

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: CGA-RA, IFA, IFA-RA, IKA, IKB-RA, IKC-RA, ISB-RA, JEA-RA, KBA-RA, KLA, KLA-RA
Responsible Office: Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Schools

Grading and Reporting

I. PURPOSE

To align grading and reporting practices with the curriculum and assessment practices of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the state of Maryland, in order to accurately document and report student achievement

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Assessments* include, but are not limited to, districtwide assessments, end-of-unit tests, final evaluations, projects, performance-based assessments, and other similar formative and summative demonstrations of a student's mastery of grade level or course material.
- B. *Body of evidence* is a collection of aligned instructional tasks used to determine if a student has met identified standards or goals.
- C. *Course expectations* are statements of skills and knowledge the student should attain by the end of a course.
- D. *Course team* is all teachers in a school who teach the same course.
- E. *Grade-level expectations* are statements of skills and knowledge that elementary students should attain in a subject by the end of a grade—what an elementary student is expected to know and be able to do by the end of a grade level in a specific subject, as outlined in the grade/subject curriculum.
- F. *Marking period* is an approximately nine-week period, or quarter of a school year, at the end of which the individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.

- G. *Semester* is a term typically used only for high school credit-bearing courses, and refers to an approximately 18-week period comprising two 9-week marking periods, or quarters of a school year, at the end of which the individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.
- H. *Special populations* are groups of students who may require instructional adjustments, accommodations, or modifications to their instructional programs based on learning needs and strengths.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Evidence of Student Learning

Consistent with MCPS Regulation IFA-RA, *Curriculum*, teachers will use a variety of assessment approaches over time to create a body of evidence and monitor student learning of the MCPS curriculum. Student grades are based on the collected body of evidence.

1. The body of evidence may include assessment products such as unit assessments, papers, projects, quizzes or tests, and/or performance tasks.
2. The body of evidence may not include work assigned for practice or preparation for instruction, except as described in MCPS Regulation IKB-RA, *Homework Procedures*.

B. Grades

1. Grades must be based on individual demonstration of skill and understanding.
2. Grades for elementary content areas are based on evidence of the attainment of assigned grade-level or course expectations.
3. Grades for middle and high school courses are based on evidence of attainment of course expectations.
4. Grade-level and course expectations are outlined in curriculum documents and discussed in section III.D.
5. Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), special educators, and general education teachers who provide instruction for a student will collaboratively examine evidence collected to determine the student's grade.

6. Attendance and tardiness are not calculated in the grade, except in high school when a student has five or more absences and has not shown improvement in attendance in response to interventions stated in an Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP). AIP procedures for high school students are set forth in MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*.
7. Permissible grade symbols and scales used on report cards are set forth below.

a) Kindergarten and Grade 1 Academic Grades

P	Proficient with grade-level standards taught this marking period
I	In progress toward meeting the grade-level standards taught this marking period
N	Not yet making progress or making minimal progress toward meeting the grade-level standards taught this marking period
M	Missing data – no score recorded
NEP	Not English Proficient: Level 1 and Level 2 ESOL students who are enrolled in their first two marking periods in a U.S. school may qualify for NEP. NEP indicates that the student did not demonstrate proficiency in the Measurement Topic this marking period. If the student, regardless of ESOL level, is able to demonstrate proficiency in some content areas, grades (i.e., P, I, N) must be reported with NEP.

b) Grade 2 to Grade 5 Academic Grades

A	The student consistently demonstrates mastery of the grade-level standards taught this marking period.
B	The student frequently demonstrates mastery of the grade-level standards taught this marking period.
C	The student periodically demonstrates mastery of the grade-level standards taught this marking period.
D	The student rarely demonstrates mastery of the grade-level standards taught this marking period.
M	Missing data – no score recorded
NEP	Not English Proficient: Level 1 and Level 2 ESOL students who are enrolled in their first two marking

	periods in a U.S. school may qualify for NEP. NEP indicates that the student did not demonstrate proficiency in the Measurement Topic this marking period. If the student, regardless of ESOL level, is able to demonstrate proficiency in some content areas, grades (i.e., P, I, N) must be reported with NEP.
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c) Grade 6 to Grade 12 Academic Grades

A	90-100 Outstanding level of performance
B	80-89 High level of performance
C	70-79 Acceptable level of performance
D	60-69 Minimal level of performance
E	Unacceptable level of performance
E3	Students who have five or more unlawful absences in the class

d) Semester Grade Calculations for High School Credit-bearing Courses, Based on Marking Period 1 and Marking Period 2 Grades

AA = A*	BA = A	CA = B	DA = B	EA = C
AB = A	BB = B	CB = B	DB = C	EB = C
AC = B	BC = B	CC = C	DC = C	EC = D
AD = B	BD = C	CD = C	DD = D	ED = D
AE = C	BE = C	CE = D	DE = E**	EE = E**

*How to read chart: For example, an A in the first marking period of the semester and an A in the second marking period of the semester results in an A for the semester.

** These two grade scenarios may qualify for credit recovery as set forth in section III.J.2)

C. Reporting Student Achievement

1. Report Cards

- a) Report cards summarize evidence of student achievement collected throughout the marking period and include the following:

- (1) Grades, consistent with the required grading scale, indicating student achievement on grade-level/course expectations
 - (2) Attendance, consistent with MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*
 - (3) Students' Learning Skills for students in kindergarten through Grade 8
- b) Parents/guardians of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will receive supplemental information on progress toward the attainment of IEP goals at the time report cards are issued, consistent with federal and state requirements.
- c) At the elementary level, report cards indicate adjustments to grade-level expectations.
- (1) The report card will reflect the student's actual instructional level and achievement of assigned indicators in reading and math.
 - (2) Parents/guardians of ESOL students will receive supplemental information on their student's performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, based on expectations that are appropriate to their English language proficiency level.

2. Formal reporting varies by grade level as follows:

- a) Prekindergarten teachers report student achievement to parents/guardians in parent conferences and narrative reports.
- b) Reporting for Grades K–5 is as follows:
 - (1) Report cards for students in Grades K–5 are issued at the end of each marking period.
 - (2) In Grades K–5, one parent/teacher conference is required during the first semester. Additional parent/teacher conferences are recommended for students who are not meeting or who are exceeding expectations.

- c) Reporting for middle and high schools is as follows:
- (1) Report cards for students in Grades 6–12 are issued at the end of each marking period.
 - (2) Interim reports may be sent for all students but must be sent to the parent/guardian of each student who is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.
 - (3) Interim reports are sent between the fourth and sixth weeks of the marking period. If a student shows a marked decline in achievement later in the marking period, the teacher must inform the parent/guardian of this decline.
 - (4) Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged when a student is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.
3. Teachers are encouraged to communicate informally with the parent/guardian via phone calls, emails or password-protected sites on the MCPS website.
 4. Teachers or parents/guardians may request additional conferences as needed to discuss student progress or concerns.
 5. Teachers will use an electronic grade book and classroom-to-home communication systems selected, deployed and supported by the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI).

D. Grade-Level and Course Expectations

The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) is responsible for developing curricula consistent with MCPS Regulation IFA-RA, *Curriculum*, that establish grade-level expectations at the elementary level and course expectations at the middle and high school levels, aligned with Maryland State Department of Education standards and assessments or other nationally or internationally recognized standards.

1. All students will be considered diploma-bound and will be assessed and graded accordingly, unless and until an IEP team determines that a student will be instructed, assessed, and graded on Alternative Learning Outcomes that are aligned with the curriculum, leading to a Certificate of Completion.

Such a determination requires written consent from the parent/guardian, except as otherwise provided in Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 8-405(f).

2. Procedures for adjusting assigned curricula for elementary students not on grade level will be developed by OCIP, in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement, and approved by the chief of Teaching, Learning, and Schools.

E. School Procedures

1. The Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI) and OCIP collaboratively implement procedures established by the chief of Teaching, Learning, and Schools to implement Montgomery County Board of Education Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, including review and/or modification of grades, as set forth in sections III.J, K, and L below.
2. Grading, homework, reteaching, and reassessment procedures will be applied consistently within and among schools. School-level processes are set forth by the principal, in collaboration with the school leadership team.
3. Principals are responsible for the following:
 - a) Ensuring that grading and reporting procedures are applied consistently within their school. The principal designates the school leadership team to assist in developing and monitoring school-level grading and reporting processes, including the following:
 - (1) The principal or designee may require consistent processes throughout the school, but
 - (2) Grade-level or course teams or departments must establish consistent grading processes, as described in E.3 below.
 - b) Reviewing grading and reporting procedures with staff during pre-service days.
 - c) Communicating grading and reporting information in writing to parents/guardians at the beginning of each semester or when procedures change.

- d) Designating a staff member to serve as the school contact for grading and reporting concerns and communicating the name of the contact to students, staff, parents/guardians, and OCIP at the beginning of each school year. The staff contact is responsible for facilitating communication and providing a timely response to grading and reporting questions as follows:
 - (1) Redirecting questions to appropriate school staff members when questions are specific to an individual student's grade
 - (2) Informing the principal or designee of recurring questions and questions about policy and procedures
 - (3) Forwarding unanswered or recurring questions to OCIP
3. Grade-level or course team teachers are responsible for collaborating to establish consistency among the following:
- a) The body of evidence upon which students' grades are based, and in what proportions each type of evidence contributes to the marking period and semester grades.
 - b) The weighting of assessments, if appropriate.
 - c) The method and schedule for reteaching and reassessment opportunities, as described in Section III.F.3 below.
 - d) The extent to which homework counts toward the marking period grade in middle and high school courses, consistent with MCPS Regulation IKB-RA, *Homework Procedures*.
4. For middle and high school students, there are two categories of homework, and they count toward the marking period grade as follows:
- a) Homework for practice or preparation may account for a maximum of 10 percent of the marking period grade.
 - b) Homework evaluated for learning counts toward the remaining portion of the marking period grade.
5. Secondary teachers are responsible for the following:
- a) Establishing due dates and deadlines.

- (1) Teachers are expected to separate the due date from the deadline in order to increase opportunities for students to complete assignments.
 - (2) Work turned in after the due date and by the deadline may be lowered no more than one letter grade or 10 percent of the grade. Work submitted after the deadline will be recorded as a zero.
- b) Communicating expectations in writing for each course, subject, or grade level to students and parents/guardians.
 - c) Returning graded work to students, as described in Section III.I.
 - d) Allowing makeup work, regardless of the reason for the student's absence. Teachers may assign an equivalent, but different task or assessment to students when they return from any absence. For unlawful absences, teachers may deny credit for missed assignments or assessments, in accordance with the process approved by the principal and the leadership team.
 - e) Using grade scales, which may include letters, numbers, or symbols, as approved by the chief of Teaching, Learning, and Schools.
6. The following grading practices are prohibited:
- a) Awarding extra credit and/or bonus points.
 - b) Forcing grades into a normal frequency distribution or any other kind of curve that compares students in relation to others.
 - c) Establishing rating scales that compare students in relation to others (sliding scales are not permitted).
 - d) Assigning a grade lower than 50 percent to a task/assessment. However, if a student does no work on the task/assessment, the teacher will assign a zero. If a teacher determines the student did not attempt to meet the basic requirements of the task/assessment or the student engaged in academic dishonesty, the teacher may assign a zero.

- e) Assigning any single task/assessment that counts for more than 25 percent of the marking period grade.
- F. Pre-assessment, Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment, and Reassessment
1. Pre-assessments are designed to determine what students know and can do in order to plan instruction.
 - a) Pre-assessments are administered before instruction and may include teacher- and MCPS-designed assessments.
 - b) Pre-assessments may be recorded but cannot be used in the body of evidence to determine a student’s marking period or final grade.
 2. Formative assessments are used during the course of instruction and measure student mastery of specific indicators aligned with standards. Formative assessments are used by teachers to inform and guide subsequent instruction and may be included in the body of evidence.
 3. Summative assessments determine whether students understand and can apply what has been taught, provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge/skills they have had time to practice, are based on known criteria, focus primarily on individual student performance, and integrate important skills and knowledge.
 - a) Summative assessments may take the form of teacher- or MCPS-designed examinations, papers, projects, and/or performance tasks.
 - b) Except as specified below, grade-level or course teams establish weighting of assessments and reassessment procedures.
 4. Reassessment
 - a) In each marking period, elementary and secondary students are provided with reassessment opportunities after reteaching.
 - b) When tasks/assessments are reassessed, they may be reassessed partially, entirely, or in a different format, as determined by the teacher.
 - c) The reassessment grade replaces the original grade (if higher than the grade previously earned).

- d) What may or may not be reassessed for secondary students:
 - (1) Assessments or tasks that provide measures of student progress within an instructional unit may be reassessed.
 - (2) The following assessments/tasks that indicate a final measurement of learning may not be reassessed:
 - (a) End-of-course assessments, marking period assessments, or required quarterly assessments.
 - (b) Final research papers, reports, or essays.
 - (c) Culminating projects or performances.

G. Districtwide Assessments

Required assessments administered districtwide are one component of the body of evidence.

- 1. A districtwide assessment is required to be given at designated times in identified grade levels and identified middle and high school courses.
- 2. In middle and high school courses for which there are districtwide assessments, selected assessments may be calculated as 10 percent of the marking period grade, as directed by OCIP.

H. Final Evaluations for Seniors

- 1. Seniors enrolled in English, ESOL, information technology/computer science, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages courses are required to complete a culminating summative assessment, which may be the districtwide assessment in some cases.
- 2. Grades for final evaluations for high school seniors are calculated into the fourth marking period average and count for 10 percent of the fourth marking period grade.

I. Return of Graded Work

- 1. Graded work should be returned to students as soon as it is feasible.

2. When tests are computer scored or have answer sheets separate from test questions, students must have an opportunity to review their answers with test questions in hand. This shall not be construed so as to require teachers to return all quizzes and tests permanently, as specified below.
3. Students may retain graded work for their own later review and are encouraged to take work home to share with their parents/guardians, including marking period assessments. Exceptions are noted below:
 - a) In certain cases, teachers may retain items of an assessment to protect copyright permissions or to maintain the security of items; or when assessment items are administered through an online platform, and it is not feasible to redistribute them in other formats.
 - b) Teachers may temporarily retain graded work for review with parents/guardians, as is common practice in elementary schools, or may temporarily retain selected work for portfolio entry, as is the practice in some classes such as art and English.
4. Upon request by individual parents/guardians, teachers will make available to parents/guardians tests and quizzes given during the course or marking period so that parents/guardians can review student progress. The intent of returning graded work is to promote transparency in assessment and provide individual feedback; however, this must be balanced with maintaining the security of assessment items. Therefore, students and parents/guardians are expected not to share, or otherwise distribute, information contained on assessments or other graded work.

J. Retaking a Course or Portion of a Course

A student may retake a high school credit-bearing course or a portion of a course, subject to conditions below. Upon successful completion of the course or portion of the course, the grade earned by the student may replace the student's previous grade as described below.

1. Retaking a course
 - a) A student may retake a high school credit-bearing course, no matter the final grade.
 - b) The highest of the grades earned shall be entered on the student's transcript by the principal/designee and shall be used for the purpose of computing weighted and unweighted grade point averages.

- c) Students may only replace a course grade with the grade earned in a course with the same or comparable course code, as authorized by OCIP.
- d) If space in a class is limited, students taking a course for the first time have priority for placement in the class over students retaking the course.
- e) The school counselor completes MCPS Form 560-55, *Notice of High School Course Mark Exclusion*, to update the student's grade.

2. Retaking a portion of a course (credit recovery)

- a) High school students who fail a semester of a course required for graduation may retake the failed portion(s) of the course to raise a failing grade to a passing grade of D and recover credit for the course, subject to the following eligibility requirements:
 - (1) The grade table in section III.B.7.d shows the two grade scenarios that may qualify for credit recovery.
 - (2) Credit recovery is available to high school students who failed the second marking period of a semester of a course. Under exceptional circumstances, approval of the principal and the appropriate OSSI designee may be granted for a student to take credit recovery after receiving an E in the first marking period of a semester and an E in the second marking period of a semester.
 - (3) Credit recovery may be obtained only by enrolling in a credit recovery course in order to demonstrate successful completion of all marking period objectives.
 - (4) Credit recovery is not available to students who received a failing grade because of attendance, after an Attendance Intervention Plan, as set forth in Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*, has been implemented and shown not to be successful.
- b) For those courses for which a centrally administered online credit recovery module is not available, the superintendent of schools/designee may approve credit recovery materials

administered by the local school, subject to submission to, and review by, OCIP of appropriate documentation of student work demonstrating successful completion of all marking period objectives.

- c) If the student demonstrates successful completion of marking period objectives, the student's marking period grade will be updated to reflect the grades earned on retaken work.
- d) School counselors will assist students to—
 - (1) register for appropriate courses that will meet their credit recovery requirements, which may include summer school or centrally administered online courses; and
 - (2) initiate the process for obtaining approval from the principal and OSSI, for those students who seek to take credit recovery after receiving an E in the first marking period of a semester and an E in the second marking period of a semester.
 - (3) The school counselor completes MCPS Form 560-55, *Notice of High School Course Mark Exclusion*, to update the student's grade.
 - (4) The form must be approved by the principal in order for the principal/designee to update the course grade in the student information system – *Grade Reporting, Secondary Mark Correction* module. The documentation to update a grade from an E to a D and exclude the prior grade must be reviewed and a determination issued by the principal within 45 school days of the end of the semester in which the student took the credit recovery course.
 - (5) The former teacher, if different from the teacher with whom the student enrolled for credit recovery, must be notified when a student's grade is replaced through credit recovery.
 - (6) A copy of MCPS Form 560-55 is provided to the teacher and the school counseling office to retain, according to established procedures.

K. Grade Modifications

When there is evidence to demonstrate that a student's performance on grade-level or course expectations differs from the level of student performance indicated by the student's final marking period or semester grade, a grade may be modified.

1. Reasons for modifying a grade include, but are not limited to, correcting errors in implementation of grading and reporting procedures.
2. A grade modification may be issued for only the immediately preceding marking period or semester. The documentation to request a grade modification must be reviewed and a determination issued by the principal within 45 school days of the end of the marking period or semester, as appropriate. Requests to modify fourth marking period or spring semester course grades must be reviewed and a determination issued by the principal within 45 school days of the beginning of the following school year.
3. Modification of a student's grade is initiated by the teacher, except as set forth in section III.K.6 below, and must be approved by the principal prior to modifying the student's grade in the grade reporting module of the student information system. The teacher must be notified when a student's grade is modified.
4. To modify a marking period or semester grade for a middle or high school student –
 - a) the requestor (i.e., the teacher, or the principal in consultation with the teacher) must complete MCPS Form 355-27A, *Secondary Grade Modification*, and submit the grade modification request to the principal;
 - b) MCPS Form 355-27A must be approved by the principal in order for the principal/designee to update the course grade in the grade reporting module of the student information system, according to established procedures; and
 - c) a copy of MCPS Form 355-27A is provided to the teacher and the school counseling office to retain, according to established procedures.
5. To modify a marking period grade for an elementary school student, the teacher provides documentation as appropriate, and the principal/designee

updates the course grade in the grade reporting module of the student information system, according to established procedures.

6. Teachers have a responsibility to implement grading and reporting procedures. In cases in which procedures have not been implemented in accordance with Board Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, this regulation, and published guidance, a principal will consult with the teacher and may modify a grade, with the appropriate documentation designated above.

L. Appeals

1. A grade may be appealed consistent with Board Policy KLA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*.
2. Formal steps set forth in MCPS Regulation KLA-RA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*, for resolving complaints should be used only after informal approaches at the local school have been unsuccessful in resolving the complaint. At the secondary level, these informal approaches may include consultation with the resource teacher/content specialist.

M. Review and Reporting

1. On an annual basis, OSSI, OCIP, and OTI will monitor the use of grade modifications, course retakes, and credit recovery to evaluate adherence to procedures and timelines set forth in this regulation; MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*; and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) §13A.03.02.08B(5).
2. Such monitoring includes a record review of an appropriate sample of student records across schools and school levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school).

Related Sources:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 34 CFR Section 300.320; *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §8-405(f); *Code of Maryland Regulations* §13A.03.02.08 and §13A.05.01.09(B)

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