



Middle School Grading Handbook

2025-2026

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Background

The purpose of grading + reporting K-8 is to accurately communicate student progress towards learning outcomes aligned to the end-of-year standards. Grading and reporting will be transparent and usable for all stakeholders. Additionally, reporting will include information about a student's learning habits aligned to the Vision of a Graduate.

Equity in Grading + Reporting

The Wauwatosa School District is deeply committed to ensuring that equitable practices are a part of the teaching and learning cycle. As we consider grading practices, it is important that these equity core beliefs are included.

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT EQUITY CORE BELIEFS

The District has adopted diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility core beliefs that will guide our professional behavior and set a level of expectation for belonging in all Wauwatosa Schools. The core beliefs activate our behaviors in the vital areas of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility for all. Actions, and not words are critical to this work. The diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility core beliefs are:

1. The elimination of institutional inequities and disproportionality starts with the staff responsible for serving all students.
2. The staff of the Wauwatosa School District are responsible for the prevention of student failure, supporting students' psychological safety and social-emotional growth all while focusing on continuous improvement for the District.
3. The District shall ensure that educational programming is accessible, representative of the student population and equitable to all students.
4. Instructional teams are deliberate in delivering culturally responsive teaching strategies daily.
5. Instructional teams continuously work to increase and transform their instructional and professional capacities with the understanding that it will eventually positively impact all students.
6. Instructional practices and curricular materials are proactively developed and revised to meet the needs of students and continuously improve student performance.
7. Developing a sense of exemplary service, belonging and inclusion is the center of the District's outreach efforts with all students, families, visitors and community members.
8. Ensuring that all schools and classrooms are welcoming environments that foster understanding and care for every student, family member and visitor. In short, the diversity that these stakeholders bring to our school community shall be honored and respected.
9. Student performance is constantly monitored to assist educators to adjust their practice accordingly, document progress and determine if the professionals are closing the disproportionality gaps in the District.
10. Educators and the District will always persevere in serving students, even when a student lacks the perceived and/or historically acknowledged home guidance, support, academic background knowledge, fails to exert the expected effort, and/or struggles to consistently adhere to the District's Student Code of Conduct.

Assessment Definitions

Summative Assessments and Formative Assessments

Summative assessments are assessments that capture a student's proficiency at the completion of a learning period. Formative assessments are usually more frequent, "smaller" assessments that can take place every day and include classroom checks for understanding, quizzes, and homework assignments that receive specific feedback. Teachers collect and record both formative and summative assessments in the Infinite Campus gradebook for students and parents to see. These are some typical differences between formative and summative assessments.

Formative Assessments	Summative Assessments
are considered practice	are final products or performances and are thus eligible for retakes
can occur frequently	occur less frequently than formative assessments
are "smaller" in scope, covering fewer standards	are "bigger" in scope, covering a number of standards
can be very informal, on-the-spot, individualized for one or several students	are typically more formal, for all students in a course

The term "common summative assessment" (CSA) refers to crosstown, end-of-unit assessments given to all students in a given course (e.g. algebra), regardless of whether they attend East, West, Whitman, or Longfellow. While students often work collaboratively, their grades should reflect only their individual achievement; summative "group grades" are not an acceptable grading practice.

Grades for high school credited courses in Wauwatosa are calculated by using an average of summative and formative scores. Summative assessments are 90% of the final grade, while formative assessments are 10% of the final grade.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks represent broad learning goals, like problem solving, reading, applying scientific models, evaluating sources, etc. Each of our content areas (academic departments) has three to six benchmarks. Often, a teacher uses all the benchmarks in a content area to track students' progress throughout a semester. However, sometimes the team of teachers teaching a course decide to use only some of their content area benchmarks. A student's grade reflects their mastery of the benchmarks in a given course. The secondary benchmarks are listed below.

Department or Course	Benchmarks
Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product 2. Process 3. Articulation
Business Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create solutions to real world problems 2. Read, write & speak in the context of business 3. Use technology in a business 4. Analyze data & use info to evaluate relationships, connect concepts & draw conclusions 5. Apply financial literacy skills
Business - Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think critically 2. Collaborate 3. Communicate professionally 4. Demonstrate creativity and innovation
Computer Science	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design & implement creative solutions & artifacts 2. Think abstractly using data: develop models/predictions 3. Analyze problems & artifacts using strategies 4. Communicate information about tasks through explanation
ELA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading 2. Writing 3. Speaking + Listening
Family + Consumer Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze & apply creative problem solving concepts 2. Apply financial literacy skills to their lives 3. Communicate effectively 4. Develop & strengthen relationships 5. Create quality products essential to family & workplace

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Apply decision making process to problems 7. Apply factual knowledge
Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply concepts to health promotion/disease prevention 2. Access valid info, products, & services to enhance health 3. Apply decision making to enhance/maintain health 4. Advocate for personal, family & community health
Math	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplify/Solve 2. Graphing/Visual Representation 3. Connections/Applications
Music	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform 2. Respond 3. Connect 4. Create
Physical Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate motor skills & movement patterns 2. Demonstrates concepts, principles & strategies of physical activity 3. Demonstrate willingness to engage in physical activity 4. Apply health enhancing concepts to benefit physical fitness 5. Engage in respectful personal & social behavior in phy ed
PLTW/Engineering 9-12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate a deep understanding of engineering concepts 2. Solve problems by applying math & science concepts 3. Research, design, evaluate solutions to engineering problems 4. Construct working models & mechanisms 5. Document & communicate work in a variety of ways
Science	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication: Claim evidence reasoning 2. Concepts: Scientific principles & vocabulary 3. Modeling: Visual representation 4. Data: Gather, analyze
Social Studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehend and interpret primary and secondary sources. 2. Apply the skills of a social scientist 3. Develop and research essential questions to synthesize information and communicate ideas about their world 4. Develop an understanding of core social studies concepts

STEM (ELA, Science, and Social Studies)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design Process: Analyze problems and solutions; develop and interpret models 2. Presentation: Express knowledge, ideas, and opinions 3. Reading: Reads, interprets, and accurately applies written information 4. Research: Gathers, analyzes, and applies information 5. Writing: Clearly and effectively communicates for a variety of audiences 6. Collaboration: Collaborate effectively with teammates (exempt from grade calculation)
Technology Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and communicate solutions 2. Use tools & processes to make useful products 3. Analyze & evaluate projects to established industry standards
World Language	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpretive Reading & Listening 2. Presentational Writing & Speaking 3. Interpersonal Communication

Marks in the Gradebook

The following proficiency scale will be used by educators as marks in the gradebook. This scale will form the basis for the development of rubrics in individual courses.

Symbols	Labels	Descriptors
1	Beginning	The student shows an initial connection and application of the learning outcomes in familiar contexts.
2	Approaching	The student shows partial understanding and application of the learning outcomes in familiar contexts.
3	Proficient	The student shows a consistent understanding and application of the learning outcomes in familiar contexts.
4	Extending	The student shows a consistent understanding and application of the learning outcomes in new or extended contexts.

Additional Marks:

0 - Indicates that there is no evidence submitted to show understanding and application of the learning outcomes. A mark of 0 is also used to indicate that a missing assignment may no longer be submitted.

M - missing assessment has not been submitted. This moves to a '0' when a student can no longer make up the assessment.

Calculating a Course Grade

(revised July 2024)

All content areas have agreed upon benchmarks that represent their important thinking skills and big ideas. A content area or course may have from three to six benchmarks depending on how they have organized their thinking skills and big ideas. Throughout the semester teachers assess and record a student's achievement on assessments in Infinite Campus (summative or formative).

Step One

The teacher scores an assessment, often using a rubric that describes the four levels of mastery related to benchmark mastery, 4.0, 3.0, 2.0, 1.0. All scores are recorded in Infinite Campus according to whether it was summative or formative.

Step Two

The summative assessment scores are averaged and make up 90% of a student's final grade.

Step Three

The formative assessment scores are averaged and make up 10% of a student's final grade.

The WSD Grading Calendar is linked for reference: [📅 WSD 25-26 Grading Calendar](#) .

Grading Scale

Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, the following grading scale will be used. This scale is taken from the work of Robert J. Marzano and reflects the desire for students to reach proficiency. For high school credited courses, the GPA values remain the same for each letter grade in order to maintain parity with previously earned GPA points. There is no GPA calculation at middle school.

Average of Scores	Letter Grade	GPA Value
3.75 - 4.00	A+	4.0
3.26-3.74	A	4.0
3.00 - 3.25	A-	3.67
2.84 - 2.99	B+	3.33
2.67 - 2.83	B	3.00
2.50 - 2.66	B-	2.67
2.34 2.49	C+	2.33
2.17 - 2.33	C	2.00
2.00 - 2.16	C-	1.67
1.76 - 1.99	D+	1.33
1.26 - 1.75	D	1.00
1.00 - 1.25	D-	.67
Below 1.00	F	0

<https://marzanoacademies.org/reporting-and-grading/>

Assessment Turnaround Expectations

The District acknowledges that (a) feedback is most instructive when provided in a timely manner and (b) families desire swift reporting on their child's achievement and progress. Therefore, at a minimum, to ensure that students and families have the most accurate understanding of progress and achievement, staff shall allow for students to review their formative and summative assessment results and post the attached grades to the formative and summative assessments in Infinite Campus no later than **two (2) weeks after the administration of the assessment**. Staff are responsible for updating the gradebook every two weeks. Furthermore, staff shall post grades in the student information system with the designated grading window each semester for the purpose of communication via report cards.

Communication

Educators will engage in proactive communication with families and adhere to the following expectations.

- If a student's grade falls below a C after grades are updated, staff will contact families to inform them of the grade.
 - Staff shall document these communications in the PLP notes in Infinite Campus.
 - Communication methods include phone, email, virtual meeting, and in-person meeting.
- Staff are expected to be in regular contact with families whose students are in danger of failing or are currently failing a course.

Automated messages will also be sent to families on Thursdays to indicate any missing assignments.

Reassessment

Not every student masters a given skill by the day of the assessment - sometimes it takes them more time, or they need another attempt at demonstrating their mastery. This is why we offer multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. Multiple opportunities can come about in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, reassessing on assessments. The goal is that by offering reassessment opportunities, students will see the value of learning from their areas of growth and invest in a continuous learning process. Ultimately, it is the goal for students to find success on summative assessments through the formative assessments given throughout the learning process. Furthermore, it is expected that reassessment opportunities offer the same level of rigor as the original assessment. Further guidance will be developed during the 2024-25 school year.

Use of Incomplete Grades

A grade of 'Incomplete' may be given at the end of the semester when a student has not yet completed the requisite assessments and is not yet passing a course. Once a grade of 'Incomplete' has been issued, the teacher will notify the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the incomplete grade. The teacher and student will make a plan to complete the assessments within two weeks of the posted grade. After two weeks, the current mathematical calculation of the letter grade shall be added to the student's transcript. Any grading changes as a result of an Incomplete may only be made by the building principal in accordance with Policy 5421.

Use of Pass/Fail Grades

At the middle school level, Pass/Fail grades are utilized only in:

- Academic Lab - Literacy
- Academic Lab - Math
- Courses at Vel R. Phillips

Pass/Fail grades may not be utilized in core content or allied arts courses. See the linked document for more information. [Pass/Fail Grades](#)

Grade Appeals

Any grade appeal process must commence no more than thirty (30) days after the posting of the specific grade in question in the student information system (Infinite Campus).

- A. All grade appeals begin with the teacher and the student.
- B. If the issue is not resolved at the teacher level, it may be appealed to the evaluating administrator of the teacher. The administrator will respond to the appeal within ten (10) working days.
- C. If the issue is not resolved at the building level, it may be appealed in writing to a Grade Review Committee, to which the Chief Academic Officer will be the point of contact to initiate the process as well as the facilitator of the process. The committee will be comprised of five people:
 - a. The head high school school principal, if not the evaluating administrator, or another high school administrator identified by the Chief Academic Officer
 - b. The Director of Strategy and Continuous Improvement or designee
 - c. The Director of Student Success or designee
 - d. A teacher representative selected by the teacher whose grade is in question
 - e. A teacher selected by the student or the student's parent(s). This teacher may not be one of the child's current teachers. If the student or the student's parent(s) do not

select a teacher, the building principal will select a teacher to serve on the committee.

A majority vote of the committee is required for a change to the appealed grade.

A written grievance to the Grade Review Committee must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer within 30 days of step B above.

In the coordination of the meeting of the Grade Review Committee, considerations requested of the parties involved will be considered, however, there is no guarantee that they will be honored. It is the responsibility of the Chief Academic Officer to convene the committee in front of the family and educator involved in the appeal as swiftly as possible to provide resolution. Parties requested to be involved in this process must prioritize this process above other professional responsibilities to a reasonable degree.

Throughout the appeal process (from teacher to committee), it is the charge of district staff to determine if in the situation presented there exists prejudice, arbitrary action or capricious action on the part of the instructor, thus influencing the grade. It is only under one or more of these circumstances that a grade shall be overturned.

Below is how such actions are defined:

1. Prejudice - an unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge
2. Arbitrary - based on chance rather than being planned or based on reason
3. Capricious - changing mood or behavior suddenly and unexpectedly

At any stage, but terminating with the grade appeal committee, the appeal will result in one of the following three decisions:

1. the assigned grade should remain;
2. the course instructor is asked to reconsider the grade in light of information collected, and the reconsidered grade stands; or
3. a grade change is warranted.

Should the appeal reach the committee level, a written resolution will be communicated by the Chief Academic Officer with the family and teacher within ten (10) business days of the meeting of the committee. The building administration and relevant school counselors will also be included in said communication.

Responsibility for Learning

Teachers shall continue to use the Responsibility for Learning (R4L) score as a communication tool, but the scores will not be used to determine student access to co-curricular activities and student events. When we give students a course grade, we take into account how well they are mastering course benchmarks. Course benchmarks are really important skills. In an English class, reading and writing are examples of

benchmarks. In Science, interpreting data and communicating scientific information are examples of benchmarks. A course grade reflects how well a student is mastering course benchmarks. A course grade does not include student behaviors.

Here are some examples of student behavior:

- Engages in class by participating in activities and cooperating with other students
- Demonstrates responsibility by preparing for class, doing homework, and managing time

While these behaviors are important in a child's overall education, they are not directly related to a student's academic grade, because that grade is reserved for their mastery of the benchmarks. We keep academic behaviors separate from academic grades. However, because these behaviors are so important, we do want to give students and their parents information on the quality of these behaviors. That's where the Responsibility for Learning Score comes in.

The Responsibility for Learning Score reflects the quality of a student's behavior in a class. We use the following rubric to provide feedback on student behaviors such as those listed above:

Consistently (4)

The student consistently demonstrates the above behaviors.

Usually (3)

The student usually demonstrates the above behaviors.

Occasionally (2)

The student occasionally demonstrates the above behaviors.

Rarely (1)

The student rarely demonstrates the above behaviors.

It should be noted that attendance is very important and can obviously have an effect on grades. However, attendance should not directly be factored into a student's academic grade.

Note: Advisory must have an RFL grade.