

Questions for Examining Grading & Reporting Systems

This document is built on the premise that in order to be effective and equitable, a grading & reporting system must communicate clear information to students, educators, and parents about the skills a student has mastered or the areas where he or she needs support or more practice.

The questions below can be used to improve or re-design grading systems. These questions can be used to guide discussions among teachers in leadership team meetings, faculty meetings, team meetings, or department meetings. These questions can also be used to engage students and families in the process.

Definition of Terms:

Grading System - The system that a school has developed to guide how teachers assess and grade student work.

Reporting System - The system that a school has developed for the organization of assignment scores in grade-books (either online or paper), and the determination of grades for report cards and transcripts.

Questions:

1. Are grades based on **common understandings of proficiency** that teachers have developed together, or must each teacher use his or her own personal definition to derive a grade?
2. Does the organization of grade-books enable teachers to **specifically assess the standards** (or sets of standards) in their subject areas?
3. How well does our system ensure the **consistency of grading practices** in our school? (To what extent does a grade mean the same thing from one class to another? Do teachers factor in homework, classwork, behavior, or extra credit differently?)
4. What information do students and their families get about a **student's progress, habits of work, or areas of weakness/strength** when they look at the online grade-book and/or report card? To what extent does the grade-book or report card help **educators** understand a student's needs for enrichment or remediation within each subject area?
5. What information do students and their families get about a **student's achievement relative to school-wide expectations** (or preparedness for the next stage of their education) when they look at the online grade-book and/or report card?
6. Is it possible for a student's good behavior and work habits to **mask a lack of proficiency**? Is it possible for a student's poor behavior or work habits to mask their **attainment** of proficiency?
7. To what extent does the grading system help ensure that students can only graduate if they **have attained our vision of what graduates should know and be able to do**?