

Summary of Educator Feedback on Proposed Grading Policy and Regulation (Submitted 3/6/19 to the District)

Increased to weekly grade update required, and communication home as soon as student isn't performing at satisfactory level.

- This is basically an unfunded mandate unless more weekly planning time is built into the schedule to actually do this work.
- Parents already have access to the gradebook and can check it whenever they want, AND, there's nothing stopping the district from creating automatic notifications when students' grades drop below a certain level. Stop putting everything on teachers when the tech effortlessly does this work for us.
- IF this policy moved forward, additional dedicated planning time would have to be given in order to complete the new task. Additionally, clarification would be needed on how parents are to be notified? Phone, backpack? When is it the responsibility of the parent to check parent portal?

Minimum of 70% of grade on summative assessments. No more than 10% on homework

- There's a desire for clarification on what assessments would count as summative vs. formative. For example ANET exams are labeled as formative assessments on the BCPSS FAQ guidance document, so those should not count towards the 70% of the grade correct?
- SBG requires a completely different framework from how student work has traditionally been assessed in our district and a shift in how teachers, students and parents define academic success itself. Attempting to implement SBG within the existing structure doesn't change the current definition of success or facilitate the required culture shift. We work in a system that currently relies heavily on behavior and relative progress-based assessment. Moving to a true SBG system is a great goal, but we need to be really thoughtful about how we make that change. Mandating grades be 70% summative assessment will, in reality, result initially in more course failures for our secondary students when we look at our standardized assessment pass rates and our iReady data,
- "I think a lot of secondary teachers have no problem being tough on these standards if they're not held to outrageous responsibilities (ie you need to follow failing students home and help them with their homework while they curse at you). BCPSS is known for an "easy diploma," I think we're seeing results in the bizarre academic standards we have leech into their behavior, citizenship, and attitudes. Some students and families put in

more energy into arguing for a 60 than just putting energy into being a better student and earning a far higher grade.”

- “Our school has been on standards-based grading, 100%, for a few years now. It's interesting though, and has some good points, but in many ways it's tough on the teacher. In the past, I could count on homework and quizzes to be a main motivating factor but now they're largely not because they're not graded, only scored. You can put a minimum requirement on formatives, at least at our school (students must receive this sort of score on formative or they're not eligible for summative until they do) but that creates lots of work for teacher with parent contact, creating new formatives or summatives, etc. In theory it's really good in many ways (students no longer fail for a bunch of zeroes on homework but, like college, their grade is based on 2-4 summatives per quarter) but really hard for teacher when student loads are up around 150-160 with one planning period. Standards-based grading also eliminates late penalties, which teaches students some bad habits.”

Re-assessment of Students encouraged

- We agree with this philosophically, although support from the district would be helpful in creating re-assessments that use the same formatting as the original, cover the same standards, but use different (but similarly themed and leveled) texts, or different excerpts of the same text used in the original assessment.
- Another challenge with re-assessing is a matter of timing considering the urgency and challenge of staying on schedule with the new wit and wisdom lessons. Flex days could be built into the schedule on a biweekly/monthly basis for re-reaching and re-assessing

On a desire for differentiation across grade levels:

- These mandates are not good for early ed. Having the same grade book/system from PreK-12 doesn't work. What I teach in K and assess regularly is not going to work for high school. I would say at least PreK and K need a checklist type of report card, that yes can be accessed electronically. Number grades get different report cards. Elementary report cards should look different than middle and high school report cards. They are not all assessing the same thing so they should not all look the same.
- 1st quarter for early ed should be a parent conference. Report cards and progress reports should not start until 2nd quarter. Also for PreK the ELA could be their report card!
- “Right now conferences are optional. Making them more “mandatory” gives me as the educator the opportunity to bond with the family. I have 5 year olds that I have never met their parent!”

- See Baltimore County as an example of policy's adapting to the age/developmental level, <http://www.bcps.org/academics/grading/?fbclid=IwAR1MBbaTei70D4DVsjMbJVL5gqLivygwRWBsAbxueGfQZhkTOwljv7drive>

EL students:

- Big approval of the extension to 1 year before regular grading
- “As a former ESOL teacher, I think one year of N/A is a good change (it was only 2 quarters of N/A). I might suggest changing it to overall language level of 1.0-1.9 (under 2.0) as those are still very new beginners to learning English.”
- “The section for ELs looks good on paper, but in my opinion the district needs to do much, much more in preparing content area teachers (non-ESOL teachers) to understand EL accommodations and modifications as well as their obligations to provide them. Especially at the high school level, gen ed teachers struggle with understanding how to grade students appropriate to their language proficiency level and EL accommodations. When general education teachers focus on summative assessments they often seem to overlook the language included here. This has to be a strong focus from the top down to get teachers to understand and implement this. Also, N/A just doesn't work at the high school level when even 1.7 level students can be enrolled in graduation requirement courses such as math, art, PE, health.”
- If a child's language proficiency doesn't develop beyond 1.7, what happens to their grade the 2nd year they're in the US? Are they graded in a curve? Are they given partially translated assignments? The older students (or anyone, really) are when they move to a non-native language speaking country, the harder it can be to learn the language. This assumes that all EL will learn English at the same pace.
- What about 4th/7th graders? How would this impact choice?

Teachers will record grades using City Schools' online grade book of record

- What about if a school wants to use a different grade management system? For example JumpRope which is specifically designed for Standards Based Grading that many Expeditionary Learning schools use such as Lillie May Carol Jackson

On Standards Based Grading

- General approval of the move in theory, with some concerns:
- Unanimous opposition to the mandatory 50% grade. Standards based grading is supposed to show where they are with greater specificity and meaningfulness, this policy is the opposite of that
- Elementary should have skills checklists to show: what they can do independently, with support of a small group, or cannot complete...etc. If they want parents to have more

access and understanding of their kids grades provide an easy to use and understand checklist where it shows what they can actually do.

- There is ample research to show that when you provide narrative feedback and/or specific capacities relative to specific standards, AND a single number or letter grade, the narrative/standards based feedback is ignored and the letter/number consumes all of the attention. There is research that shows that even students who are successful cease reflection and their growth mindset upon seeing their high number or letter. The learning process stops.
 - We believe the most important thrust of this grading policy revision is to increase the clarity and meaningfulness of student learning to the students themselves, and their families. Ultimately we believe superimposing SBG on top of a percentage/letter based grading system is incoherent, and the latter will defeat the purpose of the former. A truly revolutionary policy would be to fully embrace standards based grading, and eliminate reductionist letters and numbers that lack meaning and are open to massive subjectivity.
 - This would shift the burden of responsibility to the community of students/teachers/parents together in collaborative conferences to decide at the end of the year who they are as a learner, reader, writer, mathematician, musician, scientist and person, and if students are ready to move on to the next grade or not. Such a shift would also create a less adversarial dynamic in the meetings and better aligns with the district's push for restorative practices.