



School District of Grafton

Figuring out Grading Practices

A Guide for Students and Parents

Grades 6-12



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What is the purpose of grading students?

The purpose for grading is to engage teachers and students in the process of assessing progress toward targeted knowledge and skills in order to inform learning and instruction.

The purpose for final grades is to communicate to students, parents, and teachers the level of competency a student has achieved toward a standard or learning target.

The Grafton Professional Learning Community

The Grafton School District operates under a Professional Learning Community model. This model helps us to collectively share responsibility for educating all Grafton Students. We use the following questions to guide our work in this model:

What do students need to learn? Clarifying the essential student learning targets and outcomes including how students learn.

How do we know that they have learned? The development and use of common and coherent assessments to determine if students have learned the agreed-upon curriculum.

What do we do when students are not learning? How to collectively respond in class and out of class when students don't learn the agreed-upon curriculum.

What do we do when students have already learned a concept? How to collectively respond in class and out of class when students need more than the agreed-upon curriculum.

Guidelines for Grading Academic Achievement

Question:

How do we consistently and fairly measure student mastery of designated critical learning targets?

In Grafton we acknowledge:

Grading indicates mastery of a defined outcome in relation to a specific critical learning target. To accomplish this, teachers will define critical learning targets, identify what mastery looks like, and use an assessment to evaluate student mastery.

An **assessment** is an activity designed to communicate a student's mastery of a target. These assessments can be **formative** (classwork) or **summative** (exams). Students should be aware upon assignment if an activity is designed as a formative or summative assessment. A summative assessment occurs only after sufficient practice assessments and feedback are completed as to reasonably assure mastery. Effective feedback needs to be timely and meaningful. This means that feedback needs to be regular and specific, combined with guidance and directions for making needed improvement. Feedback is formative. It provides students information on the improvements they need to make to master a critical learning target.

What does Educational Research say is important when issuing grades for academic achievement?

- Clearly communicating to the student the purpose of the assessment
- Using rubrics and clear critical learning targets
- Providing timely, specific feedback on how to meet a critical learning target
- Providing notification to parents when a student does make expected progress toward mastery of a critical learning target
- Utilizing 3-5 summative assessments per critical learning target
- Matching assessment with instruction and practice
- Providing students an opportunity to practice and receive feedback prior to assessment of a critical learning target
- Providing students with critical learning targets and goals ahead of time (syllabus)
- Providing exemplars to view achievement levels
- Using "I" or incomplete and giving students the opportunity to redo work
- Evaluating academic achievement on mastery only
- Using multiple forms of assessment over time to determine clear and consistent mastery of learning targets (quizzes, tests, etc.)

Guidelines for Assessment

Question:

How do we use student work as an assessment of learning?

In Grafton we acknowledge:

Student work has four distinct purposes which should be communicated to students when an assessment is given. Formative, benchmark and summative assessments are used to monitor and report student learning. Corrective assessments are used to demonstrate on-going mastery learning.

What are Formative Assessments?

Formative assessments (**practice**) are designed to extend learning in the classroom or from the classroom if done outside of class, to enrich the student's knowledge base, and to inform teacher instruction. This type of work is corrected but is not used as a summative assessment and, therefore, does not factor into the final grade. Students must show evidence of expected learning on a formative assessment prior to taking a summative assessment. An example would be classwork or work done at home.

What are Benchmark Assessments?

Benchmark assessments (**graded**) are completed by students after formative assessments (**practice**) and build toward a future summative assessment. Students will receive a grade that will be reinforced or replaced by a summative assessment. When turned in by the deadline, work is given credit.

What are Summative Assessments?

Summative assessments (**graded**) are designed to assess whether a student has mastered a learning target. Students not satisfied with their performance on a summative assessment will be given an opportunity to complete a corrective assessment as described below.

What are Corrective Assessments?

- **Following a summative assessment, all students will be given one (1) opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards on a corrective assessment.** Corrective assessments replace the grade on areas of the assessment in need of improvement. A student who scores below a C on a summative assessment must take a corrective assessment.
- Teachers are required to offer students a corrective assessment on summative assessments.
- Corrective assessments are given according to a teacher-determined timeline and can only be taken after teacher-determined additional practice/assignments and instruction are completed.
- Departments will determine which assessments are summative assessments. Teachers will communicate to students which assessments are summative assessments.
- There is either credit or no credit. Corrective assessments are not given for extra credit and are directly connected to demonstrating proficiency of specific learning targets.
- Suggested requirements prior to completing a corrective assessment: The opportunity to take a corrective assessment is not automatic. A student must complete additional teacher assigned work and receive additional support from the teacher prior to taking the corrective assessment. These requirements should be consistent for teachers teaching the same course.

Suggested Minimum Requirements for a Corrective Assessment

- Completion with proficiency of all formative assessments and benchmark assessments that led up to the *original assessment*
- Original assessment signed by the parent or guardian

- Requirements for taking a corrective assessment signed by parent
- Corrections made to the original summative assessment
- Conference with teacher to review the standards at a teacher-determined time (before school, after school, lunch and learn, or during class)
- Corrective assessments should be completed within a fixed, teacher-determined timeline (e.g., 5 school days)

Suggested Additional Requirements for a Corrective Assessment

- Additional formative assessments with teacher feedback
- Student reflection on why he/she was initially unsuccessful
- Student reflection comparing and contrasting the original assessment with the corrective assessment
- Student-created plan for learning that addresses learning past material and keeping up with current class work

Final Exams:

Final exams are final. Exceptions may be allowed due to extenuating circumstances and are only available at teacher request with the principal's approval.

Figure 1 – Assessment Overview

Type of Assessment	Formative (For Learning)		Summative (of Learning)	
	Formative First attempts and practice of a learning target	Benchmarks Assessment of progress toward a learning target	Summative Assessment of learning at predetermined time	Final Exam (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY) Comprehensive Assessment of learning targets
% of Grade	0%	10-30%	50-90%	10-20%
Total of Benchmark and Summative will be 80-90% of the Final Grade				10-20%
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily Practice Reader's Log Discussion Questions Smart Board Work Exit Slips Journals Reader's Notebook Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lab Reports Quizzes Writing Pieces Practice Reflections In Class Performance Reader's Notebook Discussions Projects Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests Projects Presentations Papers Lab Reports Performances Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Assessments
Expectations Of Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the purpose of the assessments and share learning targets with students Build toward Summative Assessment - strategic, sequential Base assessments on Learning Targets Provide timely, meaningful feedback (very quick) Provide differentiated instruction Provide differentiated assignments Assign extended time outside of class for students not demonstrating sufficient progress Confer with students Communicate with parents regarding patterns of poor work habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the purpose of the assessments and share learning targets with students Build toward Summative Assessment - strategic, sequential Base assessments on Learning Targets Provide timely, meaningful feedback and grades Provide differentiated instruction Provide differentiated assignments Assign extended time outside of class for students not demonstrating sufficient progress Provide additional instruction as needed Confer with students Communicate with parents regarding patterns of poor performance, including access to assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the purpose of the assessments and share learning targets with students Base assessments on Learning Targets Administer district common assessments Provide timely, meaningful feedback and grades Provide Corrective Assessment as needed after a student completes additional formative assessments on a teacher-directed timeline. Assign extended time outside of class for students not demonstrating sufficient progress Confer with students Communicate with parents regarding performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the purpose of the assessments and share learning targets with students Base assessments on Learning Targets Administer district common assessments Communicate with parents regarding performance
Expectations of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all assigned work Actively participate in the learning process Demonstrate sufficient progress toward mastery of learning target with quality work Demonstrate best effort Must demonstrate success prior to taking a benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all assigned work Actively participate in the learning process Demonstrate sufficient progress toward mastery of learning target with quality work Demonstrate best effort Must demonstrate success prior to taking a summative assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all assigned Summative Assessments Demonstrate mastery of learning target Demonstrate learning with best effort the first time Complete Corrective Assessments if grade is a C- or below or below personal expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all Final Exams Demonstrate mastery of learning target Demonstrate learning with best effort
Expectations Of Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce expectations of quality work Provide structure, place and resources for student to complete work Support school policies and expectations for completing student work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce expectations of quality work Provide structure, place and resources for student to complete work Support school policies and expectations for completing student work Encourage and support students in their preparations for Benchmark Assessments Consistently monitor student progress and communicate concerns to student and teacher as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce expectations of quality work Provide structure, place and resources for student to complete work Support school policies and expectations for completing student work Encourage and support students in their preparations for Summative Assessments Consistently monitor student progress and communicate concerns to student and teacher as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce expectations of quality work Encourage and support students in their preparations for Summative Assessments

Figure 2 – Purposes for Assessments

Assessment User	Formative Assessments	Summative Assessments
Students	Am I improving over time? Do I know what it means to succeed? What should I do next? What help do I need?	Am I succeeding at the level that I should be? Am I capable of success? How am I doing in relationship to learning targets?
Teachers	What does this student need? What do these students need? What are student strengths to build on? How should I group students? Am I going too fast? Too slow? Too far? Not far enough?	What grade do I put on the report card? What students need to be referred to school counselors, principals, or special education? What will I tell parents? What will I tell other schools?

What does Educational Research say about the different types of assessments?

- Formative assessments must provide opportunities for students to respond to feedback.
- Formative assessments must provide opportunity to practice without academic consequence.
- The student must complete formative assessments before a corrective assessment is given. These additional formative assessments are determined by the teacher based on the results of the summative assessment. These formative assessments may include completing missing assessments, additional teacher-determined assignments or mandatory additional instruction with the teacher at a teacher-determined time. The reasonably determined timeline for these assessments is determined by the teacher.
- Parent/student should sign original performance, the request for a corrective assessment, and expectations for the course. This is not done for “points” but to inform parents/students of progress and how improvement will be made.
- The format or style of a corrective assessment may be different and more rigorous from the original assessment and, at the discretion of the teacher, may reassess on only the standards that were not mastered.

Guidelines for Student Work/Assignments

Question:

How do we correlate student work to high levels of learning?

In Grafton we acknowledge:

Student work must be designed to challenge students to think critically and deeply in multiple contexts. This work should enable students to transfer their knowledge and skills successfully into a variety of environments and opportunities.

What are the Student's Responsibilities?

- Set a time each day to do assignments.
- Complete assignments accurately and on time. Check work for quality and accuracy. If possible, explain the work that has been done to an adult.
- Ask questions of your teacher if procedures for assignments or the content of assignments are not clear.
- Plan ahead to make efficient use of the time that has been allotted to complete long term assignments.

What does Educational Research say regarding Assigning Student Work?

- The assignment should provide timely, meaningful feedback related to learning targets.
- The assignment should extend skills being developed in the classroom.
- The assignment should consider:
 - a) a student's ability level
 - b) strategies for differentiation
 - c) appropriate deadlines
 - d) the availability of resources (meeting with teachers after class/online)
- The assignment must be of value – not simply “busy work.”
- The assignment should require some independent thinking on the part of the student.
- Student work should never be assigned as a punishment.
- The assignment, whenever possible, should relate to the student's interests.
- Teachers should inform students whether an assignment is formative (practice) or summative (graded).
- Quality of assignments has a greater impact for learning than quantity of assignments.

Guidelines for Zeros and Incompletes

Question:

How can grades for missing and late work be appropriately assigned and communicated?

In Grafton we acknowledge:

The true intent of teaching is learning. Since the goal of teaching is learning, it is better to have students complete work than to simply assign a zero. Students must complete work to determine their mastery of learning targets. The consequence of not doing work should be to do the work. When turned in by the deadline, work is given credit.

The use of zeros distorts the final grade so that it is no longer a true indicator of mastery. Before a permanent grade is assigned, it is the expectation that all missing work must be turned in to be checked for mastery. Consequences will also be assigned as described in the teacher syllabus and conduct rubrics. Students are expected to complete all assigned work on time. If a student refuses to do graded assignments after repeated teacher interventions, a zero may be assigned. Summative assessments must be completed to earn credit in a course. If a student does not complete a summative assessment, he/she will not earn credit in a course.

Guidelines for the Communication of Grades

Question:

How will we effectively communicate learning?

In Grafton we acknowledge:

The following purposes should be communicated to parents, students and teachers on formal grade reports:

Quarter Report Purpose (Grades 6 – 8)

This document communicates each student's academic achievement and effort to the student, parents/guardians, and teachers. These results, based on each course's learning targets, provide feedback for student self-evaluation and motivation to grow and learn.

Quarter Report Purpose (Grades 9-12)

This document communicates progress in academic achievement to the student, parents/guardians, and teachers. These results provide feedback for student self-evaluation and motivation to grow and learn.

Semester Report Purpose

This document communicates final academic achievement to the student, parents/guardians, teachers, and post-secondary institutions. These results will be used in the cumulative grade point average.

Grading Scale

Grades should accurately reflect student learning in relation to standards and benchmarks. Grades should not be based on an accumulation of points. In order to facilitate common practices across the middle and high school, the following scale will be used for reporting student learning:

Letter Grade	Percentage	GPA
A	93 – 100	4.0
A-	90-92.99	3.667
B+	87-89.99	3.333
B	83-86.99	3.00
B-	80-82.99	2.667
C+	77-79.99	2.333
C	73-76.99	2.00
C-	70-72.99	1.667
D+	67-69.99	1.333
D	63-66.99	1.0
D-	60-62.99	.667
F	0-59.99	.000

Guidelines for Effort, Conduct, & Attendance

Question:

What role should effort, conduct, and attendance play in relation to measuring academic achievement?

In Grafton we acknowledge:

Educators will separate information about student academic achievement and performance from information about work habits and social skills. Educators will communicate information to parents about students' consistency in demonstrating work habits and social skills.

Most of what we learn in life is not graded. The purpose of grades is to report academic achievement. This does not minimize the importance of timeliness, cooperation, or citizenship. While these essential attributes are not graded, they are each necessary for the longer term success of our students and the betterment of our community. Teachers will assist students by developing reasonable timelines with age appropriate checks to determine if progress is being made toward the assigned critical learning targets. If a student fails to meet age appropriate requirements for handing in assigned work, the teacher will contact his/her parent and/or assign the student a specific, teacher-determined time to come in for additional work or extra help. In addition to these steps, if students fail to meet expectations of timeliness, cooperation or citizenship, they will be referred to their counselor or administrator for additional academic support or additional behavioral consequences.

Figure 3 - Grafton High School Citizenship Rubric

Grafton High School Citizenship Rubric			
Rubric Components	Component Description Scale		
	3 – Always meets expectations	2 – Often meets expectations	1 – Seldom meets expectations
Respect and Personal Responsibility How a student presents himself or herself to the teacher and class	<p>Attendance - No more than 2 excused absences.</p> <p>Punctuality – No more than 1 unexcused tardy or late to class.</p> <p>Classroom Materials – Prepared for class.</p> <p>Behavior - Follows behavior expectations outlined in the student handbook.</p>	<p>Attendance – All absences excused.</p> <p>Punctuality – Between 1-3 times unexcused tardy or late to class.</p> <p>Classroom Materials – Normally prepared for class. Occasionally needs to go to locker to get supplies or borrows from others.</p> <p>Behavior – Normally follows behavior expectations outlined in the student handbook. Corrects behavior when reminded.</p>	<p>Attendance – Has unexcused absences.</p> <p>Punctuality – Over 3 times tardy or late to class.</p> <p>Classroom Materials - Seldom prepared for class. Regularly borrows materials or goes to locker.</p> <p>Behavior – Habitually fails to follow behavior expectations outlined in the student handbook and needs to be directed by teachers or peers.</p>
Work Habits and Productivity What work a student produces for a class and how it is produced	<p>Work Completion - All work completed and handed in on time. Promptly arranges for and completes work after an absence.</p> <p>Engagement - Independently engages in classroom activities; demonstrates interest and curiosity in learning. Uses electronic devices appropriately.</p> <p>Work Ethic – Student achievement is reflective of student ability. Resourceful; seeks assistance when needed.</p> <p>Safety Rules – Always follows classroom safety expectations and guidelines.</p>	<p>Work Completion - Most work completed and handed in on time. Needs a reminder to arrange for and complete work after an absence.</p> <p>Engagement – Stays on task and follows directions. Needs few reminders to stay on task. Electronic devices occasionally a distraction.</p> <p>Work Ethic – Student achievement is reasonably reflective of student ability. Seeks assistance when approached.</p> <p>Safety Rules – Normally follows classroom safety expectations and guidelines. Immediately corrects behavior when reminded.</p>	<p>Work Completion – Very little work completed and handed in on time. Missing work. Does not meet deadlines.</p> <p>Engagement – Does not remain focused on classwork and needs regular reminders to attend to the classroom tasks. Electronic devices regularly a distraction.</p> <p>Work Ethic – Student achievement is below student ability. Student work is inconsistent. Does just enough to get by.</p> <p>Safety Rules – Seldom follows classroom safety expectations and guidelines and regularly needs to be reminded to follow rules.</p>
Collaboration and Personal Integrity How a student works with others in the classroom and interacts within the classroom environment.	<p>Team Work – Consistently provides ideas. Values and encourages all team members.</p> <p>Interaction - Always addresses students and staff appropriately; respects the physical environment.</p> <p>Courtesy – Always listens to others complete their thoughts and responds constructively.</p> <p>Attitude – Always communicates positively with classmates.</p>	<p>Team Work – Normally provides ideas and participates in all activities.</p> <p>Interaction - Normally addresses students and staff appropriately; respects the physical environment.</p> <p>Courtesy – Normally listens to others complete their thoughts and responds constructively.</p> <p>Attitude – Normally communicates positively with classmates.</p>	<p>Team Work – Does not participate or only participates after encouragement from peers or the teacher.</p> <p>Interaction - Needs to be reminded to address students and staff appropriately and to respect the physical environment.</p> <p>Courtesy - Does not allow others to complete their thoughts or responds inappropriately to others.</p> <p>Attitude – Does not communicate with classmates unless directed by the teacher or communicates negatively.</p>

Figure 4 – John Long Middle School Effort and Conduct Rubric

John Long Middle School Effort and Conduct Rubric			
Outstanding	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<p>Student exhibits excitement towards learning, hard work and models persistence and commitment to excellence.</p> <p>Student demonstrates all of the highest qualities expected at JLMS in the following categories:</p> <p><u>Respect</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People • Time (on task) • Materials • Behavior <p><u>Responsibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared • Seeks help when needed • On time <p><u>Organization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Work completed on time 	<p>Student demonstrates most of the qualities expected or demonstrates the qualities most of the time.</p> <p>Student generally models preparedness, participation, and quality work ethic.</p> <p><u>Respect</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People • Time (on task) • Materials • Behavior <p><u>Responsibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared • Seeks help when needed • On time <p><u>Organization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Work completed on time 	<p>Student may demonstrate some of the qualities or is inconsistent in the learning environment.</p> <p>Student is unprepared for class or uninvolved in class activities.</p> <p><u>Respect</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People • Time (on task) • Materials • Behavior <p><u>Responsibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared • Seeks help when needed • On time <p><u>Organization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Work completed on time 	<p>Student does not demonstrate the qualities needed to be successful at JLMS.</p> <p>Student demonstrates a negative regard for quality work and an inability/unwillingness to accept responsibility for personal goals.</p>