

## **Grading System:**

Developing meaningful, fair grading practices is a universal goal for teachers and administrators. The establishment of guidelines serves as a foundation for enhancing sound decision making regarding grading procedures among teachers. Guided by professional literature and student/parent/teacher/administrative collaboration, this policy, along with supporting guidelines, is intended to identify the guiding principles of the West Allegheny School District grading and reporting system in order to promote district-wide, consistent implementation.

## **Philosophy:**

The West Allegheny School District defines student grading as summaries of school achievement assigned for a particular subject matter throughout grading periods. The District believes that the primary goal of grading and reporting is communication. Effective grading and reporting systems promote interaction and involvement among all stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, teachers, and administrators) in the educational process. Grading is an integral part of the instructional process when it considers multiple sources of student data. It can provide vital information that can be used to enhance teaching and learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of the District's instructional programs. Grading promotes the attainment of defined, content-specific learning goals and identifies where additional work is needed when it is directly aligned to the District curricula.

The District recognizes the multiple purposes and functions of student grades. Grades serve a variety of **administrative purposes** when determining suitability for promotion to the next level, credits for graduation, class rank, and student entrance into college. Grades also provide valuable **feedback to students and parents** about relative levels of achievement and expectations for future learning and college and career choices. They are additionally essential in the **instructional planning process** so that teachers can identify student strengths and weaknesses in order to meet specific instructional needs.

Reporting systems are utilized for **guidance purposes** in helping counselors to provide student direction regarding individual course and career recommendations. They are also useful in providing **student motivation** to continue their successful efforts in attaining good grades or to try harder to pursue success in school. Finally, grades serve as **employment criteria** in that prospective employers may want to use grades as a basis for selecting a new employee who has proven to be achievement oriented.

Grading is a complicated activity that requires considerable planning and skill. Continual reflection on the guiding premises of grading is essential when designing and implementing sound reporting systems that enhance student growth and achievement. The West Allegheny School District is committed to maintaining the integrity of its grading system by adhering to the fundamental principles that it has established.

## **GRADING POLICY**

### GRADING SYSTEM

5510

5510 The formal issuance of grades through symbols on a regular basis is authorized by the Board in order to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance, to inform the student, his/her parent/guardian, and counselor of the student's progress, and to provide a basis for bringing about improvement in student performance.

5510.1 The Administration shall develop and implement a clearly stated grading system to inform students and parent/guardian of the progress being made by the student in his/her educational program.

### **District Grading Practices and Guidelines:**

#### **District Grading Scale:**

90-100%= A

80-89%= B

70-79%= C

60-69%= D

59% and below= F

#### **Lowest Percentage For F Grades:**

If a student earns less than 50% at the end of a grading period, an instructional improvement plan will be developed by the teacher so that the student can make up to at least 50%. The actual number of points earned on each assessment/assignment will be recorded in Grade Quick (elementary) and Ed Line (middle school/high school).

#### **Determination of Final Grades:**

The four (4) nine-week grades shall be averaged into the student's final grade. Each 4 (9 weeks grading period) is weighted equally. Constancy in grading procedures is key to success with all students' success across all grade levels (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade). It also promotes CONSISTENCY for teachers, students and parents at each grade level. The final grade for a student will be determined using one of two methods, quality points or percentages.

When using quality points to determine a final grade, the following scale will be used.

**A** = 3.51 - 4.0

**C** = 1.51 - 2.49

**B** = 2.51 - 3.49

**D** = .51 - 1.49

**F** = 0 - .49

\*(When quality points are averaged to 0.5, 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5, total points will be used as a tiebreaker.)

*EXAMPLE QUALITY POINTS*

The FINAL grade for a student will be an average based on a letter grade point system. Grades – not percentages – are what determine a final grade for a student.

Letter Grade	Point System
A	4
B	3
C	2
D	1
F	0

FINAL Grade Calculation Examples:

#1 D C B D

Pts. 1 2 3 1 = 7 pts. Divided by 4 (9 weeks) = 1.75  
 (\* if above .50 round up to next whole number, so 2 = C)

#2 D D C D

1 1 2 1 = 5 pts. Divided by 4 (9 weeks) = 1.25  
 (\* if average is below .50 round down to next whole number, so 1 = D)

#3 B C B C

3 2 3 2 = 10 pts. Divided by 4 (9 weeks) = 2.50  
 (This example is between a B and C. Teachers must use total points for the year to decide the grade. This method should be used if calculations are at .50, 1.50, 2.50 and 3.50.)

*EXAMPLE PERCENTAGES*

When determining the average, teachers should round according to the rules of mathematics unless at 59.5%, 69.5%, 79.5% or 89.5%. Then total points are to be used as a tiebreaker.

65% = D

72% = C

73% = C

75% = C

67% = D

66% = D

62% = D

63% = D

67% = D

77% = C

75% = C

72% = C

279/4 = 69.75 = C Final

277/4 = 69.25 = D Final

278/4 = 69.5 = (Examine total points)

Students with three (3) F's will fail automatically unless the following condition is met: The teacher, upon reviewing the student's total year performance believes that the student in question has met the **MINIMUM** criteria for passing and the principal, upon reviewing each individual case, authorizes the passing grade.

### **Class Rank:**

Beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year, class rank will not be publicly reported. However, some competitive scholarships may require a student's rank in class. In such cases, parents may request that the class rank be reported. Student deciles will be identified for all students and a distinguished group of graduates will be recognized.

### **Student Speakers at the Commencement Ceremony:**

Beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year, valedictorians will no longer be selected at the West Allegheny High School. All graduation speakers will be chosen through a process designed by the high school administration and faculty. Valedictory speakers will be chosen from among the distinguished graduate group of students.

### **Extra Credit:**

Extra credit has to be related to the curriculum and should provide meaningful academic enrichment opportunities. Volunteering and community service are acceptable activities to count for extra credit. Students should not be penalized if they can not make evening or weekend activities; they should be given an alternative assignment to count toward extra credit. If parents are to sign a student test for extra credit points, students are to correct test mistakes. If a teacher chooses to use extra credit, it should be limited to raising the 9 week average to no more than 3%.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY**

### **PROMOTION/RETENTION OF STUDENTS**

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5540            The District believes that all children are different and that each child grows at his/her own rate, in accordance with his/her ability, environment, and past

experience. The District understands that all children may not meet the required grade level standards. The District feels, therefore, that promotion standards must be planned to permit flexibility for individual differences and to provide for the maximum yearly growth of each child. The basic criterion for promotion is the probability that the child will succeed in the next higher grade.

It shall be the policy of the District to develop and implement guidelines so that each child shall be moved forward in a continuous pattern of achievement and growth and in a manner that will endeavor to promote an acceptable level of achievement in relation to each child's ability and developmental level. Such patterns coincide with the system of grade levels established by this District and instructional objectives established for each.

### **Grade Retention Guidelines:**

Retention of students in the West Allegheny School District will be determined by the professional staff.

#### Elementary Schools

1. A rationale for each possible retention will be provided to the building principal by the classroom teacher in grades K-2. Promotion standards will be based on student performance, grades, and/or other indicators of academic achievement. Three letters will be sent to parents with recommendations for possible retention. These letters are sent in March, April, and May. The final letter will require a parent signature accepting or rejecting the recommendation. Parents make the final determination regarding retention.
2. A rationale for each possible retention will be provided to the building principal by the classroom teacher in grades 3-5. Promotion standards will be based on student performance on district and state assessments, grades or other indicators of academic achievement. A student will be required to attend summer school, receive tutoring by a certified program and/or teacher during the summer, or be retained if he/she fails math and/or reading.
3. Teacher's position regarding retention will be communicated to parent(s) in a regularly scheduled conference. If a conference is not possible, communication will be by phone or certified mail. It is the responsibility of the teacher(s) to identify students struggling and implement early interventions before retention is considered. Tutoring programs before or after school, flexible grouping, and

resource programs utilized, as well as, evaluation (mid-year) with a developed action plan must be in place.

4. If there is a disagreement regarding retention between teacher(s) and parent (s) the building principal will arbitrate the decision.
5. Students who have already failed one year will be re-evaluated in terms of maturation, his/her reading and math scores, his/her potential abilities and other pertinent factors that may result in a social promotion by the building principal.

## Middle School

1. Promotion standards will be based on student performance on district and state assessments, grades or other indicators of academic achievement.
  - a. A student will be required to attend summer school or be retained if he/she fails math, reading, and/or English.
  - b. A student who fails science or social studies must attend summer school or be retained.
2. Teacher's position regarding retention will be communicated to parent(s) in a regularly scheduled conference. If a conference is not possible, communication will be by phone or certified mail. It is the responsibility of the teacher(s) to identify students struggling and implement early interventions before retention is considered. Tutoring programs before or after school, flexible grouping, IST/SST and special services utilized, as well as, evaluation (mid-year) with a developed action plan must be in place.
3. Students who have already failed one year will be re-evaluated in terms of maturation, his/her reading and math scores, his/her potential abilities and other pertinent factors that may result in a social promotion by the building principal.

## Senior High School

1. In order to pass from ninth to tenth grade, a student must pass 9<sup>th</sup> grade English and achieve a minimum of 6.6 credits.
2. In order to pass from tenth to eleventh grade, a student pass 10<sup>th</sup> grade English and achieve 13.2 cumulative credits.
3. In order to pass from eleventh grade to twelfth grade, a student must be able to schedule the required subjects and credits (26.25) that will permit him/her to graduate in the upcoming school year. The 26.25 credits required for graduation will include:
  - 4.0 Credits of English
  - 3.0 Credits of Social Studies
  - 3.0 Credits of Science
  - 3.0 Credits of Math
  - 1.25 Credits of Health and Physical Education
  - 2.0 Credits of Arts and Humanities
  - 9.0 Credits of Electives
  - 1.0 Credit of Technology/Study Skills
  - 26.25 Credits for Graduation
4. It is the responsibility of the teacher(s) to identify students struggling and implement early interventions before retention is considered. Tutoring programs before or after school, flexible grouping, SST and special services utilized, as well as, evaluation (mid-year) with a developed action plan must be in place.
5. Teacher's position regarding retention will be communicated to parent(s) in a regularly scheduled conference. If a conference is not possible, communication will be by phone or certified mail.

