

**Berlin Central School District**  
**Grading Policy**

The Berlin Central School District believes in a rich educational environment where students can attain deep learning; express their learning in a variety of ways; differentiated to meet their needs to exhibit various skills found within each of the district-approved curricula; and cultivate relationships that encourage collaboration, respect, and individual student agency—thereby creating responsible, resilient graduates with potential and promise to achieve in their subsequent endeavors.

**Grading Systems**

Grading is considered a positive tool to indicate achievement and development in each class or subject in which a student is enrolled. The Board of Education recognizes that the classroom teacher has the primary responsibility to evaluate students and determine student grades.

The District shall use a uniform grading system. Classroom teachers shall evaluate students and assign grades according to the established system.

Grading shall be based upon student improvement, achievement on assessments, and participation in classroom discussions and activities. Parents/guardians shall be provided a written report card regarding their child's progress. The use of marks and symbols will be appropriately explained in course outlines.

To achieve these aims the District will implement the following grading practices, as they are outlined and applicable to the specific grade-levels, K-12.

**Scoring Protocols**

(Exceptions to the articulated protocols below may be presented to the building Principals for consideration.)

**K–5**

- K–5 will continue to utilize their Standards-based grading by trimester. Standards-based grading measures student progress relative to specific State learning standards.
- K–5 will emphasize the use of report card comments and conferences to further communicate expectations and understandings as to student progress with parents or guardians.

**6–8**

- 40-week courses that meet daily shall score according to the following: 22.5% per quarter grade and 10% for a final assessment (exam or project).

- An option for the final exam grades for 40-week courses may include a PBL cross-curricular “Comprehensive Project” assigned at some point during the school year, with definite consideration being given to external timelines, such as the 6–8 assessments, Regents exams, and the end-of-year expectations, et cetera. The Comprehensive Project could equal up to 10% of the overall course grade.
- Any 8th grade accelerated student in a Regents level course will follow the 9-12 scoring protocol outlined below.
- Any courses that do not meet daily over a 40 week period may or may not include a final assessment (exam or project). These courses will incorporate multiple formative and summative assessments based on course curricula. The percentages within each quarter will be evenly distributed. If a teacher chooses to give a final/project, the grade cannot exceed 10% of the overall final grade.

## 9–12

### **Non Regents-ending courses:**

- 40-week courses, that meet daily, shall score according to the following: 22.5% and 10% for a final assessment (exam or project).
- Semester long courses that meet daily shall score according to the following: 45% per quarter, 10% for final assessment (exam or project).
- Any courses that do not meet daily over a 40 week or semester period may or may not include a final assessment (exam or project). These courses will incorporate multiple formative and summative assessments based on course curricula. The percentages within each quarter will be evenly distributed. If a teacher chooses to give a final assessment, the grade cannot exceed 10% of the overall final grade.

### **Regents-ending courses:**

- Each quarter will weigh 22.5% and up to 10% for the Regents exam.
- Students may be provided a final assessment option based on teacher discretion. The final assessment may be calculated by taking 5% for a comparable project-based learning assignment to be completed at some point during the school year and 5% for the Regents exam, or teachers may elect to use the Regents exam as the entirety of the Final 10% of their grade. However, teachers may not use the PBL as the entirety of the

10% final assessment grade. This approach allows students to mitigate the impact of their Regents exam scores on their course grade, while also respecting the weight and importance of the Regents exams.

## **Grade Reports**

Parents and students shall be provided a written report card 3 times per year for grades K–5, and 4 times per year for grades 6–12. Interim progress reports shall be available 4 times per year using our Learning Management System (Schoology), for grades 6–12 at the halfway point of each quarter. Printed interim progress reports will be provided upon request, though parents and students are encouraged to access grades in the Learning Management System (Schoology) often, using the format provided by their teachers in the course outline.

## **Teacher Expectations**

### **Course Outlines**

Teachers will submit a course outline annually to the building principals and department chairs by the last day of the first week of school. This document will be provided to students and accessible via Schoology before the teacher will deliver any new content.

Course outlines will be provided to students (and by extension parents) and will be posted on the teacher's pages in the Learning Management System (Schoology), or through the process of introductory letter and open house for grades K–5.

The course outline will include the following mandatory components:

- an overview of the subject matter being taught (at K–5 this would include an overview of the standards-based report card);
- the grading breakdown for the subject: e.g., participation=10%, formative assessments=20%, summative assessments=30%, et cetera;
- any final exam or final project information, expectations, and implications;
- the teacher's resubmission policy;
- mandatory and/or important dates for the subject/course where applicable;
- teacher contact information: i.e., email, Schoology pages, et cetera;
- Course and classroom expectations, which will align with the District's Code of Conduct, will be clearly developed and communicated
- Class materials needed for the course

### **Planners**

- Teachers in grades 1-5 and 6-12, will encourage all students to utilize a planner to properly track their various assignments and to better ensure success in these assignments. We will also encourage planners for students as a tool to assist in self-regulated organizational thinking and best empower each student to attain self-efficacy and greater self-sufficiency and reliability.

### **Feedback**

- Teachers will provide timely feedback to students on assignments and progress within courses. The standard for this will be updating gradebooks **at least every two weeks**, unless an assignment is deemed to be an exception to this expectation (e.g. cross-curricular PBL assignments, research papers).

### **Gradebook Content**

- No assignment in any subject where grades are calculated for a numerical score may weigh more than 20% in any given quarter,
- All gradebooks will be well balanced in assessment types between formative assessments and summative assessments.
  - Formative assessments are defined as (i.e. exit tickets, )
  - Summative assessments are defined as (i.e. unit assessment)
- ***Gradebook must be set up in percentages and not total points.***
- Schoology is set up such that assignments are factored as a 1.0 weight. If the factor is altered for an assignment, it should be reflected in the title or description of the assignment.

### **Quarterly Averages**

- Where numerical grading systems are applied, no quarter grades lower than 50 will be permitted to be recorded for students for quarters 1 and 2. The 3rd and 4th quarters will be allowed to reflect the students' raw quarterly scores, even if below the previous minimum of 50. For semester-long courses, the first quarter of that course will be no lower than a 50. The second quarter of that semester, the raw score will be allowed.

### **Exemptions**

- Dual enrollment courses where associated colleges have pre-determined their grading policy will be exempt from the District's grading policy.

## **Academic Integrity**

### *Plagiarism and Cheating*

Any allegations of plagiarism or cheating shall be fully investigated by the School Principal or designee. Students found to have committed plagiarism or to have been confirmed to have cheated on an assignment or assessment will be subject to determinations made within the Code of Conduct policy. Determinations on these offenses will be made by the school Principal, and where additional consideration is required, with consultation from the Superintendent. Any student found to have violated the rules of academic integrity will be ineligible for academic recognition, as defined below for the duration of one marking period.

## **Academic Recognition**

*\*With few exceptions, incomplete grades may mean that a student will not be included with the names for publication at the end of each quarter:*

### **Merit List**

- Based on a student's overall quarterly average (must be 85 or higher)
- If students receive one or more grades below 65 or an incomplete for a course, they will not qualify for Merit List (\*until the incomplete is satisfied).

### **Honor Roll**

- Based on a student's overall quarterly average (must be 90 or higher)
- No course grade below 80
- \*No standing incompletes

### **Principal's List**

- Based on a student's overall quarterly average (must be 95–100)
- No course grade below 85
- \*No standing incompletes

## **Course Weighting for Advanced classes**

This component of the grading policy recognizes that at the secondary level, dual-enrollment courses (often referred to as college-level) or Advanced Placement courses resulting in the prospect of college-level credit have variability in grading practices. Grade weighting, the upward adjustment of the numerical value of student grades, shall be used to reflect the academic achievements of students completing dual-enrollment or Advanced Placement courses offered by the District. Only those dual-enrollment or Advanced Placement courses offered by the District and taught by qualified teachers shall be considered for grade weighting.

**Rationale:** Given that AP and dual enrollment courses are offered under the authority of the District and taught by teachers under the authority of the programs of the District and that they are also authorized by a center for higher learning, such as a certified college or university or the College Board, they are monitored, evaluated, reviewed, and modified to ensure course consistency to college-level and District academic standards.

### **Weighted Averages**

The academic year final grade average will be determined using the following guidelines:

- AP and dual-enrollment courses taken in advance of standard scheduling will have a level weight factor of 1.10. At the end of each quarter, student quarter grades will be weighted accordingly by the District Information Processing Specialist.

- All other courses will have a level weight factor of 1.00.

### **Add/Drop Timelines**

Students will be expected to remain enrolled in the courses that they have selected. The add/drop procedure will begin with the school counselors, and ONLY the school counselors will make changes in student schedules.

- If a schedule change needs to be made, students will have up to 10 school days after the beginning of the school year to drop or add any course.
- After this date a Student Course Change Request form must be used and signed by the student, teacher, parent, administrator, and finally the school counselor.
- After 10 weeks have passed for a 1 credit course (3 weeks for a .5 credit course), along with the signed Course Change Request form, a parent meeting must be scheduled.

(Discussion for dropping CTE courses—creating a process for the future)

### **Attendance/Participation**

It is not required that teachers utilize participation in their course grading protocols. If they do, attendance alone cannot be the reason for a student to fail a course, as per NYSED.

Also, students should be evaluated objectively. Grading categories or rubrics that include participation should be well articulated and reflect a growth mindset. Student assessments that cannot be justified through objective measures are not considered valid. Participation should count for no more than 10% of a student's quarterly grade; however, teachers may seek an exception to this rule by presenting their justification in writing to their building Principal. Please schedule a meeting with the Building Principal to address these exceptions.

### **Processing and Changing Student Grades**

Grades are expected to be submitted in a continual fashion and provided to parents on the Parent Portal or the Learning Management System (currently Schoology or Seesaw). Submission of grades in advance of the generation of quarter or interim reports will be open until a date set by the Building Principal, at which point the grading system will be closed and locked. Any submissions after that date must be accompanied by a written request. Electronic Gradebooks will be unlocked only for enough time to allow the modification. Any extension to the date the system will be locked must be approved by the Building Principal.

While the professional judgment of the teacher shall be respected, it is understood that occasionally there may need to be an adjustment in grades after the term. Examples include, but are not limited to, reflecting additional assignments, correcting mistakes, or to accommodate student illnesses. Once a grade is assigned to a student by a teacher, the grade may only be changed by the Building Principal, Superintendent or designee after notification to the teacher of the reason for such change, or upon request of the teacher. All grade changes require supporting documentation, to be maintained in the system and in the student's record, including the name and title of the person making the request, the date of the request, and the specific reason(s) for the change.

The District's student management system will serve as a historic and official representation of the grades and credits earned. Grade changes and documentation will be filed in the student's permanent record folder.

Should an administrator enforce a grade change, that administrator shall be prepared to report to the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Board.

All re-opening of the grading system and grade changes will be reviewed annually by the Superintendent to ensure the process is being followed and there is no unusual or inappropriate activity.

### **Grading System Access**

There will be a limited number of personnel other than teachers who have access or permission to enter or change grades in the system. This list includes the District Information Processing Specialist, LMS administrator and Building Principals.

The Superintendent or designee will develop regulations and procedures for adding users, establishing user's access rights (including, if applicable, override abilities), deactivating or modifying user accounts, granting user permissions, and monitoring user access to and activity within the system.

Access and permission will be reviewed annually to ensure that appropriate individual users have the correct permissions to perform the tasks required of them. Access and permissions will be compatible with roles or job duties. The access and permissions of people no longer employed by the district or no longer in positions requiring access and permissions will be removed, modified, or deactivated immediately.

Cross References:

Policy No. 7110: Student Attendance  
Code of Conduct

Effective August 29, 2023