

# Introducing the NCCS Grading Guidelines

September 2003

Dear K-12 Parents:

Of the many forms of communication between school and home, grades are one of the most important. They are used to communicate your child's progress, to help diagnose weak areas that need improvement, and to assist in planning for future education and careers. Consequently, our school district is dedicated to constantly improving its grading and reporting practices.

Our goal is to make the communication of grades as clear as possible. We want you, as a parent, to get timely, understandable, detailed information about your child's progress. We also want to increase the consistency of grading practices in our district. This way, from year to year and teacher to teacher, you and your children will understand what to expect and what their grades mean. Using this information we can work together to help your children achieve to their potential.

Below is an explanation of the grading guidelines for our district. Over time these guidelines will be revised and expanded to best meet the needs of our students.

## **Section 1: The Criteria for Grades**

We believe that all students should be judged by their own individual work. Therefore students will not earn grades based upon how they did compared to other students in class. Instead, students will be graded based upon how well they meet the standards for the course.

## **Section 2: Extra Credit and Bonus Points**

Extra credit is a valuable grading option, but needs to be used carefully so as not to inappropriately inflate a grade. If a teacher chooses to offer extra credit or bonus points, they must be related to what is being studied in class, and cannot be given for non-academic things like bringing in supplies or merely attending extra curricular events. Extra credit is limited to 2 percent of the nine-weeks grade, and bonus points are limited to 5 percent of the test or quiz they are on.

## **Section 3: Academic Practice and Achievement**

Whenever students learn something new in school, they are assessed on it many times through such tasks as homework, quizzes, worksheets, tests and more. Early in the process they are just learning the material and it is reasonable to expect them to make some mistakes. We call these assessments "Academic Practice" and they are used to find students' weaknesses and correct them. Later on when the students have had enough exposure to the material, it is reasonable to hold them responsible for it. We call these assessments "Academic Achievement" and they are used to judge how well students learned the information.

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All of our teachers are to indicate in their records whether each assessment is “Practice” or “Achievement,” as that will affect how much it counts toward the final grade. In general “Academic Practice” will not count as heavily since it is unfair to evaluate students as much when they are still learning the material.

#### **Section 4: Late Work**

It is very important for students to complete their schoolwork so that they have plenty of practice before they have to perform on a test for Academic Achievement. To encourage students to complete their work in a timely manner, each grade level or subject area has determined how much to reduce the grade for an assignment when it is late.

#### **Section 5: Ingredients of a Grade**

To communicate clearly, it is important that the nine-weeks grade only conveys your child’s academic progress. For this reason, only scores from “Academic Practice” and “Academic Achievement” can go into the nine-weeks grade. Other factors such as behavior, attitude, and effort are very important, but will be reported separately on interims and report cards. As needed, interims and report cards will be updated and expanded to include these other items.

#### **Section 6: Calculating Grades**

For the 2003-2004 school year the high school will calculate nine-weeks grades as follows:

- “Academic Achievement” will count for at least 85 percent of the grade
- “Academic Practice” will count for at most 15 percent of the grade

Grades K through 8 will not be required to make such changes until the 2004-2005 school year. At that time their percentage breakdowns will be developed.

Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with these guidelines. Please do not hesitate to contact us with comments or questions. You may contact grading committee chairperson Eric Curts at:

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Respectfully,

The NCCS Grading Committee