TEAM BCPS

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GRADING & REPORTING
PROCEDURES
MANUAL

Division of Curriculum
and Instruction

Developing lifelong learners through literacy

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BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRADING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

*Prepared under the direction o*f

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INTRODUCTION AND DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY

One of the most prominent topics of national discourse in education is effective and equitable grading practices. In the spring of 2014, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) established a Grading and Reporting Committee for the purpose of revising Board of Education Policies 5210 and 5220, which were consolidated and renamed Policy 5210 Grading and Reporting. Additionally, the committee was charged to develop districtwide procedures and practices that would ensure effective, equitable, and consistent implementation related to this policy. The committee consisted of teachers, administrators, community members, and central office staff. The guiding question leading the committee's work was, *How confident are we that the grades assigned to our students are consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning?* (O'Connor, 2011). BCPS' mission to ensure that all students possess and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be globally competitive graduates begins with a grading and reporting structure which ensures consistent and equitable practices. To this end, the committee worked collaboratively to develop grading and reporting core beliefs, a purpose, guiding practices, and procedures which will support teachers and administrators in decision-making as the district moves forward, focused intentionality towards truly effective grading and reporting practices.

Through Policy 5210, the Board of Education recognizes the need for processes and procedures to guide teachers' grading and reporting practices.

Our Vision

Baltimore County Public Schools will be among the highest performing school systems in the nation as a result of creating, sustaining, and investing in a culture of deliberate excellence for every student, in every school and in every community.

Our Core Beliefs

- Learning is our core purpose.
- Effective teaching is the most essential factor in student learning.
- Effective leaders support learning and optimum performance at all levels.
- BCPS is committed to ensuring that every student learns and succeeds, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability.
- Every student will be successful when provided high expectations and sufficient, appropriate supports.
- Organizational development is essential to BCPS' becoming a world-class school system.
- Trusting relationships and commitment to our core values will foster learning at all levels.
- Input from students, parents, employees, community members, and all BCPS stakeholders is essential.

Our Purpose

BCPS commits to all stakeholders to provide *equitable, accurate, specific, and timely* information regarding student progress towards agreed-upon common course expectations, as well as feedback for next steps and growth areas. Grades will communicate what students know and can do.

Equitable	The same work, completed in two different classrooms, should receive the same grade.
Accurate	Grades are based solely on achievement, which means other factors like behavior and attendance are not used to calculate a grade.
Specific	Grading practices should be so clear that students should be able to tell teachers what grade they have earned, even before the teacher calculates it.
Timely	Feedback to students is so timely that students can actually use that feedback right away to improve their performance on tests and assignments.

Our Guiding Practices

1. Grading practices must be supportive of student learning.
2. Marking-period grades will be based solely on achievement of course or grade-level standards. Classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported separately using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators.
3. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
4. Grades will be based on a body of evidence.
5. A consistent grading scale will be used to score assignments and assessments in the learning management system.
6. Accommodations and modifications will be provided for exceptional learners.

GUIDING PRACTICE 1: Grading practices must be supportive of student learning.
The primary role of every educator is to promote learning; therefore all grading practices will be established to support student motivation to learn.

As we begin to think about our grading practices, we always need to start by asking ourselves does this practice promote and motivate student learning?

Research on the connection between student motivation and learning has focused on three basic types of mindsets or learning orientations that students develop while in school. Students tend to develop a performance/ego orientation, a task-completion orientation, or a learning orientation (Ames, 1992; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Halvorson, 2012).

Performance/Ego Orientation
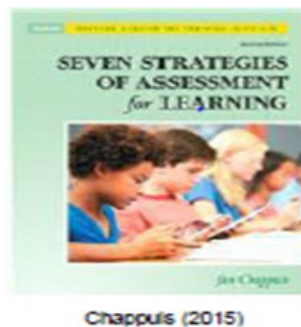

Task-Completion Orientation

Learning Orientation

As outlined in Jan Chappuis' book *Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning* (2015), students with performance/ego orientations tend to be motivated by the grades they achieve or the number of points they earn on an assignment, their rankings compared to other students, and extrinsic rewards such as honor rolls or school awards. Students with task-completion orientations tend to focus on getting the assignments completed and turned in. Traditional grading practices tend to positively reinforce both performance/ego and task-completion orientations. In contrast, students who develop **learning orientations are motivated by the actual learning experiences**. Their rewards arise from the challenges of acquiring and applying new knowledge and skills and showing progress (Chappuis, 2015).

Chappuis (2015)

While students may possess a combination of all three types of orientations, those motivated primarily by performance goals or task completion tend to lose motivation and confidence when faced with difficult academic challenges or when set back by failures. Students with a performance orientation state, "I knew I was going to fail anyway," or "I don't have enough points to earn an A so why try?" Students with a task-completion orientation state, "When is it due?" and "How long will it take to complete?" Often earning points or just getting the work completed becomes more important than learning the information.

In contrast, students who are motivated by mastering learning goals persevere in the face of such challenges. Difficult tasks or setbacks do not diminish motivation or self-esteem. Students with learning orientations—or growth mindsets—are more likely to choose more difficult but rewarding ways to demonstrate learning (Chappuis, 2015). These students believe effort will lead to eventual success, and thus they develop a willingness to try and persist.

Our grading practices must support developing and enhancing learning orientations in all students.

Steps for Promoting a Learning Orientation

Promoting a learning orientation begins by being transparent about what students will be learning, using clear learning targets and success criteria or "I can" statements at the beginning of every unit. By connecting the "I can" statements to the standards and learning outcomes, students will begin to understand "where they are going" in terms of their learning progression and intended outcomes. It is also important to communicate with students often about the specifics of their work and learning. By infusing formative assessment into everyday instruction and providing actionable feedback along the way, students become increasingly self-aware, and

the feedback helps to increase hope, efficacy, and student achievement (Stalets, 2016). Research shows that providing specific, timely feedback tied to standards promotes learning and closes achievement gaps.

The following are strategies for effective feedback:
- Give descriptive oral and/or written feedback during instruction.
- Align the feedback to "I can" statements and intended learning outcome.
- Provide descriptive, non-evaluative feedback that leads to next steps.

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Research & Rationale
"How Am I Doing?"
Chappuis (2012)
Educational Leadership

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To further motivate students, while also reaching the highest levels of the Danielson Framework, teachers can promote students' learning orientation by teaching them to self-assess, reflect, and use metacognitive strategies during the learning process.

- Students should be asked to reflect on and articulate their learning. Students can do this in many ways: orally, in writing, or using an electronic format.
- Students' self-reflections should be reviewed to allow teachers to help students learn how to adjust their ongoing learning.
- Before the teacher assigns a grade, students should have multiple opportunities to practice and revise earlier work based on feedback.
- Students should be taught how to collect their own evidence of learning—their own "body of evidence."
- Students must set goals that can easily be tracked by the teacher and themselves.

BCPS believes we must continue to help students develop their own action plans to find success. Because all students will have different goals and plans, time should be periodically provided in class to allow students to reflect on their progress. Student reflections should be specific to the goals they have established for themselves. Reflections on summative assignments or assessments should assist students in determining if the score they achieved accurately reflects their knowledge and skills.

Prior to determining the marking period grade, students should be asked to reflect on their body of evidence, self-assess, and grade themselves based on their learning. Once students are taught how to self-evaluate, their grades should closely align with the teacher's grades. If a student is way off (high or low), this is a great opportunity to have a conversation with that student about what mastery looks like and what their work is in relation to it. This provides an opportunity to compare their work to samples of strong and weak responses. Teachers should remind students that they are working with them to help them reach mastery. They should model what success looks like regularly and offer samples and analyze together what makes the samples exemplary. Wherever possible, teachers should teach students to help one another and provide meaningful feedback, so the teacher is not working in isolation.

Communication is important. Teachers should inform students and parents that grading practices have been enhanced to help students focus on their learning—what they know and are able to do—and less on the number of points they are earning on an assignment. If students are tracking their own progress, the final marking period grade will not come as a surprise.

Students and parents should have a clear understanding of the student's progress throughout the marking period. Results of formative nongraded or practice assignments can be entered into the grade book in the learning management system as a practice assignment. Ongoing communication and timely feedback are essential.

GUIDING PRACTICE 1: Grading practices must be supportive of student learning.

Recommended	*Not Recommended*
- Communicating standards and learning targets to the student. - Sharing student-centered unit overviews/ "I can" statements at the beginning of every unit. - Sharing learning targets/objectives at the beginning of every lesson. - Sharing examples of strong and weak work. - Co-constructing success criteria with the students (students need to know what success looks like). - Giving timely, descriptive feedback that communicates where the student is in relation to the learning goal and what the student needs to do next to reach the goal. - Providing results of formative practice assignments (practice) and entering the scores into the grade book in the learning management system as practice assignments. - Entering scores into the grade book in the learning management system as graded assignments after students have had time to practice, receive feedback, and adjust their learning. - Teaching students to self-assess, reflect, and set goals. - Entering grades into the grade book in the learning management system in a timely manner so students have time to reflect on and improve their grade prior to the end of the marking period.	- Giving feedback only in the form of a score or a grade. - Giving only evaluative feedback (for example, "good job" or "well done" comments or a check mark). - Grading while the student is still practicing new learning. - Grading formative assessments. - Providing feedback only after an assignment or assessment has been graded.

GUIDING PRACTICE 2: Marking period grades will be based solely on achievement of course and grade-level standards. Classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported separately using the the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators.
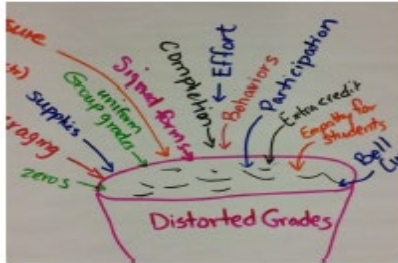
If we incorporate behavior, attendance, and effort into the grade, we no longer consider grades accurate indicators of achieving the learning targets and course expectations.
The achievement grade should reflect what the student knows and is able to do. (Wormeli, 2006).

BCPS believes it is important that teachers provide students with ongoing feedback on their academic achievement and behavior. However, when both types of information are combined into one grade, the grade becomes distorted, making it difficult to determine from the grade exactly what a student knows and is able to do in relation to the standards. **Turning work in on time, behaving appropriately, participating in discussions, and working cooperatively with adults and peers are all very important skills necessary to be successful in college and a career. However, they do not assess the actual learning.**

Starting in 2016–2017, classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported in a separate section of the report card, using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators. Student behavior and work ethic are critical components to students' growth as young learners however, these skills will not be considered in the achievement grade. Inclusion of behaviors in the achievement grade has been shown to have a negative impact on student motivation and prohibits maximum learning of content. (O'Conner, 2009)

BCPS also believes penalizing students for late or missing work is not a practice that promotes learning. Recording a zero on a student's assignment will not motivate the student to work harder or learn content at a higher or faster rate. (O'Conner, 2009) While BCPS curriculum guides suggest a standard pacing of instruction, penalizing a student for requiring more time, support, or resources to master a standard or learning goal is contrary to differentiation, customization, personalization, and best practices in teaching and learning. The purpose of teaching is to increase learning, therefore consequences for not turning in an assignment cannot immediately include issuing a zero and absolving the student from demonstrating understanding. The consequence for a student not turning in an assignment should be to require the student to complete the assignment (in accordance with established procedures). The teacher may enter an (I) for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence in the grade book in the learning management system, and then require the student to complete the work. In accordance with Rule 5120, teachers are not required to provide students absent for unlawful reasons with make-up work, but may do so at their discretion and in accordance with their school's established procedures. Failure to complete and hand in assignments on time should be recorded on the report card, using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators on the following page.

BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators

		Classroom Conduct	Work Completion	Working With Adults	Working With Students
Meeting	4	**The Student:** • Consistently arrives on time. • Is consistently prepared for class. • Consistently participates in class. • Consistently accepts responsibility for actions. • Consistently behaves appropriately as outlined in classroom rules.	**The Student:** • Consistently completes classwork as assigned. • Consistently submits homework on time. • Consistently uses available instructional supports. • Takes advantage of retake/redo opportunities.	**The Student:** • Consistently responds to and communicates positively with adults. • Consistently follows directions from adults. • Consistently seeks help from adults and asks questions when needed. • Consistently interacts cooperatively with adults.	**The Student:** • Consistently communicates positively with other students. • Consistently avoids or resolves conflict with other students. • Consistently demonstrates tolerance of multiple perspectives. • Consistently interacts cooperatively with other students.
Developing	3	**The Student:** • Sometimes arrives on time. • Sometimes is prepared for class. • Sometimes participates in class. • Sometimes accepts responsibility for actions. • Sometimes behaves appropriately as outlined in classroom rules.	**The Student:** • Sometimes completes classwork as assigned. • Sometimes submits homework on time. • Sometimes uses available instructional supports. • Sometimes takes advantage of retake/redo opportunities.	**The Student:** • Sometimes responds to and communicates positively with adults. • Sometimes follows directions from adults. • Sometimes seeks help from adults and asks questions when needed. • Sometimes interacts cooperatively with adults.	**The Student:** • Sometimes responds positively with other students. • Sometimes avoids or resolves conflict with other students. • Sometimes demonstrates tolerance of multiple perspectives. • Sometimes interacts cooperatively with other students.
Insufficient Progress	2	**The Student:** • Rarely arrives on time. • Rarely is prepared for class. • Rarely participates in class. • Rarely accepts responsibility for actions. • Rarely behaves appropriately as outlined in classroom rules.	**The Student:** • Rarely completes classwork as assigned. • Rarely submits homework on time. • Rarely uses available instructional supports. • Rarely takes advantage of retake/redo opportunities and support.	**The Student:** • Rarely responds to and communicates positively with adults. • Rarely follows directions from adults. • Rarely seeks help from adults or asks questions when needed. • Rarely Interacts cooperatively with adults.	**The Student:** • Rarely communicates positively with other students. • Rarely avoids or resolves conflict with other students. • Rarely demonstrates tolerance of multiple perspectives. • Rarely interacts cooperatively with other students.
Little to No Evidence	1	**Even with help, the student:** • Does not consistently arrive on time. • Is not consistently prepared for class. • Does not participate. • Does not accept responsibility for actions. • Does not behave appropriately as outlined in classroom rules.	**Even with help, the student:** • Does not consistently complete classwork as assigned. • Does not submit homework on time. • Does not use available instructional supports. • Does not take advantage of retake/redo opportunities.	**Even with help, the student:** • Does not respond to and communicate positively with adults. • Does not follow directions from adults. • Does not seek help or ask questions when needed from adults. • Does not interact cooperatively with adults.	**The Student:** • Does not communicate positively with other students. • Does not avoid or resolve conflict with other students. • Does not consistently demonstrate tolerance of multiple perspectives. • Does not interact cooperatively with other students.

*All bullet points are indicators for the level. Not all indicators must be met in order to score a student at a particular level in each category.

The Participation Grade

Currently, participation points are provided to students for numerous factors such as raising their hand, the number of responses, and turning in class supplies. Giving students extra points toward their achievement grade for participation is not aligned to best practice and is not consistent across schools or the school system. To accurately determine students' achievement grades and to keep school-to-home communication meaningful, teachers must carefully consider how they evaluate participation, effort, and a student's willingness to try.

Research & Rationale
The "Participation" Grade
Guskey, McTighe, and
O'Connor (2014)
ASCD Express

The achievement grade in any course must be based on the student's level of performance in relation to what the course expectations and standards are and what the student is able to demonstrate. Teachers should consider the following questions:
- How accurate was the student's verbal response?
- Was it supported by evidence from the text?
- To what degree did the student use a variety of materials to create their artistic expression in relation to the standard?

Unless a content standard specifically includes participation in the standard, teachers must report the participation grade separately from the achievement grade to maintain meaningful communication between school and home. The student's level of participation should be reflected in the Classroom Conduct section of the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators.

For classes which require student performance or required interaction—for example art, physical education, music, theatre, career and technology education (CTE), and world languages—the student's grades must be based on the level of performance related to the expectation and standard and not the student's willingness to attempt the activity. In these classes, the teacher should consider class participation as evidence of a student's level of performance. This evidence will be scored and factored into the achievement grade.

GUIDING PRACTICE 2: Marking period grades will be based solely on achievement of course and grade-level standards. Classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported separately using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators.

Recommended	*Not Recommended*
• Sharing classroom expectations with students. • Teaching appropriate classroom expectations for behavior, work completion, and ability to work effectively with adults and peers. • Providing positive reinforcement and ongoing descriptive feedback on classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work effectively with adults and peers. • Separating achievement grades from classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work effectively with adults and peers. • Using class participation as a means to gather evidence of a student's level of performance and score the evidence. • Entering an (I) for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence in the learning management system and then requiring the student to complete the work. • Completing the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators ratings based on observations and anecdotal records. • Determining final achievement grades based on a collected body of evidence aligned to course expectations and standards. • Providing additional supports and interventions for students not meeting expectations. • Implementing the standards of the Student Handbook as appropriate.	• Deducting points from an achievement grade for late or missing assignments. Indicate this information on the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators. • Deducting points from an achievement grade for talking or noncompliant behavior. • Giving points as part of an achievement grade for neatness, participation, and effort. • Giving points as part of an achievement grade for completion of assignments or homework. • Giving points as part of an achievement grade for signed papers, extra supplies, and meeting deadlines. • Giving points for attending an after-school performance, musical, or art show.

GUIDING PRACTICE 3: Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.

Multiple Opportunities for Learning

Grades in any course must be based on the students' level of performance in relation to what the course expectations and standards are and what students are able to demonstrate. To accomplish this, teachers must gather multiple pieces of evidence to be sure students have demonstrated understanding of course expectations and standards before determining a final marking period grade. For each topic in a unit, students should be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know in a variety of formats. This allows for possible errors that may occur due to irregularities in assessments, luck, or a bad testing day. (O'Connor, 2007)

Demonstrating achievement of expectations standards for a course means being able to demonstrate the identified skill multiple times in multiple contexts. The body of evidence can include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

☑ Discussions	☑ Project-based learning tasks
☑ Verbal responses	☑ Assignments
☑ Performances	☑ Videos
☑ Presentations	☑ Quizzes
☑ Observations	☑ Unit assessments
☑ Labs	☑ Culminating events
☑ Essays	☑ Works of art

Opportunities to Improve Over Prior Performance

Allowing students to improve their performance related to standards and expectations is a highly effective, research-based approach. (Wormeli, 2011)

Reteaching and reassessment is about recognizing that students may surpass their previous levels of performance, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate those higher levels, and then giving them full credit for their learning. (Schimmer, 2016)

Research & Rationale
Redos and Retakes Done
Right
Wormeli (2011)
Educational Leadership

Providing students additional learning opportunities throughout a unit supports best practices in student learning and better prepares students for college and career readiness. Students increase their level of understanding by receiving and acting on descriptive feedback. (Hattie, 2009) Thus, as part of a

rigorous learning cycle, students must be allowed additional learning opportunities to improve their performance.

Procedures

School administrators should establish consistent schoolwide parameters for reassessment (which assignments can be redone), including, but not limited to the number of multiple opportunities, number of attempts, or length of time to submit. Reassessment opportunities that are identified by the teacher will occur during the instructional unit. When a teacher identifies an opportunity for reassessment, all students should have opportunities to demonstrate greater understanding, regardless of the grade on the original assessment, if they meet the following requirements:

- Completed the original assessment.
- Completed required assignments.
- Completed reteaching/relearning activities, as determined by the teacher.

Reassessments may occur partially, entirely, or in a different format, as determined by the teacher. The teacher will work with the student to schedule the best time for reteaching and reassessment. Generally, this will occur during the school day.

Students' grades should reflect all new learning. Only the higher scores should be included in the students' marking period grade.

School staff will communicate course-specific reteaching and reassessment procedures and timelines in writing at the beginning of a semester/school year, or when course-specific procedures change. All procedures for reteaching and reassessment will be supported, monitored, and supervised.

At the end of a unit of instruction students will be administered a curriculum-based unit assessment. The end-of-unit summative assessment can be administered only once, and thus students cannot retake the same assessment to improve their score. However, throughout the unit students will be provided with multiple opportunities to improve their performance and show what they know and are able to do.

Strategies for managing additional learning opportunities in the classroom, from Rick Wormeli's article *Redos and Retakes Done Right*, are listed below. For additional strategies, visit the Research and Rationale section of the Grading and Reporting Web site.

1. Ask students who attempt additional learning opportunities to submit the original attempt with the new one and write a brief letter comparing the two. What is different, and what have they learned as a result of redoing the work?

2. Require students to submit a learning plan and evidence of their learning before work can be redone. This may include creating a calendar in which the students list day by day what they will do to prepare for a reassessment.

3. Students should be encouraged to submit additional learning for major assignments/assessments or parts of assignments/assessments associated with the major assessed standards in the unit. Students do not have to be given the opportunity to redo every assignment.

Dueck (2014)

Deadlines

BCPS believes adhering to deadlines is an important skill and behavior for student growth. Due to the current structure of BCPS grading periods, there still remains a need for cut-off dates for additional learning opportunities. Deadlines for turning in additional learning opportunities will be determined by grade-level or content teams. It is recommended that students submit any additional learning opportunities at least one week prior to the end of a marking period.

Given the importance of establishing and communicating consistent parameters around student reassessment and deadlines, the following is a non-inclusive list of considerations that could be included in a school's reassessment procedures and timelines:

1. Teachers and/or school teams should work to carefully consider the nature of an assignment to determine if that assignment is eligible to be redone.
2. An assignment's eligibility for being redone should be clearly communicated by the teacher.
3. Assignments should be submitted on time (by the deadline) and show a reasonable effort in order for the assignment to be eligible to be redone.
4. Teachers should provide students with feedback and additional opportunities to learn prior to students' resubmission of assignments.
5. Summative unit assessments cannot be retaken or redone. This includes end-of-unit and end-of-semester/marking period assessments in all courses.
6. In accordance with Rule 5120, teachers are not required to provide make-up work to students absent for unlawful reasons but may do so at their discretion and in accordance with their school's established procedures.

GUIDING PRACTICE *3: Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.*

Recommended	*Not Recommended*
• Assigning work that is aligned to standards and falls within a student's range of what they can achieve. • Gathering multiple pieces of evidence. • Assessing the standards multiple times in multiple contexts. • Allowing students to redo both assignments and classroom assessments for particularly important standards. • Allowing students to improve their prior grade by turning in an assignment that demonstrates new learning or a higher level of understanding. • Providing descriptive feedback and allowing students to improve their grade by acting on the feedback. • Ensuring students engage in new opportunities to learn prior to a second attempt. • Allowing new learning to replace prior attempts and grading students based upon the higher of the two scores. • Setting deadlines and holding students accountable. • Recording failure to meet deadlines as a reflection of academic conduct rather than a reflection of what students know and are able to do.	• Allowing only students who earned a low score to have additional learning opportunities. (All students should have the opportunity to improve.) • Averaging students' first and second attempts or reducing a grade solely because it was a second attempt. • Giving extra credit. • Increasing a student's grade for just completing more work or putting in more time. • Grading on a curve.

GUIDING PRACTICE 4: Grades will be based on a body of evidence.

To ensure all the grades assigned to students are equitable, accurate, and meaningful, all marking period grades and scores assigned to students should be defensible through a collected body of evidence aligned to course standards. A body of evidence is a collection of aligned instructional tasks, such as assignments, assessments, presentations, products, and observations used to determine if a student has met all identified standards, expectations, or learning goals.

Demonstrating achievement of expectations and standards for a course is being able to demonstrate the identified skill multiple times in multiple contexts. The body of evidence can include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

☑ Discussions	☑ Project-based learning tasks
☑ Verbal responses	☑ Assignments
☑ Performances	☑ Videos
☑ Presentations	☑ Quizzes
☑ Observations	☑ Unit assessments
☑ Labs	☑ Culminating events
☑ Essays	☑ Works of art

The type and quality of assignments included in the body of evidence will differ by course, content area, and age. Students should be provided with multiple opportunities to show what they know and are able to do in a variety of formats—grades cannot be determined solely from traditional assessments.

To ensure consistency and alignment with standards, district-level content offices will provide direction regarding essential major assignments and assessments to be included in the body of evidence.

Beyond district-level major assignments and assessments, grade-level teams at the elementary level and departmental teams at the secondary level are responsible for collaborating to establish general consistency among the classroom assignments, products, presentations, performances, and assessments that will be included in the body of evidence.

Assessments and classwork assignments should be scored and included in the learning management system after instruction, feedback, and an opportunity to practice have occurred. All summative assignments and assessments may be included in the body of evidence and used to determine a student's achievement grade.

Grade books in the learning management system should document a student's progress toward grade-level standards. Teachers can and should use their professional judgment, along with a student's body of evidence, to determine an interim, marking period, or final course grade. To ensure consistency within content areas and courses, district-level content offices will provide recommendations on categories and the weighting of those categories.

Pre-assessments or diagnostic assessments are designed to determine what students know and can do in order to plan instruction. Pre-assessments are administered before instruction and may include teacher- and system-designed assessments. Pre-assessments can be recorded in the grade book in the LMS as practice assessments but cannot be used in the body of evidence to determine a student's marking period or final grade.

Summative assessments are assessments used to evaluate student learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period—usually at the end of a lesson cycle, unit, marking period, course, semester, program, or school year. All curriculum-based summative assessments must be aligned to the standards outlined in the curriculum. The standard being assessed determines what type of assessment is necessary. Not all summative assessments should be paper-pencil tests or online assessments. Students should be provided with multiple opportunities to show what they know and are able to do in a variety of formats—class discussions, performances, projects, labs, presentations, verbal assessments, etc.

Summative assessments should be recorded in the grade book in the learning management system and can be used in the body of evidence to determine a student's marking period or final grade.

Formative assessment is an ongoing process that occurs during instruction. Tools that are useful as part of the process may be in the form of role play, survey, presentation, thumbs-up/thumbs-down vote, artwork, a song, teacher-student interview, accountable talk, or a quick write. The primary purpose of formative assessment is to inform instruction and future learning. By infusing formative assessment into everyday instruction and providing actionable feedback along the way, students become increasingly self-aware, and the feedback increases hope, efficacy, and student achievement. (Stalets, 2016)

Formative assessment, done well, represents one of the most powerful instructional tools available to a teacher or school for promoting student achievement. (Wiliam, 2007)

The formative assessment process has a solid body of research showing its effect on student achievement and has been identified as an area of focus by the Maryland State Department of Education. When implemented well, formative assessment can effectively double the speed of student learning. (Hattie, 2009)

According to Leahy, Lyon, Thomson, and Wiliam (2005), effective formative assessment involves five non-negotiable components:

- *Clarify and share learning targets and the criteria for success with students*. For example, teachers may share student work samples completed by previous students and have current students discuss which ones are strong or weak, and why.
- *Design effective classroom discussion, questions, and learning tasks.* Teachers translate learning targets into assessments that yield accurate results. Teachers utilize well-planned questions, effective questioning techniques that keep all students engaged, and strategies that gauge the understanding of the whole class.
- *Provide feedback that moves learners forward.*   Communication and comments that address what students need to do to improve promote further learning more effectively than letter grades.

- ***Activate students as the owners of their own learning.*** For example, teachers may have students evaluate their own work, using agreed-upon criteria for success.
- ***Encourage students to be instructional resources for one another.***

Formative scores and feedback can be recorded in the grade book in the learning management system as practice assessments. Scores from assessments that started out as formative can be entered in the grade book in the learning management system as a summative grade after the student has had an opportunity to practice with new learning, received descriptive feedback, and improved upon the learning. At this point the scores would be considered summative.

Grades Must Be Fair, Valid, and Reliable

Marking period grades must be based upon a body of evidence that is aligned to standards and expectations and that includes multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. They must also be free from behavioral bias. A student's final grade will need to be substantiated through multiple assignments and assessment items. Teacher-developed assignments, class discussions, and project-based learning tasks can all be utilized to elicit formative evidence of learning. Summative unit assessments, curriculum-based summative quizzes, and assessments developed by district teacher teams, building-level departmental teams, and/or teachers should be included in the body of evidence.

Role of Homework

Homework is a very important part of teaching, learning, and parent involvement. The goal is to provide quality assignments that enrich students' experiences. Homework assignments must be meaningful and aligned to learning standards. Students should have a clear understanding of the purpose of their homework and be able to see a clear and direct connection between their homework, the standards, and the end-of-unit assessments.

Research & Rationale
Making Homework
Central to Learning
Vatterott (2011)
Educational Leadership

Homework assignments provide students with an additional opportunity to practice, deepen their understanding, and/or increase progress toward meeting standards and expectations.
There are two categories of homework:

1. **Homework completed for practice or preparation for instruction** – homework that is reviewed by the teacher to inform instructional decisions and for which the teacher provides feedback but is not graded for accuracy or quality; usually given for practice or to prepare for instruction or an upcoming assessment; assigned to build skills and understanding, not to evaluate learning.
2. **Homework completed to evaluate learning** – homework that is assigned to collect evidence of skill or understanding after instruction, practice, and feedback; homework that is evaluated for accuracy or quality may be included in the marking period grade. Homework that may be evaluated for learning and be included in the marking period grade may include, but is not limited to, the following:
   a. Continuation of an ongoing assignment that occurs both in school and at home, applying taught skills and concepts.
   b. Demonstration or check of understanding or skill after instruction, practice, and feedback.

Procedures

Homework procedures should be applied consistently within and among schools. School administrators should ensure school-level processes, as approved by the school leadership team, for implementing the following procedures:
1. Teachers should only assign homework that is related to the curriculum standards and aligned to learning outcomes.
2. Teachers determine and communicate the purpose for each homework assignment and whether or not the homework will count toward the marking period grade. Timely and meaningful feedback on both types of homework should be provided; feedback may take a variety of forms, as determined by the teacher.
3. School staff should communicate course-specific homework procedures in writing at the beginning of a semester/school year, or when course-specific procedures change. Homework procedures should be supported, monitored, and supervised.

Note: Homework for practice or preparation for instruction is assigned to build skills and understanding. This type of homework does not evaluate learning and, therefore, is not assigned a grade for accuracy (e.g., correctness) or quality (e.g., degree to which standards are met). It is not intended to penalize students who fail to understand the material, make careless errors, or are confused by the assignment and do not know how to complete it at that point in time. Rather, the intent of this homework is to help students learn and prepare them for subsequent tasks that are graded (e.g., summative projects, performances, tests, or quizzes). When a student has turned in homework for practice or preparation for instruction by the deadline, the teacher will review the assignment and provide feedback to further the student's understanding. Students who fail to turn in homework assignments are missing out on their opportunity to practice and receive feedback prior to being evaluated for a marking period grade.

BCPS believes all homework completion is important, therefore it will also be reported separately on the report card using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators.

Role of Final Evaluations

Final evaluation activities should be viewed as another opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding of standards. Final evaluation activities are designed to measure student achievement of the course standards and expectations. In courses for which a countywide final evaluation has been developed, the final evaluation administered must be the countywide evaluation. Students who complete an external evaluation approved by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction that corresponds to the content of a course (for example, an Advanced Placement or an International Baccalaureate examination) should not be required to complete the BCPS final evaluation for the same course.

If the students complete an approved external evaluation and the final evaluation is not taken, the four marking period grades should be equally weighted to determine the final grade. Students may elect to take the BCPS final evaluation and have their final grade calculated according to the regular computation method.

A student on short- or long-term suspension at evaluation time will be permitted to take the evaluation upon their return and will remain eligible to qualify for the awarding of course credit.

Insufficient Evidence

In order to complete a course, students are required to submit evidence of learning. Staff will demonstrate flexibility and work with students to provide additional learning opportunities to demonstrate learning for topics missed. If a student fails to submit evidence by the end of the marking period (deadlines for turning in assignments will be set by the grade-level or departmental teams), a final grade may be determined based on the work that was submitted, or the student may receive an I (Insufficient Evidence) on their report card. A final marking period grade of I requires manual entry by the teacher. Special circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. (See p. 40 for additional information.)

Communication

To ensure students have real-time access to their grades, teachers will use the learning management system and classroom-to-home communication systems selected, deployed, and supported by BCPS.

The scores and grades entered in the learning management system need to be current and allow students time to reflect on and improve their grade prior to the end of the marking period. For classes that meet two or more times during the week, graded and/or practice assignments need to be updated at least every two weeks.

Teachers or parents/guardians may request conferences as needed to discuss student progress or concerns. In addition to the information provided in the learning management system, teachers are encouraged to communicate throughout the marking period with the parent/guardian via phone calls, conferences, or e-mails notifying parents/guardians.

GUIDING PRACTICE 4: Grades will be based on a body of evidence.

Recommended	*Not Recommended*
- Providing students with multiple opportunities to show what they know and are able to do in a variety of forms (verbally, written, through demonstration, via a product). - Based on the guidelines provided by curriculum content offices, working within grade-level or departmental teams at the beginning of the school year to establish consistent grade book in the learning management system categories for the same classes or courses. - Working within grade-level or departmental teams to plan for upcoming units and to preview common assignments and performance-based projects. - Aligning all assignments to the corresponding assessed standards in the unit. - Revealing assessment components to the students at the beginning of a unit and connecting homework to the unit assessments. - Working collaboratively to identify exemplars of strong and weak work and sharing the examples with students prior to the assessment. - Collecting high quality evidence aligned to the assessed standards in the unit. - Scoring formative classwork, practice, and homework and entering results in the grade book The learning management system as practice assignments. - Collaboratively scoring unit assessments, performance tasks, and culminating events. - Determining the final marking period grade based upon the entire body of evidence and professional judgment.	- Revealing the components of summative assessments just prior to the test. - Working in isolation when planning for an upcoming unit. - Grading large amounts of work in isolation. - Grading formative classwork, practice, and homework.

GUIDING PRACTICE 5:
A consistent grading scale will be used to score assignments and assessments in the learning management system.

Starting in 2016–2017, when scoring assignments and assessments within their grade book in the learning management system, school staff may choose to use one of the following: a traditional 100-point grading scale or a 50-point grading scale. Teachers within the same school should use the same scale. In the future, teachers across the district will move toward using common grading scales to plan for instruction, assess student learning, and provide feedback to students.

Traditional 100-Point Grading Scale

The traditional 100-point grading scale is the scale currently utilized by most teachers. This scale allows teachers to easily convert points to percentage and then to the end-of-marking period grade.

Grade	Points/Percentage	Range	Rating
A	90–100	10	Outstanding
B	80–89	10	Above Average
C	70–79	10	Average
D	60–69	10	Below Average
E	0–59	**60**	Failing (No Credit Awarded)

50-Point Grading Scale

The 50-point grading scale is very similar to and is set up in the same way as the 100-point scale. The 50-point scale allows teachers to easily convert to the end of the marking period grade. However, this scale has a distinct advantage over the traditional grading scale in that the range of possible scores for each letter grade is equal. As seen in the chart for the traditional 100-point scale above, the failing range or the range for the grade of an E is from 0–59.9 or 60 percentage points. In the 50-point scale, the range for failing is the same range as for all other letter grades – 10 percentage points.

Teachers using this scale would enter any percentage score ranging from 0–49.9 percent as 50 percent. A (LS) code, indicating the student earned the lowest score possible, can be entered into the gradebook to indicate scores ranging from 0–49.9 percent are calculated 50 percent. Refer to Guiding Practice #1 for student learning orientations.

Grade	Points	Range	Rating
A	90–100	10	Outstanding
B	80–89	10	Above Average
C	70–79	10	Average
D	60–69	10	Below Average
E	50–59	**10**	Failing (No Credit Awarded)

Implementation of Assignment Codes in the Grade Book in the Learning Management System

Lowest Score (LS) Code*	Lowest Score (LS) code calculates as 50% of the total possible points. This code may be used when a student attempts a task and earns below 50% of the total points possible. An attempted assignment should show a reasonable effort on the part of the student. Assignments that do not show a reasonable effort can be marked as Incomplete (I). If no attempt is made on an assignment or an assignment is not submitted, the Missing (M) code can be used.
Incomplete (I) Code	Incomplete (I) code has no impact on the overall calculated grade. This code may be used when a student is absent, has attempted, but not completed the assignment with a reasonable effort, or used as a place holder if a student has not completed an assignment.
Missing (M) Code	Missing (M) code calculates as a 0 for the assignment. This code may be used when a student is absent or if a student has not completed an assignment. The Missing (M) code should only be entered after the due date of the assignment has passed.
Excused (E) Code	Excused (E) has no impact on the overall calculated grade. This code may be used when a student is not required to complete an assignment.

Note: If a score lower than 50% is entered when a teacher is using the 50-point grading scale, an exclamation point (!) will display next to the score to alert the teacher, student, and parent that this score is outside the range of the chosen grading scale.

Parameters for Determining Grades

At all levels, in all courses, the following parameters have been established to ensure appropriate proportionality of types of assignments being factored into the marking period grade. The final marking period grade should be defensible through a collected body of evidence aligned to course expectations and standardsand include a wide variety of assignments and assessments. The final marking period grade should never be based on traditional tests alone or a very limited number of scores.

Grade books in the learning management system should include two types of scores for assignments:

1. Scores for formative assignments completed as practice or preparation for instruction. These scores will not impact the marking period grade.

a. To keep parents informed of their child's ongoing progress, the teacher may enter scores assigned to practice work in the grade book in the learning management system, but these scores will not impact the marking period grade.

b. Classwork or homework assigned as practice or preparation for instruction is given to build skills and understanding. This type of assignment does not evaluate learning and, therefore, should not be included in the marking period grade. It is not intended to penalize students who fail to understand the material, make careless errors, or are confused by the assignment and do not know how to complete it at that point in time. Rather, the intent of the assignment is to help students learn and prepare them for subsequent tasks that are graded (e.g., summative projects, performances, tests, or quizzes).

c. When a student has turned in work completed for practice or preparation for instruction, the teacher should review the assignment and provide descriptive feedback to further the student's understanding.

2. Scores for summative assignments are assigned to evaluate a student's level of understanding after instruction, practice, and feedback have been provided. These scores will make up the body of evidence used to determine the marking period grade.

a. These types of assignments and assessments should be assigned and scored for accuracy and/or quality to collect evidence of understanding after instruction, practice, and feedback.

b. The marking period grade must be based on a variety of assignment types and a balance of major and minor summative assignments and assessments.

i. **Major summative tasks or assessments** are given to evaluate learning at the conclusion of the unit or topic of instruction. These tasks or assessments cover the essential learning within the unit and generally assess multiple standards. Major summative tasks or assessments can include projects, extended labs, culminating performances, research reports, unit tests, culminating events, performance-based assessments (PBAs), and extended essays.

ii. **Minor summative classwork assignments or learning checks** can also be given to evaluate smaller chunks of learning at the conclusion of a shorter learning cycle (which can take place in one day, or over multiple days). This can include, but is not limited to, traditional classwork, homework assigned after instruction, practice, and feedback, discussions, quizzes, brief constructed responses, and exit tickets. The point value of an assignment or assessment should reflect the relative instructional time spent on the task.

Recommended balance of major and minor summative assignments:
- Grade Book in the learning management system.
  - Minor Summative: Approximately 60-70% of the marking period grade.
  - Major Summative: Approximately 30-40% of the marking period grade.

Recommended percentages will be determined by content area, course, and grade level.

The appropriate balance of major and minor assignments can be accomplished in multiple ways at the teacher's discretion. This could include, but is not limited to, balancing assignments through the distribution of points on assignments and between categories or using weighted categories.

A score on any one assignment cannot drop an overall marking period grade more than one letter grade.

*Advanced placement teachers who have had syllabi approved by The College Board, should implement the approved syllabi.

GUIDING PRACTICE 5: A consistent grading scale will be used to score assignments and assessments in the learning management system.

Recommended	Not Recommended
• Within a school or grade-level team, using common scales to score student work. • Communicating standards and learning targets to the student. • Communicating clear expectations to students—sharing grading scales with students at the beginning of the year and prior to each assessment. • Giving timely, specific feedback that communicates where the student is in relation to the learning target and what the student needs to do to reach the target. • Giving full credit for new learning. A student's marking period grade should be at least the average, but if the student is showing improvement or a higher level of understanding, a marking period grade may be higher than the calculated average. • Determining the final marking period grade based upon the entire body of evidence and professional judgement. • To ensure both students and parents have a clear understanding of the assignments in the LMS gradebook, clearly labeling all assignments.	• Deducting points from an achievement grade for late or missing assignments. (Indicate this information on the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators) • Using only the calculated average when determining a student's marking period grade. • Using codes to label assignments in the grade book in the learning management system.

GUIDING PRACTICE 6: Accommodations and modifications will be provided for exceptional learners and English learners.

Accommodations are adaptations that "level the playing field" for a student. Accommodations do not change the learning goals/grade-level standards for the student but allow the student to participate in and demonstrate mastery of the standards. It is mandatory to document accommodations for students with a 504 or Individualized Education Program (IEP), or EL (English Learner) Plan. Accommodations do not alter a student's grade.

Modifications are changes in content and assessment based on the recommendations from the student's individual educational team. Modifications change the grade-level standards. For example, a fourth-grade student may be focusing on standards below the students' current grade level. The decision to modify standards is a formal individual educational team process that includes parents and students, as appropriate.

Students with Disabilities – Special Education IEP

School staff will use the same report cards with students with disabilities as they do with all other students. Students with disabilities will also receive quarterly IEP progress reports.

High School and Middle School:
- All students with disabilities who are non-diploma bound will be graded as pass or fail.
- All diploma-bound students will be graded on the standards aligned to the course or grade level.

Elementary School:
- All diploma-bound elementary school students will be graded on the standards for their grade level.
- All students in Grades 4–5 with disabilities who are non-diploma bound will be graded as pass or fail.
- All students in Grades 1–3 with disabilities who are non-diploma bound will be graded as consistently demonstrating (CD), progressing (P), or needs development (N).

English Learners (ELs)

Teachers of all content areas must provide assessment and instructional accommodations for English Learners. Accommodations are determined and recorded within the first 45 days of each school year or 30 days of student enrollment if the student enters after October. Accommodations do not change the learning goals/grade-level standards for the student but allow the student to participate in and demonstrate mastery of the standards.

REPORTING PROCEDURES, GRADE CALCULATIONS, AND CODES

Roles and Responsibilities

District Responsibilities

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for developing curricula consistent with BCPS' policy and rule that establishes grade-level and course expectations aligned with Maryland State Department of Education standards and assessments, for providing direction regarding the assignments and assessments to be included in the body of evidence, and for providing guidance on effective grading practices. This includes sample bodies of evidence, specifically for courses tied to high school graduation. Additionally, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for providing teachers with a "Year at a Glance" for core courses that identifies the course standards and expectations for curriculum, and a syllabus template that can be used for communication with students and parents.

The Department of Information Technology is responsible for maintaining the Master Course File; for the calculation of the report card grades, GPAs, and QPAs within the Student Information System (SIS), and for participation on the grading and reporting committee to establish the timeline for reporting grades and the distribution of report cards.

Executive Directors of schools are responsible for working with the school's administrative team to monitor the implementation of the grading and reporting policy and procedures.

Principal Responsibilities

Principals are responsible for ensuring that grading and reporting procedures are applied consistently within their school. The principal works with the school leadership team to assist in developing and monitoring school-level grading and reporting processes including:

- Ensuring that grade-level teams or departments establish consistent grading processes as described in Grade-Level or Department Team Responsibilities below.
- Working with teachers to establish schoolwide parameters (methods, procedures, and timelines) for multiple opportunities for learning and reassessment.
- Reviewing grading and reporting procedures with staff during preservice days and as necessary throughout the year.
- Communicating grading and reporting information in writing to parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year or when procedures change. This may be done in the following ways:
  - Publishing the information in school newsletters and staff/student handbooks.
  - Posting the information online.
- Designating a staff member to serve as the school contact for grading and reporting timelines, expectations, and concerns.
- Communicating the name of the school contact to students, staff, and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year. The staff contact is responsible for facilitating communication and providing a timely response to grading and reporting questions as follows:

- o Redirecting questions to appropriate school staff members when questions are specific to an individual student's grade.
- o Informing the principal or designee of recurring questions and questions about the policy, rule, or procedures.

Grade-Level or Department Team Responsibilities

As approved by the principal, grade-level or department teams are responsible for reviewing and implementing the expectation established by curriculum content offices and collaborating to establish general consistency among the following:

- The assignments, presentations, products, observations, and assessments used to determine a student's level of performance in relation to grade-level standards.
- The categorization and weighting of points for assignments in the learning management system. Not all categories will be the same across the system; however, the categories and weighting of the categories need to be consistent for the same course.
- Due dates, deadlines, and late work procedures.

Teacher Responsibilities.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Communicating grading and course expectations in writing for each course, subject, or grade level to students and parents/guardians within the first month of school or when course-specific procedures change.
- Communicating course-specific reteaching and reassessment procedures and timelines in writing at the beginning of a semester/school year, or when course-specific procedures change. All opportunities for reteaching and reassessment will be supported, monitored, and supervised.
- Ensuring the marks entered into the grade book in the learning management system accurately reflect student performance as aligned to the course expectations.
- Allowing makeup work. Teachers may assign an equivalent but different task or assessment to students when they return from any excused or unexcused absence. Students returning from an absence will be allowed at least the same number of days of the absence to complete make-up work. In accordance with Rule 5120, teachers are not required to provide make-up work to students absent for unlawful reasons, but may do so at their discretion and in accordance with their school's established procedures.
- Determining the degree to which students have mastered grade-level standards based on the body of evidence.
- Using the grading scales outlined in this manual to determine marking period grades.
- Sharing the electronic grade book in the learning management system with staff as appropriate.
- Returning graded work and providing feedback to students in a timely manner. The scores and grades entered in the grade book in the learning management system must be current and allow students time to reflect on and improve their grade prior to the end of the marking period.
  - o When tests are computer-scored or have answer sheets separate from test questions, students must have an opportunity to review their answers with test questions in hand. This shall not be construed so as to require teachers to return all quizzes and tests permanently as specified below.

- o Students may retain graded work for their own later review and are encouraged to take work home to share with their parents/guardians. Exceptions are noted below:
    - System-developed unit assessments and final evaluation activities, after student review in class, may be retained by the teacher if the questions are needed for future test construction and, therefore, security of test items must be maintained.
    - Teachers may temporarily retain graded work for review with parents/guardians or may temporarily retain selected work for portfolio entry, as is the practice in some classes such as art and English.
- Upon request by individual parents/guardians, teachers will make available to parents unit assessments and final evaluation activities given during the course or marking period so that parents/guardians can review student progress. However, the test items must remain secure.

Report Cards

Report cards summarize evidence of student achievement collected throughout the marking period and include the following:

All Schools
- Grades, consistent with the required grading scale, indicating student achievement on grade-level/course expectations.
- Attendance, consistent with BCPS' Policy and Rule 5120 in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-301, Compulsory Attendance.
- Skills and conduct.
- An indication of a request for a parent/teacher conference.

High Schools
- Grade point average and quality point average.
- State-mandated assessment status.
- Student service learning hours.
- Extra-curricular activity eligibility.
- Total credits earned.

Parents of students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) will receive supplemental information on progress toward the attainment of IEP goals at the time report cards are issued, consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

English learners (ELs) who have an overall proficiency score of 1.0 – 2.9 and are new to the school system will receive the code **NG (No Grade)** in non-ESOL classes on their report card in lieu of a grade for the first two marking periods in which they are in a United States school system. After the first two marking periods, English learners (ELs) who have an overall proficiency score of 1.0 – 2.9 may receive a **Pass (P)** or **Fail (F)** code in lieu of achievement codes (CD, P, N) or letter grades (A, B, C, D, E) in all non-ESOL classes. For additional guidance, please refer to the ESOL Grading FAQs.

Elementary report cards include a section for Programs and Services. To assist teachers, programs and services are listed on a pull-down menu. This report card area is visible to parents only when a service or program is selected from the menu.

All schools shall use the standardized report card form, which indicates student achievement through the use of letter grades as well as progress on classroom skills and conduct.

Timeline

All schools will follow the BCPS Grade and State Reporting calendar for the completion and distribution of interims and report cards.

Report cards for students in Grades 1–12 are issued at the end of each marking period. Progress reports are issued for prekindergarten and kindergarten.

Interim Reports

Secondary Schools

Interim reports are to be made available for all students at the midpoint of the marking period. If a student shows a marked decline in achievement (decrease of two or more letter grades or a failing grade) from the prior marking period, the teacher must inform the parent/guardian of this decline. Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged when a student is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.

Elementary Schools

If a student shows a marked decline in achievement (decrease of two or more letter grades or a failing grade) in the marking period, the teacher is expected to send home an interim report informing the parent/guardian of this decline. Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged when a student is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.

Report Card Grade Change

An adjustment of a report card letter grade will be made for a sound educational purpose and must be documented in the student information system. An adjustment of a report card grade will be made only according to the following protocol:

- A teacher may request to adjust a student's report card grade when there are extenuating circumstances and/or based on additional evidence that demonstrates mastery of content standards. A request must be submitted in the student information system and approved by the principal prior to making the change. A principal may adjust a student's report card grade only after conferring with the teacher who assigned the grade and in alignment with the master agreement. The principal will notify the teacher in writing if the grade is to be adjusted.

A **Grade Change Request Form** should be completed in the student information system after the marking period has closed and report cards have been issued. If the grade change request is approved, a copy of the new report card should be printed and placed in the student's cumulative record. (Reference Superintendent's Rule 5210). .

If a grade change is requested and the teacher of record is unavailable, the principal may review the body of evidence in the learning management system and determine if a grade change is warranted.

Determining Marking Period Grades

Teachers will use a variety of assessment approaches over time to create a body of evidence and monitor student learning of the BCPS curriculum. Student grades will be based on the collected body of evidence that is aligned to course or grade-level standards. The body of evidence may include assessment products such as unit assessments, end-of-course assessments, assignments, presentations, products, observations, and/or performance tasks such as discussion, recitation, simulation, construction, movement, procedure, or demonstration of a skill.

The final marking period grade will include the following:
- Grades must be based on individual mastery of knowledge and skills.
- Grades are based on evidence of attainment of course expectations/standards.
- ESOL Teachers, special educators, and general education teachers who provide instruction for a student will collaboratively examine evidence collected to determine a student's grade.
- Students enrolled in courses outside of BCPS will follow the grading policies and procedures of the enrolled institution or university.
- A letter grade or code will be used to indicate the individual level of achievement of each student in relation to the attainment of course objectives. A letter grade or a code will be given for all courses in which a student is enrolled.
- A letter grading system (A, B, C, D, E) will be used for Grades 4–12 report card grades; no plus or minus signs will be used for official records.
- A coding system (I, W, L, P, F, S, U, NG) will be used.

For Grades 1, 2, and 3, achievement codes rather than letter grades will be used. The achievement codes appear on the first page of the report card as abbreviations with definitions beside them as follows:

CD	Consistently Demonstrating	Student demonstrates a strong command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied in the grade-level standards.
P	Progressing	Student is developing their command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied in the grade-level standards.
N	Needs Development	Student demonstrates a beginning command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the grade-level standards. Additional practice is needed.
NA	Not Applicable	The knowledge, skills, and practices embodied in the grade-level standards were neither taught nor evaluated this marking period. The box will appear gray.
NG	No Grade	The student is a Level 1 or Level 2 English Learner and will not receive a grade this marking period.

To determine achievement grades for students in Grades 4–12, consider overall evidence of student performance using the following guidance:

A	Outstanding	Students performing at this level demonstrate a distinguished and strong command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the standards. Students at this level are meeting or extending the standards at their grade level.
B	Above Average	Students performing at this level demonstrate a moderate command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the standards. Students at this level are approaching the standards at their grade level.
C	Average	Students performing at this level demonstrate a developing command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the standards at their grade level.
D	Below Average	Students performing at this level demonstrate a beginning command of the knowledge and/or skills embodied by the standards assessed at their grade level.
E	Failing	Students performing at this level demonstrate no evidence of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the standards assessed at their grade level.

For Grades 4–12, final marking period grades will be determined as follows:

A	90–100	Outstanding
B	80–89	Above Average
C	70–79	Average
D	60–69	Below Average
E	0–59	Failing (No Credit Awarded)

Percent scores are rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, any score ending below .5 rounds down, and any score ending in .5 and above rounds up. Based upon the entire body of evidence and professional judgment, the teacher determines the final marking period grade. Grades are imported from the LMS to the SIS (FOCUS) at the end of each marking period as a support to teachers, it is still the responsibility of the teacher to verify grades that were imported and make necessary adjustments to the final grades.

Home and Hospital

Implementation of Codes

Coding will reflect the academic history of a student. Codes are used as follows:

CODE	DESCRIPTION
Incomplete/ Insufficient Evidence (I) Code	Incomplete/Insufficient Evidence (I) codes will be issued for marking period grades and only upon approval of the principal/designee when students have been unable to complete required course work due to absences or other extenuating circumstances. Incomplete/Inefficient Evidence (I) codes issued for marking period grades must be converted to a letter grade no later than two weeks after the issuance of the report card, except in unusual circumstances as approved by the principal/designee. At the end of the two weeks, the teacher must complete a Grade Change Request to change the Incomplete (I) code to the appropriate grade and notify the student and parent/guardian. If the teacher does not submit a Grade Change Request, the Incomplete (I) code will be calculated as a failing grade (E) when computing the final course grade. An Incomplete (I) code will be treated as a failing grade (E) in terms of academic eligibility. Incomplete (I) codes will not be issued for Marking Period 4. Incomplete (I) codes may be used as the final course grade when students are enrolled in an online course or other form of instruction that does not coincide with the grading procedures or grade reporting periods of a traditional course. In this instance, the Incomplete (I) will not automatically convert to a grade of (E).
Withdrawal (W) Code	Withdrawal (W) codes will be issued when students withdraw from a course after the designated date for withdrawal (seven school days after the first interim report for the course). If a student transfers between levels of the same course, a Withdrawal (W) code will not be assigned. The grade the student earned in the original course will be transferred and averaged into the new course. The teacher in the new course may require make-up work. If a student transfers to a different course prior to the designated date for withdrawal, a Withdrawal (W) code will not be assigned. The student will be responsible for making up work in the new course. Make-up work will be averaged into the first marking period grade. If a student withdraws from a course and transfers to a different course after the designated date for withdrawal, a Withdrawal (W)

CODE	DESCRIPTION
	code will be assigned in the withdrawn class and no credit will be awarded. Documentation of the change will be placed in the student's cumulative record. If an IEP/504 team determines a student needs a change in schedule to make progress toward meeting their IEP/504 goals, a Withdrawal (W) code will be assigned in the withdrawn class. The student may earn credit in the new course, and the final grade will be calculated based on the grades earned in the new course. The Schedule Change Form will be placed in the student's cumulative record. Courses with a Withdrawal (W) code will not receive credit and will not be calculated in the marking period or cumulative GPA and QPA. This code will not be changed unless it was assigned in error, in which case the principal is the only person authorized to approve the change.
Late Enrollment (L) Code	Late Enrollment (L) codes will be issued when students enroll in a course too late for credit to be granted. When a student withdraws from a course after the designated date for withdrawal and transfers to a different course (rather than another level of the same course), a Late Enrollment (L) code will be assigned in the new course for marking periods prior to and including the marking period in which the transfer occurred. A Late Enrollment (L) code will also be assigned for the final grade on the report card and the transcript for students entering after the second marking period. When a student transfers into a BCPS school more than seven days after the interim report of the first marking period and before the second marking period interims are issued, and enrolls in a course in which they was not enrolled in the previous school, a Late Enrollment (L) code is assigned for all marking periods prior to and including the marking period in which the student transfers. A Late Enrollment (L) code may be assigned for the final grade on the report card and the transcript. Courses with a Late Enrollment (L) code will not receive credit and will not be calculated in the marking period or cumulative GPA and QPA. For courses in which only one marking period was assigned a Late Enrollment (L) code, a final grade for the course may be calculated by using the three other marking period grades earned. Late Enrollment (L) codes will be used if a student transfers into a BCPS school without documentation of grades from the previous school.

CODE	DESCRIPTION
	This code will not be changed unless it was assigned in error, in which case the principal is the only person authorized to approve the change.
Pass (P) Code	Passing (P) codes will be issued when certificate-bound students successfully complete a marking period or course, when high school students successfully complete an intervention course, or when Level 1 and 2 ELs successfully complete non-ESOL courses.
Fail (F) Code	Failing (F) codes will be issued when certificate-bound students do not meet with success in a marking period or course, when high school students do not meet success in an intervention course, or when Level 1 and 2 ELs do not meet with success in non-ESOL courses.

A Failing (F) code will be calculated as an (E) when determining eligibility for extracurricular activities. |
Satisfactory (S) Code	Satisfactory (S) codes will be issued when students meet the standards of an online course or other form of instruction that does not coincide with the grading procedures or grade reporting periods of a traditional course. Examples include high school online courses and middle school intervention courses.
Unsatisfactory (U) Code	Unsatisfactory (U) codes will be issued when students do not meet the standards of an online course or other form of instruction that does not coincide with the grading procedures or grade reporting periods of a traditional course. Examples include high school online courses and middle school intervention courses. An Unsatisfactory (U) code will be calculated as an (E) when determining eligibility for extracurricular activities.
No Grade (NG) Code	The No Grade code (NG) will be issued for Level 1 and Level 2 English Learners (ELs), Grades 1-12, who are new to school in the school system for the first two marking periods they are in the system. The NG code can be used for marking period grades, interim grades, or final grades; however, it can only be used for two consecutive marking periods.

Determining Final Grades

Only the final grade and/or code will be retained on the transcript and SR-3 Card.

Final grades will be calculated by the Student Information System (FOCUS) as outlined below:

Full-year courses with a final exam
For full year courses with a final exam, each marking period (1-4) and the final exam will be calculated as 20% of the final grade. This includes courses with an End-of Course exam administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Full-year courses without a final exam
For a full-year course that does not include a final exam, each marking period (1-4) will be calculated as 25% of the final grade and include the progression of grades as needed.

Half-Year Courses with a final exam
For half-year courses with a final exam, each marking period will be calculated as 40% of the final grade and the final exam will be calculated as 20% of the final grade.

Half-Year Courses without a final exam
For half-year courses without a final exam, each marking period will be calculated as 50% of the final grade.

Full year courses without a final exam, including AP or IB courses and middle school only courses will be calculated by averaging the marking period grades and include the progression of the grades as needed.

Examples

Marking Period MP1: A MP 2: C MP 3: C MP 4: A	The final grade calculated will be a B.
MP1: B MP 2: A MP 3: B MP 4: A	The final grade calculated will be an A as the grade moved in an upward progression.
MP 1: A MP 2: B MP 3: A MP 4: B	The final grade calculated will be a B as the grade moved in a downward progression.

Senior Mid-year Grade

The mid-year grade is an average of the first two marking periods and provides a prediction of what the final course grade might be. During Marking Period 2 grade reporting, the SIS will automatically calculate a mid-year grade for all Grade 12 students. The SIS (FOCUS) will average the first two marking period grades and include the progression of the grades as needed. If the teacher determines the mid-year grade calculated by the SIS is not correct, the teacher may correct the grade in the SIS.

Examples

MP1 A and MP2 C.	The mid-year grade calculation will be a B.
MP1 B and MP2 A.	The mid-year grade calculation will be an A as the grade moved in an upward progression; a predictor of the direction the final grade is moving in.
MP1 A and MP2 B.	The mid-year grade is a B.

Additional Considerations

For courses in which only one marking period was assigned a Late Enrollment (L) code, a final grade for the course may be calculated using the three marking period grades earned.

For courses earned in a nontraditional format (online learning, extended year learning program, etc.), a final grade will be determined by established formula provided by the Office of Educational Options.

For a full-year course to earn credit, a student's computed average must be at least a D and that student must (a) pass one marking period each semester or (b) pass both marking periods in the second semester. If, however, a student has not satisfied either requirement and the teacher feels that the student has passed the course, the teacher may complete a Grade Variance Form.

If a student retakes a course for which credit was previously earned, the student may earn credit more than once for the same course only if the course is designated as such in the Course Catalog. If the course is not designated in the Course Catalog as eligible for repeating, the student may still retake the course. Both course attempts and the corresponding grades earned will be recorded on the transcript. The course attempt with the highest grade earned will be awarded credit and, if taken in high school, used for calculating GPA, QPA, and class rank.

If a student participates in a high school credit-bearing course during middle school, the credit will be awarded to the student, and a "P" will appear on the high school transcript if the student earned a passing grade in the course.

Students Transferring into BCPS

If a student transfers into BCPS more than seven days after the interim report of the first marking period and before the second marking period interims are issued and enrolls in a course in which they was not enrolled in the previous school, a Late Enrollment (L) code should be used.

Grades for comparable courses for students who have transferred from another school will be averaged into the final grade.

Final grades earned for courses completed outside of BCPS will follow the grading and weighting standards of the system in which the course was completed.

Computation of Middle/High School Grade Point Average (GPA) and Quality Point Average (QPA)

Marking period GPA will be used to determine academic eligibility for extracurricular activities, National Honor Society, honor roll, and any other activity requiring the reporting of a grade point average. Both the GPA and QPA will be recorded on the transcript.

The GPA for a marking period will be determined by adding each credit-bearing course's total points and dividing the sum by the number of credit-bearing class periods. The point values are as follows:

$$A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, E = 0$$

The cumulative GPAs will be determined by multiplying the points for the final grade earned for each course by the credits assigned to the course, summing the results, and dividing by the total of the credits assigned to the courses taken.

Both GPA and QPA are computed for each marking period and cumulatively at the completion of each course and will be on final report cards at the end of each school year.

Both a GPA and QPA will be calculated by October 1 of the senior year and will be based on all high school credits earned.

Courses carrying a designation of gifted and talented/advanced academics (GT/AA), advanced placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and honors (H) will contribute to weighted class rank. Weighted courses will be indicated as such in the Master Course File.

The same process to calculate GPA will be used for calculating QPA using the points assigned below.

AP:	A = 6	B = 5	C = 4	D = 1	E = 0
IB:	A = 6	B = 5	C = 4	D = 1	E = 0
GT:	A = 6	B = 5	C = 4	D = 1	E = 0
H:	A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 1	E = 0
ST:	A = 4	B = 3	C = 2	D = 1	E = 0

Honor Roll (Secondary Schools)

Eligibility for the honor roll is based on the student's current marking period grades and the following must be met:
1. The student must achieve at least a 4.0 QPA or a 3.0 GPA with no more than one "C" for the marking period.
2. A single D, E, F, or U will automatically exclude a student for that marking period.

National Honor Society (High School)

Eligibility for the National Honor Society is calculated based on a student's cumulative high school GPA. A GPA of 3.3 or greater is necessary for eligibility. Final grades and credits are used in the calculation. If no final grade is available, the current marking period grades are used. Unlike QPA, the GPA is not weighted.

Academic Recognition and High School Graduation

Starting with students entering Grade 6 for the first time in the fall of 2016, academic recognition during a high school graduation ceremony may be awarded to students based on established and posted criteria determined by the school and approved by the community superintendent. Criteria must be approved by March of the prior year for incoming Grade 9 students.

The top five percent of each high school's graduating class as recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education will be determined based on QPA.

Home and Hospital

The BCPS grading policy applies while students receive Home and Hospital Program (HHP) services.   During the BCPS quarterly grade reporting window, HHP tutors submit grade data to the Home and Hospital Supervisor. The HHP Supervisor submits the grade data to the identified liaison at the home school. For students receiving Full Time HHP services, the tutor makes a recommendation to the student's teacher of record about grading. The teacher of record reviews the recommendation and determines and issues the student's grade. For students receiving Chronic Intermittent HHP services, students are graded solely by the teacher(s) at the current school of enrollment. For all HHP students, the teacher of record at the school of enrollment, assigns report card grades based upon progress reported by the Home and Hospital tutor. Note, the BCPS report card will not reflect the tutor's name but will reflect the enrolled school's teacher of record. For students with an IEP, the HHP tutor provides data on the IEP goals for the case manager at the enrolled school to review and consider when reporting quarterly progress.

Definitions

Body of evidence is a collection of aligned instructional tasks—such as assignments, assessments, presentations, products, observations—used to determine if a student has met identified standards or goals.

Class rank is the relative position of a student in their graduation class based upon a cumulative quality point average (QPA).

Code is a letter used in lieu of a grade to reflect the academic history of a student.

Countywide final examination is an end-of-course assessment administered to students enrolled in that course.

Course is a planned sequence of instruction related to a specific subject. The content of a BCPS course is defined by an approved curriculum.

Course expectations are statements of skills and knowledge the student should attain by the end of a middle or high school course.

Course level is an indication of the rigor of a given course. Course levels may include advanced placement (AP), advanced academics/gifted and talented (GT), International Baccalaureate (IB), honors (H), and standard (ST). Not all courses are offered at different levels.

Credit is a unit of achievement awarded for the completion of a course and the successful demonstration of established standards for the course.

Credit by examination is a credit awarded to a student who does not complete a course but successfully demonstrates knowledge of established learning goals by passing an approved examination.

Curriculum

- **Written curriculum** is the curriculum documents produced by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction specifying what is to be taught.

- **Taught curriculum** is the curriculum as it is implemented in the classroom.

- **Assessed curriculum** is the curriculum as it is reflected by state and local formative and summative assessments.

- **Digital curriculum** is the written, taught, and assessed curriculum provided on a digital platform.

Departmental team is all teachers in a school who teach the same content and/or course.

Final evaluation activity is an assessment administered at the end of a high school course, including those taught in middle school, that determines whether students understand and can apply what has been taught; provides students the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge/skills on which they have had time to practice; is based on known criteria; focuses primarily on individual student performance; integrates important skills and knowledge; and may take the form of examinations, papers, projects, and/or performance tasks such as discussion, recitation, simulation construction, movement, procedure, or application.

Grade is a letter with a percentage and quality point equivalent indicating a measure of performance related to achievement of course objectives.

Grade-level team is all teachers in a school who teach the same grade level(s).

Grade point average (GPA) is the unweighted numerical representation of a grade measuring a student's overall performance across courses taken for a specific period of time. There are two types of GPAs:
- Marking period GPA
- Cumulative GPA

Interim report is a report issued at the midpoint of each marking period that reflects the academic progress of a student through the date of issuance.

Marking period is approximately a nine-week period at the end of which the individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.

Master course file is a comprehensive listing of all courses and relevant course details available to schools. All courses included have an approved curriculum.

Quality point average (QPA) is the weighted numerical representation of a grade measuring a student's overall performance across courses taken for a specific period of time. The weight is determined by the course level.

Report card reflects the performance of a student through the date of issuance and is issued at the end of each marking period.

Semester is an approximately 18-week period comprised of two 9-week marking periods.

Score is a point value recorded in the learning management system indicating performance on a given assignment or assessment.

Standards are the grade-level or course learning objectives all students are expected to meet.

Transcript is a record of courses, grades, credits, and other graduation requirements completed by a student.

Weighting grades is the process of adding quality points to honors (H), advanced academics/gifted and talented (GT), advanced placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) course values.

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Appendix A

Special thanks to the following people who participated in the initial district grading committee in 2015-2016, and invested numerous hours in an effort to improve our system of grading for students.

Grading and Reporting – Initial Committee Members 2015-2016

Co-Chairs

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Dr. Richard Weisenhoff, Executive Director, Department of Academics

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Dr. Dani Biancolli, Elementary Coordinator, Social Studies
Dr. Mary Boswell-McComas, Coordinator, Professional Growth and Partnerships
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Ms. Christina Byers, Executive Director, Leadership Development
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Ms. Jessica DeShields, Counselor, Loch Raven Technical Academy
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Mr. Tim Hayden, Coordinator, School Counseling
Ms. Sharon Hoffman, Supervisor, Early Childhood Programs
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Ms. Susan Kleinsasser, Teacher, Rodgers Forge Elementary School
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Mr. Andrew Last, Principal, Perry Hall High School
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Dr. Penelope Martin-Knox, Assistant Superintendent, Middle Schools
Ms. Kimberly McMenamin, Coordinator, Professional Development and Training

Ms. Tara McNulty, Supervisor, Application Support and Training
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Ms. Rebecca Rider, Director, Special Education
Ms. Christine Roberts, Teacher, Dumbarton Middle School
Ms. Jennifer Robinson, Teacher, Pikesville Middle School
Dr. Marshall Scott, Assistant Superintendent, Middle Schools
Ms.Sandra Skordalos, Teacher, Patapsco High School
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Community Stakeholders

Ms. Abby Beytin, President, Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO)
Mr. William Lawrence, Executive Director, Council of Administrators and Supervisory Employees
  (CASE)
Mr. Nick Prateley, President, Baltimore County Student Council
Ms. Deeksha Walia, Student Member, Baltimore County Board of Education
Ms. Donna Sibley, Coordinator, Education Advisory Council
Ms. Elisa Hartman, Chair, Special Education Citizen Advisory Council
Ms. Jessica Paffenbarger, Past-Chair, Special Education Citizen Advisory Council
Ms. Julie Miller-Breetz, Chair, Gifted and Talented Citizen Advisory Council
Ms. Jackie Brewster, Chair, Southeast Area Advisory Council
Mr. Fred Barlett, Chair, Southwest Area Advisory Council
Ms. Aimee Freeman, Chair, Central Area Advisory Council
Ms. Julie Henn, Chair, Northeast Area Advisory Council
Mr. Clifford Collins, Chair, Northwest Area Advisory Council
Mr. Emory Young, President, Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Appendix B

2016-2017
Steering Committee Members

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Ms. Sharon Gallagher, Coordinator, Educational Options
Ms. Amy Grabner, Principal, Essex Elementary School
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Ms. Kim McMenamin, Coordinator, Organizational Development
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Ms. Donna Murphy, Counselor, Eastern Technical High School
Ms. Nora Murray, Program Specialist
Mr. KevinDouglas Olive, Teacher, French, Western School of Technology
Ms. Erin O'Toole-Trivas, Principal, Parkville Middle School
Mr. Murray "Buddy" Parker, Principal, Western School of Technology

Dr. Stefani Pautz, Coordinator, Curriculum Operations
Mr. Craig Reed, Principal, Patapsco High School and Center for Arts
Mr. Tyler Reedy, Teacher, English, Ridgely Middle School
Ms. Leah Renzi, Resource Teacher, Overlea High School
Ms. Rebecca Rider, Director, Special Education
Ms. Jennifer Robinson, Teacher, Mathematics, Pikesville Middle School
Mr. Brian Schiffer, Director, Fine Arts and Social Sciences
Ms. Christine Schumacker, Director, Science PreK–12
Mr. Steve Shatzer, Teacher, Social Studies, Perry Hall High School
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Dr. John Staley, Director, Mathematics PreK–12
Dr. Melissa Whisted, Executive Director, Academics Services
Ms. Verletta White, Chief Academic Officer

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Ms. Christine Schumacker, Director, Science PreK–12
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Dr. Melissa Whisted, Executive Director, Academic Services
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2021–2022
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Ms. Donna Sibley, AEAC Coordinator
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