

**GRADING POLICY**  
**GRADES 6-8**

**PURPOSE:**

The North Kingstown School District has made a major commitment to establishing curriculum benchmarks that are aligned with Rhode Island Department of Education academic expectations as determined in the RIDE Grade Level/Span Expectations and as assessed on the New England Common Assessment Program (and in 2014 the Common Core State Standards Initiative with the PARCC Assessment). In September of 2010 common benchmark assessments have been created or are being created in all academic areas and at all levels. Having common benchmark summative assessments (benchmark assessments at the elementary and middle level and anchor assignments and exams at the high school) in place will help our district to have clear and meaningful data as to how well-prepared our students are to master concepts assessed by these high stakes assessments. Having consistently applied grading practices that accurately report student learning is the next logical step in improving the clarity of our expectations, our alignment to the state curriculum, and the effectiveness of our instruction.

**PHILOSOPHY:**

In the 2010-11 School Year, the North Kingstown K-12 Grading Policy Committee set a vision to move toward a policy that will be...

- Collaboratively designed.
- Fair and consistently applied.
- Accurate in how it reflects student learning of the NK curriculum.
- Aligned to state and national standards (i.e. a passing grade from NK should mean that a student is well-prepared for state and other standardized assessments).
- Meaningful to all who use them, especially students.
- Practical in that we will not create something that is a major burden to operationalize.

The North Kingstown Middle School grading policy facilitates consistent grading of student work between teachers of the same courses. While acknowledging that teachers' professional practice and grading may vary, and that some variety of approach can be educationally beneficial, the approach from one teacher to another of matching classes should be relatively similar.

Administration will make every reasonable effort to schedule time during the school day for teachers to collaborate. Teachers will use scheduled opportunities to meet and discuss pedagogy and grading. While diversified practices will be permitted, our goal will be to merge best practices and like grading procedures. Administrators and teachers should make every reasonable effort to share and discuss teaching practices.

## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

### **Middle Level Grading**

**Consistency:** All teachers who teach at the middle school level should share a consistent approach to grading per course / level (e.g. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science, Algebra I Honors, etc.). For instance, all 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English teachers will discuss their approaches to grading with one another and come to consensus about being relatively similar in their weighting of grading elements as detailed below. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by the principals in coordination with the content coordinators.

**Formative Assessments--Lesson Practice and Activities: NO MORE THAN 25% OF FINAL GRADE** (Any of the items chosen in this group should be relatively similar in scope and weight to that implemented by all teachers of the course/level—i.e. teachers collaboratively decide to assign a relatively similar amount and rigor of homework and grade homework similarly).

- Independent practice on daily work (daily assignments and homework)
- Brief progress checks (e.g., small quizzes; reviews or warm-ups)
- Grading of effort and class participation.

**Summative Assessments--Unit and Course/Grade Level Understanding and Performance: NO LESS THAN 75% OF FINAL GRADE** (All teachers should include a relatively similar experience (in scope and rigor) with regard to these major course assessments)

- Unit (chapter) assessments (tests)
- Unit or major performance tasks – mainly products, performances, and projects (e.g., essays; artwork; visual representations; models; multimedia; oral presentations; lab experiences; live or recorded performances)
- \* District (Course/Grade Level) Assessments: Includes Mid-term and Final Exams and District-Wide Quarterly Benchmark Assessments and Exams  
**\*Grading quarterly benchmark assessments and exams will be in common. These assignments should include the same instructions, be graded for the same criteria, and receive the same weight for all students of a course/level.**

### **Exceptions:**

- Exceptions to the above percentages are allowable for departments who determine the need based on the nature of the subject (such as a band or chorus course which may include a greater participation grade due to the nature of the coursework expectations). Exceptions will be proposed by members of the department and content coordinator and approved by the principal(s).
- Exceptions to the similarity of strategies to allow for piloting new ideas and for teachers using different strategies from the norm that have proven success in student achievement. Exceptions will be proposed by members of the department and the content coordinator and approved by the principal(s).

**Incomplete or Failing Work:** The passing grade at the middle level is 65% on all course work. It is expected that our schools will make multiple attempts to intervene with and communicate with students and/or parents about incomplete or failing work. Teachers will record all student grades electronically within the NKSD student information system (currently I-Parent) within two weeks (can be longer for major projects and papers) of the work being completed by students.

**Formative Assessments:** Teachers will notify parents via email and/or phone call if there is a significant pattern of incomplete or failing work. Students will not have opportunities to make up late or failing work in this category for credit.

**Summative Assessments:** Revision of summative assignments (not including final exams) that are incomplete or score below 50% is mandatory and will follow the procedures listed below:

1. Students will have one week to revise the work, or an alternate assessment of the same standards, following the teacher's direction. This may include having the student assigned to work in the teacher's classroom before or after school to complete the work. Work must be revised to at least 70% proficiency and will receive a grade no higher than 70%. (Students whose initial score was between 50% and 69% can also elect to revise an assignment—at the teacher's direction—to 70 % proficiency within one week for a grade of 70%.)
2. After one week, if the student has failed to make up the work, the teacher will notify a parent and will assign the student to a before or after-school tutorial program until the work is completed to 70% proficiency or until the end of the quarter, whichever comes first. A tutorial program staff member will contact a parent upon reception of the student and will keep in contact about the student's progress. Upon completion, the work will receive a grade of no higher than 50%. This intervention ends at the close of the quarter.
3. In the above scenario, administrators in consultation with teachers may consider extenuating circumstances (family crisis, illness, etc.) and make adjustments to the timeline and other details as they see appropriate.

**Cheating / Plagiarism: Formative Items:** At discretion of administrator after consultation with the teacher, a parent will be notified and the student will receive Detention, ESD, or In-School Suspension and must complete the original work to proficiency at that session(s) for no credit. **Summative Items:** At discretion of administrator after consultation with the teacher, a parent will be notified and the student will receive Detention, ESD, or In-School Suspension and must complete the original work to proficiency at that session(s) for 40% credit.

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