



Glasgow Middle School

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Last year, we began school-wide to develop grading and reporting policies that reflect the emerging consensus among educators about best practices in this vitally important aspect of teaching and learning. These policies, based on a clear philosophy of assessment, put into everyday classroom practices the principles of both Fairfax County Public Schools and the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program.

The best thinking and most convincing research among education professionals has led us to several common understandings:

- Grades should be determined by achievement and not behavior.
- Achievement should be measured against clearly-stated, detailed learning objectives (standards) using established criteria for success.
- All students should have the opportunity—without penalty—to master the understanding and skills necessary for advancing in their studies.

We believe that regular, prompt, richly-detailed feedback leads to better learning; that middle school students should be increasingly responsible for their own achievement; that **how** things are done is important; and that self-reflection (the ability to consider and act on one's work) is an essential life skill.

If you are new to our learning community, the details of our approach will seem very different from traditional percentage-based, point-accruing systems with which most of us are familiar. (We have several opportunities planned to help parents learn about MYP grading and reporting, and teachers will be working with students to build their understanding both at the outset and throughout the year.) We have made these important changes because our research and our experience convinced us that it's what's best for kids. Our faculty are leaders in implementing approaches to assessment that are emerging as standards of practice for meeting the needs of 21st century learners.

If your student is returning, you know that last year was transitional for all of us as we explored the strengths and challenges of MYP assessment. This year we have uniform expectations for teachers and students. Based on extensive feedback from all of our stakeholders, we have streamlined the reporting process for parents. We have established dates throughout the year when you can expect detailed reports on your student's approaches to learning, ongoing progress, and quarterly/final grades.

As always, the success of our students depends on our ability to forge an effective partnership among parents, teachers, support services, administrators, and the larger community. Thank you for your continued feedback as we work together to make the world a better place through education.

Sincerely,

Deirdre M. Lavery
Principal