

Policy Outline

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I. Policy Value Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to ensuring that all students learn and that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders are provided meaningful feedback on student achievement. Grading, reporting, promotion, and retention within the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) are based on the individual student’s mastery of curriculum standards. Additionally, the Board supports students in maintaining and extending their learning through the use of homework as part of the curricular program. The Board views grading, reporting, and homework as part of an ongoing conversation about student academic progress with students and their families.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to ensure that information on grading, reporting, promotion, retention, and homework is determined in a clear and consistent manner and reported to students and their families through regular and timely communication about student academic progress.

III. Standards

A. Grades and Codes

1. A letter grade or a code will be given for all courses in which a student is enrolled.
2. A letter grading (A, B, C, D, E) and coding (I, N/A, P, W, X, Z) system as described in Sections III.A.3. and 4. respectively, will be used; no plus or minus signs will be used for official records, such as reports cards and transcripts.
3. Codes

- a. Any courses taken in middle and high school.

I - I (Incomplete) codes will be used when a student has not been able to complete required coursework due to excused absences or other extenuating circumstances. I codes will be converted to an appropriate letter grade according to Implementation Procedures Section II.D.1.

N/A - N/A (Not Available) codes will be used when transfer students (in-county or from out-of-county) are missing grades from one marking period and/or assessment grades. High school credited courses with N/A codes will be calculated into the cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA). The final grade will be the average of the remaining quarters or assessment grades. N/A codes may also be used as a placeholder for non-traditional courses until the marking period and/or assessment grades are recorded at the end of the semester. If an N/A code is needed for another reason, counselors should request permission from the Office of School Counseling. A student may not receive N/A codes in multiple quarters of the same course and still receive credit.

When the achievement of Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals requires a schedule change, N/A codes will be used for missing marking period and/or assessment grades in a new course.

P - P (Pass) codes will be used when a student successfully completes a course through credit by assessment, credit awarded for coursework from non-accredited schools, or home instruction courses upon enrollment in an HCPSS school. Courses with P codes will receive credit and will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA.

- b. Any courses taken in middle or high school for high school credit.

W - W (Withdrawal) codes will be used to indicate that a student withdrew from a course more than 24 school days from the start of a full year course or 16 days from the start of a semester course, or the date of enrollment for a non-traditional course, and did not transfer into another level of the same

course. Courses with W codes will receive no credit and will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA but will be calculated into marking period GPAs for eligibility.

X - X (Late enrollment in class) codes will be used when a student enrolls in a course after the 24th day of a full-year course or after the 16th day of a semester-long course, too late for credit to be granted. Courses with X codes will receive no credit and will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA but will be calculated into marking period GPAs.

Z - Z (Assessment not taken) codes will be used when a student does not take a midterm or final assessment for a course. Courses with Z codes will receive no credit, will count as a credit attempted, and will earn 0 quality points until the Z code is converted to an appropriate letter grade.

4. Grades

Grading will reflect the student's level of mastery of curriculum standards. Students will be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning via various measures in each quarter. Parameters for grading will be developed collaboratively with educators and the Division of Academics. Letter grading will be determined as follows:

- A (90-100%) – Outstanding level of achievement
- B (80-89%) – High level of achievement
- C (70-79%) – Satisfactory level of achievement
- D (60-69%) – Low level of achievement
- E (59% or lower) – Failure (no credit awarded for high school credited courses)

Percent scores are rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, if the number behind the decimal point is less than 5, the score is rounded down to the next whole number and if the number behind the decimal point is 5 or more, the score is rounded up to the next whole number. (Example 1: 89.49% rounds to 89; Example 2: 89.50% rounds to 90)

5. High School Grades

Final grades in high school credited courses will be determined by translating the letter grade for each marking period and State end-of-course assessment where applicable, using the following quality points scale:

- A = 4
- B = 3
- C = 2
- D = 1

$$E = 0$$

- a. 1.0 or more credit courses
- i. Multiply the quality points for each marking period grade by two. Add the quality points for each assessment grade. Compute the sum and divide by ten.
 - ii. For reporting purposes, the quotient will be converted to a letter grade using the following scale:

$$A = 3.50-4.00$$

$$B = 2.50-3.49$$

$$C = 1.50-2.49$$

$$D = 0.75-1.49$$

$$E = \text{Below } 0.75 \text{ (No Credit)}$$

Note: The average for a D must be 0.75 (not 0.5) to 1.49 in order for credit to be awarded.

Example: A student earns an A in quarter 1, B in quarter 2, B on the mid-term assessment, B in quarter 3, an A in quarter 4, and an A on the final assessment: Student's grade would be $4(A) \times 2 = 8$, $3(B) \times 2 = 6$, $3(B) \times 1 = 3$, $3(B) \times 2 = 6$, $4(A) \times 2 = 8$, $4(A) \times 1 = 4$. $8 + 6 + 3 + 6 + 8 + 4 = 35$ divided by $10 = 3.5$. Final Grade A.

- b. Semester courses (0.5 credit courses)
- i. Multiply the quality points for each marking period grade by two and compute their sum. Add the quality points for the assessment grade and divide by five.
 - ii. For reporting purposes, the quotient will be converted to a letter grade using the following scale:

$$A = 3.50-4.00$$

$$B = 2.50-3.49$$

$$C = 1.50-2.49$$

$$D = 0.75-1.49$$

$$E = \text{Below } 0.75 \text{ (No Credit)}$$

Note: The average for a D must be 0.75 (not 0.5) to 1.49 in order for credit to be awarded.

Example: Student earns a C in one marking period, a B the second marking period, and a C on the midterm: Student's grade would be $2(C) \times 2 = 4$, $3(B) \times 2 = 6$, $2(C) \times 1 = 2$. $4 + 6 + 2 = 12$ divided by $5 = 2.4$. Final Grade C.

Middle School Grades

6. Final middle school grades will be determined by translating the letter grade for each marking period using the following quality points scale:

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

a. 1.0 credit courses

- i. For high school courses taught in middle school, the midterm assessment will be included in the second quarter grades and the final assessment will be included in the fourth quarter grades.
- ii. Compute the sum of all marking periods and divide by four.
- iii. For reporting purposes, the quotient will be converted to a letter grade using the following scale:

A = 3.50-4.00
B = 2.50-3.49
C = 1.50-2.49
D = 0.75-1.49
E = Below 0.75 (no credit)

Note: The average for a D must be 0.75 to 1.49 in order for credit to be awarded.

Example: Student earns an A in quarter 1, a B in quarter 2, a B in quarter 3, and an A in quarter 4: Student's grade would be 4(A), 3(B), 3(B), 4(A).
 $4+3+3+4=14$. 14 divided by 4 = 3.5. Final Grade A.

b. Semester courses (0.5 credit courses)

- i. Compute the sum of the marking period grades. Divide by two.
- ii. For reporting purposes, the quotient will be converted to a letter grade using the following scale:

A = 3.50-4.00
B = 2.50-3.49
C = 1.50-2.49
D = 0.75-1.49
E = Below 0.75 (no credit)

Note: The average for a D must be 0.75 (not 0.5) to 1.49 in order for credit to be awarded.

Example: Student earns a C in quarter 1 and a B in quarter 2:
Student's grade would be 2(C), 3(B). $2+3=5$. 5 divided by 2 = 2.5. Final Grade B.

c. Quarter Courses (0.25 credit courses)

For quarter-credit courses, the quarter grade will be the final grade.

7. Make-up work will be accepted under the following conditions:
 - a. A student may make up work and receive a recorded grade for work missed due to an excused absence or school field trip attendance. Students returning from excused absences or school field trips will have the number of days equal to the number of days of excused absences to complete the make-up work (i.e., work due on the day of a school field trip will be turned in on the next school day; work assigned on a day of an excused absence will add one school day to the due date). For absences beyond two weeks, an administrator can allow for additional days for work to be completed.
 - b. A student may complete make-up work but will not receive a recorded grade for work missed due to an unexcused absence.
 - c. Teachers may allow students to redo work to demonstrate a satisfactory level of mastery at a minimum.
 - d. Make-up work may not necessarily be identical to the original assignment but will meet instructional intent.
8. Student behaviors, including but not limited to, lateness to class, absence, or disciplinary action, may not be used to reduce a student's grade. However, student behaviors and attendance may impact the student's grade indirectly because of missed instructional time and incomplete assignments.
9. Extra credit is not offered in Grades 6-12. However, students may be provided opportunities to recover credit and demonstrate mastery through other relevant coursework. Opportunities should be given to students who are not passing whenever possible.
10. HCPSS will recognize and accept any and all credits a student earned toward graduation in any other public school in Maryland. Credits earned while not enrolled in a Maryland public school would be reviewed in accordance with COMAR and HCPSS policy and procedures.
11. The final grade for high school credited courses completed in middle school will appear on the high school transcript but will not be calculated into the student's GPA.

B. High School Grade Point Average

1. GPAs will be calculated and reported at regular intervals on both a periodic and cumulative basis. The following guidelines will be used in calculating GPAs:
 - a. The GPA for a marking period will be determined by adding each course's total quality points and dividing the sum by the number of attempted credits.
 - b. The cumulative GPA will be determined by multiplying the quality 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.
 - c. For students earning a Certificate of Program Completion, the GPA will be determined by all courses the student is enrolled in, since this student is not earning high school credits.
2. Both cumulative unweighted and weighted GPAs will be calculated for all students at the end of each marking period.
3. Weighted GPAs will be based on course level, with additional quality points added to designated courses.
4. Students must earn a grade of A, B, or C in a gifted & talented (GT) or advanced placement (AP) course in order to earn the weighted designation of 1.0 additional quality point per credit. Students must earn a grade of A, B, or C in an Honors course in order to earn the weighted designation of 0.5 additional quality point per credit. Students taking a dual enrollment course in a post-secondary institution for dual credit will receive the weighting for the highest possible equivalent offered by HCPSS, using the chart below. The following chart summarizes quality points for weighted GPA purposes, where applicable:

	AP and G/T	Honors	Regular
A	5.0	4.5	4.0
B	4.0	3.5	3.0
C	3.0	2.5	2.0
D	1.0	1.0	1.0
E	0	0	0

C. Promotion and Retention - Middle School

1. Decisions concerning promotion or retention will be made by the principal upon recommendation of the school team, including the teacher(s), with the knowledge and appropriate participation of parents. The factors which principals will consider are detailed in Section II.F.3 of the Implementation Procedures.
2. A student receiving special education will be assessed based on the provisions of their IEP.

3. After consideration of all factors, including parent input, the principal will decide if promotion or retention is appropriate. Parents may appeal a decision to promote or retain to the Community Superintendent.

D. Promotion and Retention - High School

1. To be promoted to grade 10, students must have five credits including one English credit or one mathematics credit and one year of high school attendance.
2. To be promoted to grade 11, students must have ten credits including one English credit and one mathematics credit and two years of high school attendance.
3. Beginning with students who are in grade 9 in school year 21-22, to be promoted to grade 12, students must have fourteen credits including two English credits and two mathematics credits, have successfully passed Health I and Lifetime Fitness, and three years of high school attendance.

E. Reporting

1. Prompt feedback is essential for developing student understanding. The grading and returning of student work will occur within three weeks of the student's submission, in the learning management system and also in class, if appropriate and barring unusual circumstances. Some non-traditional courses (such as online and dual enrollment courses) may not meet these expectations. Please check the course syllabus or speak with the instructor.
2. Teachers will notify parents of progress throughout the marking period. Parents may access a student's progress through the learning management system. Additionally, teachers may communicate progress with parents in person, by phone, or in writing, either electronically or in print.
3. School employees will communicate to students and parents on a quarterly basis the student's level of academic performance in the curriculum.
4. Report cards will be issued at the conclusion of each marking period and will reflect all work completed during that marking period unless otherwise indicated by the teacher.

F. Report Card Grade and/or Code Change

1. A change of a report card grade will be made for a sound educational purpose according to the following protocol:
 - a. A teacher will not change a student's report card grade unless there are extenuating circumstances and the change is approved by the principal. The teacher will follow the procedures established by the HCPSS in

- Section III.F.2 below.
- b. A principal may change a student's report card grade only after conferring with the teacher who assigned the grade. The principal will notify the teacher in writing if the grade is to be changed. The principal is responsible for implementing the procedures defined by the HCPSS below in Section III.F.2. for processing and recording a grade change and subsequent change to permanent records.
 - c. Grade and/or code changes cannot exceed 45 school days following the last day of school in the marking period in which the change is to be made.
 - d. For a grade change for the 4th marking period or for a non-traditional course or course with a State end-of-course assessment, the timeline would begin on the first day of school in the new school year.

2. Procedures

- a. Grade and/or code changes must be documented on the grade change form. Parents must be notified of the grade change by the teacher or the principal.
 - i. The grade change form needs a signature from the teacher, the data clerk, and the principal. It needs to include a reason for the grade change and date of the approval.
 - ii. Copies of the grade change form go into the student's cumulative record, to the teacher, to the data clerk, and to the Office of School Counseling.
 - iii. A grade change may be authorized by the Executive Director of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being, Chief Academic Officer, Chief School Management and Instructional Leadership Officer, or Community Superintendent. If a grade change is generated from outside the school, a grade change form is still completed with a reason for the change. This form goes into the student's cumulative record and to the principal and data clerk.
- b. Parents will be notified of the grade change by the teacher, principal, or Central Office employee changing the grade.
- c. The Office of School Counseling will audit the grade changes annually.
- d. Appeals of grade changes can be made to the Community Superintendent.

G. Homework

1. If assigned, homework will be purposeful, appropriate, informational, and have flexible due dates when possible. It is intended to extend learning and provide an opportunity for practice. Some courses or instructors may choose to not assign homework.
2. At the beginning of each school year, schools will communicate their homework guidelines and procedures with all students and families.

3. Homework guidelines will be established using the following criteria:
 - a. The appropriate amount of time that students are required to spend on homework is as follow:
 - i. For courses that are not for high school credit, each instructor may assign an average of, at most, one hour of homework per week. Not all classes will require homework. Some classes might require students to spend more or less time on homework than is typical.
 - ii. For courses that are for high school credit, each instructor may assign an average of, at most, one and a half hours of homework per week. Not all classes will require homework. Some classes might require students to spend more or less time on homework than is typical.
 - b. A syllabus is recommended for distribution at the beginning of every semester outlining each course's requirements, including regular assignments, projects, possible due dates, and procedures for requesting feedback on assignments.
 - c. Teachers are required to ensure that homework is accommodated/modified as necessary in accordance with students' IEPs and Section 504 Plans.
 - d. Teachers will provide feedback on homework assignments.
 - e. Homework may not be assigned or due on a day schools are closed due to inclement weather or unplanned closures.
 - f. Homework may not be assigned over the summer for any courses, nor winter or spring breaks for middle or high school courses.
 - g. A student may make up and receive a recorded grade for homework not completed due to the observance of a religious holiday. Students returning from a religious holiday observance will have an equal number of school days to complete make-up work.
 - h. Homework may be graded in Grades 6-12 but cannot exceed 10 percent of the total grade.

IV. Responsibilities

Principals will communicate information annually regarding middle and high school grading and reporting to all students, parents, and HCPSS employees.

V. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy.

VI. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. 504 Plan – A written document developed for an eligible student that allows the student to receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

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- B. Assessment – An evaluation of what students know and/or can do.
- C. Code – A letter used to reflect the academic history of a student.
- D. Course – A planned sequence of instruction related to a specific subject delivered at an HCPSS school during the school day and within the school year. The content of an HCPSS course is determined by the curriculum standards.
- E. Course Level – An indication of the challenge of a given course. Course levels may include advanced placement (AP), gifted & talented (GT), honors (H), and on grade level. Based on course content, not all courses are offered at each of the different levels (for example, there is not Latin I GT).
- F. Credit – Unit of achievement awarded for the completion of a course and the successful demonstration of mastery of curricular standards.
- G. Curriculum – The prescribed elements of programs and courses which state clearly and specifically what students are expected to know and be able to do, how well they will be able to do it, how they will meet the curriculum standards, and by what means they will be assessed.
- H. Curriculum Standards – The learning outcomes that students are expected to master, which reflect the best knowledge of the developmental needs of learners, and that comply with requirements from local policy and state law.
- I. Excused (Lawful) Absence – An absence for any portion of the day under the following conditions:
1. Death in the immediate family
 2. Illness of the student, including mental illness or behavioral health needs
 3. Pregnancy and parenting needs
 4. Court summons
 5. Hazardous weather conditions
 6. Work approved or sponsored by the school
 7. Observance of a religious holiday
 8. State emergency
 9. Suspension
 10. Lack of authorized transportation
 11. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.
- J. Grade – A letter indicating a measure of performance and mastery of curricular standards.

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- K. Grade Point Average (GPA) – Numerical representation, weighted or unweighted, of a grade measuring a student's overall performance across courses taken for a specific period of time. There are two types of GPAs:
1. Marking Period GPA
 2. Cumulative GPA
- L. Homework – Assigned work to be completed outside the scheduled school hours.
- M. Individualized Education Program (IEP) – A written description of the special education and related services for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised by the student's IEP team.
- N. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team – A group of individuals responsible for identifying and evaluating students with disabilities. The IEP team develops, reviews, and/or revises an IEP for a student with a disability and determines placement in the least restrictive environment.
- O. Marking Period – A segment of the school year during which instruction is delivered, student progress is monitored, and grades are given.
- P. Mastery – Comprehensive knowledge or skill in a subject.
- Q. Non-traditional Course – Classes that are organized and delivered using different time, location, or instructional methods from traditional in-person instruction. These may include dual enrollment college courses, fully online courses, courses taught during the evening or summer, etc.
- R. Official Records – A student's report card and Student Records Systems card.
- S. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 2. Adoptive Parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 3. Custodian – A person or agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
 4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.

5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian, as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101 (c) (Informal Kinship Care) or has been issued a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Verification of Release form entering into a custodial arrangement with the federal government.
 6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- T. Promotion – The normal progression of a student from one grade level to the next based upon successful completion of coursework.
- U. Quality Points – The numerical equivalent of a grade on a 4.0 scale (A=4.0; B=3.0; C=2.0; D=1.0; E=0). Also refers to points which may be added to designated courses for weighted GPA purposes.
- V. Report Card – Document that records a student’s grades, attendance, comments, and other information.
- W. Retention – The act of continuing a student’s enrollment in a current grade level based upon unsuccessful completion of coursework.
- X. School Year – The school year begins on the first day of school as determined by the school calendar and will continue through the day before the next approved school year. Summer courses and non-traditional courses taken during this time are part of the school year.
- Y. Student Records Systems Card (Annual Secondary School Performance Data Summary or Transcript) – Record by grade level of courses, grades, credits, and other graduation requirements completed by a student.
- Z. Unexcused (Unlawful) Absence – An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy.
- AA. Weighting Grades – The process of adding quality points to advanced placement (AP), gifted & talented (GT), and honors (H) course values. Students taking a dual enrollment course in a post-secondary institution for dual credit will receive the weighting for the highest possible equivalent offered by HCPSS.

VII. References

- A. Legal
Md. Ann. Code, Education Article, §7-301, Compulsory Attendance

Md. Ann. Code, Education Article, §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care)
 Md. Ann. Code, Family Law Article, §5-507
 COMAR 13A.03.02, Graduation Requirements for Public High School in Maryland
 COMAR 13A.03.02.08, Grading and Reporting
 COMAR 13A.08.01.03, Lawful Absence
 COMAR 13A.08.01.04, Unlawful Absence
 COMAR 13A.10.01.01, Home Instruction Program

- B. Board Policies
 - Policy 8200 Digital Education
 - Policy 8030 Graduation Requirements
 - Policy 9010 Attendance
 - Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities
- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
 - NCAA Eligibility Center - Definition of Non-traditional courses - <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/nontraditional-courses>
 - Catalog of Approved High School Courses
 - Grade Change Form
 - Schedule Change Form

VIII. History¹

ADOPTED: June 25, 1987
 REVIEWED: December 21, 2015
 MODIFIED: April 14, 2016
 December 22, 2020
 December 16, 2021
 REVISED: February 8, 1990
 June 10, 1999
 January 27, 2005
 June 12, 2008
 March 21, 2013
 June 13, 2019
 August 16, 2022
 EFFECTIVE: August 16, 2022

¹ Key: *Adopted*-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; *Reviewed*-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; *Modified*-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; *Revised*-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; *Effective*-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.

**GRADING AND REPORTING:
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL**

Effective: August 16, 2022

I. Notification/Dissemination

The principal will inform all students, parents, and employees of the provisions of this policy annually and at other times as appropriate. This may be done in the following ways:

- A. Making announcements via the public address system at the beginning of the school year.
- B. Publishing the information in school newsletters.
- C. Publishing the information in employee/student handbooks.
- D. Making the information available for new students through the registration process.

II. Grading

- A. Determining Quarterly Student Grades
 - 1. The letter grade will be used to indicate the individual level of achievement of each student in relation to mastery of curriculum standards.
 - 2. Curriculum coordinators will work with teachers and other stakeholders to collaboratively create quarterly grading parameters to include percentages, appropriate short-term (formative) assignments and summative tasks by content area and/or grade level. Neither summative nor short-term assignment categories should exceed 70 percent.
 - 3. Short-term assignments may include a variety of classwork such as independent work, individually graded group work, oral responses, and other tasks.
 - 4. Summative tasks may involve examinations (e.g., tests) and tasks/projects (e.g., longer-term assignments, essays, projects). Both short-term assignments and summative tasks should include a variety of types of work. Tasks will be graded on demonstration of performance objectives, quality of work, and completeness.

5. The parameters will be submitted for review to the Division of Academics Leadership Team. Once accepted, parameters will be reviewed by the Division of Academics Leadership Team annually and any changes will be made collaboratively with educators and the Division of Academics. Recommendations for changes to grading parameters will be subject to a comment period prior to review.
6. Extra credit is not offered in Grades 6-12. However, students may be provided with opportunities to recover credit and demonstrate mastery through other relevant coursework. Opportunities should be given to students who are not passing whenever possible.
7. Within the first five days of class, every teacher will distribute to their students an explanation of how students' grades will be calculated. This information will be made available to parents both in writing and through the learning management system. Prior to distribution to students, the administrator will review and approve the teacher's grading explanations.

B. Final Assessments for Courses Taken for High School Credit

1. 1.0 credit or more courses that are not State assessed.
 - a. At the end of the second marking period, a mid-term assessment may be given. At the end of the fourth marking period, a final assessment may be given.
 - b. Assessments may take different formats, including but not limited to, a report, capstone project, portfolio, or multiple choice test.
 - c. No student is exempt from assessments, and assessments may not be taken/due before a scheduled assessment date.
 - d. Non-traditional courses may not have a final assessment or these may be scheduled for a different time.
2. 0.5 courses

At the end of the second or fourth marking period, a final assessment may be given.
3. A student on suspension or expulsion at assessment time will be permitted to take the assessment and will remain eligible to qualify for the awarding of course credit.

C. Reporting Middle and High School Grades

1. For middle and high school courses, only the final grade and/or code will be retained on the Student Records Systems card.
2. If a student retakes a high school credited course when credit was previously earned:
 - a. The student may earn credit more than once for the same course only if the course is designated as eligible for additional credit in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses.
 - b. If the course is not designated as eligible for additional credit in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses, the student may still retake the course but will only earn credit once.
 - c. Both the final grades from taking the course originally and for retaking the course will be recorded on the high school transcript. Any course, original or retaken, taken in high school, will be included in the high school Grade Point Average (GPA).

D. Implementation of Codes

Codes used for courses taken in middle school and high school

1. I (Incomplete) Code
 - a. Incomplete codes will be issued only for marking period grades and only upon approval of the principal/designee when a student has been unable to complete required course work due to legal absences or other extenuating circumstances.
 - b. Incomplete codes must be converted to a letter grade no later than ten days 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 will change the incomplete code to the appropriate grade and notify the student and parent.
 - c. If a student transfers into an HCPSS school with a code of I as a final grade, the student will receive no credit for that course and it will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA. If it is a marking period grade, it will be calculated into marking period GPAs in accordance with this policy.
2. N/A (Not Available) codes will be used when transfer students (in-county or from out-of-county) are missing grades from one marking period. Courses with N/A codes will receive credit and will be calculated into the cumulative

GPA. The final grade will be the average of the remaining quarters and/or assessment grades. N/A codes may also be used as a placeholder for non-traditional courses until the marking period and/or assessment grades are recorded at the end of the semester. If an N/A code is needed for another reason, counselors should request permission from the Office of School Counseling. A student may not receive an N/A in multiple quarters of the same course and still receive credit. A student needs to pass at least two quarters and at least one quarter in each semester or both quarters of Semester 2 of a full-year course in order to pass the course.

If a student moves out of the state of Maryland within 14 school days of the last day of school (or end of first semester) and is not beginning in their new school for the remainder of the year, a principal can allow the student to accept the grade at time of withdrawal for Q4 or Q2.

3. W (Withdrawal) Code

W codes indicate that a student withdrew from a course after the designated date for withdrawal (24 school days from the start of a full-year course and 16 days from the start of a semester-long course).

- a. If a student transfers between levels of the same course, a W code will not be assigned. The grade the student earned in the original course will be averaged into the new course. The new teacher may require make-up work.
- b. If a student transfers to a different course prior to the designated date for withdrawal, a W code will not be assigned. The student will not be required to make up work in the new course if the schedule change is made prior to the W date, if make-up work is completed it may be averaged into the current marking period grade.
- c. If a student withdraws from a course and transfers to a different course after the designated date for withdrawal, a code of W will be assigned in the withdrawn class and no credit will be awarded. The schedule change form will be placed in the student's cumulative record. The teacher of the new course may recommend work for the student in order to gain missing content, and it will be the teacher's decision if it will be included in the student's grade. The principal may permit a student to earn credit in the new course until 16 days after the mid-point of the course as outlined in Section II.E.1. below (i.e., 16 days after the end of the second marking period for 1.0 credit or more courses).
- d. If an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines a student needs a change in schedule to make progress toward meeting their IEP goals, a code of W 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.

- e. Students may enroll in a digital education course, with approval, after the posted withdrawal deadline if they are able to complete the course requirements by the course end date or school year, whichever is earlier.

4. X (Late enrollment) Code

X codes will be issued when a student enrolls in a course too late for credit to be granted (after the 24th school day of a full-year course or after the 16th school day of a semester-long course).

- a. 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), an X code will be assigned in the new course for marking periods prior to and including the marking period in which the transfer occurred. An X code will also be assigned for the final grade on the report card and the transcript and no credit will be awarded.
- b. When a student transfers into the HCPSS more than 24 school days after the start of the course and before the second or fourth marking period begins, and enrolls in a course in which they were not enrolled in the previous school, X is assigned for all marking periods prior to and including the marking period in which the student transfers. An exception may be made as outlined in Section II.E.1. below.

5. Z (Assessment not taken) Code

Z codes will be assigned when a student does not take a midterm or final assessment for a course. Z codes will be converted to the letter grade earned on the assessment if the assessment is taken within the following deadlines:

- a. For a midterm assessment, the student will take the assessment no later than four weeks (20 school days) following the administration of the assessment.
- b. For a final assessment, the student will take the assessment no later than 10 days following the start of the next school year.
- c. For graduating seniors, Z codes will not be used. If a senior misses an assessment, an E will automatically be given.

Under unusual circumstances, the principal may approve an extension to the deadlines in Section III.D.5. above. Otherwise, within 45 school days, the Z code is converted to an E for the assessment grade, and a final grade will be calculated.

- E. Students Transferring into the HCPSS or into Alternative Education Placement
1. A code of X or N/A is typically used if a student transfers into the HCPSS (more than 24 school days after the start of a full-year course or more than 16 school days after the start of a semester-long course and before the second or fourth marking period begins) and enrolls in a course in which they were not enrolled in the previous school. However, the principal or their designee may take extenuating circumstances into consideration when determining whether a code of X or N/A should be used. If a student has 2 or more N/As in the same course, the student will not be awarded credit unless make-up work for the purposes of gaining critical content will be given and graded to replace at least one of the quarters with the N/A grade. Make-up work for the purposes of gaining critical content may be given and averaged into grades at the discretion of the teacher. Students may also be enrolled in non-traditional courses to supplement work to be included in quarter, assessment, or final grades.
 2. The grades for comparable courses for students who have transferred from another school will be averaged into the final grade.
 3. Religion courses and final grades in those courses from parochial schools not satisfying Section II.E.2. above will be reflected on the transcript but will not be awarded credit.
 4. Credit transfers for students assigned to alternative education placements will be reviewed by the Gateway Student Support Team (GSST) or Central Education Placement Team (CEPT) and approved by the principal.
- F. Middle School Academic Intervention, Promotion, Retention and Accelerated Grade Placement
1. Academic Intervention
 - a. When a middle school student performs below grade/curriculum expectations, the school team, including the teacher, will, with the knowledge and appropriate participation of parents, provide additional assistance and opportunities for the student to improve their performance. Interventions may include the following:
 - i. A conference with the student
 - ii. Differentiated instruction delivered within the regular classroom/school day
 - iii. A change in class/subject placement
 - iv. The involvement of a multidisciplinary student support team (including IEP team for special education students)
 - v. The involvement of support staff

- vi. Participation in supplemental academic activities (e.g., before/after school tutorials, mentoring)
 - vii. Enrollment in summer school
- b. In addition, for students who perform below grade level in reading and/or mathematics, the school team will develop a plan to improve and monitor achievement.
 - c. Grade level teams will review and modify student plans with the appropriate grade level teams for the following year.
2. Consideration for Promotion
- a. The principal may, upon the recommendation of a school/grade team, promote a student who achieves at or above grade/curriculum expectations towards curriculum standards in English, mathematics, science, and social studies as measured by teacher-made or selected assessments and by teacher observations.
 - b. A student receiving special education will be assessed based on the provisions of their IEP.
 - c. After consideration of all factors, including parent input, the principal will decide if promotion is appropriate. Parents may appeal a decision to promote to the Community Superintendent.
3. Consideration for Retention
- a. With input from the appropriate school/grade team, the principal will consider a student for retention when a student fails to meet standards appropriate for the grade level. The principal may also consider for retention a student who is recommended by a school/grade team or parent for other reasons. The principal must consider whether the needs of the student are best met through retention and offer the parent an opportunity to be included in the decision-making process.
 - b. The principal will make a decision about retention based on a number of factors, which may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Academic achievement level
 - ii. Demonstrated progress in response to academic interventions
 - iii. Age of the student
 - iv. Previous retention(s)
 - v. Attendance record
 - vi. Parental concerns
 - vii. Developmental factors
 - viii. Health factors

- ix. Emotional factors
 - x. Report Card
 - xi. IEP, if applicable
 - xii. 504 Plan, if applicable (see Policy 9060 - Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504)
- c. For students who receive special education services, the IEP team will provide input to the administration regarding retention of a diploma-bound student.
 - d. The provisions of this policy do not apply to a student with an IEP who is scheduled to graduate with a certificate of completion rather than a diploma.
 - e. Any student who is not passing in English/Language Arts and/or mathematics at the end of 8th grade (as shown on the student's report card) will be required to participate in appropriate interventions, based on academic need as determined by the middle school principal. Interventions may include summer school, evening school, and other non-traditional course options and/or designated reading and/or mathematics intervention courses in 9th grade.
 - f. Parents may appeal a decision of retention to the Community Superintendent.
 - g. If a student is retained in the current grade, the instructional team for that grade must review any academic interventions provided to the student during the current academic year and make revisions designed to accelerate the student's pace of learning for the following year.
4. Consideration for Accelerated Grade Placement
- a. A principal may, upon the recommendation of a school/grade team or parent, consider accelerating a student to an advanced grade when they consistently demonstrate the ability to achieve at a higher level than expected in the essential curriculum as measured by quarterly, teacher made and other assessments, and by teacher observations.
 - b. The principal will decide whether to move the student to an advanced grade based on a number of factors, which may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Academic achievement level
 - ii. Age of the student
 - iii. Previous accelerations
 - iv. Attendance record
 - v. Parental concerns

- vi. Developmental factors
 - vii. Health factors
 - viii. Emotional factors
 - ix. Report card
 - x. IEP, if applicable
 - xii. 504 Plan, if applicable (see Policy 9060 - Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504)
- c. Students will not be accelerated to advanced grades against the wishes of their parent/guardian.

G. High School Promotions

1. To be promoted to grade 10, students must have five credits including one English credit or one mathematics credit and one year of high school attendance.
2. To be promoted to grade 11, students must have ten credits including one English credit and one mathematics credit and two years of high school attendance.
3. To be promoted to grade 12, students must have fourteen credits including two English credits and two mathematics credits, have successfully passed Health I and Lifetime Fitness, and three years of high school attendance.
4. Promotion of students will be considered and updated by high schools at the end of the first semester, the end of the school year and after summer school to account for completion of non-traditional coursework.

H. GPA

1. Courses carrying a designation of gifted and talented (GT), advanced placement (AP), and honors (H) will contribute to weighted GPA. Weighted courses will be indicated in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses. For transfer students, HCPSS will weight grades of courses designated GT, AP, and H taken outside HCPSS if the same courses are offered in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses. Students taking a dual enrollment course in a post-secondary institution for dual credit will receive the weighting for the highest possible equivalent offered by HCPSS. GT and H designation are not available for some non-traditional courses.
2. Both an unweighted and weighted cumulative GPA will be calculated by the first week of October of the senior year and will be based on credits earned in grades nine through eleven.
3. At graduation, an unweighted and weighted cumulative GPA will be calculated based on credits earned in grades nine through twelve.

4. GPAs from both the first week of October and the end of the senior year will appear on the final high school transcript.
5. Weighted GPA will be used for academic eligibility for extracurricular activities, National Honor Society, honor roll, and for any other activity requiring the reporting of a grade point average.

I. High School Courses Taken in Middle School

1. Any high school course listed in the Middle School Course Catalog which is offered at the middle school is eligible for high school credit and will be treated as an equivalent.
2. The student's final course grade will be recorded on the high school transcript.
3. The student's grade will not be calculated into the high school GPA.
4. If a student re-takes one of the high school courses taken in middle school for which credit was earned, only the first credit will be awarded.
5. If a student is receiving a full year of high school world language content within one middle school year, one high school credit will be awarded at the completion of that year.
6. If a student earns a credit in middle school with a weight associated in the course and retakes the course in high school in a course that does not have a weight associated, the course taken in high school will not receive a weighted grade.

J. Non-traditional Courses

Non-traditional courses include, but are not limited to, digital education, credit recovery, or high school credit-bearing courses taught during summer or after regular school hours, or dual enrollment courses taught at a higher education institution. Courses eligible for dual enrollment credit taught in a high school building during the traditional school day may also be considered non-traditional and have a weighting structure that aligns with the institute of higher education partner's accreditation standards.

1. All non-traditional courses have teacher-facilitated instruction that meets the standards of the HCPSS curriculum.
2. All non-traditional courses have a defined period for completion that may vary from the traditional academic calendar.

3. All non-traditional credit recovery courses must be substantially comparable, qualitatively and quantitatively, to the previously attempted course.
4. For non-traditional courses taken outside of the regular school day, the attendance policy may be modified.

K. Summer School

1. Summer school is a continuation of the school year preceding enrollment in the course.
2. Students may enroll in an Innovative Pathways Summer School course up until the third day of the course.
3. For non-traditional courses taken outside of the regular school day, the attendance policy may be modified.
4. Students who retake a course through summer school may be able to gain eligibility for fall extracurricular activities. The grade earned in summer school does not replace the recorded grade for the fourth quarter of a student's report card or transcript. However, the final grade earned in the summer school class will be calculated in place of the student's fourth quarter grade in the course only for the purpose of meeting eligibility requirements.

L. Credit Recovery

1. Schools may enroll students in on-site credit recovery programs within the first 24 school days of the academic year. Transfer students may enroll in credit recovery courses.
2. Students may enroll in credit recovery, including the Innovative Pathways Evening Program (formerly Evening School).

III. Reporting

- A.** Teachers will grade, post, and return student work within three weeks of the due date, barring unusual circumstances and include written feedback when possible and appropriate.
1. Students and parents can expect updated grades every three weeks from the start of a marking period. The exception will be during the start of school when teachers will post updated grades by the fourth week of school (20 school days).
 2. Teachers should notify parents of unsatisfactory progress throughout the marking period.

3. Assignments or assessments that are unable to be sent home due to question security or copyright may be reviewed at school by students or parents but may not be sent home.

B. Non-traditional Reporting

1. Credit recovery course credit may be awarded for the completion of a course where the student was previously enrolled but did not earn credit (See Policy 8200 Digital Education).
2. Non-traditional courses, including but not limited to, summer school, digital education, evening school and credit recovery course grades will be reflected on the high school transcript and calculated in the cumulative GPA.
3. For non-traditional courses where the student was previously enrolled but did not earn credit, both the original course grade and the non-traditional course grade will be included in the GPA and recorded on the high school transcript.
4. For non-traditional courses taught outside the traditional school day, marking period grades may be earned by semester. Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 will reflect the Semester 1 grade, and Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 will reflect the Semester 2 grade. An N/A code may be used for Quarter 1 or Quarter 3 if applicable, which will be updated to reflect the Semester 1 grade at the end of Quarter 2 or Quarter 4. This grade change will not affect student's athletic eligibility for Quarter 1 or 3. If timing prohibits the entry of an exam grade, an N/A can be used and changed.
5. Final grades for non-traditional courses taught outside the traditional school day during the school year will be included in eligibility calculations for Quarters 2, 3 and 4. Final grades will be used.

IV. Report Card Grade Change Procedures

Grade changes must be documented on the grade change form. Parents must be notified of the grade change by the teacher or the principal.

- A. The grade change form needs a signature from the teacher, the data clerk, and the principal. The form must include a reason for the grade change and date of the approval.
- B. Copies of the grade change form go into the student's cumulative record, to the teacher, the data clerk, and to the Office of School Counseling.
- C. A grade change may be authorized by the Executive Director of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being, Chief Academic Officer, Chief School Management and Instructional Leadership Officer, or the Community Superintendent. If a grade change is generated from outside the school, a grade

change form must be completed and include a reason for the change. This form goes into the student's cumulative record and to the principal and data clerk.

V. Report Card Code Change

Code changes must be documented on the grade change form. Parents must be notified of the code change by the teacher or the principal.

A change of a report card code will be made according to the following procedures:

- I (Incomplete) This code will be changed by following the guidelines described in Section II.D.1.b. of these procedures.
- P (Pass) This code will not be changed unless it was assigned due to an administrative error, in which case the principal is the only person authorized to change it.
- W (Withdrawal) This code will not be changed unless it was assigned in error, in which case the principal is the only person authorized to change it.
- X (Late enrollment in class) This code will not be changed unless it was assigned in error, in which case the principal is the only person authorized to change it.

VI. Homework

- A. For the purposes of determining the number of hours of homework per week or day, teachers should include reading of course material, studying of course material, and practicing skills taught in course (e.g., rehearsing a musical instrument). Time spent on long-term projects should also be included when determining the number of hours of homework; however, these projects do not constitute homework for grading purposes.
- B. Middle school teaching staff will be provided with opportunities to meet as teams to schedule assignments so that students do not regularly have more than one hour of homework each week per instructor. It is recommended that the school principal or designee work with teaching staff to facilitate this collaboration.
- C. The goals and expectations for homework in high school credit courses will be clear and include opportunities for student input. As appropriate, flexibility and student choice will be considered in the assignment of homework duration, rigor, product, and weight in grading. A syllabus is recommended for distribution at the beginning of every semester outlining each course's requirements, including regular assignments, projects, possible due dates, and procedures for requesting feedback on assignments.

VII. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Accelerated Grade Placement – The movement of a student out of the normal progression to an advanced grade.
- B. Alternative Education Placement – A location outside of the designated home school designed to accommodate students who have demonstrated the need for significant academic or behavioral support.
- C. Capstone Project – A multifaceted assignment requiring multiple intellectual activities that serves as a culminating academic experience.
- D. Portfolio – A systematic collection of student work completed throughout the course, demonstrating mastery in multiple aspects of the curriculum.
- E. Report – A written or oral presentation on a topic that a student has explored in depth synthesizing information from a variety of sources.

VIII. Monitoring

Policy 8020 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Division of Academics.

IX. History¹

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¹ Key: *Adopted*-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; *Reviewed*-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; *Modified*-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; *Revised*-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; *Effective*-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.