

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE: Effective Grading and Reporting to Support Learning

This document identifies the “gold standard” for the critical components of an effective reporting and grading system. Connections are also made to various resources to support your work, including Michigan Assessment Consortium tools. Links to resources are provided throughout the document to assist leaders to increase understanding and to access tools to support implementation with fidelity. This guide was developed using resources from Ken O’Connor as the primary reference, including the book *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition, 2018.

Resource:

Component A: Clear Purpose		
CRITICAL COMPONENT: What are the essential components of a CLEAR PURPOSE within an effective grading and reporting system?	“GOLD STANDARD” for Implementing the Critical Component What would you see when this component is implemented well?	SUPPORTING RESOURCES Including Independent Study & Guided Professional Learning
Clear Purpose Defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A collaboratively developed understanding of the purpose of grading is shared by all staff, students, and parents in the district. 	<p>Assessment Learning Network:</p> <p>ALN Session: Effective Grading Practices; by Ken O’Connor and Arthur Chiaravalli</p> <p>Return-to-School Assessment Guidance: Grading for Learning; July 2020</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for Learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by “equitable grading”?</p> <p>Learning Point: Criterion- and norm-referenced score reporting: What is the difference?</p>
Purpose Supports Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The shared purpose of grading clearly supports the learning process. 	<p>Learning Point: Grading for Learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>LEARNING Point: What is gathering evidence of student understanding?</p>

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		<p>LEARNING POINT: GUIDANCE 2020: Grading for Learning</p> <p>Resource: Important Considerations for Student Assessment and Reporting/Grading Policies and District Continuity of Learning Plans.</p> <p>Resource: Narrative Reporting</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by “equitable grading”?</p> <p>Learning Moment: Achieving grading practices that support high quality teaching and assessment.</p> <p>Learning Moment: More descriptive feedback and fewer summative marks.</p>
Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The shared purpose has been clearly communicated to staff, students, and parents in the district. 	<p>Learning Point: What are learning targets?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are learning progressions?</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is gathering evidence of student understanding?</p>

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		<p>Learning Point: What is formative feedback? Why is feedback from the teacher important?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is student self-assessment?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to teaching?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to learning?</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by equitable grading?</p>
Staff Disposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff have the needed dispositions, knowledge, and skills to effectively execute and uphold the purpose for grading/reporting practices as defined in the shared purpose statement. 	<p>Learning Point: What do we mean by equitable grading?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to teaching?</p>
Ongoing Support and Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing opportunities to determine levels of understanding of the various stakeholders and the provision of ongoing professional learning and/or coaching resources is evident throughout the district to support consistent implementation of the defined grading practices. 	<p>Resource: Webinar with Ken O’Connor; How to grade for learning.</p> <p>Study Guide Resource: How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Joe Feldman Traditional grading practices vs. beliefs about teaching, learning, and equity.</p>

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		<p>Learning Moment: Joe Feldman: How equitable grading and assessment improves teaching and learning.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Joe Feldman: Framework for equitable grading.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Joe Feldman: A way forward to more equitable classroom grading.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Joe Feldman: Beliefs and grading practices resulting from pandemic.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Joe Feldman: Grading as behavior management? There are better measures to use.</p>
Aligned Policy and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures throughout the district align with and support the shared understanding of the purpose of grades. • Staff work to consistently adhere to the district policies and procedures in the area of grading. 	<p>Learning Point: What do we mean by equitable grading?</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for Learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p>

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Component B: Essential Conditions of Quality for Effective Grading		
CRITICAL COMPONENT: What are the critical components of EFFECTIVE GRADING CONDITIONS within a grading and reporting system?	“GOLD STANDARD” for Implementing the Critical Component What would you see when this component is implemented well?	SUPPORTING RESOURCES Including Independent Study & Guided Professional Learning
<p>Supports Learning</p>	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning is “messy” and ongoing feedback throughout the learning process helps students to attain learning goals. High quality descriptive feedback as part of the grading and reporting system is critical to support learners and learning Scores and the resultant grades are one component of a feedback system to support learning. 	<p>Resources column:</p> <p>MAC in a Moment: March 2019</p> <p>MAC in a Moment: March 2020</p> <p>Learning Point: What is formative feedback? Why is feedback from the teacher important?</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for Learning. Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: What is gathering evidence of student understanding?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is formative feedback? Why is feedback from the teacher important?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is feedback from peers?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to teaching?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to learning?</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p> <p>Learning Moment: More descriptive feedback and fewer summative marks by Ken O’Connor</p>

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		<p>Learning Moment: Teacher framework for assessment that supports student learning, by Jay McTighe</p> <p>Learning Moment: Practices in lieu of grading, by Arthur Chiaravalli</p> <p>Learning Moment: Descriptive feedback to support students becoming better writers, by Arthur Chiaravalli</p> <p>Resource: Educational Leadership. September 2020, Volume 78 No. 1: Grade Expectations</p> <p>Resource: How to Grade for Learning Study Guide, MAC</p> <p>(Review or Purchase) September 1, 2020; ASCD Magazine, Volume 78, Number 1) Articles within this issue include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading During the Pandemic: A Conversation • The Only “F” That Matters” • Does This Count? • Breaking up the Grade • Avoiding Unintended Consequences in Grading Reform • The Economics of Grading • Stepping up the Grading Environment

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How I revamped my Grading System • Research Matters / Grading to Encourage Re-learning • Show & Tell: A Video Column / Time for Competency-Based Grading? • Leading Together / Time to Power-Up Teaching Practices • Confronting Inequity / Well-Rounded Grading • Five Inconvenient Truths About How We Grade • Eight Essential Principles for Improving Grading • Instructional Shifts to Support Deep Learning • The Power of Digit Badges
Accurate	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades must measure student achievement (i.e., demonstration of the knowledge and skill components of the standards) as precisely as possible. • Behavioral skills must be measured independent of achievement to provide an accurate indicator of student learning. 	<p>Resources column:</p> <p>Learning Point: Criterion- and norm-referenced score reporting: What is the difference?</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: What is summative assessment and how can it be used in the classroom?</p> <p>Learning Point: Performance Assessment – What is it and why is it useful?</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades represent learning and practices such as mark penalties, bonus questions and averaging across scores does not occur. • Inclusion of other non-academic factors in grades such as attendance, homework, late work, and extra credit will negatively affect the accuracy of a grade. • Inclusion of group performance scores as part of the grade for an individual negatively impact accuracy • Effective use of high-quality assessments aligned to learning targets is critical to support the accuracy of grades in reporting student learning. 	<p>Learning Point: Performance assessments in the visual arts classroom.</p>
Meaningful	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting student performance as it relates to standards and/or topics provides essential information to inform the learning process. • Student results, communicated in “user-friendly” language to parents and students helps to support understanding and give meaning to the results. 	<p>Resources column:</p> <p>Learning Point: How do we design assessment systems for modern learning?</p> <p>Learning Point: Performance assessments in the visual arts classroom.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Using classroom assessment to achieve deeper learning by Jay McTighe</p> <p>Learning Moment: Teacher framework for assessment that supports student learning, by Jay McTighe</p>

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		Learning Moment: Assessment practices that supports development of capable learners. By Ed Roeber
Consistent	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency in grading practices and the application of district policies and procedures is essential. Clarity about “how well” a standard or learning target must be learned, the performance standard, is critical to ensure consistency of grading. Grade level bands/content area teachers with common standards must ensure understanding and consistency in the application and use of the performance standards within their team. 	<p>Resources column:</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is collaborative scoring? Why can it be so valuable?</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for Learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Moment: Using curriculum outcomes to achieve deeper learning, by Jay McTighe</p>
Equitable	<p>Staff understands that equitable grading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflects a student’s performance is accurate is resistant to bias is motivational promotes self-efficacy 	<p>Web Page: Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by “equitable grading?”</p> <p>Joe Feldman: Learning Moment: Traditional grading practices vs beliefs about teaching, learning, and equity</p>

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		<p>Joe Feldman: Learning Moment: How equitable grading and assessment improves teaching and learning</p> <p>Joe Feldman: Learning Moment: Framework for equitable grading</p> <p>Joe Feldman: Learning Moment: A way forward for more equitable classroom grading</p> <p>Joe Feldman: Learning Moment: Beliefs and grading practices resulting from pandemic</p> <p>Joe Feldman: Learning Moment: Grading as behavior management. There are better methods to use?</p> <p>Jay McTighe: Learning Moment: Teacher framework for assessment that supports student learning.</p>

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Component C: Clear Guidelines for Effective Grading Practices		
CRITICAL COMPONENT: What are the essential components of CLEAR GUIDELINES for within an effective grading and reporting system?	“GOLD STANDARD” for Implementing the Critical Component What would you see when this component is implemented well?	SUPPORTING RESOURCES Including Independent Study & Guided Professional Learning
<p>Based on Standards</p>	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades are aligned to identified priority standards for each grade level and/or content area. Grades are determined and reported aligned with learning targets and/or standards, not as an overall grade. High quality assessments which align with standards and provide evidence of learning each standard are used to support grading practices. Grading relates directly to the learning goals and provides feedback as to strengths and challenges within the assessed learning targets. 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Web Page: How can assessment literate practice support a Competency-Based Education Model</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for Learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: Using curriculum outcomes to achieve deeper learning, by Jay McTighe</p> <p>Learning Moment: Achieving grading practices that support high quality teaching and assessment, by Ken O’Connor</p> <p>Learning Point: What are learning targets?</p>
<p>Use Performance Standards</p>	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades depend on clear performance standards that are understood by teachers, students, and parents. Clarity as to student performance expectations has been provided to ensure consistent application across grade level classrooms and/or within content area courses. Performance standards are based on proficiency with a limited number of levels that are public, based 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>MDE Resource: Defining Competency-Based Education in Michigan</p> <p>MDE Resource: The What and Why of C-BE</p> <p>Learning Point: Performance Assessment – What is it and why is it useful?</p>

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	<p>on expert knowledge, clearly stated in words, and supported by exemplars or models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades depend on a student’s level of proficiency and all students may achieve mastery, there is no “curve” or rationing of high or low grades. 	<p>Learning Point: How do we design assessment systems for modern learning?</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p> <p>Learning Point: Criterion-and norm-referenced score reporting: What is the difference?</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p> <p>MAEIA Resource: What is Performance Assessment?</p>
<p>Grade Individual Achievement Only</p>	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades are based on individual achievement (i.e., demonstration of the knowledge and skill components of the standards). Effort, participation, attitude, and other behaviors are reported separately. Students are not rewarded or penalized for behavior in a grade determination. These attributes are reported separately. This includes things such as: attendance, academic dishonesty, effort, participation, attitude, late work, extra credit 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by “equitable grading”?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are learning targets?</p> <p>Learning Moment: Ken O’Connor: Determining Grades</p>

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Sample Student Performance	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All scores are not included in scores, specifically, assessments used for formative purposes. This formative assessment process is used to provide information for improvement and/or adjustment by teachers to their teaching and students to their learning. Staff, students and parents understand the use of the formative assessment process and the purpose for the exclusion of these scores during grade determination. Include information in grades primarily from a variety of summative assessments. Most homework is practice and should not be included in grades. 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by formative assessment?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is gathering evidence of student understanding?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are teacher questioning strategies?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is skillful use of questions?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to teaching?</p>
Emphasizes Most Recent Evidence	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently makes use of the most consistent level of achievement when determining grades Gives special consideration to the more recent performance 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by “equitable grading?”</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides several assessment opportunities with varied assessment methodology to determine current achievement levels. 	<p>Learning Point: What is gathering evidence of student understanding.</p>
Grade Determination	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades are “determined” considering the effective grading practices and are not “calculated” based upon a formula or a software program. Determination of grades follows effective practices including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Averaging (the mean) is not used as a calculation for a final grade. Other measures of central tendency such as the mode and median are considered, if needed, and applied appropriately. Zeros are not included during grade determination. Weighting should only be used rarely and only when there is a large discrepancy in the importance/significance of standards in a grading period. Rubrics/level scores should be used; points and percentages should not be used. 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: What do we mean by “equitable grading?”</p> <p>Learning Moment: Student involvement in grading, by Arthur Chiaravalli</p> <p>Learning Moment: Determining Grades, by Ken O’Connor</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple sources of data are considered ○ Professional judgement is applied ○ Use of a “logic rule”, a series of statements that describe how grades for standards will be converted into grades, is encouraged. 	
<p>Quality Assessment and Record Keeping</p>	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment literacy to know how to gather dependable evidence of student learning using high quality assessments to either promote student learning or to certify it, depending on the context is essential (Stiggins). ● Staff understands the purpose of each assessment utilized and uses the evidence gathered appropriately. ● Assessments meet well written (i.e., clear, unambiguous, and at the right reading level) standards for accuracy including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear targets ○ Clear purpose ○ Sound design including target-method match, appropriate sampling, avoiding bias and distortion 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Quote in book by O’Connor p. 197. Citation is Stiggins 2017, p. 64</p> <p>Learning Point: What fundamental understandings are necessary are necessary for assessment literacy?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is summative assessment and how can it be used in the classroom?</p> <p>Learning Point: Performance Assessment – What is it and why is it useful?</p> <p>Assessment Resources: MAEIA Arts Performance Assessments</p> <p>Planning Tool: MAEIA Arts Instruction and Assessment</p> <p>MAEIA K-12: My Administration Plan</p> <p>MAEIA K-12: MAEIA’s Integrated Arts Assessments</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record keeping accurately maintain evidence of student learning Record keeping is completed in a timely manner Records are available to stakeholders involving staff, students, and parents for review and to support feedback for learning 	
Student Involvement	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should/must understand age-appropriately how their achievement will be assessed and how their grade will be determined. Students are provided the opportunity to be involved in the assessment process through self-assessment, reflection, and goal setting, and in communicating about their achievement and progress. 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Learning Point: What is learner agency?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is feedback from peers?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is student self-assessment?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to learning?</p> <p>Learning Point: How do students with disabilities participate in state and district assessments?</p> <p>Learning Point: Online formative assessment strategies that help students with disabilities.</p> <p>MAEIA Video: How does performance assessment benefit students?</p> <p>Learning Moment: Arthur Chiaravalli: Student involvement in grading.</p>

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Component D: Communicating Student Achievement		
CRITICAL COMPONENT: What are the essential components of COMMUNICATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT in a balanced assessment system?	“GOLD STANDARD” for Implementing the Critical Component What would you see when this component is implemented well?	SUPPORTING RESOURCES Including Independent Study & Guided Professional Learning
Communicates Achievement	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades meet the purpose of communicating student achievement/learning to various stakeholders including students, parents, employers, colleges, etc. 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Resource: A Case for Standards-Based Grading and Reporting</p> <p>Learning Point: Grading for learning: Guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: Proficiency and Growth: What’s the difference?</p> <p>Learning Point: Measuring Student Growth: More than just choosing a model.</p> <p>Learning Point: Reliability and validity: How do these concepts influence accurate student assessment?</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p>
Utilizes Various Methodology	<p>Staff understands that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grading and Reporting is conducted in a variety of ways including, but not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Cards Online Portals/Online Gradebooks 	<p>Resource Column:</p> <p>Web Page: Why and when would teachers choose to use performance assessments?</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Communications (emails, texts, phone calls, in-person conversations) • Parent/Teacher Conferences, Teacher/Student Conferences and Student Involved/Led Conferences • Portfolios • Performance Assessments 	<p>Learning Point: Grading for learning guidelines for supporting student success.</p> <p>Learning Point: Performance Assessment – What is it and why is it useful?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is gathering evidence of students understanding?</p> <p>Learning Point: What are teacher questioning strategies?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is skillful use of questions?</p> <p>Learning Point: What is student self-assessment?</p> <p>Learning Point: Where does SEL assessment fit in the building and district assessment system?</p>