

Book	Policy Manual
Section	5000 Students
Title	GRADING
Code	po5421
Status	Active
Adopted	November 28, 2011
Last Revised	February 26, 2018

5421 - **GRADING**

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility for providing a system of assessing student achievement that can help the student, teachers, and parents judge properly how well the student is achieving the goals of the District's program.

The Board believes that the District's assessment system should be a reliable system and one that ensures each student's grades signify accurately his/her degree of accomplishment of those expected learning outcomes which are to be stated for each program at every grade level K-12.

The Board directs the District Administrator to develop procedures for grading in accordance with Policy 2260 - Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity which:

- A. develop clear, consistent criteria and standards particularly when grades are based on subjective assessment;
- B. help each student understand in each course or program what behavior and/or achievement is needed to earn each grade as well as what will produce a failing grade;
- C. provide frequent opportunities for each student to obtain information as to his/her progress toward the learning goals of his/her courses or programs;
- D. provide for a pass/fail grade in programs where appropriate;
- E. provide students the opportunity to assess both their own achievements and their areas of difficulty.

The grading system should not inhibit the professional staff member from learning each student's individual strengths and weaknesses.

The grading system should be subject to continual review by staff, students, and parents. Revisions shall be made only when changes will assure a more valid or reliable or clearer system of grading.

The teacher responsible for a student's instruction in a particular course or program shall determine the student's grade. That grade may not be changed without the teacher's consent unless overruled by the Principal.

Revised 12/1/17

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CHILTON HIGH SCHOOL
 530 W. Main Street
 Chilton, WI 53014
 (920) 849-2358
 www.chilton.k12.wi.us
 School ETS Code: 500390

COMMUNITY

Chilton is located in the center of east-central Wisconsin, about a half-hour from the Fox Valley, Green Bay, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan and Manitowoc. Chilton, a city of approximately 3,800 residents, is the county seat of Calumet County in Wisconsin. The Chilton Public School District is a K-12 district with an average enrollment of approximately 1,200 students.

2018-2019 ENROLLMENT GRADES 9-12

Chilton High School services approximately 380 students.
 Grade 9 – 91
 Grade 11 – 94
 Grade 10 – 91
 Grade 12 – 104

PATTERN OF SCHOOL YEAR

Two 18 week semesters following a hybrid block schedule: two 85 minute periods per day with a third and fourth or fifth and sixth period consisting of either one 90 minute combined period or two 45 minute “skinny periods”.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

30 teachers, 1 counselor in addition to other specialists. The student/teacher ratio is 13:1.

ADMINISTRATION

Principal: Mr. Ty Breitlow
 Athletic Director: Mr. Corey Behnke

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Mrs. Denys Mallmann
 Phone: (920) 849-2358 Fax: (920) 849-3998
 E-mail: mallmannde@chilton.k12.wi.us

SPECIAL CURRICULUM FEATURES

- Courses offered on a quarterly term, semester, and yearly basis.
- Evaluation of student learning based on standards
- Graduating seniors will receive academic distinctions based on a Laude System. 3.0 GPA will be considered an honors graduate. 3.5-3.75 GPA will be awarded the Cum Laude distinction. 3.76-3.99 will be awarded the Magna Cum Laude distinction. 4.0 will be awarded the Summa Cum Laude distinction
- Comprehensive college preparatory courses, to include Advanced Placement opportunities
- 11 Dual Enrollment opportunities offered through Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) for a total of 35 available college credits
- 5 Advanced Standing opportunities offered through FVTC
- Industry level vocational/technical certification courses
- Independent Study available in most subject areas and departments
- Early College Credit Program, Start College Now, and Part-Time Open Enrollment available

STANDARDS BASED LEARNING (SBL)

- Provides students, parents and teachers more information about the student’s progress in meeting the level of achievement required in each standard.
- Removes extraneous factors and focuses solely on a student’s academic achievement
- Recognizes that learning is a process that takes place over time and with experiences. SBL puts more focus on the learning and not simply tallying points for a letter grade.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Language Arts	4 cr.	Phy Ed	1.5 cr.
Social Studies	4 cr.	Health	0.5 cr.
Mathematics	3 cr.	Leadership	0.5 cr.
Science	3 cr.	Finance	0.5 cr.
Elective	11 cr.	TOTAL:	28 credits

CLASS RANK

Class rank is a GPA of all “academic” subjects and is cumulative of all semesters in high school. “Academic” subjects are those courses considered to be prerequisites for post-secondary admission. Class rank is not regularly published, but available upon request.

SBL REPORTING & GPA CONVERSION

Descriptor	Grade Scale	(GPA)
<i>Meeting</i>	3.00	4.00
*All students must meet expectations to earn course credit.	2.90	3.67
	2.80	3.33
	2.70	3
	2.60	2.67
	2.50	2.33
	2.40	2
<i>Approaching</i>	2.39 -1.50	0.0
<i>Attempting</i>	1.49 - 0.0	0.0
<i>Incomplete</i>	INC	0.0
N/A		Not Applicable

AVERAGE COMPOSITE ACT SCORES

The average composite ACT score for students who have completed the recommended core college preparatory curriculum:

2012-2013	22.6	2013-2014	23.5
2014-2015	21.3	2015-2016	21.3
2016-2017	21.1	2017-2018	19.9

ADVANCED PLACEMENT SCORES

11 total Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered

Year	# Students	# Tests given	Exam Score 3 or Higher
2014-2015	50	90	78.8%
2015-2016	46	92	79.3%
2016-2017	50	70	65.7%
2017-2018	47	68	64.7%

FURTHER EDUCATION OF GRADUATES

Class of:	2015	2016	2017	2018
4-yr College	62%	57%	59%	46%
Voc/Tech College	30%	22%	22%	26%
Work Force	5%	9%	10%	18%
Military	3%	9%	5%	6%
Undecided	0%	3%	4%	2%

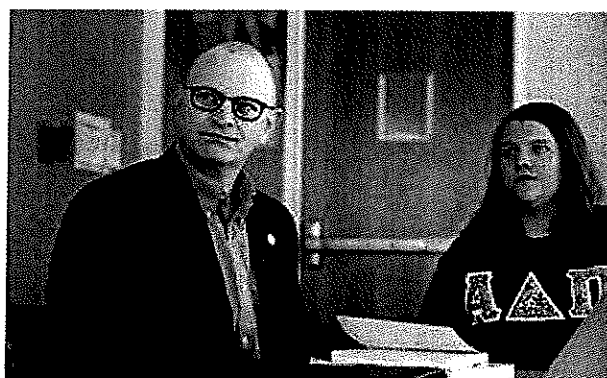


School Administrator

Getting a Fair Shot?

Three findings from a study of university officials' views on the use of standards-based grading in admissions decisions

BY THOMAS M. BUCKMILLER AND RANDAL E. PETERS/*School Administrator, February 2018*
Drake University



Tom Buckmiller, associate professor at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, studied how university admissions officers were reacting to nontraditional student grade transcripts.

postsecondary admissions.

As more education leaders consider implementing a standards-based approach to assessment and grading, they are bumping up against a formidable barrier — parents worried about how college admissions officers will size up their sons' and daughters' applications to selective institutions.

Many parents, particularly those of higher-achieving students, assume the drastic change in grade reporting will harm their children's chances of gaining admission. Students accustomed to traditional grading formats harbor a similar fear of being disadvantaged in their candidacies for

A high school administrator with whom we have worked acknowledged this real concern, but he pointed out its fallacy. "I don't fault students for that. But they're so consumed with a 3.85 [GPA] as opposed to a 3.75, they don't care *how* they get it. I tell them all the time, 'You will get into college, but that's not why we're here. We're here to make sure you get *through* college,'" said Nathan Wear, principal of 450-student Solon High School in central Iowa.

The purpose of our recent qualitative study was to determine whether students who attended high schools using standards-based grading are likely to receive fair and equitable consideration

in the university admissions process. Further, we examined the extent to which university admissions personnel understood standards-based grading, as well as the nature of any challenges that high school grades and transcripts based on standards might pose to admissions decisions.

Based on our in-depth qualitative interviews with admissions officials at two large state universities, one midsized state university and one midsized private university, all situated in the Midwest, we found three significant themes relating to standards-based grading and admissions.

» **No. 1: Letter grades and transcripts based on standards are acceptable, if not preferable, in the eyes of admissions offices, but with some caveats.**

When standards-based grading principles were more fully explained, university admissions directors expressed general approval. They shared their frustrations with rampant grade inflation, inaccurate portrayals of student performance, the regular need for remediation once students were enrolled and widely varying grading systems from one school district to the next, often associated with traditional grading practices.

One admissions director remarked in disbelief, saying, “I’ve seen kids graduate from good high schools who are illiterate — I mean, they are *illiterate* — and yet they are high school graduates.”

Some agreement existed among the admissions officials that information communicated through grades and transcripts that is more precise and accurate, that separates and addresses personal traits such as work ethic and attendance, is a truer reflection of students’ performance relative to an academic standard.

University officials in our study stated almost unequivocally that students from schools awarding grades that reflect clear learning targets and separate reporting of behavioral and academic indicators would not receive unfair evaluation for admission.

The separation of academic and personal behavior grades, a key component of most standards grading, was seen as beneficial to the admissions process. Final transcripts submitted in June, a couple of months before students matriculate, would be especially helpful to staff responsible for incoming students. Said one counselor: “It’s just more information — more so for borderline students probably than the students who are auto admits.”

K-12 educators should help families understand this form of grading is better preparation for college than traditional grading. “I think it’s telling parents that this is a better way for students

to become responsible,” said one admissions counselor.

Once they understood standards-based grading more fully, university admissions officials were receptive. The one caveat was that letter grades brought greater efficiency to admissions operations work and were still preferable for that reason. This is not an obstacle for most high schools that have adopted standards-based (or standards-referenced) grading principles, as most schools ultimately convert the standards-based marks to traditional letter grades on report cards and transcripts.

Within this context, under the current admissions system at the four universities in the study, transcripts from districts with standards-based grading would not be affected in any way. If students’ grades, in the form of GPAs, and other required indicators met minimum requirements, they would continue to be admitted as in traditional systems.

» **No. 2: Universities receive profiles from schools with alternative grading/reporting systems and use strategies to ensure equitable consideration of applicants.**

Nontraditional grading on transcripts is not new in college admissions. Admissions personnel at the four universities we studied provided multiple examples of such cases and described strategies used to ensure equity of access. One pointed to applicants who had been home-schooled — “an example of a student who’s not always going to have a GPA, but they’ve carefully narrated the content and the progress of the student. ... [S]tandardized test scores will probably get weighed a little more heavily.”

We asked admissions offices about the impact they will experience as more student applications come from schools using standards-based practices. One respondent admitted, “Unless we prepare for it and know what we’re getting into, it will tax our current resources” and put pressure on the existing system. They’re already seeing the trend of schools eliminating class rank.

“We’re at the point where about 25 percent of students who graduate do not have a class rank. Clearly, we’ve had to deal with the issue. ... If you have one or two schools that launch this, are we going to change for that? Probably not,” said one university admissions official. “But when ... 20-25 percent of schools are doing [standards-based grading without letter grades] then, yes, we’ve got to come up with a new formula.”

To help with their decisions, admissions personnel said they would contact high school counselors if they had questions about a student’s readiness or a school’s specific grading and reporting practices. As such, it would be prudent for schools transitioning to standards-based grades to raise the awareness of their counseling staffs because it’s the latter who will serve as

conduits of information.

» **No. 3: The need for efficiency in the admissions process has forced personnel to place an inordinate trust in grades and standardized test scores.**

The issue of admissions personnel advocating for the reporting of letter grades, even in systems employing standards-based grading principles, is a matter of limited campus re-sources and the demand for efficiency. Admissions directors said their relatively small staffs are charged with reviewing and making admissions recommendations from many thousands of applicants each year.

Noting the heavy weight of doing more with less, one admissions official said, "The worst thing we can do is admit them when they don't have the skills to be successful. It's on our shoulders when they're ... dropping out and walking away with debt." Another official noted, "We suspect grades are inflated and standardized tests are biased." When asked about the best way to report grades, one admissions director responded, "I think most of us would be interested in knowing that you have removed the variables that inflate grades." Thus, recognizing the importance of providing accurate grades that reflect both academic achievement and behavior (work ethic, attendance, perseverance), reported separately, becomes a critical responsibility of secondary school educators.

Finally, one admissions official brought up the distinction between the practices of large/mid-sized universities — which we studied — and those at smaller private liberal arts colleges, who tend to be more responsive to changes in grading and reporting systems.

A Higher Bar

Ultimately, leaders in both K-12 and higher education have a responsibility for leading their respective organizations in ways that advance the preparation of college- and career-ready learners, in spite of entrenched attitudes and other barriers. Improvements in grading systems that more accurately communicate student achievement are needed, and K-12 leaders should not wait for those in higher education to change.

University admissions officials are willing to adapt to defensible educational practices that will yield more precise information. In doing so, they stand ready to set a higher bar of postsecondary *completion* instead of just *admission*.

TOM BUCKMILLER is an associate professor of education at Drake University. Twitter: [@tombuckmiller](https://twitter.com/tombuckmiller). **RANDY PETERS** is an associate professor of educational administration at

Addressing Parent Concerns

1. **Being done in some classes today, but not all, why....why not roll out when it's clear and clean**
 - a. We are always looking to improve our grading practices. Each year we have modified the grading and reporting policies and practices i.e. A, B, C, D, F and their associated percentages and skinny vs block recording of grades.
 - b. We have been gradually working towards implementation of this grading practice since the 2014-15 school year. It was intentionally done systematically to learn and grow in hopes of limiting the amount of confusion for both parents and students.
 - c. Marshall HS has been implementing SBL for the past 6 years. The last 2 years have been full implementation in all grades/content areas with the exception of AP courses. For year 7, they will move to 100% SBL implementation.

2. **First year for Appleton and Hortonville, why the rush for Chilton?**

This is an unfair characterization. Oshkosh has been SBL for 8 years. Appleton is in its 3rd year at the MS, 2nd at the HS's. Marshall is in year 6. St. Croix Central HS is in its 4th year. Winneconne is in its 3rd year. Poynette MS & HS are in their 6th year. Wauwatosa is in their 5th year. All make adjustments each year. This is a state- and nation-wide conversation.

3. **Scale of 1-3, then what is a 4, staff on different pages**

This is an excellent reason for why we needed to roll it out in phases. Last school year some individuals worked within the 4 tiered system. Many of those same individuals attended a professional development training led by a leading educational researchers Rick Wormelli. This challenged our thinking on the 4 tiered system and forced us to reflect and evaluate how we were assessing our students. CHS faculty has revised our grade scale and will be uniform across all for 19/20.

4. **Some classes worth more than 3 points**

The CHS faculty has taken parent input as a conversation point within this concern. CHS has had two GPAs. There is work being done to identify which courses will be weighted more in GPA calculation. Current thinking is that college-level coursework should be worth more. There will be ongoing discussion taking place this spring.

5. **Can you use SBL and still report out both in traditional GPA and SBL points?**

We are. Due to our respect for parent feedback, we have a GPA. True SBL practices do not include any form of averages.

6. **Colleges don't know how to interpret SBL vs traditional GPA as the 4 colleges presented as such during the panel discussion**

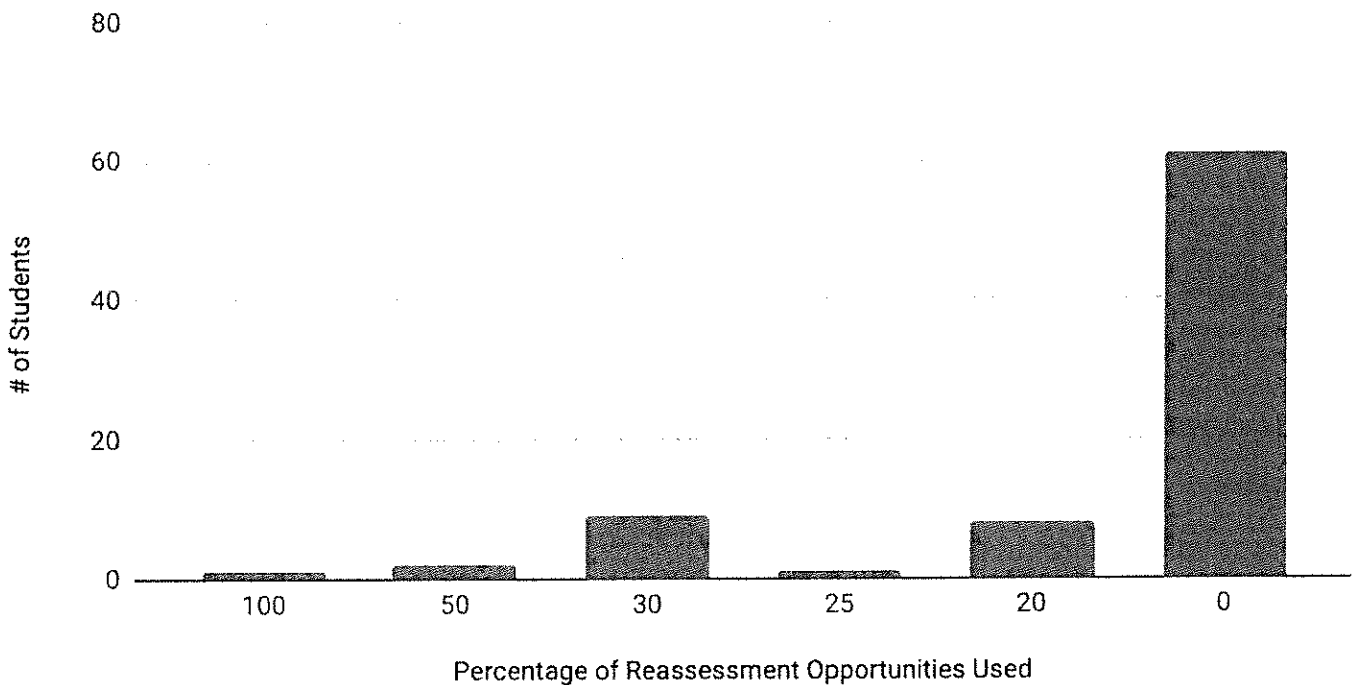
This is false. Both the public and private IHEs are talking about SBL and stated that they receive all types of scales (4.0-12.0) that must be interpreted from the school profile. Our school profile has been updated to reflect the proper way to interpret our grade reports.

7. Allows lazy students to be lazy, retakes

The reality is it is just the opposite. It prevents "lazy" students from choosing to take a zero when they don't want to do something because they must complete it. As for the retakes, if the reassessment policy is followed through, it is actually more work which should benefit those that didn't understand it the first time OR force the "lazy" to put forth more effort than they would have had to do the first time.

As seen in the graph below, only a small number of students choose to reassess every opportunity they have. There are more students reassessing 20-30% of the time they have the opportunity. There are also several student who have chosen to not reassess at all at this point in the semester (this data was from the first six weeks of the semester).

Percentage of Reassessment Opportunities Used vs. Number of Students (2nd Semester Science Course Data)



8. How do teachers manage kids at different stages all during the semester?

No matter how we report out on grading, students have always been in different learning places at different times. SBL provides the opportunity to be more accurate in identifying individual differentiation needs. Moreover, CHS faculty have been trained and engaged in learning about Differentiation and Universal Design Learning since 2014-2015 as part of our focus on individual student learning.

9. Employability skills (on time, effort) now not part of grade but might be reported separately, different answers from different teachers

Employability skills are being utilized by some teachers and their feedback will be part of discussions we will have at the end of the school year.

10. Scholarship applications, most granting groups have no clue

- a . How do you know this? What evidence supports this?
- b . According to Denys Mallmann, "Many scholarship applications do not ask for a class rank, and if they do, it will be able to be provided upon request from the student. Not all scholarships even require submission of a transcript. Primarily, these scholarship organizations are looking for the GPA on a 4.0 scale. Since we are converting to that 4.0 scale, this would not be an issue."

11. How does 2.9 equal a 2 when its 96% of a 3 or an A in the traditional system?

- a . This is an unfair comparison. While we recognize the use of what is familiar to attempt to understand, these are separate grading systems and cannot be compared.
- b . The tiers represent the ability of a student to demonstrate their understanding and ability. The averaging of percentages, which usually represents an accumulation of points based on many factors, some that may not be truly academic, like behavior, are incorporated into the academic grade.

12. How do Chilton kids compete against other schools?

- a . How we grade and report out will not change how our students compete against students at other schools. Our students will continue to have high expectations from our staff and curricula. We are shifting from allowing students to "play school" to demonstrating evidence-based skill attainment.
- b . The way people have to process and interpret information today is very different from the past. With the technology available today, the skills students need to find success are different. In order to meet these changing needs, we have to adjust how we instruct and assess our students.
- c . We had students with numbers on transcripts last year gain acceptance to UW-Madison, among others.

13. Do high performing students get credit for first and fastest?

- a . The purpose of SBL is to focus on individuals reaching the expected levels of achievement in each course. So, philosophically the attainment is the goal, not the timeline. Furthermore, faculty at CHS have given reassessments long before any discussion of SBL and only now has this arisen as a concern. Is it because it will be a building-wide practice?
- b . In the traditional system, the top was a 100%, there was/is no recognition for that.

14. Parents don't feel a part of solution, just an audience to respond, most parents have no clue this is happening

- a . We have already addressed a number of parent concerns and used feedback to make changes to our practices. We will continue to work through others as they arise.
- b . Multiple staff members have sent letters home explaining SBL in their classrooms over the past 2 years.
- c . While we acknowledge there are some concerns with SBL that have been voiced by a few parents, there are many parents that have communicated support.

