

## Grading Policy

<b>General Belief</b>	<p><b>Vision</b></p> <p>The Providence Public School Department believes that all students can and should be self-directed, reflective learners. Our grading system will provide timely, accurate, and actionable feedback contributing to the development of students' growth mindset and helping them build the habits of mind necessary for college and career readiness in the 21st century.</p> <p><b>Theory of Action</b></p> <p>By creating equitable and rigorous universal grading expectations across all schools, we will ensure that our grades are accurate and mitigate institutional and personal bias. Doing so will allow students multiple ways to demonstrate progress toward course standards and content, and will provide families with feedback on student progress.</p> <p><i>According to L. Hough from the Harvard Review, "Equitable grading...has three pillars: accuracy, bias-resistance, and intrinsic motivation." Grades must accurately reflect only a student's academic level of performance and proficiency while excluding non-academic criteria (such as behavior) with the use of mathematically sound calculations and scales.</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>Grades are the primary method for communicating academic achievement among students, families and teachers. This policy will establish uniform practices that are consistent, accurate, and provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate progress toward course standards and content. These indicators will provide accurate and timely feedback to students, families, and administrators, which will create equitable opportunities for all students. A grading policy that creates consistency and reliability is an essential component of the district's role in developing and implementing accountability and performance monitoring systems.</p> <p><i>"Traditional grading practices perpetuate our achievement and opportunity gaps...improved grading practices promote objective assessment of academic mastery, transparent expectations, growth mindsets, a focus on learning instead of points, and student agency -- all key ingredients to serve diverse learners and create culturally responsive classrooms." -- Joe Feldman Grading for Equity</i></p>
<b>Purpose and Scope</b>	<p>The goal of this new grading policy is to improve on the original policy (from March 2016) by giving students multiple opportunities to demonstrate</p>

	<p>progress toward standards and content, and to provide clear guidelines so our diverse learners (PreK-12) can thrive in culturally responsive classrooms that promote a growth mindset rather than failure.</p>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p><b>Academic Proficiency</b> - demonstrated competence in relation to knowledge and/or a set of skills related to identified grade-level standards. (Vermont Department of Education)</p> <p><b>Basic Education Program (BEP)</b> - Together with other federal and state laws and regulations, the BEP outlines the rights of every student in the Rhode Island public education system. It sets basic standards to help ensure that high-quality education is available to all public school students, regardless of where they live or go to school. (RI BEP)</p> <p><b>Bias</b> - A tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc., are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Explicit bias</u> (or conscious bias): Refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.</li> <li>2. <u>Implicit bias</u> (or unconscious bias): Describes when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge.</li> </ol> <p><b>Criteria</b> - The pre-specified qualities showing what students have to do during assessments in order to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes. How well they do this is described at different levels - These standards (or performance descriptors) are often presented in a rubric. (U of Tasmania)</p> <p><b>Differentiated Instruction</b> - Differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping makes this a successful approach to instruction. (Carol Ann Tomlinson)</p> <p><b>Equitable Grading Practices</b>- Equitable grading has three pillars: accuracy, bias-resistance, and intrinsic motivation. (Joe Feldman)</p> <p><b>Equitable Outcomes</b>-Maximizing resources for equitable outcomes refers to the school’s use of its central resources—time, money, and staffing—to meet the unique needs of its students. Despite gaps in the funding and resources provided to schools, it is imperative that schools maximize their benefit from the resources they do have. Maximizing resource benefits requires that decisions be made collaboratively by those closest to the learners. Equitable outcomes refers to the concept that the school’s goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students</p>

themselves vary. All students should be prepared to be ready for both postsecondary and career pathways. (Coalition of Essential Schools)

**Feedback** - information given to the learner about the learner's performance relative to learning goals or outcomes. (Education Endowment Foundation)

**Formative Assessment** - a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support. (The Glossary of Ed Reform)

**Growth Mindset** - The underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence. When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement. (Carol Dweck)

**Habits of Mind** - A set of thinking dispositions at the core of social, emotional, and cognitive behaviors. (Harvard University)

**Learning Outcome** - Measurable statements that articulate at the beginning what students should know, be able to do, or value as a result of taking a course or completing a program. (Cornell University)

**Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)** - A framework for supporting successful school operations and systems. This framework ensures that all students are supported for meeting academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes, and this responsibility belongs to everyone. (BRIDGE-RI)

**Reflective Learning** - Developing critical thinking skills by analyzing experiences to improve future performance. (University of Queensland)

**Rubrics** - A rubric is a type of scoring guide that assesses and articulates specific components and expectations for an assignment. Rubrics can be used for a variety of assignments: research papers, group projects, portfolios, and presentations. (Cornell University)

**Self-Directed** - Making your own decisions and organizing your own work rather than being told what to do by managers, teachers, etc. (Cambridge University)

**Standards** - Concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. (Glossary of Education Reform)

	<p><b>Standards Aligned Assessments</b> - Assessments that measure a student's progress towards course standards. (West Ed)</p> <p><b>Summative Assessment</b> - The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against a standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include: a midterm exam or a final project. (Carnegie Mellon University)</p>
<p><b>Guidelines and Implementation Strategies</b></p>	<p>To ensure that the purpose and scope of this policy is possible, Providence Public Schools must align grading policies with the objectives of the PPSD’s <i>Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy</i> where every child in every classroom, in every school has the same opportunity to achieve greatness.</p> <p>By employing an equitable and comprehensive grading policy, we will support efforts to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eliminate achievement gaps.</li> <li>2. Accelerate learning.</li> <li>3. Cultivate trust inside and outside the learning community (students, families, teachers, district, stakeholders).</li> <li>4. Provide clear communication and articulate academic progress to all students and families in a clear, timely, consistent, and equitable manner that ensures the accuracy of grades as a learning outcome measured across all classrooms and schools in the district.</li> <li>5. Improve equity by giving students multiple opportunities to show progress towards course standards.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guidelines</b></p> <p>The Providence Public School Department will employ the above principles to improve grading practices throughout the district. To implement these principles, a shift from a traditional grading approach, to a standards-based grading approach is required. This shift will be employed by upholding the following guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Academic grades measure progress toward course content and standards rather than student behavior, conduct, and attendance.</li> <li>2. Academic grades and assignments are assessed on a 50-100 point scale.</li> <li>3. Students shall be afforded a minimum number of assignments spaced throughout the year (both summative and formative) aligned to course standards.</li> <li>4. Students shall be allowed sufficient opportunities to demonstrate proficiency toward course standards.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Report cards will reflect proficiency towards course standards assessed throughout the course.</li> <li>6. Standard-aligned assignment scores will be reported weekly in the district-approved electronic gradebook throughout the school year. Missing assignments will be recorded with the minimum grade so that the digital gradebook is always up to date.</li> <li>7. Assessments and assignments will have clear criteria, rubrics, and purpose, explicitly articulated as required by the Basic Education Program regulations.</li> <li>8. Report cards will be digitally recorded and available on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>9. Progress reports will be digitally recorded and available at the midpoint of each quarter.</li> <li>10. Student performance shall be communicated and documented with parents/ legal guardians in their preferred language during face-to-face conferences several times each school year.</li> <li>11. Any student has the right to appeal a semester or course grade submitted by a teacher. Changes in academic grades can only be made based upon evidence of progress toward meeting course standards completed for class. See Regulations for forms and details on this process.</li> </ol> <p><b>Implementation Strategies</b></p> <p>To develop grading principles and practices at all levels (elementary, middle and high school), we will do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a clear, shared vision for cultural proficiency aligned to our Race Ethnicity Framework, and sustain culturally and linguistically affirming grading practices districtwide.</li> <li>2. Provide training and support that will help teachers engage in and promote deeper learning with students, eliminate redundant testing, and disaggregate data (by ethnicity, race, gender, language, program type, and ableism), in order to identify and address opportunity and achievement gaps.</li> <li>3. Engage parents as partners in eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps.</li> <li>4. Provide professional learning for teachers and school leaders along with communication with families and students about policy changes.</li> <li>5. Policy will be reviewed at least once every three (3) years in order to make any revisions necessary to accomplish the aims of this policy.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Training, Oversight, and</b></p>	<p>The Superintendent and/or their designee is responsible for developing and implementing District-wide Grading Regulations with clear accountability metrics, that measure equitable outcomes for all PPSD students. The</p>

<b>Communication</b>	Superintendent and/or their designee will report on the plan and outcomes to the Providence School Board and the community, at the end of every school year.
<b>Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements</b>	The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board Policies. In the event any part of any Policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such an event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this Policy.
<b>Legal Reference</b>	<b>Rhode Island, Title 16:</b> <a href="http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/INDEX.HTM">http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/INDEX.HTM</a>
<b>Cross Reference</b>	<b><u>Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy (revised March 2023)</u></b>  <b><u>PPSD MTSS Policy (revised November 2022)</u></b>  <b><u>The Basic Education Program (BEP)</u></b>
<b>References</b>	<p>Carifio, J., &amp; Carey, T. (2010). Do Minimum Grading Practices Lower Academic Standards and Produce Social Promotions. <i>Educational HORIZONS</i>, 88(4), 219–230. <a href="http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ895689.pdf">http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ895689.pdf</a></p> <p>Feldman, J. (2018). <i>Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms</i>. Corwin.</p> <p><i>Grade Expectations</i>. (n.d.). Harvard Graduate School of Education. <a href="https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/19/05/grade-expectations">https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/19/05/grade-expectations</a></p> <p>Reeves, D. S. (2004). The Case against the Zero. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 86(4), 324–325. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170408600418">https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170408600418</a></p> <p>Revisiting “<i>The Case Against the Zero</i>”: A response to Daniel Buck. (n.d.). The Thomas B. Fordham Institute. <a href="https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/revisiting-case-against-zero-response-daniel-buck">https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/revisiting-case-against-zero-response-daniel-buck</a></p> <p>Vatterott, C. (2015). <i>Rethinking Grading: Meaningful Assessment for Standards-Based Learning</i>. ASCD.</p> <p>Resource Documents from Rhode Island Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Calibration Protocol for Scoring Student Work</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">TITLE 204 – COUNCIL ON SECONDARY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION 6.1 Definitions</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Comprehensive Assessment System: Rhode Island Criteria &amp; Guidance</a></li> </ul>

**History**

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