

New Haven Public Schools

Grading Workgroup

Teaching and Learning
Wednesday, May 19, 2022





Grading Workgroup Members - Thank you!

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Rosalyn Diaz-Ortiz, Multilingual Learners

Ivelise Velazquez, Assistant
Superintendent for Curriculum and
instruction.

Purpose:

**To review the parts of
the sample grading
policies.**



Parts of a Policy

Introduction - Philosophy - Responsibility

Weighted Grades

Rank in Class

Weighted Grade Format

Changing of a Grade



Introduction

Philosophy (sample language)



It is the philosophy of this district that students respond more positively to the opportunity for success than to the threat of failure.

Intro Continued (sample language)

Evaluation of student progress is a primary responsibility of the teacher. Every teacher shall maintain an evaluation record for each student in the teacher's classroom.



Weighted Grades

**...encourage and reward
students for selecting
courses at more challenging
levels of difficulty.**

(sample language)

Weighted Grade Format (Another Example)

Students will receive an extra point added to their letter grade when determining rank in class. The system will work as follows.

Non-Weighted Courses		Weighted Courses	
A+	+12	A+	+13
A	11	A	12
A-	10	A-	11
B+	9	B+	10
B	8	B	9
B-	7	B-	8
C+	6	C+	7
C	5	C	6
C-	4	C-	5
D+	3	D+	4
D	2	D	3
D-	1	D-	2

Rank in Class (example)

...three percentage points will be added to the number resulting from the conversion from letter grades to numerical grades for all courses designated “honors” and for all advanced placement courses.





Pros and Cons of Weighted Grades

PRO

Students receive additional points in their grade point average to reflect their performance in more challenging classes.

Teaching might be targeted to a smaller range of needs, interests, or abilities through ability grouping.

Grades or completion of prerequisite courses can guide enrollment for success.

CON

Not all students are given the choice to enroll or access more challenging courses, keeping them from also accumulating more points in their grade-point average.

More evidence that tracking hinders rather than facilitates learning for all students.

Sometimes student achievement potential is pre-determined to exclude them from high-challenge coursework leading to weighted grades.



Changing of a Grade (sample language)

The final grade assigned by the teacher cannot be changed by a District administrator **without notifying the teacher**. Reasons for changing a student's final grade include:

- a miscalculation of test scores;
- a technical error in assigning a particular grade or score;
- the teacher agrees that the student may do any extra work assignment and its evaluation impacts the grade;
- an inappropriate grading system used to determine the grade; or
- an inappropriate grade based on an appropriate grading system.



What's missing? (that we might consider)

- A separation between grade on Knowledge and Skills versus Habits of Mind (Effort).
- Connection to Report Card
- Adopting a specific scale such as 0 to 100, 50-100, or 0-5 or A, B, C, D, E, F
- Does a grade reflect what the student knows and is able to do or does it include student effort behaviors such as on-time assignments and participation?
- More explicit communication about how grades are calculated or how they impact college entrance.
- Requiring a mechanism to support families and students to plan for college/career as early as middle school and to access summer offerings.
- Rank in class designations as standard across schools or left to school based decision.
- Consideration for Multilingual Learners or Special Education students.
- Language to connect policy to comments on report cards.
- Language specific to K-8, not just high school.
- How to address credit recovery.



Articles and Sample Policies

1. *Is it becoming too hard to fail?* Schools are shifting toward no-zero grading policies

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/is-it-becoming-too-hard-to-fail-schools-are-shifting-toward-no-zero-grading-policies/2016/07/05/3c464f5e-3cb0-11e6-80bc-d06711fd2125_story.html

The move is intended to give students a chance to recover even if they fail an assignment or a grading period. Some consider a score of zero to be mathematically unjust in any case: a student who earns a zero and then a perfect score on the following assignment has an average of 50 percent — still an F in most grading systems.

2. *Do No-Zero Policies Help or Hurt Students?*

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/do-no-zero-policies-help-or-hurt-students>

"But the equity argument was just one dimension of the criticism leveled at zeros. A significant number of teachers simply considered it draconian arithmetic—a grading strategy that, once triggered, torpedoed any record of progress and learning across the remainder of the grading period. "If you are using a 100 point system, 0's are unfair," said Edutopia audience member Stephen Currence. "Which student has demonstrated greater mastery: student A: 100, 100, 100, 100, 0, or student B: 75, 80, 90, 80, 90? Mathematically, it is student B with an 83 average, but student A has clearly demonstrated greater mastery." Even demonstrating consistent mastery for months can be undone by a single zero, in other words, and for many teachers that feels unjust." Emilina Minero, Edutopia, July 3, 2018 ***Mind/Shift

3. *How Teachers Are Changing Grading Practices With an Eye on Equity* <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/52813/how-teachers-are-changing-grading-practices-with-an-eye-on-equity>

Feldman hates this scale for many reasons, but the biggest one is the destructive power of a "zero" for missing work. He contends the scale is weighted towards failure because 0-60 represents failing, whereas there are only 10 points between every other grade delineation. And if a student gets a zero on an assignment, it's almost impossible to climb out of the hole that creates in their grade. Many students just give up. They know it's mathematically impossible to pass after that.

11 Sample Policies from CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education): <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XHXmwhnvHeW-jbbSrDKkUzEcuSNHXLnR/view?usp=sharing>