

Secondary Common Grading Practices

Department of Curriculum and Instruction Support



Student Tracking of Grades

Teachers are strongly encouraged to have students reflect on their learning, record scores, and develop a plan of action for improvement. Student tracking of goals and achievement increases student motivation and completion of work. Student grades can be viewed online using the Campus Portal at campus.ops.org. Contact your school to sign up for Campus Portal access for both families and students.

Checkpoints and Final Due Dates

For larger projects, student learning is chunked into manageable segments with mid-unit checkpoints and feedback. Final due dates are posted in Campus Portal.

Samples of Student Work

Samples of student work that are both strong and weak should be provided by teachers and examined by students so that expectations for advanced, proficient and basic levels of learning on the proficiency scale or rubric are clear.

Posted Scores/Grades

Scores of 4/Advanced, 3/Proficient, 2/Basic, 1/Below Basic, and 0/Failing are proficiency levels on an individual assignment or assessment. A grade is the culmination of all scores for the course. Scores will be updated every other week in Infinite Campus (district grade book). In addition, teachers communicate to students the updated progress grades bi-weekly. Check Campus Portal for updates.

Campus Portal Update

Student grades may be viewed on the OPS web-based Campus Portal. Schools send home quarterly progress reports and report cards to parents every nine weeks.

Group Grades

Group grades are not utilized.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit.

Bell Curve

Grading is never based on the bell curve. Grading on a curve is not based upon an individual student's work and should never be used.

Learning Goals

Teachers will provide students clear learning goals that reflect the content standards and how they will show their teacher mastery of the content. Teachers are asked to write learning goals using student-friendly language. This could be done by rephrasing the expectation as "I can..." The verb selection in a learning goal reflects the rigor of the learning.

Student Accommodations

Accommodations are provided to students with special needs without adjusting or reducing grades. Accommodations for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans may change requirements for quantity of work, time allotted, presentation format, type of evidence, etc.

Modifications

Modifications that alter course content or assessments are not used.

Transfers

Students who transfer from outside of OPS will have their grades from their previous school's averaged with their current scores to more accurately reflect the student's level of learning. Teacher discretion, with the assistance of school administration, is used when students transfer from one OPS school to another to determine placement and acceptance of prior credits.

Late enrollments for Out of School Students

Determination of grades for late enrollees (who have been out of school) will depend upon the number of days and assignments missed in that grading period that cannot be made up. Afterschool assistance will need to be considered.

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Overview

Grades for students enrolled in the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) are based on achievement of District-wide/State content standards, which specify what students should know and be able to do. Standards are the same across schools and classrooms for the same courses in the Omaha Public Schools. These common grading practices are intended to ensure students have the knowledge and skills necessary for the next level of a course, the next grade or readiness for college or the workforce.

Purpose and Intended Use

Common grading practices provide specific, clear learning goals for students, parents, teachers and administrators of what a student must know and be able to do to master the content of a course. They allow teachers to be consistent with best practices from grading based on educational research. Most importantly, common grading practices provide clarity for students and families as to what the grading criteria and expectations are between and amongst teachers, courses and schools in OPS.

Proficiency Scales

Proficiency scales are established levels of learning that are standardized at the district level for each course, and they are broadly written to allow teachers to use the same scale for multiple assignments/projects. Proficiency scales are available to students and parents by posting them in the classroom and publishing them in a course syllabus or on the teacher's website.

Level of Performance	Score	Description
Advanced	4	The student consistently demonstrates a thorough understanding of course content/grade level standard by making in-depth inferences and showing extended applications of the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs consistently at a high level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is above the expected course content/grade level standard(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceeds expected course content/grade level standard Applies skills and strategies in new and unfamiliar situations
Approaching Advanced	3.5	The student demonstrates partial success at showing a thorough understanding of course content/grade level standard by making in-depth inferences and applications of the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs with partial success at a high level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is above the expected course content/grade level standard(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates success toward exceeding course content/grade level standard Applies skills and strategies consistently in familiar situations, and at times, in unfamiliar situations
Proficient	3	The student demonstrates a proficient understanding of the expected course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is at the expected course content/grade level standard(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets expected course content/grade level standard Retains information and applies skills and strategies in familiar situations
Approaching Proficient	2.5	The student demonstrates an adequate understanding of the information for the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs with partial success at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is at the expected course content/grade level standard(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially meets expected course content/grade level standard Retains information and at times applies skills and strategies in familiar situations
Basic	2	The student demonstrates a basic understanding of the information expected for the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs the skills required for the course content/grade level standard at a basic level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially meets expected course content/grade level standard Retains information and simple processes in familiar situations
Approaching Basic	1.5	The student demonstrates some basic understanding of the information expected for the course content/grade level standard(s). The student struggles to perform the skills required for the course content/grade level standard at a basic level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially meets some of expected course content/grade level standard Retains some information and simple processes in familiar situations
Below Basic	1	The student demonstrates difficulty in understanding the information and performing the skills expected for the course/grade level standard(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs below expected course content/grade level on the standard(s). Has difficulty retaining information and applying skills and strategies
Failing	0	The student demonstrates little or no evidence of understanding the information or skills required for the course content/grade level standard(s).

Coursework Types

The three types of weighted coursework include Practice, Formative, and Summative. Coursework may be expected to be completed during class time or outside of school.

- Practice (0%)** assignments are brief. They are done to learn a new skill or to gain initial content knowledge, (e.g., student responses on white boards, a valid sampling of math problems, keyboarding exercises, diagramming sentences, checking and recording resting heart rate). Practice assignments are not generally graded for accuracy (descriptive feedback will be provided in class) and are not a part of the grade. Practice work is at the student's instructional level.
- Formative (35%)** assessments/assignments are done for learning. They are minor assignments, (e.g., a three-paragraph essay, written responses to guiding questions over an assigned reading, completion of a comparison/contrast matrix). Formative assignments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Descriptive feedback provides the student with the necessary information to improve their learning. Formative work is at the student's instructional level and/or grade level standards. It is suggested to have three to five formative assessments for every one summative assessment. Formative assessments may be assigned to be completed at home or at school.
- Summative (65%)** assessments/assignments are major end of learning unit tests or projects, (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with multimedia, science fair project). Summative assignments are graded for accuracy. Summative assignments assess the student's progress on grade level standards. Summative assessments may be assigned to be completed at home or at school.

Coursework Amounts

Coursework that is expected to be completed at home should average no more than ten minutes per day times the student's grade level. These minutes reflect the total minutes of coursework per day for all subjects. This is a broad estimate that will vary drastically depending on the courses taken, the speed of completion of tasks, student ability to work independently outside of class, the number of study halls and the amount of time provided in class for coursework.

Redoing/Revising Coursework

Students may be allowed redos and revisions of coursework for full credit during the unit of study based upon the teacher's professional judgment and evidence collected throughout the unit. Scores for student work after retaking, revising, or redoing work will not be averaged with the first attempt at coursework or assessment, but will replace the original student's score.

Missing Coursework

Work not turned in at all will be recorded in Infinite Campus (district grade book) as an M for missing, which calculates to a score of zero.

Late Coursework

Students are expected to complete coursework on time. Late coursework may be accepted for full credit until the end of the unit based on teacher's professional judgment and evidence collected throughout the unit. Accepted late work will not result in a reduction, and the M (missing) will be replaced with the score earned by the student. The teacher or school may make exceptions depending upon student circumstances such as prolonged absences due to illness.

Rubrics

Rubrics are teacher-created scoring guides that are specific to an assignment, a skill, or a project and are based upon the levels in the proficiency scale for that course. Rubrics should be available to students and parents by posting them in the classroom and publishing them in a course syllabus or on the teacher's website.

Professional Judgment in Grading

Teachers make informal decisions every day about student learning through observations, oral discussions, group interactions, practice work, projects, etc. Sometimes there is dissonance between how students test and the actual level of learning reflected in a grade. In such incidences, teachers may choose to exercise professional judgment to more accurately reflect the level of learning the student achieved.

Teachers should reflect on quarterly grades to make sure that the grade given accurately represents what a student knows and can do. Professional judgment decisions different from grading evidence should be documented and shared with families and building administration before grades are turned in for the grading period.

Leveled Assessments

All graded assignments, projects, and assessments will have opportunities for students to demonstrate advanced, proficient, and basic levels of learning to ensure rigor and that students can reach the highest possible level of proficiency.

- Level 4 (Advanced)** tasks allow students to apply their knowledge and skills to new or related situations or scenarios. Level four tasks start with application, analysis, and move into synthesis and evaluation.
- Level 3 (Proficient)** tasks (the target of instruction) consist of complex knowledge and skills and include application and analysis.
- Level 2 (Basic)** tasks are basic recall and simple skills which include knowledge and comprehension.

Weighting Assignments (Using a Multiplier)

When entering grades in the grade book, teachers may assign greater weight to some assignments. For example, the final exam may impact a student's summative grade more than a unit test. Teachers will have the option to use a whole number multiplier to weight both formative and summative assessments to a maximum of four. If a weight of two or more is applied to an assessment, this information will be communicated to students at the time the assessment is announced.

Grade Calculations

Students will receive a proficiency level of: 4/Advanced; 3.5/Approaching Advanced; 3/Proficient; 2.5/Approaching Proficient; 2/Basic; 1.5/Approaching Basic; 1/Below Basic and; 0/Failing on scored assignments and assessments.

Teachers will place scores for formative and summative coursework in folders within Infinite Campus (district grade book) that are weighted at 35% of the final grade for formative and 65% of the final grade for summative. The final score for each of these categories will then be averaged to obtain the student's final grade.

At the end of a grading period, the final scores in the formative and summative categories will be used to determine a student's overall grade for the course. The overall grade will be determined using the OPS Grading Scale.

OPS Grading Scale

A	=	3.26 – 4.00
B	=	2.51 – 3.25
C	=	1.76 – 2.50
D	=	1.01 – 1.75
F	=	0.00 – 1.00