

Frequently Asked Questions

Secondary Grading and Reporting

Assessments

Q May formative assessments be used to determine a grade?

A Only after instruction, practice, and teacher feedback.

Q Are quizzes no longer considered formative assessments?

A Quizzes are graded formative assessments. Teachers will assess student learning in a variety of ways over time within a grading period; therefore, quizzes can not be the only type of formative assessment administered to students.

Q Are grades determined solely by summative assessments?

A The weighting of categories is teacher determined. Teachers should use many assessment tasks to determine if students are meeting standards. Formative assessments should be used, but should meet the conditions given in the previous answer. BVSD policy states that *formative and summative assessments* should comprise a minimum of 70% of the total at the middle level and 75% at the high school level. The Secondary Design Team recommends that 90% of a students grade be based on foramtive and summative assessments with at least 50% of the final academic grade based on *summative assessments*. The suggested range for *formative assessments* is 30-40% and non-graded factors, *preparation and production*, should account for no more than 10%.

Q How about grades in product/performance-based subjects? If a student is supposed to cook an omelet, is it acceptable that the student write an essay?

A What is the skill being assessed? If the skill is cooking the omelet, then the student would have to actually cook. If the skill is understanding the process for cooking an omelet, then an essay or procedural chart would work.

Q How do teachers distinguish between practice and achievement of curriculum standards and benchmarks?

A Teachers can tell their students which assignments are for practice and which are for achievement. Practice is reported in *Preparation and Production*, movement toward achieving the standard is reported in *Formative Assessments* and achievement is reported in the *Summative Assessment* category.

Reassessment

Q Which assessments, formative and/or summative, should students be given another opportunity to take?

A Depending on the discipline and depending on the professional judgment of a team of teachers (e.g. grade level or within disciplines), students may be offered a reassessment for either formative or summative assessments. The goal is to ensure student learning and achievement of the standards, not solely to increase grades.

It is not always necessary to have a completely new reassessment task. It is possible that teachers will revisit some of the content or skills on later assessments, so the reassessment opportunity will happen on those later assessments. Reassessments must be manageable for the teacher and be designed to increase learning. Occasionally declining to offer a redo or a retake is the kindest option.

It also is possible that teachers will reassess only one part of the assessment where a student showed insufficient understanding of a significant skill or concept.

Requiring students to engage in additional learning opportunities, such as additional practice or a teacher conference, before retaking/redoing a summative, discourages the “I’ll just use the test as practice” mentality.

Q Will individuals or an entire class be reassessed?

A All students may be reassessed regardless of grade on original task/assessment, if they met the following requirements: completed the original task or assessment, complete required assignments, and complete reteaching/relearning activities as determined by the teacher. A teacher may decide to reassess an entire class or individuals.

Q Who initiates reteaching and reassessing—students or teachers?

A Students or teachers may initiate reteaching and reassessing.

Q Do teachers have to make a totally new assessment when they offer a reassessment?

A A performance task such as an oral presentation or an essay may be reassessed after the student revises it. When task/assessments are reassessed, they may be reassessed partially, entirely, or in a different format. Items missed on the original assessment may be reassessed immediately following reteaching/relearning or may be presented in a later assessment.

Q Can a final exam be re-taken?

A Final exams cannot be retaken unless the course is repeated.

Q Why not reassess final test?

A The grading procedures must be manageable and promote effective teaching and learning. Teachers and students should be confident that after instruction, practice, feedback, reteaching, and reassessment, a student will be successful on a final task or assessment. If they are not, more discussion is warranted.

Q If a student makes no attempt at an assignment that can be reassessed, can a teacher make the decision not to allow the student to have that opportunity?

A Yes. If the student does not meet the requirements of reassessment, including completing the first task or assessment, the student may not have the opportunity to be reassessed.

Q If one student asks for a reassessment, does the teacher then announce to the whole class that they have another chance?

A Reassessment opportunities are identified by the teacher before the original assessment. Therefore, all students are informed of the opportunity for reassessment.

Q Do teachers have control over the total number of reteach/reassess opportunities offered?

A Yes. Teams will determine what assessments/tasks will be reassessed, within the parameters of the procedures. **Not every assessment/task must or will be reassessed!**

Q When does a teacher determine the format for the reassessment? Whether it will be partial or full?

A The teacher determines the format after collecting and reviewing the students' work.

Q Is offering reteaching after school instead of during class an acceptable approach?

A The teacher determines the method and schedule for reteaching.

Q Does the teacher have a choice to offer a reassessment after correcting the first assessment?

A If the results of an assessment/task reveal that many students need reteaching, the teacher consults with the course team and uses professional judgment to determine if a reassessment opportunity is needed.

Q Can a different teacher do the reteaching or reassessing?

A Yes

Q What is the time frame for a reassessment period?

A This is a teacher decision.

Q What grade does the teacher record—the original grade, the grade on the reassessment, or an average of the two?

A The teacher should replace the original grade with the more recent, reassessment grade, whether it is lower or higher. The teacher does not average the two grades.

Q Even if the reassessment grade is lower than the original assessment grade, it will be recorded and replace the original?

A Yes. Opportunity for reteaching and relearning continues while the opportunity for re-grading does not.

Q Can graded homework become the reassessment tool for special populations of students?

A Homework evaluated for learning can be the reassessment tool for any student.

Q When can students have an opportunity for a reassessment?; when they get an F, or a D, or a C or B if they want to try for the A?

A When a teacher offers the opportunity to any student meeting specified conditions, the teacher must offer the opportunity to all students meeting those same conditions. Teachers must decide on reassessment procedures and then communicate and apply those procedures consistently.

Q What are the conditions students must meet to be offered a reassessment opportunity?

A Teachers should determine actions they will expect students to take before they have an opportunity for reassessment. Examples of such actions might be attending a study session with the teacher, completing a study packet and review session, or participating in a session with a peer tutor.

Q How many times is the teacher responsible for reassessing?

A If a reassessment is appropriate, one time is reasonable.

Late Work

Q We're unclear about late v. missing work. We know that late work can be reflected in a corresponding grade placed in the 'P & P' category. This differentiates the work from *work habits*. Summative late work can be dropped only one letter grade or increment on a scale. However, does that apply to **MISSING work as well?**

A Missing work, or work that was not turned in by the deadline and will no longer be accepted, is recorded as the bottom of the grading scale used: F on A-F scale, 0 on 4-0 scale, and 50 on 100-point scale. Increments on the grading scale must be

equivalent.

Q How do you determine a deadline?

A Teachers make the decision, based on their professional judgment--based on student needs, teacher needs (interim grades due, end of marking period), or fairness factors--projects being handed back and not wanting to give some students an unfair advantage.

Q Are deadlines given extended time for special populations?

A Absolutely. If a student has a documented accommodation of extended time for assignments, teachers must meet that legal obligation. It means teachers need to be careful about when they have assignments due at the end of a quarter, as well. It may mean setting no deadlines later than one week before the last day of the quarter.

Homework

Q How do you motivate students to do assignments they know will not be graded?

A The assigned homework must be meaningful and teachers must help students see how doing the homework will help them learn what they need to be successful on the graded assignments. Timely, specific teacher feedback on practice assignments that is related to a criterion or goal also motivates students to complete the practice assignments. And, in reality, even small marks (two points if you've got it, no points if you don't) in the "P & P" category can motivate students.

Q If a student does homework and is helped by a parent or copies from a friend, how can an open note assessment count as an academic grade? Also, how could this be a viable resource for an open note quiz?

A Teachers should use open note quizzes and graded homework assignments judiciously. If teachers observe a significant difference between the quality of assignments done in class and homework assignments, further observation and discussion is necessary.

Q Does this change the way a teacher can grade reading assignments given as homework? For example, if a teacher assigns pages in a history text, or a chapter in a novel, can the teacher give a factual quiz on the reading assignment and count it as a grade? Or does the teacher now have to list failing to read a chapter or novel as a learning skill?

A If students are provided practice on the concept before assigning the homework, then teachers are allowed to quiz students on the homework assignment and count it as a grade. If the students are doing something for homework that demonstrates they have learned something taught them (e.g., analyzing plot structure, mood, literary devices, character or making inferences) then teachers may quiz them on the chapter immediately after reading and include it in the grade. If the students

need discussion or instruction to fully understand the chapter and teachers want to use the quiz just to check if they read the chapter to prepare for the discussion, then yes, it would be reported in the “Preparation & Production” category, completing assignments.

Q What is the difference between homework for completion and homework evaluated for learning?

A Homework checked for completion is homework that is reviewed by the teacher to inform instructional decisions and for which the teacher provides feedback, but is not graded for accuracy or quality. It is usually given for practice or to prepare for instruction and is assigned to build skills and understanding, not evaluate learning.

Homework evaluated for learning is homework that is assigned to collect evidence of skill or understanding after instruction, practice and feedback. It is homework that is evaluated for accuracy or quality in relation to established learning outcomes.

Determining Grades

Q If a student earns 38% on a test, do we record 50% or 38%?

A When a student makes an attempt to complete the assessment or task and meets minimal standard, 50% is recorded as the grade when a teacher is using the 100 point scale.

Q Is extra credit allowed?

A Extra credit is not allowed. Teachers should continue to provide differentiated or tiered assignments that provide challenge, extension, enrichment, and application or transfer of learning. A student who is not satisfied with a performance on an assessment/task identified as reassessable and who meets the required conditions may engage in reteaching/relearning and may be reassessed to show improved performance.

Q Is 50% the lowest grade on tests as well as assignments?

A If a teacher is recording percentages on the 100 point scale in the grade book, yes.

Q Using the 4-1 grading scale, would you please let me know what would be the grade for students? For example what constitutes an A?

A Use the 4-point scale as it is used for the GPA: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0. A letter grade or number on this scale represents a range of performance. An A or a 4 does not represent a perfect performance or product. For example, teachers may determine that a 9 correct out of 10 items on an assignment or quiz = 90% = A, which is then recorded on the assignment and in the gradebook as an A.

Q Is the "end" more important than the "middle" when grading? Should later assessments be given more weight?

A Yes, the end is more important. It is strongly suggested that eventually, teachers will give weight to most recent, most essential, and most comprehensive (involving synthesis and transfer of learning).

Q Do we understand that quizzes and tests are all weighted the same? Can there no longer be a heavier weight for a test vs. a quiz?

A Teachers, teams or departments should reach agreement on weights of assignments, projects, quizzes, and tests; they will need to communicate and apply the decision consistently. Any assignment's "weight" will depend upon the category in which it is placed, and the relative point values of all other assignments in that category. The thing to avoid is, in effect, double weighting a test, for example, by increasing its point value significantly.

Q What about incomplete grades? Can a teacher give an incomplete grade if a student has missed a date for turning in an assignment?

A Teachers continue to use I for incomplete on the report card to designate an incomplete quarter grade, for a variety of reasons. An incomplete grade must be changed within a short period after the end of a quarter or semester.

Q Are students given group grades for assessments and projects?

A No

Preparation and Production

Q What are the guidelines for keeping student data on learning skills?

A Use all of the strategies you used in the past to observe, record, and report study skills or study habits. Record homework and classwork completion. Keep notes of what you observe as students work in your class individually and in groups. Establish a process that will allow you to look at patterns and trends in students' learning activities, preparation and classroom practices. Your process does not have to involve recording a tally mark everyday. You do not need to "count up" P & P points. Use your recorded observations to support the information you report about students learning behaviors and practices on reports home, including progress reports and conferences What you report must be credible and defensible.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Q If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing, does s/he still receive 50%? Will s/he be allowed to make-up this assignment? What should be the penalty for a student who has cheated on a major assessment?

A For cheating and plagiarism, the discipline code applies. In addition, if the assignment is not turned in by the deadline using honest procedures, the

assignment is missing. A missing assignment earns a failing grade, which is the bottom of the scale used: F on A-F scale, 0 on 4-0 scale, 50 on 100-pt scale.

Q If a student is caught cheating on a major exam, a 50% grade (or "F") would result. Does there then need to be an opportunity for the student to retake the exam, if the overall quarterly grade earned is substantially lower than his or her actual mastery of the course objectives?

A Students are not given the opportunity to take exams a second time, unless they re-take the course. If a student earns an F on a final exam because of cheating, the system for determining grades applies, as it does for any other F. The principal may choose to deal with the cheating through disciplinary means.

High School Courses in Middle School

Q How do we deal with high school courses in middle school?

A For middle school students taking high school courses, standards for the course are considered the standards for the individual student.

Special Populations

Q If other students in the class are getting As, Bs, and Cs, how does a child feel who is working hard, making progress, but gets only Fs because he or she is working significantly below the grade level?

A If a student is “working hard AND making progress” in the essential learnings being taught to them at their instructional level, they should be earning grades that reflect their achievement. The grading and reporting policy provides that IEP teams, ELL teams or TAG Educational Advisors will determine if students in identified special populations need to be graded against the essential learnings at their instructional level, not their enrolled grade level.

Q We are concerned about the students who may be well below grade level in one or more areas. Are they to be graded strictly according to grade or course objectives?

A The grading and reporting policy provides that IEP teams will determine if students in identified special education programs need to be graded against the essential learnings at their instructional level, not their enrolled grade level.

Q Must the student’s IEP be written to include the detail needed to provide standards for grading on academic achievement?

A Yes. The purpose of the IEP is to provide access to the general education curriculum, therefore IEP goals and objectives must be written in a way that align with essential learnings and course objectives.

Miscellaneous

Q I have a question about a past practice--namely, that a student who does not attempt a major common task has often failed the semester. Do you have any suggestions for making sure students complete these major tasks (including the preliminary scaffolding parts of such a large assignment)?

A The way to help students succeed with such large tasks is to break them into milestones related to specific objectives taught—for example, gathering resources, analyzing information collected, organizing information, drafting, revising. Another way to help students avoid sabotaging themselves is to spread a major task across two marking periods. Departments or grade level/course teams should reach agreement on how they will manage major common tasks and should communicate the decision and apply it consistently.

Q If a student cuts class unexcused, can the student take a missed test and still get credit for the test?

A The guidelines for make-up work for excused/unexcused absences are still in effect. Teachers are not required to give students an opportunity to make up missed work after an unexcused absence. They are not prohibited from giving students a chance to take a missed test. Grade levels or departments should review the school attendance policy and decide how to address this question.