

PowerSchool/PowerTeacher Grade Book

Guidelines and Expectations for KHS and PRM Staff

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Guidelines for Designing Effective Grading Practices

There are no hard-and-fast rules about the best ways to assess student performances through grading practices. Most teachers agree, however, that grades provide information on how well students are mastering skills and instructional content delivered to students in their classroom. The primary purposes for assessing a student's performance on skills and content mastered would be to:

- Describe clearly the worth, merit, or value of the work accomplished
- Improve the capacity to identify competencies in specific skills that enhances an individual's ability for self-evaluation with respect to work submitted
- Stimulate and support quality work from students
- Communicate the teacher's assessment of the student's progress
- Inform the teacher about what specific skills students have and haven't mastered
- Identify students for the consideration of placements into additional educational offerings that meets specific needs

Teachers, who grade carefully and consistently, reduce the number of students who complain and thus less time will be spent by the teacher in defending a grade. Many students and parents take grades very seriously and view a teacher's assessment of them as a sign of approval or disapproval. Because of the present day issues of accountability to student assessment, teachers need to develop assessment practices that communicate to students a clear rationale for their grading practices. Teachers who devise clear guidelines for assessing student performance will find the grading process more efficient, less ambiguous, and easier to report. The suggestions below are designed to help teachers develop clear and fair grading policies:

- 1. Teachers should grade on the basis of student mastery of skills.** Teachers should confine assessment and grading practices to a student's academic performance by eliminating the inclusion of classroom behavior, effort, attendance, punctuality, attitude, personality traits, or student interest in the course material, as criteria for grading practices. Teachers, who assess non-academic factors, obscure the primary meaning of the grade, as an indicator of what specific skills students have mastered. Communication of behavior, effort, attitude, etc. should be communicated to parents separately.
- 2. Teachers should try not to overemphasize grades.** Teachers should explain to their students the meaning of and basis for grades and the procedures they use to assess student performance. One good assessment practice is to inform students at the beginning of the year

through a course syllabus how much tests, papers, homework, and the final exam will count toward their final grade. Once teachers have explained their grading practices, avoid excessive talk about grades. These practices of continual reminders of grading practices may increase students' anxieties and have a negative effect on a teacher's instructional climate, especially when used as a reinforcement to poor performances.

3. Teachers should keep students informed of their progress throughout the school term.

Effective assessment practices should give a student a sense of what their score means after each paper, assignment, midterm, or project that is graded. Teachers should give a reference to grade obtainment periodically throughout the school year by giving students individual progress reports. Frequent progress reports has a potential to motivate students to improve if they are doing poorly or to maintain their performance if they are doing well. By keeping students informed throughout the term, you also prevent unpleasant surprises at the end.

4. Teachers should clearly state grading procedures in a course syllabus, and go over this information in class. Most students and parents want to know how a teacher's grade will be determined in terms of the weightiness of various tests and assignments, and the model of grading a teacher uses to calculate a final grade. The communication of how grades will be calculated should be clearly stated and include information such as:

- General grading process – are they graded using overall points, weighted categories, standards, or some other scale?
- Are their allowances for extra credit, late assignments, or revision of papers, and are these practices clearly stated in the grading policies?
- Will the teacher accept or refuse any late work? Will points be deducted according to how late the work is submitted? Will the teacher handle late work on a case-by-case basis?
- What assessments will be used in the calculation of final grades and what assessments are formative in nature?

5. Teachers should avoid modifying grading policies during the term. Teachers should avoid changing their grading practices once the standards for grading have been communicated to their class. Abrupt changes in grading practices may erode students' confidence in teacher fairness, consistency, objectivity, and organizational skills. If teachers discover that a change in their grading practices is important for student success then the teacher should communicate a complete explanation for the necessitated change in their assessment practices.

6. Teachers should provide enough opportunities for students to show you what they know. Teachers who provide students with many opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned get an accurate assessment of a student's proficiency on desired skills.

7. Teachers should record student assessment results numerically rather than as letter grades, whenever possible. To assure greater accuracy of assessment practices teachers should record tests, problem sets, homework by their point value when calculating final grades.

Minimum Expectations for Use of PowerSchool/PowerTeacher Gradebook

- Teachers at KHS are required to use PowerSchool to post **student attendance for each meeting period (block)**. Teachers at PRM are to use PowerSchool to post **AM/homeroom attendance only**.
- Grading policy should be outlined in writing and distributed to students in September, provided to parents at Back to School Night and also posted in the Class Content section of your PowerTeacher Gradebook. Once a grading policy has been distributed, a teacher should not deviate from it without notifying students and parents with adequate notice prior to the end of the marking period.
- Posting to PowerTeacher Gradebook**
 - For core academic courses¹, posting should occur **no less than once every two weeks**. You can post more often if you wish; there is no limit to how often you can post grades and assignments to your PowerTeacher Gradebook.
 - Use care when entering grades and be sure to check for errors.
 - Teacher comments can be added at any time but will be expected at mid-marking period.
- There should be similarities between assessment practices within content area/departments or grade-level teams. This is especially true for courses with multiple sections taught by different teachers. Communicate with your colleagues, while it is understandable that the classes are not going to be identical, they do follow the same curriculum and contribute to students placement, GPA, etc.
- Best practice suggests that students should be assessed often in a formative way and that summative assessments that contribute to the calculation of a marking period grade should occur an average of once per week and cover a range of assessment types. **Teachers at PRM and KHS are required to make sure that there are an adequate number and diversity of assessments on which student marking period grades are determined. Should there be a question about the calculation of a student's marking period grade, a teacher should be able to justify the grade without question.**
- Teachers will use the board-approved grading scale:

KHS

97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	F

PRM

98-100	A+
93-97	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	F

Additional PRM notations

X- Excused
 O- Outstanding
 S- Satisfactory
 I – Incomplete
 U - Unsatisfactory

¹ Courses that are long-term project-based (fine arts, technology, etc) may not be able to post as often as twice a month.