



# HSD Grading and Assessment Practices: What, Why, How

Parent Presentation, 11/10/14

## Changes in Grading and Reporting Guidelines: 2013-14

- Changes in grading and assessment practices were initiated at the start of the 2013-14 year
- The emergent needs for change can be traced back as far as 2007-08, when the district ratcheted up its focus on best practices in instruction and assessment
- **Concern** – grading and assessment practices varied widely across the district ... we needed to:
  - Achieve *greater consistency* in practice system-wide
  - Ensure achievement grades accurately represent what they are intended to report ... *academic achievement*

## Example Concerns

**Across the system, we found the following issues that impacted consistency and validity of achievement grades:**

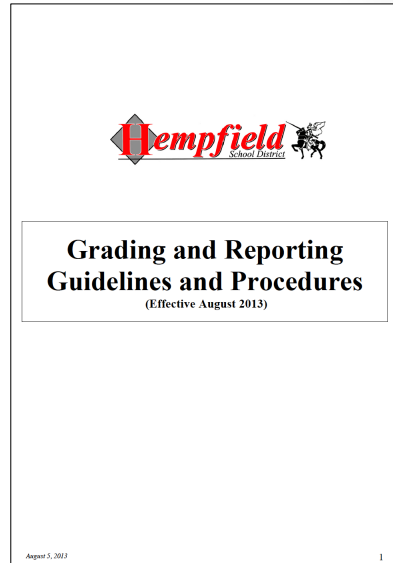
- Work graded for completion rather than accuracy (potential for grade inflation)
- Class participation included in academic grade when not involved in measuring achievement
- Amount of points teachers awarded for formative work vs. summative work varied widely
- Teacher practices related to make-up/late work and extra credit varied significantly (pts deducted for late work, etc.)

## What's the concern?

Determination of grades for a student in the same grade level and/or course varied widely across the system, depending on which teacher or building was educating the student ...

*An "A" in Algebra I for a student coming from one teacher/building could mean very different things compared to a student coming with an "A" from another teacher/building with respect to what they know, understand, and can do! (with implications for continuing forward in course work in a subject area from year to year)*

- **During the 2012-13 year**, the district convened a K-12 committee comprised of more than 30 professionals to:
  - **Review** the district's grading and reporting guidelines and procedures
  - **Examine the research** regarding best practices
  - **Make recommendations** to the administration for changes needed
- **Changes were published** in a document that was posted to the website after a letter went home at the start of the year



## HSD Core Beliefs: Grading and Reporting

- No single grade or symbolic representation can accurately reflect student achievement/progress and soft skills development (work/social habits) ... **multiple methods for providing feedback are necessary**
- **Academic grades** need to accurately reflect student achievement/mastery of standards and concepts outlined in course KUDs
- **Feedback needs to accurately reflect** student progress or growth with respect to achievement and soft skills development
- Feedback related to academic achievement and growth needs to **inform instructional decision-making and classroom practices**

## Changes for 2013-14

### 3-Pronged Report Cards K-12:

- A **student's academic grade (prong 1)** will be calculated using the percentage designations outlined in this document:
  - **Grades 7-12:** 70% Summative Assessment Data - 30% Formal Formative Data
  - **Grades 3-6:** 60% Summative Assessment Data - 40% Formal Formative Data
- **Feedback on Work Habits (prong 2)** provided on all report cards grade K – 12.
- **Narrative comments (prong 3)** utilized along with coded comments on all report cards grade K – 12.

**Guidelines regarding Cheating/Plagiarism and Extra Credit implemented.**

## Formative vs. Summative Assessments

- **Summative Assessments** evaluate achievement at the end of a defined period of instruction (natural breakpoints within units or at the end of a unit).
  - Are designed to produce clear data regarding student accomplishments at key points in a course/grade level ... ***What they know, understand, and can do relative to the standards*** established for the unit/course:
    - Unit Tests
    - Midterm or Final Exams
    - Final projects or portfolios (paper, artwork, writing sample, etc.)
    - Final performances or demonstrations

## Formative vs. Summative Assessments

- **Formative Assessments** are tools/processes teachers use to evaluate student progress toward learning goals (KUDs) along the way within a unit or course.
  - Designed to provide info to students about their progress toward learning goals and help teachers make educational decisions and adjust instruction
  - **Informal Formative Assessments** – *are not graded with a formal number/letter ... HW checked for completion, Q & A during class, exit tickets, etc.*
  - **Formal Formative Assessments** – *graded* but do not carry as much weight as a summative assessment as students (= advanced practice, “temperature check”) ... HW graded for accuracy, quizzes, independent classwork, etc

## Why the Summative/Formative Percentage Breakdown?

- Summative assessments conclude an instructional segment, when it is necessary to determine to what level students have achieved the standards (KUDs) ... *carry more weight because all instruction has been provided, all practice has occurred*
- Formal formative assessments are done after ample practice occurs and are included in the overall grade to:
  - Ensure that a student’s marking period/course grade is not based on too small a number of grades (think about college courses – course grade may be based on 2-3 grades only)
  - Acknowledge and emphasize the importance of the work done by students *during* the unit of study
- Elementary percentage (60-40%) places less emphasis on high stakes summative assessments than at the secondary level (70-30%) ... more emphasis on process

## Why not calculate total points earned divided by points possible?

- Taking the total points earned and dividing by the total points possible does not work to figure out a child's grade in this system ...
- Example:
  - 10 HW assignments, 5 pts apiece graded for accuracy (FA)
  - 2 quizzes, each 25 points – done one third and two thirds of the way through the unit (FA)
  - 1 Unit Test, done at the end of the unit that counts 50 points (SA) ...

In the example, the formative assessments add up to 100 points = twice the value of the summative assessment at 50 points. This is particularly concerning because:

- No guarantee that the HW was done independently.
- Student quiz scores may not be ideal, as learning is still in progress during the unit.

## How do I calculate my child's grade in this system?

### Secondary:

$$(\text{Form Assess Avg} \times .3) + (\text{Summ Assess Avg} \times .7) = \text{Grade}$$

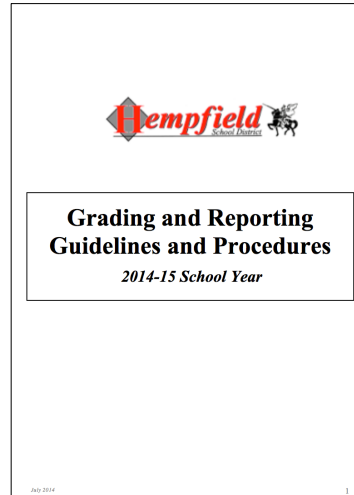
### Elementary:

$$(\text{Form Assess Avg} \times .4) + (\text{Summ Assess Avg} \times .6) = \text{Grade}$$

***See handouts for examples***

## Whats new for 2014-15?

- Enhanced *Cheating/Plagiarism* language
- Newly developed *Electronic Device Protocol* to be applied in assessment situations
- Updated Language regarding the resolution of Incompletes due to Make-Up and Late Work
- Revised timeline for the implementation of Retests and Redos



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### Elementary Education

#### Philosophy

The years spent in elementary school are very important to the long-term development of each child, for it is during these years that most children are first introduced to a diverse set of formal learning processes, forming the foundation on which the rest of their school career will be built. It is the objective of the Hempfield Elementary Schools to engage students in learning experiences that are positive and growth-focused. To accomplish this aim, we strive to provide students with challenging, developmentally appropriate instruction and the support necessary to build the strong foundation needed for success now and in the future.

Our district's elementary program includes learning experiences in language arts, mathematics, science, health, social studies, art, music and physical education. Teachers work very hard to develop relationships with students and to gather information regarding interests and background experiences that can be used to tailor learning experiences to facilitate growth of the "whole child." A rich diversity of guided learning experiences focused on standards-based instruction and each student's social and emotional growth constitute the "backbone" of our elementary program.

Members of our elementary staff look forward to working cooperatively with parents to cultivate a positive and rewarding experience for our students. We urge parents to take an active interest in school activities through attendance at school functions. We also request that parents make their child's regular attendance of school a top priority; because the correlation between attendance and student success at school is so strong, we believe it is essential that regular attendance be maintained so that our students can fully realize the benefits of our education program. Through a

### Elementary Info

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#### Resources

- [14-15 Elementary Handbook \[PDF\]](#)
- [Grading & Reporting Guidelines \[PDF\]](#)
- [Kindergarten Information](#)