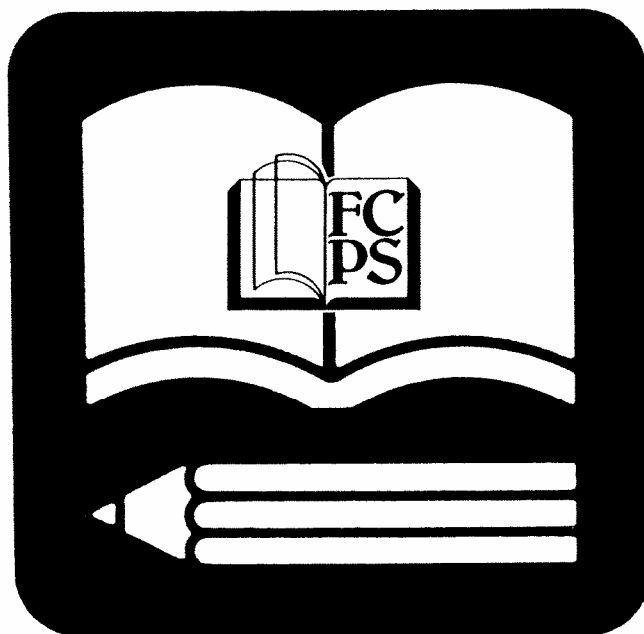


FAIRFAX COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
TEACHER'S
GUIDE



GRADING AND
REPORTING
TO PARENTS

September 2008

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This teacher's handbook presents the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) guidelines for grading and reporting for middle school students. The purpose is to establish grading and reporting practices at the middle school level in order to reach the following goals:

- promote consistency in grading.
- promote sufficient agreement among teachers about assessment of identified standards of knowledge.
- promote practices that allow more time to learn when necessary.
- promote ongoing formative feedback to students prior to grading.
- promote credible and useful feedback to parents and students.
- ensure that achievement grades are based on actual knowledge and skill proficiency demonstrated in the classroom and ensure that grades are separated from work habits.
- ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- ensure that students acquire foundational knowledge and essential skills before being promoted to the next grade level.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Fairfax County middle schools report student achievement regularly through parent contact, the interim progress report, and the quarterly progress report. Teachers and teams shall assess student achievement and communicate this information to students and parents in a timely and relevant manner. Included in this communication to parents, teachers and teams will:

- state the teacher-designed method for determining quarter, semester, and final grades and the responsibility of the parent and the student in the communication process as outlined in this document.
- include a summary of what students will be expected to know and be able to do at the end of the course and a list of major activities and their time frames.
- provide this communication in writing to parents and students at the beginning of each school year and at the beginning of each semester course.
- place a copy of the teacher or team written communication in the grade book for easy reference, for accuracy in reporting, and for use in parent conferences.

Administrators should review teacher procedures for assessing student achievement and interim progress report and progress report data.

I. Creating a Partnership

- A. FCPS middle schools encourage a partnership with parents in order to promote academic and behavioral success for all students. Parent outreach is encouraged through PTA programs, Back-to-School Nights, teacher communications, newsletters, communications in the most common language spoken in the homes, parent volunteer and resource programs, student programs, business partnerships, and formal and informal efforts in the community. In order for parents to be a part of a collaborative process, teachers and teams will begin each school year by distributing a written statement that includes the following: what all students are expected to know (content) and be able to do (process) by the end of the year; promotion criteria; the expected standards for work habits; the dates that interim progress reports and progress reports are distributed; the standardized countywide test dates; and any major projects that students will be working on during the school year.

B. Teacher, Counselor, Team Conferences With Parents and Students

The purpose of a conference is to develop a mutual understanding of various aspects of the student's progress and to encourage cooperative planning toward effective solutions of problems that may exist. (APPENDIX I)

II. Interim Progress Reports

- A. Teachers and teams in the four-core subject areas shall issue interim progress reports or approved school-designed report instruments to all students each midquarter. These reports indicate ongoing student achievement toward mastery of identified standards of knowledge and competencies in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Interim progress reports and progress reports should separate achievement from responsibility and/or work habits. Teacher-assigned homework may be a part of the academic grade. (APPENDIX IIA)
- B. Interim progress reports are issued midquarter of each grading period. Teachers of courses in noncore areas are required only to provide interim progress reports to students who have not earned a grade of C or above or dropped two letter grades from the previous quarter, but individual schools may elect to send interims to all students in all classes. Interim progress reports shall be hand carried by students or mailed directly to parents.
- C. Teachers will maintain the grade book records of interim grades and student performance to support the interim progress report.
- D. Students will share the responsibility for keeping parents informed regarding their achievement in school.
- E. Each school will publish for parents the dates interim progress reports will be issued to students.

III. Quarterly Progress Reports

- A. Progress reports reflect student learning based on identified standards of knowledge and competencies included in the curriculum. The grading symbols for academic achievement are A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, and F. Progress reports should separate achievement from responsibility and/or work habits. Teacher-assigned homework may be part of the academic grade. (APPENDIX IIB)

- B. Throughout the quarter grading periods, teachers will maintain a record of student progress using various assessments. All students will be graded on achievement after sufficient instruction, feedback, and practice have been provided. Final grades reflect the mastery level at the end of the regular school year. Final grades include averaging results of assessments along with professional judgment based on the student's overall pattern of progress throughout the school year.
- C. If sufficient progress has not been made with classroom achievement by the end of the regular school, students will attend the summer program. It is recommended that students who receive a final grade of F in one or two core courses attend the summer program; otherwise they will be retained. Students who fail three or four core courses will be retained. Final determination of promotion or retention will occur at the completion of the summer program. This determination will be based on student progress in the summer program in addition to the pattern of achievement during the previous school term.
- D. In accordance with the current version of Regulation 2431, Middle School Teacher's Guide: Grading and Reporting to Parents, progress reports are issued four times per year at specified intervals. Progress reports shall be hand carried by students or mailed directly to parents.
- E. Each school will publish for parents the dates that progress reports will be issued to students.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I. Philosophy

Fairfax County middle school grading philosophy rests on two tenets. The first is that middle school students are at varying stages of development and readiness and are continually learning. Therefore, the purpose of quarterly grades is to provide information about a student's achievement at that given time and about learning trends during the school year. The second is that achievement grades must be distinguished from work habit grades. This provides a clear distinction between student learning and student behavior. Additionally, this clearly suggests to students, parents, and teachers areas on which to concentrate for student growth and improvement.

- A. The Fairfax County School Board has affirmed the following principles:
 - Academic grades must be based on what students learn.
 - Homework should reinforce student learning, and teachers should provide feedback to students on homework completed.
 - Expectations for student achievement must be clearly communicated to both students and parents.
- B. Student Achievement: Achievement grades represent the teacher or team evaluation of a student's academic progress and the extent to which skills and competencies for a given Program of Studies have been demonstrated. Letter grades of A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, or F are recorded on the quarterly progress report.
- C. Student Work Habits: Work habits are assessed separately in order to highlight the importance of responsible behavior. Furthermore, student achievement or academic performance, while directly affected by work habits, must stand alone as an actual representation of student learning. S for Satisfactory or N for Needs Improvement is recorded on the progress report.

II. Quarter and Final Grades

A. Teachers are permitted to grade by percentage, 100-point scale, letter grades,

B. Grades are defined as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>4.0 Scale</u>	<u>100% Scale</u>	<u>Definition</u>
A	3.7-4.0	94-100	Designates the status of a student who consistently demonstrates accurate and complete knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS), and applies that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
B+	3.2-3.6	90-93	Designates the status of a student who regularly demonstrates accurate knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS), with minor needed improvement, and applies that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
B	2.7-3.1	84-89	Designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS), with some improvement needed in accuracy and/or consistency in performance, applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
C+	2.2-2.6	80-83	Designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to refine skills necessary to solve a variety of problems.
C	1.7-2.1	74-79	Designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS), but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire skills necessary to solve problems.

D+	1.4-1.6	70-73	Designates the status of a student who needs additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, it is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level in a sequence of courses.
D	1.0-1.3	64-69	Designates the status of a student who needs significant practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, it is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level in a sequence of courses.
F ¹	0-0.9	Below 64	Designates the status of a student who has not demonstrated the basic knowledge of content and/or skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) and requires additional practice and instructional experiences in order to succeed.
I ²			Designates the status of a student who has not been able to complete tasks that are major components of the quarter grade for reasons considered appropriate by the teacher or team or by the principal or his or her designee. The student is required to make up work within a specified time period in order to convert this "incomplete" to a grade by the next quarterly progress report.

¹ No student with an average below 1.0 on a 4.0 scale may receive a passing quarter grade.

² I (Incomplete) = May not be given as a permanent final grade.

III. Guidelines for Assigning Quarter and Final Grades

- A. Achievement grades will be separated from work habit grades in order to accurately distinguish between actual learning and student demonstration of responsible behavior.
- B. Each quarter the student will receive a letter grade to designate the level of achievement in a course
- C. Incomplete (“I”) quarter grades will become a letter grade once all assignments are completed within a designated time period and will be reflected in the next quarter’s progress report.
- D. Final grades awarded to the student will be A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, or F, and shall be based on trends in and mastery of learning rather than averaging of quarterly grades for the year. Final grades may include averaging assessment results along with professional judgment based on the student’s overall pattern of progress throughout the school year.

IV. Incompletes

- A. While a student should receive a grade whenever possible, there are times when an “Incomplete” “I” grade is appropriate. Teachers and teams may assign an incomplete grade under the following circumstances:
 - 1. A student with excused absences who is unable to complete assignments that are major components of the quarter grade may receive an “I” for that grading period. If a student receives an “I,” he or she must adhere to the teacher or team plan to complete missing assignments.
 - 2. A student receives an “I” only if his or her absences are excused according to criteria established by FCPS. However, the principal may approve a passing grade or an “I” for a student with three or more unexcused absences if a teacher submits a written request.
 - 3. A student may receive an “I” for other reasons considered appropriate by a teacher or team or by the principal or his or her designee.
- B. It is **expected that** students will make up “I” grades by the end of the next grading period. An incomplete grade (“I”) may not be given as a final grade.

V. Determination of Grades

A. Individual Assignments:

1. A teacher or team may employ letters, numbers, or other representations, which reflect ongoing assessment. Each teacher or team develops grading criteria that explicitly indicate how the grade is determined (e.g., the weighting of tests, assignments, etc.)
2. Formal and informal daily assessment is ongoing in determining student achievement. Weekly assessment is expected and should be recorded formally in the teacher's grade book.
3. Special education, students with 504 plans, and Standards of Learning (SOL) language-minority students receiving instruction in the general curriculum are required to meet course objectives. Accommodations and modifications to instruction are made for students' individual needs.
 - a) Accommodations are instructional techniques, additional supports, or specialized services to help a student make progress and demonstrate learning.
 - b) Modified instruction occurs when content and performance expectations are selected from the general curriculum to meet a student's individual needs in developing functional life skills or for a student whose level of academic performance is significantly below grade level expectations.
 - c) The need for accommodations and modified instruction for a student receiving special education services is documented in the student's individual education program (IEP).

B. Quarter and Final Grades:

1. Grades measure academic performance and are used as a means of reporting achievement in accordance with POS standards, benchmarks, and indicators. Grades recorded in the grade book during the quarter may be percentages, letters, or other symbols. Final grades may include averaging of assessment results along with professional judgment based on the student's overall pattern of progress.
2. The quarterly grade is determined by using the procedures outlined in the teacher's evaluation design and is recorded in the grade book as a percentage and letter grade or a letter grade. The percentages must correlate to the school system's published scale. The quarterly progress report grade will be a letter grade.

3. Courses earning high school credit are governed by the rules and regulations of the high school, which include the grading rules and practices from Regulation 2430. High school credit courses taken in grades 7 and 8 become part of the student's high school transcript and are included in the calculation of the high school grade point average (GPA).
 4. Virginia state and FCPS regulations permit parents of a middle school student who has completed a high school credit course to have that course expunged from the student's record. Middle schools need to ensure that parents are aware of this option. Parents must make this request no later than the end of the first nine weeks of the following school year. If the student is in the eighth grade, the request must be sent to the director of student services of the high school the student will attend. If the student is in the seventh grade, the request must be made to the director of student services of the middle school attended. Once deleted, the course cannot be reinstated.
- C. Level L, 1, 2, and 3/4 ESOL students enrolled in mainstream core classes should be given opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and capabilities through a variety of alternative assessments. When language skills seriously inhibit a student's ability to demonstrate understanding, the student may be graded on a pass-fail basis for no more than two grading periods. Once language skills are sufficiently developed, grading should be on the FCPS letter system. In all cases, ESOL students should receive letter grades for the fourth grading period and the final mark.

VI. Assessing and Grading Special Populations

- A. Special Education Students: The IEP Team determines service delivery options and appropriate placement for students eligible to receive special education services. Teachers and teams who work with students receiving special education services will give consideration to those students' individual needs when reporting to parents. The following guidelines are used in assessing the progress of students receiving special education services.
1. The Middle School Progress Report is used when reporting grades for students receiving special education services.
 2. Instruction for students receiving special education services is formulated in accordance with the Program of Studies, which includes the Standards of Learning, Aligned Standards of Learning, and the goals and objectives documented in each student's individual education program (IEP).

- a) Accommodations are provided based on the needs of the student. The report card comment “Receives accommodations” may be used to clarify that accommodations were required for the student to make progress and demonstrate learning in a particular class.
- b) Modified instruction in the general curriculum is based on the needs of the student. The report card comment “Receives modified instruction” may be used to clarify that modified instruction in the general curriculum was needed for a student to make progress in a particular class. Please refer to section V.A.3. (page 9), Determination of Grades, for additional information.

- 3. The grades of students receiving special education services will reflect achievement of grade-level expectations, selected from the general curriculum and based on student need. In addition, students are evaluated according to individual rates of progress, based on IEP goals and objectives.
- 4. Principals have the responsibility for grade-level placement. After consultation with appropriate staff members and parents, grade level placement decisions will be made after considering all relevant information including the IEP of a student receiving special education services.

B. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Language Minority Students: Specific issues are to be considered in instructing, assessing, and grading ESOL and Level 3/4 students. As much as eight years of exposure to a new language may be needed to acquire the academic language competency necessary to comprehend sophisticated concepts and vocabulary. These students are eligible for ESOL accommodations.

1. ESOL Proficiency Levels:

Level L	Beginning ESOL students. Students have little or limited proficiency in English and have had minimal or interrupted formal schooling in their home countries.
Level 1	Beginning ESOL students. Students have little or limited proficiency in English.
Level 2	Intermediate ESOL students. Students have developed some oral English proficiency and are gaining experience and skill in reading and writing English.

Level 3/4	Advanced ESOL students. Students have considerable proficiency in speaking and understanding English and are in the process of refining and extending their reading and writing skills.
LEP Monitor	Limited English proficiency (LEP) students. Students continue to develop competence in cognitive academic language proficiency but do not receive direct ESOL instruction. They retain eligibility for instructional support as needed.
Post Monitor	Students who have exited an ESOL program and bilingual students who do not need ESOL instruction.

2. Expectations and Assessment: Teachers and parents should maintain realistically high expectations for ESOL students. Language minority students who enroll in FCPS possess a similar range of cognitive abilities, motivation, and challenges as do other students in the mainstream population. They have a first language and, in some cases, several languages in which to express themselves and their abilities, and are in the process of developing sufficient English to transfer these skills. Regular consultation with ESOL teachers can apprise content teachers, teams, and parents of the ESOL students' language development and appropriate academic expectations for them.

Content teachers must make a distinction between English language usage and comprehension of concepts and processes when they assess language minority students. It is the student's comprehension and ability to apply concepts and processes that are gauged, not the student's English language skills. English proficiency will affect a student's ability to articulate his or her comprehension so it is essential to use alternative methods to assess what and how much these students understand and how they are able to apply concepts.

VII. Changes and Corrections to Student Scholastic Record

A. Grade Verification and Corrections

1. At the end of each grading period, teachers review and verify grades, submitting corrections to the student information assistant.
2. In the event that the teacher is unavailable, the principal or his or her designee, together with a staff member as appropriate (department chair, lead teacher, etc.), reviews and verifies grades and submits corrections to the student information assistant.

B. Requests to Change Quarter and Final Grades

1. Parents or students who believe that an assigned mark is incorrect shall contact the teacher and indicate the reasons for the requested change.
2. If the teacher agrees that a change is warranted, a Marks Change form is submitted to the Student Information Assistant and signed by the teacher and the principal or designee. (APPENDIX III)
3. If the teacher affirms the grade, an appeal by the parent or student of the teacher's decision requires a conference with a school based subject area administrator.
4. If the teacher disagrees with an administrator's decision, the teacher may meet with the principal to discuss the reasons for the decision.
5. Any further appeal by a parent must be submitted in writing to the principal who is the final determiner.
6. Every effort shall be made to address with the teacher a request to change a mark. In the event the teacher is unavailable, the principal or designee, in consultation with a department chair or lead teacher, as appropriate, will review the request and, if a change is warranted, submits a Marks Change form to the student information assistant.
7. The principal may either decline or approve a mark change in accordance with the current version of Regulation 2430, High School Teacher's Guide: Grading and Reporting to Parents and Regulation 2431, Middle School Teacher's Guide: Grading and Reporting to Parents.

8. Grade changes should be processed within ten school days of a change authorization and should be confirmed with the parent and teacher by telephone or in writing.
9. No staff member who is related to a student may approve or make a change in that student's academic cumulative record and shall defer his or her role to the principal or, in the case of the principal, to the cluster assistant superintendent.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

I. Student Placement

- A. To qualify for promotion, seventh and eighth grade middle school students are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency based on identified standards of achievement in the four core areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Sixth grade middle school students are required to pass language arts and mathematics. To guarantee promotion, students must earn a passing final grade based on grade-level expectations.

Students who fail three or four core courses will be retained. Students who fail one or two courses will attend summer program or be retained. At the end of summer program, a student's progress will be evaluated to determine appropriate placement, either promotion or retention. Additional support may be provided for these students the following year.

- B. ESOL students enrolled in ESOL content and language courses (e.g., FOCUS science and social studies, ESOL Level 1 and ESOL Level 2) receive instruction in content area and English language foundation objectives necessary to be successful in subsequent content area courses.

The use of assessments directly aligned with ESOL course objectives will help teachers monitor progress in these courses. ESOL students enrolled in non-ESOL (general education) content courses (e.g., eighth grade science, Algebra 1, etc.) will receive appropriate instructional accommodations because they are continuing to develop their academic English skills. Assessments that are not solely dependent upon English language proficiency will be used to monitor these students' progress.

- C. Principals will maintain the responsibility for grade-level placement after consultation with appropriate staff members and parents. Decisions will be made after considering all relevant information about the student, including the IEP of a student receiving special education services. Placement decisions, which are contested by the parents, may be appealed in accordance with the complaint procedures outlined in the current version of Regulation 2601, Student Responsibilities and Rights.
- D. If it appears that a student will require another year at the present grade placement, parents should be informed of the student's specific academic needs at the end of the second grading period or as soon as retention appears to be a possibility. At this time, the school will explain the specific academic needs of the student in an effort to collaborate with the family to improve student achievement. Behavioral issues may be included in the discussion.

II. Summer Program (Middle School Courses)

Middle school summer program is designed to provide principals with an intervention model that best meets the needs of the students in their individual schools during the summer. The plan provides:

- Equity by recognizing the varying needs of schools in FCPS.
- A focus on improving academic skills rather than remediation.
- Inclusion of students with IEPs and ESOL students.
- Continuity between summer and regular school year curricula as well as coordination between summer and school year learning goals and activities.

Special education students with extended school year (ESY) IEPs will be provided with services under another plan. Further information will be available from the Office of Student Services.

III. Summer Program (High School Courses)

Courses for high school credit taken by middle school students during summer school are included in the calculation of grade-point average.

OUT-OF-CLASS SCHOOLWORK

I. Homework and Independent Practice

- A. Homework and independent practice form an essential component of the learning process for students. Assignments should be meaningful, with an emphasis on quality rather than quantity, and should be tailored to match the needs of all students. Homework should reinforce student learning, and teachers should provide feedback on homework completed.
1. Assignments designated as homework and independent practice should accomplish one or more of the following:
 - prepare for in-class assignments or long-range projects.
 - provide practice on concepts or skills already taught.
 - enrich, enhance, and extend school experience.
 - provide real-life applications.
 - provide for parental involvement in student learning.
 - provide time for research, reflection, and/or creation.
- B. The following principles should govern teachers in the assignment of homework and independent practice:
1. Students will receive either a work-habit grade (when homework and independent practice is designed as an application of concepts or skills, as an assessment of student understanding, or as preparation or background for the next class) **or** an achievement grade (when completing a project or assignment after mastery has been demonstrated in the classroom). Teachers may use their professional judgment about the use of teacher-assigned homework as part of the academic grade. Work-habit grades will be an S (satisfactory) or N (not satisfactory). Achievement grades will be letter grades.
 2. Teams and elective teachers should establish homework and independent practice policies and coordinate assignments.
 3. When teachers assign projects that require out-of-class time for completion, they should ensure that all students have access to the necessary supplies and optional after-school time to fulfill the requirements. Not all students have access to libraries, computers, materials, or parental assistance in the evenings.
 4. Homework and independent practice should never be used as punishment.

II. Makeup Work

When students are absent, an opportunity to make up work shall be provided. For excused absences, makeup work receives credit; for unexcused absences, makeup work receives no credit. Any exception to this practice shall require the principal's approval.

A. Short-Term Excused Absence (1 to 9 days)

1. One day of absence affords one day of makeup work opportunity. Students have a maximum of ten days to make up work missed during an excused period of absence. However, the period of time allowed to make up work may be extended at the discretion of the teacher or team.
2. Makeup work for excused absences is graded and recorded in the grade book by teachers without penalty to students.
3. For an approved prearranged absence, a student may request assignments in advance of the absence. Teachers will provide regular or alternative assignments in advance of the absence when feasible.
4. Following any absence, including a prearranged absence, students should make arrangements with individual teachers for makeup work.

B. Long-Term Excused Absence (ten days to two or three months)

1. Absence from school for an extended period may be excused for the following reasons:
 - long-term illness (verified by a physician's note).
 - Hospitalization.
 - death in the immediate family.
 - unusual circumstances approved by the principal.
2. Make-up work is graded by the class teacher (or the homebound instructor); grades are recorded in the grade book without penalty to students.

C. Unexcused Absence

Although students may choose to make up work following unexcused absences, the makeup work does not receive credit. Make-up work is encouraged so that students will profit from future instruction. Any exception to this practice requires the principal's approval.

IV. Homebound Instruction

The school counselor coordinates with the school social worker to process the necessary application for homebound instruction with a parent and the family physician and secures the approval of the director of social work and support services. After approval of the request for homebound instruction, the student is assigned a homebound instructor for the core subjects.

- A. Parents of students who anticipate an extended absence of at least four weeks for medical reasons may request homebound instruction as soon as they know the expected length of the absence. A physician's report must indicate the nature of the illness (e.g., hospitalization).
- B. The homebound instructor coordinates the homebound instruction with the student's classroom teachers. The student's grades are submitted to the school through the school counseling office.
- C. In cases of extended illness, the homebound instructor may be responsible for assigning nine-week grades.
- D. In cases where a student has a classroom teacher and a homebound instructor, quarter or final grades are determined by the teacher or homebound instructor with whom the student has spend the major portion of time. If the time amounts are equal, the classroom teacher determines the grade but includes the homebound instructor's evaluation.
- E. Makeup work is graded by the homebound instructor; grades are recorded in the classroom teacher's grade book without penalty to the student.

Withdraw-Pass and Withdraw-Fail

I. Withdraw-Pass and Withdraw-Fail

	<u>1st Quarter</u>	<u>2nd Quarter</u>	<u>3rd Quarter</u>	<u>4th Quarter</u>
Full-Year Course	No grade penalty. Nothing recorded on the record.	Record WP (withdrew passing) or record WF (withdrew failing) for the year.	Record WP or WF for the year.	Record WP or F for the year.
One-Semester Course	No grade penalty. Nothing is recorded on the record.	Record WP for the semester or record F for the semester.	---NA---	---NA---

- A. All withdrawals must be effected prior to computation of final grade.
- B. For the first grading period only, a student has five days after the date on which progress reports are sent home in which to drop a course without having a grade recorded.
- C. Middle schools do not calculate grade-point averages. However, if a high school credit course is taken by a middle school student, courses dropped are not counted in the high school grade-point average except when an F is received:
 - 1. for the final grade of a full-year course.
 - 2. for the final grade of a semester course.
- D. Unless there are unusual circumstances, a student may not withdraw during the final quarter of a course if passing the course.

CHEATING and PLAGIARIZING

I. Cheating and Plagiarizing

A. Cheating is academic deception. Plagiarizing is falsely claiming authorship. Cheating and plagiarizing are serious offenses.

B. Guidelines:

1. Teachers have the responsibility to:

- a) teach or review the correct use of sources when assigning work.
- b) structure conditions during testing to alleviate the possibility of cheating.
- c) specify the types of collaboration that are discouraged and those that are encouraged.
- d) teach students summarization of material and the distinction between summarizing and copying straight from the text.

2. Students have the responsibility to:

- a) avoid situations that might contribute to cheating or plagiarizing.
- b) avoid unauthorized assistance.
- c) use sources in the prescribed manner, including documenting reference materials by citing sources.
- d) Avoid plagiarism by:
 - using quotation marks for statements taken from others.
 - acknowledging information and ideas gathered from any source.
 - consulting faculty about any questionable situations.

C. Implications

1. Students who cheat and/or plagiarize are responsible for their actions.

Parent, student, school counselor, and administrator must be informed of any infraction involving either cheating or plagiarizing.

2. Appropriate consequences include:
 - a) an alternative assignment or recompletion of the original assignment.
 - b) a lowering of the grade or an F on the assignment.
 - c) a retaking of a test.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is a necessity for maximum school achievement. In addition, punctuality and dependability in meeting assigned responsibilities are personal behavior habits valued in our society. In order to help students in develop desirable behavior patterns, as well as to increase the student's classroom learning, FCPS requires that students be punctual and regular in school class attendance. While makeup work cannot substitute for missed classroom experiences, in cases of excused absences, makeup opportunity is provided and makeup work receives full credit; for unexcused absences, makeup work does not receive credit but is encouraged so that the student will profit from future instruction. Any exception to this practice would require the principal's approval. When attendance problems exist, the school system resources are made available to aid in solutions to these problems.

Students forfeit daily class grades for each day of unexcused absence. Parents are notified when two unexcused absences from a class or classes have accrued, and a conference is requested. Credit for the class or classes will be withheld until the conference is completed. When a student has three or more unexcused absences from a class during the same quarter, the student receives a failing grade for the quarter in that same class. Any exception to this practice requires the approval of the principal.

I. Excused Absence

- A. For purposes of credit and grading, excused absences include:
- illness of the student.
 - death in the family.
 - doctor's or dentist's appointment.
 - observance of a religious holiday.
 - suspension (except certain substance abuse violations).
 - other reason acceptable to the principal or designee.
- B. The local school prescribes specific procedures and recordkeeping methods and, in accordance with the most recent version of Policy 2232, Student Attendance at School, may seek approval for alternative attendance programs by submitting a request to the Division Superintendent for approval and concurrence by the School Board. However, the following guidelines usually apply: when it is necessary for a student to be absent from school, the parent or legal guardian should call the school to notify the person in charge of attendance of the student's absence and explain the reason for the absence. Such calls should be made each day of the absence, preferably between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. Each student who is absent from school for any reason other than for school business must upon return, or no later than by the day after returning, present to the principal a note from the parent or other responsible person, setting forth the reason(s) for the absence.

II. Unexcused Absence

A. Unexcused absences may include but are not limited to:

- all-day truancy.
- class truancy.
- missing a ride or the bus.
- prearranged absences not approved.
- family or student vacations.
- child care.
- Nonschool-related activities.

B. A student unexcused for his or her absence from school must report to the attendance office (or principal's designee) to obtain an admission pass, which must be presented to each class teacher and signed. Local school policy prescribes attendance procedures and recordkeeping.

III. Prearranged Absence

Approved prearranged absences are designated as excused. The principal uses professional judgment in making a determination based on the reasons stated in the written request for the prearranged absence. Such factors as the educational value of the proposed experience, the personal or family benefit resulting from the experience, and the impact of the absence on the student's academic progress will be given consideration in determining whether a prearranged absence is approved or not approved. Prearranged absences that are not approved are designated as unexcused.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

I. Right to Complain

Students who believe that conditions of the school or decisions made by staff members are not in their best interest may present complaints to teachers or school administrators, who shall make themselves available or schedule appointments to hear these complaints. The principal shall notify, in writing, the director, Office of Equity and Compliance, of complaints alleging discrimination.

II. Meeting With the Principal

If a student is not satisfied that a complaint previously presented to a member of the school staff has been resolved satisfactorily, the student or his or her parent may request a meeting of the student, parent, and principal. The principal may require the parent to attend and shall, following the meeting, promptly inform the parent in writing of his or her decision on the complaint.

III. Appeals to Cluster Assistant Superintendent

The principal's decision on a complaint may be appealed by the student or his or her parent(s) to the cluster assistant superintendent within two school days following receipt of the principal's decision. The parent's written appeal shall state precisely the reasons for dissatisfaction with the principal's decision and shall be limited to the matter under review. Upon receipt of an appeal from a parent, the cluster assistant superintendent, or his or her designee, shall promptly review the complaint and inform the parent in writing of his or her decision. The cluster assistant superintendent may, at his or her discretion, include a meeting with the principal and the parent as part of his or her review of the parent's complaint and shall notify the Office of Equity and Compliance of complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or intellectual ability. The decision of the cluster assistant superintendent shall be final.

Conference Planning Guidelines

- The teacher, counselor, or team:
 - Determines purpose of conference or objectives the teacher or team wants the student to meet.
 - Gathers pertinent data on the student's achievement.
 - Gathers pertinent data on the student's work habits.
 - Determines where the student is being successful or showing achievement.
 - Determines what motivates the student and what could be used as positive reinforcement.
 - Discusses what has already been tried to help the student.
 - Completes a parent conference form in preparation for the meeting as appropriate.
- Conducting the conference:
 - The teacher representing the team or the counselor contacts the parent to arrange the conference.
 - The conference begins with a warm welcome to the parent and the student.
 - The ethnic and/or cultural heritage of the family shall be respected.
 - One member of the teacher, counselor, or team should summarize the information collected so as not to overwhelm the parent with several teachers speaking.
 - The parent should be invited to ask questions and to provide input or information regarding the objective of the conference.
 - The parent should be encouraged to share what has been tried at home and whether it has been successful or not.

- There should be mutual agreement on the issue(s) to be resolved and the goal(s) to be set.
- The conference should focus on possible solutions or strategies to reach the goal or goals that have been set.
- Possible strategies should be discussed; the teacher, counselor, or team should discuss with the parent the best solution and confirm that the parent will provide support to the plan.
- The teacher, counselor, or team and parent should agree on a specific plan for the following two to three weeks (e.g., changes in behavior or achievement they expect to observe if the student is meeting the goal(s)).
- The teacher, counselor, or team should place a reminder on the team calendar or in a tickler file at the two-to three-week interval to ensure reconnecting with the parent by telephone or conference.
- The problem-solving cycle begins again with data collected as to the progress made and the next goal to be reached.

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT DEFINITIONS

MIDDLE SCHOOL INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT GRADE DEFINITIONS

This report offers an opportunity for better understanding of the student's current achievement. Please notify the school if a conference is desired.

ACHIEVEMENT

- A Consistently demonstrates accurate and complete knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies; applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
- B+ Regularly demonstrates accurate knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies, with minor needed improvement; applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
- B Demonstrates knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies with some improvement needed in accuracy and/or consistency in performance; applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
- C+ Demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies, but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to refine skills necessary to solve a variety of problems.
- C Demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies, but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire skills necessary to solve problems.
- D+ Needs additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, this is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level course in a sequence of courses.
- D Needs significant practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, it is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level course in a sequence of courses.
- F Has not demonstrated the basic knowledge of content and/or skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies and requires additional practice and instructional experiences in order to succeed. As a final mark, this student has not demonstrated sufficient knowledge to be promoted to the next level course in a sequence of courses.

WP Withdrawn Passing

WF Withdrawn Failing

I Incomplete: Student must make up grades by the end of the next grading period; otherwise, the teacher will convert the I grade to a letter grade at that time. An incomplete grade cannot be given as a permanent final grade.

NM No mark: Unable to assess this student due to short time enrolled in this class/school.

WORK HABITS (W/H)

S Satisfactory work habits

N Needs improvement in work habits

*Comments are aligned horizontally with the course to which they apply. Spacing will occur after a course with multiple comments.

MIDDLE SCHOOL INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT
FOURTH QUARTER



STUDENT	COURSE	TEACHER	WRI	W/CLASS	H	MS	GRADE LEVEL	REPORT PERIOD	FROM	TO
TEACHER COMMENTS* (see reverse side)										


Date

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT
FIRST AND SECOND QUARTER

		MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT	
STUDENT		GRADE	
REPORT PERIOD		FROM TO	
COURSE TITLE	TEACHER	COMMENTS <small>COMMENTS ARE ALIGNED HORIZONTALLY WITH THE COURSE TO WHICH THEY APPLY. SPACING WILL OCCUR AFTER A COURSE WITH MULTIPLE COMMENTS.</small>	
	ACADEMIC MARKS		WORK HAR- ITS
EXPLANATION OF MARKS		See reverse side for interpretation of marks.	
Signature of Parent or Guardian		_____	

PROGRESS REPORT GRADE DEFINITIONS

MESSAGE TO PARENTS

This report will be sent to you after the end of each nine-week period to convey information about the school work of your child. You are requested to review the report, discuss it with your child, and contact the school if you desire clarification or additional information.

The school may request that you sign the report and return it the next school day. The signature is not necessarily an approval of this report but is intended as evidence that the parent or guardian has examined it.

Division Superintendent

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT GRADE DEFINITIONS

ACHIEVEMENT

- A Consistently demonstrates accurate and complete knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies; applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
- B+ Regularly demonstrates accurate knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies, with minor needed improvement; applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
- B Demonstrates knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies with some improvement needed in accuracy and/or consistency in performance; applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.
- C+ Demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies, but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to refine skills necessary to solve a variety of problems.
- C Demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies, but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire skills necessary to solve problems.
- D+ Needs additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, this is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level course in a sequence of courses.
- D Needs significant practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, it is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level course in a sequence of courses.
- F Has not demonstrated the basic knowledge of content and/or skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies and requires additional practice and instructional experiences in order to succeed. As a final mark, this student has not demonstrated sufficient knowledge to be promoted to the next level course in a sequence of courses.

WP Withdrawn Passing

WF Withdrawn Failing

I Incomplete: Student must make up grades by the end of the next grading period; otherwise, the teacher will convert the I grade to a letter grade at that time. An incomplete grade cannot be given as a permanent final grade.

NM No mark: Unable to assess this student due to short time enrolled in this class/school.

WORK HABITS (W/H)

S Satisfactory work habits

N Needs improvement in work habits

MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMENTS

<p>A. Uses effective study skills. B. Participates responsibly. C. Understands content. D. Receives accommodations. E. Models honesty and leadership. F. Shows improvement. G. Bring and organize materials. H. Needs to use assignment books. I. Parent Conference Requested.</p>	<p>K. Needs to stay on task. L. Needs to complete homework. M. Needs to follow procedures. N. Inconsistent achievement. O. Improve knowledge of content. P. Needs to improve basic skills. Q. Needs to improve writing. R. Improve reading comprehension. S. Absences affect achievement. T. Stay after school for help.</p>
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MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL INTERIM MARK INFORMATION

1. Teachers send an interim for any student whose performance warrants a D+, a D, or an F or whose performance declines two letter marks from the previous nine weeks marking period.
2. Teachers are also encouraged to use interims to report improvement or outstanding achievement.
3. Under normal circumstances, a student should not fail a subject any nine-week period unless prior notice was given via a timely interim report, mailed or hand delivered by the student to the parent(s) or guardian(s).
4. Communication with parent(s) or guardian(s) about student progress is not limited to the interim report. Interims can be supplemented by phone calls to parent(s) or guardian(s).
5. Teachers will maintain, in the grade book, records of interims mailed or given to students.



MARKS CHANGE

Course Number	Section No	Course Title	Period	Teacher	Grade Level
Student ID		Last Name		First	Middle
From			To		
1st Quarter Mark					<p>Note to Teacher: Course Number, Section Number, and Student ID are printed on your class list.</p>
2nd Quarter Mark					
Semester Mark					
3rd Quarter Mark					
4th Quarter Mark					
Final Exam Mark					
Final Mark					
Date	Teacher's Signature	Approval	School Data Processor		

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