do not demonstrate proficiency on

²⁰ 5-B DCMR § 2200.8.

²¹ 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."

these tasks, they receive specific qualitative feedback to revise the tasks, raise the grade, and demonstrate increased proficiency. Work in this area should increase in complexity over the course of a unit, building toward cumulative assessments. These assignments are completed in class or outside of class. These assignments can be supported by teachers, peers, or resources.

- **Assessment (40%):** This category includes all formal evaluations of individual student skills, knowledge, progress, and proficiency. Assessments in the Required Curricular Tasks in the Canvas Course Companions – which are included in this category – range from traditional tests and quizzes to performance-based tasks that demonstrate student skill and knowledge of an entire unit. Assessments are completed independently, within a set amount of time, honoring accommodations, in a formal testing environment. They can be administered by the district or by teachers. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on assessments receive specific qualitative feedback on revision and revise the assessment to raise the grade and demonstrate increased proficiency.

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.²² 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 must work with designated staff, the student's parent(s), and the student to identify appropriate interventions.²³

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)

²² 5-B DCMR § 2200.9.

²³ 5-B DCMR § 2200.9.

school days after the end of the term.²⁴

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.²⁵ Progress reports and report cards will be used to share this information and notify students and parents 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.²⁶

6. Makeup Work

Teachers must provide students with an opportunity to make up work in the case that a student is absent from class, and late work must be accepted and graded at any time until the end of the current term. However, the maximum grade that a student can earn on an assignment that is submitted late is a "B" (i.e., a maximum grade of 86%).²⁷ Otherwise, teachers should follow standard grading procedures when grading makeup work.

²⁴ 5-B DCMR § 2200.10.

²⁵ 5-B DCMR § 2204.1.

²⁶ 5-B DCMR § 2200.11.

²⁷ The 86% ceiling for late work applies to revision work and work submitted late due to unexcused absences, with the rationale that on-time submission should be incentivized. Students with excused absences must be given the opportunity to earn full credit and an equivalent period of time to complete the missed work (i.e., no less than one additional calendar day for each day missed) with all assignments submitted by the last day of the term.

Teachers must provide written communication to students at the beginning of the course regarding the school-wide makeup work policy.

D. Failure Due to Absence

DCPS secondary students with ten (10) unexcused absences in any class shall receive an initial written notice 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 unless an exception applies.²⁸ DCPS secondary students with fifteen (15) unexcused absences in any class shall receive an additional 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.²⁹

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.³⁰

E. Appeals

1. Appeals for Failures Due to Absence

A written appeal may be filed by a parent, primary caregiver, or student on behalf of any student receiving a failing grade(s) due to unexcused absences.³¹ This appeal must be submitted to the principal of the school attended or to a designee of the Chancellor within ten (10) school days after receipt of the failing grade(s).³²

Upon receipt of such an appeal, 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.³³ This Appeals Panel shall consist of not less than three (3) members to be selected from the following, one of which shall be from category (a):

- 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 in the matter being appealed;
- e. An attendance staff person, or
- f. A representative from DCPS central office administration.³⁴

Substitutions of no more than two (2) members of the Appeals Panel may be made when necessary.³⁵

The Appeals Panel shall hold a hearing within ten (10) school days after its appointment by the principal or Chancellor’s designee.³⁶ The student, his or her parent/guardian, or duly authorized representative

²⁸ 5-B DCMR § 2103.4.

²⁹ 5-B DCMR § 2103.5.

³⁰ 5-B DCMR § 2103.6.

³¹ 5-B DCMR § 2103.7.

³² 5-B DCMR § 2103.8.

³³ 5-B DCMR § 2103.9.

³⁴ 5-B DCMR § 2103.10.

³⁵ 5-B DCMR § 2103.11.

³⁶ 5-B DCMR § 2103.12.

shall appear at the hearing to represent the student. 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.³⁷

Each appeals panelist, including the chair, shall have an equal vote; however, two (2) voting members can render a decision.³⁸ In the case of a tie vote, the initial grade is deemed to be upheld by the Appeals Panel.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

The student, his or her parent/guardian, or duly authorized representative 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.⁴¹ When an appeal of the Appeals Panel's decision is filed, the Chancellor's official grade appeal designee shall review all documentation submitted and issue the final administrative decision in the matter.⁴² This written determination shall be issued within five (5) school days of the review and consideration of all submitted evidence.⁴³ In these appeals of the Appeals Panel's decision, 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, and strict rules of evidence shall not apply.⁴⁴

2. Other Grade Appeals⁴⁵

A parent or student has the right to seek to amend educational records believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of a student's privacy. An initial grade appeal shall be in writing and shall be directed to the school principal.

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 given.⁴⁶ 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.*⁴⁷

³⁷ 5-B DCMR § 2103.13.

³⁸ 5-B DCMR § 2103.14.

³⁹ 5-B DCMR § 2103.15.

⁴⁰ 5-B DCMR § 2103.16.

⁴¹ 5-B DCMR § 2103.17.

⁴² 5-B DCMR § 2103.18.

⁴³ 5-B DCMR § 2103.19.

⁴⁴ 5-B DCMR § 2103.19.

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

⁴⁶ 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, available at <https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dcps-and-wtu-collective-bargaining-agreement-2016-2019>.

⁴⁷ 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, available at <https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dcps-and-wtu-collective-bargaining-agreement-2016-2019>.

A parent or student may appeal the principal's decision by submitting a written appeal to the Instructional Superintendent within ten 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.

F. 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 current school to request a student's prior records from the transfer school upon enrollment.⁴⁸

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, provided the opportunity to make up the missed work for that term by the end of that term, and permitted to earn a grade upon completion of the work. Students transferring into DCPS from another school district or charter school will have their transcripts reviewed and will be placed into the appropriate courses for the current term.

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 the full length 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.

V. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

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

Implementation of this policy will be reinforced through a central oversight process which includes regular data reviews, record sampling, reviews of underlying documentation, and site visits, as necessary. This framework will ensure that DCPS builds a system of continuous improvement and prevent noncompliance.

⁴⁸ See 5-E DCMR § 2603.3.

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DCPS is committed to serving every student with equity, excellence, transparency, and accountability. Questions or concerns regarding this policy should be directed to the DCPS Office of Secondary Schools or Office of the Chief Integrity Officer. For any concerns about or violations of this directive, contact the Chief Integrity Officer by completing the Online Referral Form⁴⁹ or sending an email to dcps.cio@dc.gov.

⁴⁹ Available at <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/office-integrity>.