

2. GRADING

- References: (a) Director, Department of Defense Education Activity Memorandum, "DoDEA Electronic Gradebook System Policy for Grades 4-12," August 25, 2009
(b) DoDEA Regulation 2000. 3, "Student Grade Level Placement," March 26, 2004

Additional Resources:

- DoDEA Regulation 2000.10, "Department of Defense Dependents Schools Progress Reports," August 1, 1995
- DoDEA Regulation 2000.1, "High School Graduation Requirements," July 29, 2004

a. Grading Guidelines

(1) Grades measure academic performance and indicate the student's level in meeting achievement of DoDEA academic standards and curriculum objectives. They report achievement relative to measurable curriculum objectives; they do not measure academic potential or social performance. Percentages used in grading must correlate to the DoDEA grading scale.

(2) Grading reflects the teacher's professional judgment of a student's level of achievement. Various methods can influence a teacher's evaluation of a student's mastery of curriculum objectives. Teachers are responsible for justifying their grading system (evaluation design) and the grades assigned to their students. It is understood that within a teacher's grading system (evaluation function), a numerical grade cannot be assigned to every accomplishment or degree of success/failure.

(3) Student progress should be reported in a useful and understandable way to the student and sponsor. The critical issues in grading are the validity and usefulness of the grades for the variety of purposes they are called on to serve (i.e., conveying information on student achievement, providing incentives for students to study, serving as selection criteria, and assisting the student in career and educational planning). The following guidelines are offered to assist in arriving at a grade:

(a) Daily grades. Teachers may employ letters, numbers, or other symbol sets for daily grades. However, all symbols and weighting of class work should be explained in the grading system developed by the teacher and approved by the principal.

(b) Quarter or 9-week grades. These grades are applicable to elementary, middle, and high schools.

(c) Semester or 18-week course grades. These grades are determined by using the procedure outlined in the grading system designed by the teacher and are recorded in the teacher's records as a percentage or letter grade. If the 18-week period completes a semester course (60 clock-hours of instruction) for which one-half unit of credit is granted, a notation will

be entered onto the student's permanent record. A letter grade will be recorded and the report card will reflect a letter grade. For semester courses, this is the final grade.

(d) Arriving at the grade. Grading begins with individual achievement, not with a preconceived pattern. Any system or curve that predetermines the number or distribution of grades tends to be unfair and unrealistic and is not used in DoDEA. Because the art of test-making is imprecise at best, this guideline does not preclude teachers from adjusting raw scores or using commercially prepared tests and their results when determining student grades. The results of DoDEA system-wide testing programs, and supplements to them, are not to be used in assigning individual student grades. However, parts or the whole of end-of-course exams may be used as an exam and utilized when determining grades. A normal distribution curve should not be used in arriving at grades.

(e) Teacher's grading system (grading evaluation design). Each teacher will develop a percentage-based and/or letter-based evaluation system/design best suited for his or her class in arriving at the grade to be reported for the grading period. This system must explicitly indicate how grades are to be determined (e.g., the means of weighing tests and assignments), and will be reviewed with the principal, or designee. A copy of this evaluation system will be placed in the teacher's grade book and presented to student and parent/sponsor when the student begins the course. Teachers use their judgment on the individual test items and the procedures for scoring tests appropriate for a specific class or subject.

(f) Grade composition. Grades should reflect all marks recorded, and each piece of work or assignment is valued according to the individual teacher's grading system. Grades should be determined by individual student achievement. The exception occurs when the accrual of unexcused absences during a grading period may require a lowered or failing grade for that period.

(g) Passing grades. A student should be considered to be doing passing work when the grades he or she receives indicate a general level of achievement and a general pattern of acceptable responses. Teachers should carefully consider all work required or accepted. A student's failure or success on one test or one assigned task, such as a book report or a research paper, would not normally be sufficient for failing or passing a course or the grading period.

(h) Weighted grades. The provision for calculating class rank is based on careful research of current practice in school systems in the United States and on analysis of the unique circumstances found in the DoDEA system. DoDEA will only calculate weighted grades for students who complete and take the requisite exams for Advanced Placement (AP) courses, or for students who complete International Baccalaureate second-year higher-level courses (Bahrain only). The following point values should be used in calculating the GPA for courses completed in DoDEA:

<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>
A= 4.0	A= 5.0
B= 3.0	B= 4.0
C= 2.0	C= 3.0
D= 1.0	D= 2.0
F= 0.0	F= 0.0

1. Computation of relative student achievement, such as class rankings within graduating classes, will be determined on the basis of weighted grade point averages.

2. In determining GPA for students transferring from schools outside the DoDEA system, DoDEA accepts at face value the grades awarded in other systems. Incoming students with College-Board-Recognized AP courses on their transcripts and proof of completion of the respective AP examinations will receive the weighted grades equivalent to DoDEA's point-value scale. Incoming students with weighted grades that are not from AP courses will be assigned the point-value of the letter grade based on DoDEA's unweighted scale used in calculating the GPA. DoDEA will not change any letter grade on a transcript. In order to calculate GPA for all students on an equitable basis, the following procedures should be used when entering marks from schools outside the DoDEA system in the school management database:

a. Enter the letter grade earned at the non-DoDEA school. Include marks of "+" or "-" Point values for the grade will be automatically calculated based on the DoDEA policy. A plus or minus after the grade will be recorded but will not affect the point calculation. For example, "B+," "B," and "B-" all count as 3.0.

b. The grade points and the student's cumulative GPA will be calculated automatically by the school management database according to DoDEA standards. GPAs for all students being ranked in DoDEA will be calculated on the same basis.

(i) Frequency of evaluation activities. Teachers conduct frequent and ongoing evaluations in determining a grade for a grading period. Teachers are encouraged to administer daily grades and are required to administer at least one grade each week. Weekly evaluation encourages class attendance and consistency in study habits. Grades may reflect formal or informal tests, quizzes, classroom and laboratory participation, teacher observations, homework, and special assignments.

(j) Final grades. All recorded grades within the grading period, including the final examination and other evaluation activities that are used to measure student achievement of instructional objectives, are used in determining the final grade. Year-long courses (120 hours of instruction) are valued as one unit of credit. Semester courses (60 hours of instruction) are valued as one-half unit of credit. Courses of 30 hours of instruction, or quarter courses, have a final grade value of one-fourth credit (applicable only to middle school, which consists of grades 6, 7, and 8). The grading system used to determine report card grades should reflect student evaluation in reference to instructional objectives. When a student has more than one teacher for a course, the last teacher should assign the final course grade after consulting with the former teacher(s).

(k) Students with disabilities and English language learners (ELL). All students, including students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, are graded on a quarterly basis. All grading options available for general education students may be used with students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and with ELLs. All students with disabilities will receive a GPA calculation and be eligible for any honors that have been established by the school.

(l) Extra credit. Extra credit is given at the discretion of the classroom teacher. When extra credit is used in determining grades, the extra credit policy should be reviewed by the principal, or designee. The extra credit policy should be presented to students and parents/sponsors prior to use.

(m) Semester examinations. Semester examinations in most school subjects will normally be administered to all students in grades 9-12. Examination schedules should be developed with the instructional staff. Semester examination grades normally should not count more than one-fourth of the semester grade. Semester examinations are not exclusively "semester tests." Other assigned activities, such as student-teacher contracts, special projects, and other student assignments, may be used as alternatives to semester examinations in determining the semester grade.

(n) Removing an "Incomplete" ("I"). Because of late entry during the semester or because of long illness, it may be necessary for a teacher to give an "I" grade at the end of a marking period or even at the end of a semester. Principals must ensure that both the guidance counselor and the teacher determine the length of time the student needs to complete the unfinished work, and plan with the student so that the make-up work is completed as soon as possible. Normally, this is no later than 2 weeks after the end of the first semester or 2 weeks after the end of the second semester.

(o) Advanced study. Students in 7th and 8th grades who satisfactorily complete courses in foreign language and Algebra I and above math courses normally taken in grades 9-12, will receive appropriate course credit towards graduation. The grades count toward high school graduation requirements but will not be used in the calculation of the high school GPA. [Note: Students who entered 9th grade in SY 04-05 will have the letter grades from 7th and 8th grade courses calculated into their GPA. Students who entered 9th grade in SY 05-06 will have the letter grades from 7th grade courses calculated in their GPA.]

(p) Appealing grades. Students or parents/sponsors that believe a quarter or semester grade is in error should first meet with the teacher to resolve the dispute. The teacher should be able to explain how the grade was determined following his or her approved grading system. If the dispute cannot be resolved with the teacher, the student/sponsor should contact the principal in writing. A meeting that includes, at a minimum, the student, the teacher, the parent/sponsor, and the principal or his or her designee, will be held to attempt to resolve the disputed grade issue. The principal has the authority to make the final decision on the disputed grade. If a grade is changed, the reason for the change should be provided to the teacher in written form.

(q) Grading deficiencies. For any child demonstrating unsatisfactory progress or achievement, teachers must notify parents with enough time to correct the deficiency. Notification must occur as soon as unsatisfactory achievement is evident, and not later than the midpoint of the nine week grading period.

b. Electronic Grade Book (EGB)

(1) An EGB program is a grade book that the teacher can access on the teacher's classroom computer. The grade data is stored on the SIS server. Access to the program is available to the teacher on the teacher's home computer if desired.

(2) The program allows entry of student assignments, quizzes, tests, and marks with transfer capability into the DoDEA standard school information management system.

(3) The EGB program currently in use is the only DoDEA-supported program. The program must be used for all students in grades 4-12 including those having an IEP, or those in a special program such as ESL or compensatory education, with flexibility in grades and averages. For example, the program can use the DoDEA points and credits table to determine automatic averaging among quarters and semesters, or to allow for an alternate grade, which bypasses the traditional table of automatic averaging and allows teachers flexibility in assigning letter grades if they wish.

(4) Timely and accurate reporting of student progress shall be accomplished using the approved DoDEA EGB program. All assignments (e.g., quizzes, tests, examinations, homework, speeches) that are used to assess and report student progress shall be promptly evaluated and/or graded, posted in the EGB, and returned to the student. The normal period of evaluation and posting should be no longer than 10 working days from the date the assignment is collected, with reasonable exceptions for large projects (e.g., term papers, research projects, portfolios). This includes all assignments at all grade levels and in all subjects that are part of the educator's assessment of the student. At a minimum, all teachers are required to record one assignment or grade per week in the EGB program. Limited exceptions may be granted by the school principal. (See Director of Department of Defense Education Activity Memorandum (Reference (a)).)

c. Promotion/Retention

(1) Promotion or retention of each student must be considered on an individual basis, and decisions must be based on criteria that reflect positive concern for individual characteristics, strengths, and needs of the student. One criterion must be the extent to which the student can succeed at the next grade level or in subsequent courses.

(a) Promotion. A student is regularly promoted in the elementary grades by successfully completing curricular requirements of subject areas for the grade. Promotion in the secondary school is governed by DoDEA Regulation 2000.3 (Reference (b)).

(b) Retention or other placement adjustment. A student placement committee (SPC) will be established by the principal to recommend the placement of a student being considered

for a waiver of academic requirements or a double promotion, to validate student success in meeting curricular expectations, to determine retention or promotion, or to make other placement adjustments. The progress of a student whose placement has been adjusted will be reviewed by the SPC. The composition of the SPC and its operating/reporting procedures is outlined in Reference (b).

(2) The principal is responsible for assuring that the SPC fulfills its assigned functions. The final decision on each student's grade and program placement is the principal's responsibility.

d. Homework. School homework policies should be developed locally with the involvement of both faculty and the community. Each District school's homework policy should be distributed to all students and parents/sponsors at the beginning of the school year.

e. Recognition and Awards

(1) DoDEA recognizes that rewarding outstanding student achievement and performance is an integral part of the education process, and that providing incentives and awards enhances student self-esteem and promotes the goals and mission of DoDEA.

(2) A school awards program may include recognition in a number of areas, (e.g., achievement or performance in academics, athletics, school activities, attendance, citizenship, leadership, service, or any other activity deemed worthwhile by the school).

(3) The provision of awards and incentives is the responsibility of the local school. The history, traditions, and current needs of each school should determine the number and nature of the awards given to students. Schools should establish, in writing, the criteria and process for selecting recipients for each award given. The award program should be reviewed at least every 2 years by the principal in conjunction with parents/sponsors, teachers, and students. The final authority in determining the number, type, and recipients of school awards is the principal.