

## **Policy Regarding Grading in the Boston Public Schools Updated 2023**

The BPS grading policy will provide accurate, dignifying feedback to every student about where they are academically and what they need to be successful. The implementation of the grading policy will provide families, students and teachers information necessary to determine what interventions a student may need and what classes they are prepared to take. The policy will ensure that grades consistently reflect students' proficiency in content areas, help them gauge their progress, and that grading scales are balanced and equitable across the district. Our data indicates that most of our students who are on the verge of earning a passing grade in one or more subject areas are our Black and Latinx students, our students with disabilities, and our English Learners. This policy will help us shift our practices to provide better-targeted support to our students and give them the tools necessary to achieve proficiency across all content areas. As a vehicle for closing opportunity and achievement gaps, the grading policy will provide clear and comprehensive guidance that aligns with our teaching practices, family engagement and student experience, grounded in equity and research.

This policy is critical in propelling all students toward the Strategic Plan and School Committee goals centered on College, Career and Life Readiness. We must provide every child with the same unfettered access to every conceivable tool to unlock the greatness within them. The policy will ensure that grading practices are accurate, bias-resistant, motivational and coherent in the district. These grading practices will ensure our stakeholders can trust the district's commitment to equity. With the School Committee's approval of this policy, the Academics and Schools Divisions will collaborate with our stakeholders this spring to finalize and enact an implementation plan that focuses on the adaptive work ahead.

The Boston Public Schools will at all times maintain Superintendent's Circulars that: (1) outline procedures for maintenance of grades to ensure that they are accurate, timely and aligned to DESE standards; (2) detail a common report card structure and timeline for schools by grade span and program; (3) set clear expectations for the frequency of grades and feedback to students; (4) create clear guidance for expectations for grading scales; (5) provide clarity on schools accountability for grades for students who transfer during the school year; and (6) outline the flexibilities allowable including makeup time and insuring practices that promote demonstration of proficiency.

Separately, as companions to this policy, the district will develop and maintain detailed implementation processes in the form of Superintendent Circulars ensuring: (1) implementation of MassCore graduation requirements and waivers (CAO-07); (2) common GPA calculation and transcription processes (CAO-06); (3) a common process for promotion and retention (CAO-01); (4) a common and public course catalog that details for students and families course of study options for all secondary schools as well as course descriptions, credit, and governance; and (5) an updated process and calendar for course creation.

Adoption of a Common Grading Policy for the Boston Public Schools

The School Committee of the Boston Public Schools is responsible for creating policies and practices that support the preparation of every student to be college, career and life ready. We must remove barriers that interfere with students graduating from BPS ready to succeed in the next stage of their lives. If we support BPS educators' effective use of culturally responsive practices, provide high levels of support, and adopt coherent grading practices that are mathematically consistent, bias-resistant, and motivational for students, then we will see increased student engagement and grades that reflect student learning.

BPS will adopt the following Grading Policy for all students in the district. The policy focuses on a student's mastery of the content rather than compliance behaviors often rooted in bias and lead to inconsistent grading across our schools. Specifically, the following practices will be required of all educators in the district.

**PROPOSED**

<b>Grading Practice</b>	<b>Why is it more equitable?</b>
<b>Consistency and timeliness</b>	Educators will ensure that term grades follow the practices in the BPS Grading Policy and are posted in Aspen by the closing date according to the district grading calendar.
<b>“No Credit” grades will no longer be given</b>	As an alternative, schools may mark a student with an “incomplete” to enable equitable learning recovery.  In all cases, a student not earning a passing grade must be given the opportunity and responsibility to recover any learning loss equitably or make up for the work missed within two weeks.
<b>No academic penalties will be given for late work</b>	Grades should be based on the mastery demonstrated by student work, not the timing of student work. Deadlines will be given for work and we expect students to meet these expectations. Deadlines will be explained to students and should align with unit plans and summative tasks. When a student turns in the assignment it will be graded and the grade in ASPEN/SMS will reflect student mastery (not the tardiness of the work).
<b>A balanced grading approach (ex. 0-4 grading scale or a minimum of 50 for an assignment on a 0-100 scale) will be used</b>	Teachers will determine minimum grades for assignments where the lowest possible grade is balanced with the value of the highest grade. Best practices would include the implementation of a consistent numerical grading scale (0-4, 1-7, etc.) that aligns to the GPA scale.
<b>Demonstration of competency in summative tasks must make up at least 80% of term grades</b>	Grades for assignments should represent what students have demonstrated in their learning and not non-academic behaviors. Students should have opportunities to retake assessments so that grades most accurately reflect students' most current level of mastery.

<p><b>Students will receive consistent feedback on assignments before students are formally assessed</b></p>	<p>Teachers are intentional about taking time to give students clear and actionable feedback. Students understand the criteria for success for any given assignment and have clear action steps for getting there. We understand the importance of coherence in how we provide feedback and are committed to making this an instructional focus for the upcoming school year to better support our staff.</p>
<p><b>Middle/High School: A consistent agreed-upon number of assignments per grade and consistent intervals for grading updates in Aspen/SMS</b></p> <p><b>Elementary: All schools will have a consistent approach across all content areas (including specialty classes) for routinely providing students and families with formative feedback</b></p> <p><b>All Grade Levels:</b></p>	<p>Teachers are expected to provide regular feedback through visible grades on a student information platform for middle and high school students.</p> <p>Schools serving elementary grades must have a consistent approach to providing students and families with formative feedback weekly. Students must receive term grades for Language Arts, Math, History/Social Studies, Science, and any specialty classes offered.</p> <p>Students may only receive a composite grade for “Humanities” or “STEM” or equivalent if the course is offered at the equivalent of a double-block. Students must also receive formative and summative feedback on grade-level language arts and history/social studies or math and science concepts and meet all of the requirements above.</p>