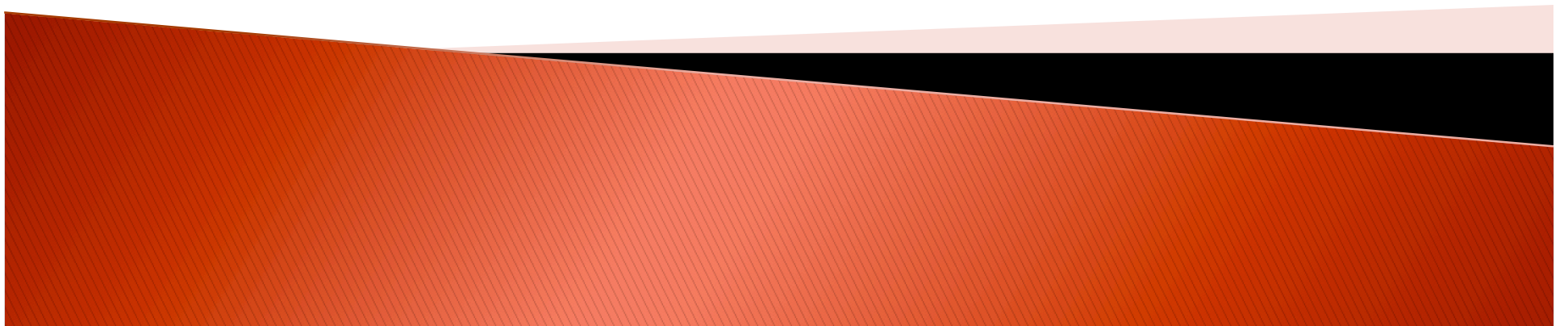


Grading Practice Update

Ruth Steidinger – Sr. Director of Middle School Programs



Review of Elementary Journey

- ▶ Ten years ago, central leadership staff led elementary school based staff, parents, and community members in a conversation about grading practices
- ▶ The result was a move to standards based grading in elementary schools and a report card that separated evaluation of learning from behaviors
- ▶ In June 2008, E&R staff authored a study indicating that there was a stronger correlation between a student's elementary grade and their EOG performance than their middle school counterpart.

Review of High Schools and Middle Schools Journey

- ▶ At the conclusion of the 07–08 school year, principals unanimously agreed to engage in a year long conversation regarding grading practices

Year of Conversation: High School

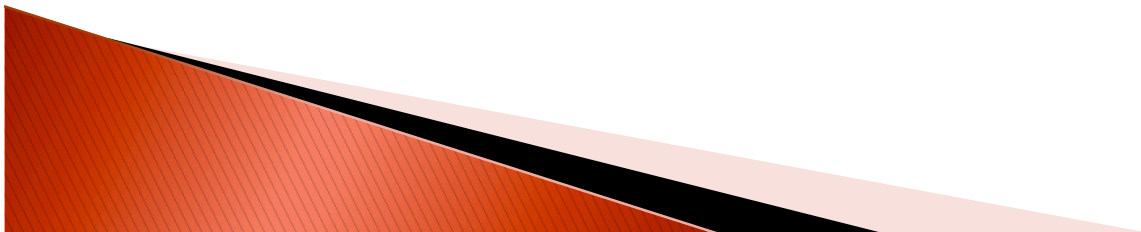
- ▶ High school principals agreed that APIs would lead the conversation at their schools utilizing Ken O'Connor's book, *A Repair Kit for Grading , 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*
- ▶ API monthly meetings involved:
 - Use of protocols to solicit feedback from school-based discussions
 - Introduction to new activities for engaging school-based staff in conversations
- ▶ High Five provided staff development on grading practices.
- ▶ Each high school sent teacher leaders to this training to give them tools to assist APIs in the discussions back at their school.
- ▶ High School Central Service staff supported teacher conversations via Department Chair meetings and PLC Team Leader meetings.

Year of Conversation: Middle School

- ▶ Improved grading practices has been a priority for middle school principals for several years.
- ▶ Data teams served as the forum in 2008–09:
 - Monthly meetings with school teams.
 - Activity–based presentations and discussions.
- ▶ Parallel work with department chairs and IRTs.
- ▶ Engagement with elementary and middle school counselors.

Why are we having this discussion?

- ▶ Grades serve multiple purposes:
 - Communicate student achievement
 - Inform post-secondary institutions and potential employers
 - Aid in educational and career planning
 - Provide information that students can use for self-evaluation
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs
 - Guide administrative decisions such as grade and class placement, graduation, promotion, and honors
- ▶ Our current policy gives very little direction



Current Policy

5520

GRADING SYSTEM

5520

The formal issuance of grades through symbols on a regular basis is authorized by the board in order to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance, to inform the student, her/his parents, and counselor of the student's progress, and to provide a basis for bringing about improvement in student performance, where such change seems necessary.

5520.1

Meaningful evaluation shall include consideration of all activity that has occurred during the particular evaluation period. Such activities should include (1) **homework**, (2) **projects**, (3) **reports**, (4) **class participation**, and (5) **tests which shall include unit tests**. In addition to the above activities, examinations shall be administered at the conclusion of each course which offers credit toward high school graduation. In traditional schedule schools and other schools that offer year long courses, an examination shall also be administered at the mid-point of the course. A teacher made examination, a state required end-of-course assessment, or a VoCats assessment shall satisfy these requirements. The relative value attached to any activity shall be determined by the importance of the activity toward achieving the course objectives.

5520.2

Parental conferences are a valuable method of reporting to parents. Conferences regarding a student's progress in a particular class shall include the teacher of that class.

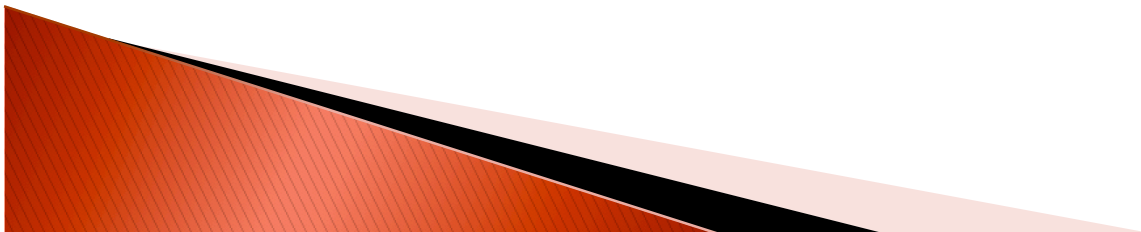
5520.3

Parents shall be notified by the midpoint of each grading period if a student is failing a course or if his course grade has declined by a letter grade.



Process of developing a new policy

- ▶ We hosted a grading practice summit to include:
 - Parents
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Higher Education Professors
 - Community Members
 - Central Administrative Staff
- ▶ Over 100 people were in attendance on March 19, 2010
- ▶ A representative from each of these groups was selected to participate in a task force that was charged with drafting a revised grading practice policy. We concluded our work in March of 2011.



Questions we pondered over the course of two to three years?

- ▶ Should we include student behaviors in grades?
(effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.)
- ▶ Should we report student behaviors separately?
- ▶ Should we reduce grades when work is submitted late?

Additional questions we have pondered?

- ▶ Should we give points for extra credit?
 - Should we give students 10 point coupons for holiday gifts?
 - Should we reward students with extra points for bringing in their interim signed or a box of tissues?
- ▶ Should we punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades?
- ▶ What alternative consequences are there for this behavior?

Additional questions we have pondered?

- ▶ Should we include group scores in grades?
- ▶ Should we include zeros in grade determination when work is missing?
- ▶ How do we provide additional opportunities for the student to do the missing work while not diminishing the importance of his/her responsibility?

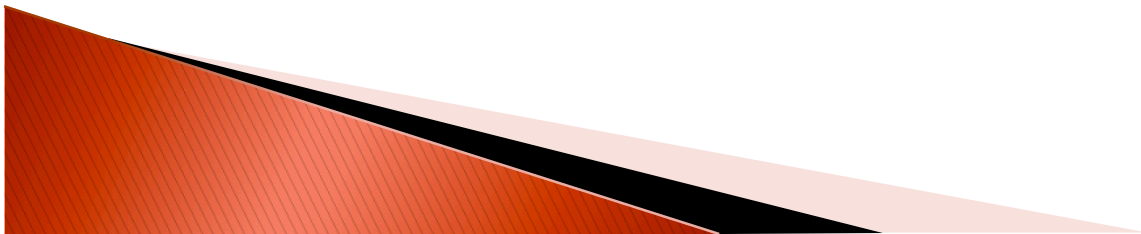
Additional questions we have pondered?

- ▶ Should we summarize a student's work over time or only the most recent achievement?
- ▶ Should we use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades or only from summative assessments?
- ▶ Should we “give” a student a couple of points if he/she is borderline passing? Do we do this only for the well behaved child or all students?

Work of the Task Force

- ▶ The first agreement that was reached by the task force was the purpose of grading:

The purpose of a grading system is to accurately and consistently measure and communicate an individual student's level of mastery of defined curriculum objectives.




Points of Agreement

- ▶ The purpose of a grading system is to accurately and consistently measure and communicate an individual student's level of mastery of defined curriculum objectives.
- ▶ While attendance and nonacademic related behaviors influence student learning, they are reported separately and will not be included in a student's academic grade.
- ▶ All WCPSS grading and reporting practices will support the learning and teaching process and encourage success for all students.
- ▶ All assessments and assignments will be aligned with state/district adopted standards and/or curriculum and be designed to accurately assess student achievement.

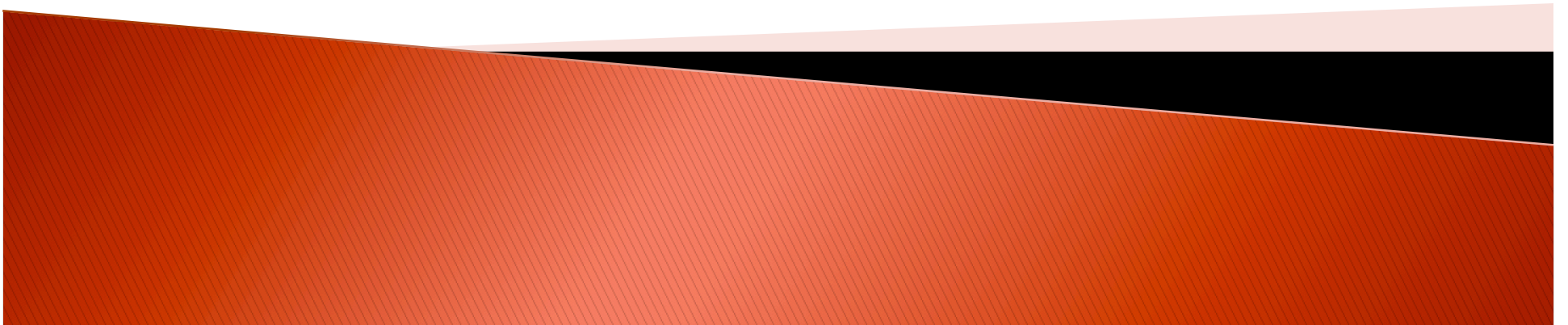


Points of Agreement

- ▶ Accurate and consistent evaluation of academic achievement shall employ multiple formative and summative assessments to determine a student's level of mastery of curriculum objectives.
 - ▶ Teachers will provide students and their parents/guardians with clear explanations of their grading practices.
 - ▶ Teachers will provide each student with ongoing specific feedback to promote learning, self evaluation and growth.
 - ▶ Communication between teachers, parents, and students will be timely, including ongoing system-wide mechanisms for communication of student progress and grades.
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Review Policy and R&P

Provide feedback



Questions?

