Brandywine School District
Grading Practices Information for Parents

The Brandywine School District Grading Guidelines are a result of two years of collaboration with a committee of key secondary educators and administrators. The guidelines are designed to serve as a secondary school grading practice, establishing consistency across the district in communicating students' achievement of the State Standards.

Grading Practices
1. Teachers will record all grades in eSchool (posting to Home Access Center)

2. The 10 -point grading scale will be used for grading student work.
   A= 90-100
   B= 80-89
   C= 70- 79
   D= 60-69
   F= 59 and below

3. Beginning in the year 2017-18, teachers will enter grades into eSchool as formative or summative measures. Weighting will be as follows:
   Formative: 30%
   Summative: 70%

Formative Assignments should be frequent and ongoing, completed in route to mastery. This would include work that is considered practice and leads up to students being able to show what they have learned. These assignments are checkpoints on students' progress and provide the opportunity for teacher feedback, help to identify any problems with understanding and aid students in meeting or exceeding the standards. Examples of these assignments may include but not limited to; quizzes, drafts of writing, homework (graded for understanding), classwork practice worksheets, questions at the end of a reading, graphic organizers, and concepts in the early stages of learning.

Summative Assignments are completed after sufficient instruction, practice and feedback are given usually requiring students to demonstrate mastery of essential understandings. This category may include but not limited to; tests, common district assessments, projects, quizzes, quarterly assessments, performance tasks, research papers, labs, projects started in class but finished at home, as long as formative feedback has been given.

Qualities of a Learner such as behavior, participation, effort and attitude will not be factored into grades. Grades will be based on evidence of what the students know and are able to do per the State Standards. The comments section on the Report Card is now replaced by the Qualities of a Learner rubric. The rubric measures these qualities such as effort and homework completion. This rubric should be reviewed with students at numerous times during the year (assume students are a 3 unless they are inconsistent/always late, etc.).

Teachers will inform students and parents of how grades will be determined in a particular class. This will include the weight that each component of the academic work carries, and should also outline grading criteria, procedures for redoing work for credit, and rubrics used for major assignments. The communication will take place in class, at open house, at parent conferences, via Schoology, email and/or sent home.

Recent Updates 2016-17 and Beyond
- The letter grade will now be determined from evidence using student "products", such as tests, quizzes and projects. It will still be used to determine course credit and GPAs.
- The comments section has been changed to now reflect "process skills" (Qualities of a Learner) such as Self-directed Learner, Quality Producer, Collaborative Worker and Respectful Citizen. These are things such as effort, timeliness and being a good citizen.
- The free text section below each course allows teachers to type in student-specific comments.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why and how were current Secondary Grading Practices developed? Historically, grading practices have varied widely among public schools. These varied practices created obstacles in the learning process and in students' motivation to learn. Our district-wide Secondary Grading Committee, comprised of staff and administrators, worked to ensure that the grades assigned to students in grades 6-12 would be consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning. Grading was identified as a focus for four reasons: 1) to better link grading and reporting practices to other BSD curricular, instructional, and assessment philosophies; 2) to address the need for consistent grading practices across our 6-12th grade levels and courses; 3) to establish a grade reporting system that is more accurate of measuring students evidence of what they know and can do; and 4) to align our grading with current research and best practices.

What are the New Secondary Grading Practices? Grades in core content areas will be defined by two categories:

1. **Summative.** These grades will comprise 70% of students' grade average in the course. (Summative category – this category will include tests, common unit assessments, projects, performances, and presentations.)
2. **Formative.** These grades will comprise 30% of students' grade average in the course. (Formative category – this category will include quizzes, formative assessments homework, and class work tasks.)

No grades shall be awarded to students for **participation** or for **work completion**. Grades shall only be determined based on the mastery of the learned material in the assignment, assessment or task.

Why are summative scores weighted heavier than formative scores? Summative scores are generally a reflection of a more comprehensive set of information requiring more recall and a deeper understanding of the concepts because of the level of thinking and learning that is being assessed. Also, in most cases, summative assessments are performed individually and

without support resources to reference during the answering of questions. This does not include supports, accommodations or modifications required by a student's IEPs or 504 plan. The updated guidelines provide teachers with a more accurate assessment of student performance and mastery of standards.

Why are these grading practices a better reflection of student learning? In a grading system where formative assignments are valued the same as summative assignments in the calculation of the final grade, a student could receive high grades on formative assignments that were performed in groups and/or with assistance from students and teachers, clouding the ability of teachers to judge whether students have mastered the targeted standards. Students' overall grades may not be an actual representation of their understanding of the concepts and subject. These guidelines provide teachers, parents, and students with a more accurate assessment of student performance.

What are legitimate purposes for grading students' work?
Purposes for grading students' work include but are not limited to:
- Providing feedback on learning and achievement to students, parents, and teachers
- Providing information that students can use for self-evaluation and growth
- Encouraging student growth and progress in learning
- Identifying students for available educational opportunities (e.g., courses or programs) and
- Evaluating the effectiveness of curricular, instructional, and assessment practice

How do the secondary grading and reporting practices more accurately reflect student achievement? Grades will more accurately reflect what students know, understand, and how they apply learning in meaningful ways. Grades will be based primarily on various assessments and performance tasks, which reflect larger experiences of learning. Also, when a score accurately reflects students' knowledge and skills, areas of needs can be detected so students can get extra help in these targeted areas.

Glossary of Terms

Qualities of a Learner –Behaviors, study skills and work habits that contribute to learning but are not included in an achievement grade.

Process skills– Criteria of skills that are associated with Qualities of a Learner (work completion, punctuality, organization, class participation).

Product – Criteria that is associated with academic performance (evidence from assessments and assignments; i.e. projects, tests, lab reports).

Philosophy of the Report Card- The primary goal of grade reporting is to communicate with parents and students about their progress in demonstrating achievement of the State Standards (letter grade) and effort invested in the learning process (Qualities of a Learner) for each marking period.

Formative Assignments/Assessments- frequent and ongoing, completed in route to mastery. This would include work that is considered practice and leads up to students being able to show what they have learned. It includes feedback to students to improve their learning. They are checkpoints on students' progress and provide opportunity for teacher feedback, diagnose any problems and are able to aid students to meet or exceed the standards. Examples of these assignments may include but are not limited to; quizzes, drafts of writing, homework (graded for understanding), classwork practice worksheets, questions at the end of a reading, graphic organizers, and anything in the early stages of learning concepts/content.

Summative Assignments/Assessments are completed after the learning experiences, usually requiring students to demonstrate mastery of essential understandings after sufficient instruction, practice and feedback is given. This category may include but are not limited to; tests, common district assessments, projects, quizzes, quarterly assessments, performance tasks, research papers, labs, projects started in class but finished at home, as long as formative feedback has been given.

Adapted from McKinney Independent School District Divison of Learner Support
Secondary Grading Guidelines. McKinney Independent School District, 7 Oct. 2011, www.mckinneyisd.net/departments/services/secondary_grading/. Accessed 12 Dec. 2016.

Assignment and Assessment Types

Content Area	Formative	Summative
General	Occur during the learning process Use quick questions to check for basic understanding Provide feedback during the learning process to improve learning Samples: Informal teacher questions Rough drafts Homework graded for accuracy Reflective journal	Occur after the learning process Provides the information a teacher needs to assign a grade Allow students to prove what they have learned Samples: Final copy of written work Tests Formal oral report Final journal