

## GHS Grading Practices FAQ

### Key Concepts

**Formative Assessment** - Assessment for the purpose of learning

**Summative Assessment** - The final evaluation, usually quantitative in practice, of the degree to which the goals and objectives of a program have been attained \*(Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

**Rubric** - An established set of criteria for scoring or rating students' performance on assessments, portfolios, writing samples, or other performance tasks

**Standard** - Defines the level of skill students must demonstrate on the learning outcome

**Success Criterion/Criteria** – A success criterion (plural = criteria) describes the expected degree to which the learner must reach in order to be successful in the learning intention. When quality is expected (vs. simple completion), success criteria are written using qualitative language designed to indicate levels of performance \*(Adapted from the Assessment Reform Group)

**Level up or Upgrade** - After an initial assessment, students are given targeted feedback and given the opportunity to improve their work as it relates to a target, standard, or rubric.

**Grading Practices** - Within the classroom, individual teachers (or group of teachers) have practices that they can utilize which may include assessment design, gradebook setup, and how they provide feedback and reporting.

**Grading Policies** - Board approved policies that have been read, reviewed, and passed by the school board of the Greenfield Schools.

**Grading Procedures** - Practices that the school uses that are uniform from classroom to classroom. This includes semester grading, the equal interval scale, and grading that is based on a standard/target/rubric.

### General Questions

Why are we working to improve our grading practices?

As instructional approaches in the classroom evolve from looking at what students know, to how students can apply what they know, it is critical that our reporting system aligns with these instructional practices. The traditional grading scale has a focus on what a student might have earned (points for completing homework, extra credit, points on tests, etc.). Our move to an equal interval scale PLUS a focus on performance assessments will allow us to measure and report on student learning as it relates to standards and success criterion not just an average of points earned, thus providing an accurate picture of student learning.

How will changes in grading affect college acceptance?

Since there is no change in letter grades, GPA, or transcript there is no impact on college acceptance. It could be argued that since equal interval grading is a better representation of student learning that our students will be better prepared and equipped for college, career, and beyond. Colleges do have their own acceptance criteria that very rarely mirrors how high schools determine and report grades. It is crucial that students and parents know and understand the individual criteria for each university. Your school guidance counselor is an important and critical asset that you should contact if you have these types of questions.

What other districts are implementing these types of grading practices and procedures?

Surrounding schools that use this approach - MPS, Wauwatosa, Waukesha, Muskego, New Berlin, Whitnall, Franklin, Pewaukee, Hartford Union, and Swallow School.

How will these grading changes affect student GPA's and or transcripts?

The changes in grading at Greenfield High School do not change any of our policies on GPA and transcript. Letter grades will remain on the transcript and GPAs will continue to be calculated the same way that they have in the past.

What is the purpose of grading?

The central purpose of grading and reporting is to communicate information regarding student growth, learning and achievement.

What is different as a result of changes in the grading?

As we move forward, the most visible change is that the grading scale is changed from a traditional 100% scale to a Four Point Equal interval Scale. This scale allows teachers the ability to accurately assess the level of student learning as it relates to a standard, learning target, or success criterion. The changes in grading help foster clearer expectations from teachers, multiple opportunities to practice prior to the final demonstration of learning, and targeted feedback to help upgrade efforts. As previously stated, letter grades will still be given, GPA's will be formulated, and grades will communicate learning as opposed to a compilation of points.

## **Grading Procedures**

How is a semester grade calculated?

Traditionally grading periods have been broken down into two quarters that then equalled a semester. In our new procedure the semester is cumulative. In the past students that had done poorly in the first quarter may mathematically have little chance to pass the semester. This change allows for students to demonstrate growth over time and teachers can put more emphasis on where a student is at during a final demonstration of learning.

What does it mean to "level up"?

Leveling up a student's work is simply a series of steps to improve a final demonstration of learning. In most cases, students are guided through a series of steps to complete work (or a stage of work - for example an outline or rough draft) and then receive targeted feedback from students and/or the teacher in order to improve their work. The number of attempts provided to improve work and the time-line for those opportunities will vary based on student need. Often times, a student will be required to continue to "level-up" their work until they reach a minimum acceptable level of mastery for that assessment.

## Grading Practices

How do in-class assessments change?

For the past few years teachers have been changing assessments in classes. As assessments continue to evolve from the memorization of facts and understanding of information to the application of knowledge, students will be assessed in a balanced way that has a focus on learning.

How do teachers determine grades?

Teachers use a variety of instructional practices in their classes. These practices lead to a differing types of formative and summative assessments that are based on a class standard, learning target or success criterion. Grades should be determined by a variety of these different types of assessments that gauge what levels of learning occurred in classes.

Are retakes allowed?

Teachers are allowed to have practices in class that would give students the opportunity to have a retake. This does NOT mean that students have an open opportunity to retake assessments whenever during the semester. Most teachers have a set period of time that a retake can take place in and also may have required steps to re-learn the material that must be completed prior to being given a retake opportunity. Teachers should have practices in place for students and parents to know and understand when retakes are available.

How do students know how to earn a "4" or a "A" in their classes?

For any score in a performance assessment (for example - a paper, a project, a lab, etc.) students should have access to a rubric that would allow them to know and understand the success criteria for that assessment. The rubric should be explained to the students early in the process of completing the performance assessment. Students should use this rubric as a way to direct their own progress during completion of the assessment.

Why would a teacher use a rubric?

Rubrics are used to give students a clear picture of the success criteria, standard, or target that is being used to assess student work. Teachers use rubrics as a way to give students an accurate assessment of their work while being able to reference that work against a standard, learning target, or success criterion. Feedback is also focused on learning when rubrics are established and utilized.