

2016 Grading Policy

Parkville Middle Parent FAQs

1. I don't understand the 4 point scale. What does each number really mean?

POINTS	GRADE Equivalent	DESCRIPTOR
3.50-4.00	A+	Extending Standards (The student has demonstrated a deep understanding of the standard and can transfer their understanding to old or new experiences and/or other content areas.)
3.00-3.49	A	Meeting Standards (The student has demonstrated complete understanding of the foundational skills and knowledge necessary to meet the standard and applies their knowledge consistently.)
2.50-2.99	B	Approaching Standards (The student has developed an understanding of the foundational skills and knowledge necessary for achieving the standard, and is applying their understanding toward the learning goal most of the time.)
2.00-2.49	C	Developing Toward Standards (The student has developed a basic understanding of the foundational skills and knowledge necessary for achieving the standard, and is applying their understanding toward the learning goal with varied success)
1.00-1.99	D	Beginning Understanding of Standards (The student has a very basic understanding of the foundational knowledge necessary for achieving the standard)
0.00-0.99	E	Limited or No Evidence of Understanding (The student has shown limited or no evidence of understanding- No Credit Awarded)
M or I	E	Missing or incomplete evidence- (The student has not submitted evidence of performance)

2. How will this impact my student's GPA and high school applications?

The 4 point grading scale will not change how grades are reported on report cards, how honor roll is determined, or how high school grade point averages will be determined.

3. My student received a zero on an assignment. Does this mean he/she didn't complete the assignment?

No, a score of a zero means that the student submitted the assignment but showed limited or no evidence of understanding the standard. If a child did not submit an assignment at all, the score will read "M" for "Missing". If the child started the assignment but did not show enough evidence for the teacher to assess his/her level of understanding, then the score will read "I" for "Incomplete". Scores of "M" and "I" contribute zero points toward the average.

4. A teacher told me that on a particular assignment, the highest possible score is a 3. Why is it that the highest grade a student can achieve on some assignments is a 3 and on others it's a 4?

The score of a 4 is given when a student has demonstrated that they can extend their understanding of a standard and apply their knowledge in different contexts. Short answer questions, projects, performance-based-tasks, discussions, essays, verbal responses etc. allow students the opportunity to show how they can extend their understanding of a standard. Some question types (multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank) do not provide students the opportunity to show how they can extend their understanding. Therefore, on these types of assignments, a 3 is the highest possible score.

5. How will my student know what they have to do in order to score a 3 or 4?

Teachers use a variety of techniques for providing your students with this information. Strategies include: sharing learning targets/objectives at the beginning of every lesson, sharing examples of strong and weak work, co-constructing success criteria (what success looks like on this assignment) with students, allowing students the opportunity to practice with formative (ungraded) assignments, giving timely and descriptive feedback that communicates where the student is in relation to the learning goal and what the student needs to do next to reach the goal, and allowing students the opportunity to redo or "upgrade" their assignment once feedback has been given. If you feel that your child does not understand what he/she needs to do in order to meet a standard, please ask your child's teacher to give your student individual feedback regarding that specific standard.

6. What role does homework play in the new grading policy?

Homework is a very important part of teaching, learning, and parent involvement. Homework assignments provide students with an additional opportunity to practice, deepen their understanding, and/or increase progress toward meeting standards and expectations. Like other forms of formative assessment, teachers will use the results from homework to provide students with feedback, and the scores will be entered as a formative (non-graded) assignment in BCPSOne. Accuracy is a critical element of grading, so it is important that teachers verify students' demonstrated level of performance on homework. In other words, we need to verify that students' performance in class aligns with their performance out of class, otherwise we risk inaccurate grades. Teachers may give a short in class quiz on the information covered as part of homework in order to evaluate performance and to hold students accountable for completing the assignments. We believe homework completion is important; thus, it will also be reported separately on the report card using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators.

7. Why are teachers no longer deducting points for lateness or penalizing students' grades for behavior infractions? How are you holding students accountable for their behavior and teaching them good work ethic?

We believe it is important that teachers provide students with ongoing feedback on their academic achievement and behavior. However, when both types of information are combined into one grade, the grade becomes distorted, making it difficult to determine from the grade exactly what a student knows and is able to do in relation to the standards. Turning work in on time, behaving appropriately, participating in discussions, and working cooperatively with adults and peers are all very important skills necessary to be successful in college and future careers. However, they do not assess the actual learning. Student behavior and work ethic are critical components to students' growth as young learners; however, these skills will not be considered in the achievement grade. Inclusion of behaviors in the achievement grade has been shown to have a negative impact on student motivation and prohibits maximum learning of content. Starting in 2016–2017, classroom conduct, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported in a separate section of the report card, using the BCPS Skills and Conduct Indicators. Look for this information on your student's report card. Additionally, Parkville Middle uses an incentive system to reward students for positive conduct. Students earn "PBIS Bucks" that can be redeemed for prizes, tickets to events, snacks, etc. You may also find that your student's teachers have individual incentives in their own classrooms.

8. What are "redos" and "upgrades"? What assignments can my child "redo"?

At Parkville, we use these terms synonymously. Throughout a unit, as part of the formative assessment process, students are encouraged to resubmit assignments or parts of assignments that demonstrate a higher level of understanding or new learning. If a child submits an assignment upgrade that demonstrates a higher level of understanding, only the "upgraded" score will be included in the students' marking period grade. Allowing students to improve their performance related to standards and expectations is a highly effective, research-based approach. Reassessment is about recognizing that students may surpass their previous levels of performance, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate those higher levels, and then giving them full credit for their learning.

Important Note: *We believe adhering to deadlines is an important skill and behavior for student growth. Due to the current structure of BCPS grading periods, there still remains a need for cut-off dates for additional learning opportunities. Additionally, students do not have to be given the opportunity to redo every assignment. These decisions are made at the discretion of the teacher. At the end of a unit of instruction, students will be given a curriculum-based unit assessment. The end-of-unit summative assessment can be administered only once, thus students cannot retake the same assessment to improve their score. However, throughout the unit students will be provided multiple opportunities to improve their performance and show what they know and are able to do.*

9. Why aren't extra credit opportunities being given anymore?

Traditionally, extra credit opportunities have been given to students who want to improve their class average. All students, not just the students who are performing poorly, will have access to additional learning opportunities to improve their grade by demonstrating a new or higher level of learning and understanding (see question 8). Thus, extra credit as it has traditionally been known is no longer necessary.

10. Sometimes I see a letter code as a grade instead of a number. What do those letters mean?

M= Missing

I=Incomplete

Y=Yes

N=No