

Why did we adopt a new policy?

- The District 218 Board of Education adopted a grading policy in June 2013. This policy will ensure that students' grades reflect learning and mastery of course skills and objectives. We began investigating this shift at least four years ago. Other districts across the country are adopting similar policies. As stated in our district values, we want to support and challenge each student with high expectations. Additionally, we want grading practices to be consistent across departments. Therefore, we believe that a uniform grading policy that emphasizes student mastery of course objectives with a retesting component strongly supports our shared vision values of high expectations and equity and opportunity.

How will my semester grade be computed?**Semester Grade Breakdown**

- 65% Common Unit Assessments and/or Other Major Unit Assessments or Tests
- 20% Other Assessments (i.e. quizzes, labs, essays, portfolios, performances)
- 15% Practice (i.e. homework, class assignments)

How will my semester report card grade be computed?

- The semester report card grade will be computed in the same manner as last year. It will be based on one semester grade (please refer to the breakdown above) worth 80% and one final exam grade worth 20%.

	Semester Grade	(80%)
+	Final Exam	(20%)
	Final Report Card	(100%)

Which assessments can be retaken?

- Any assessment in the 65% category can be retaken, regardless of the initial grade. In other words, major assessments like common unit assessments can be retaken.

What does a student need to do in order to retake an assessment?

- The student must complete a relearning plan, that has been developed in partnership with their teacher, in order to retake an assessment.

Which grade will be recorded if students take advantage of a retake?

- The higher grade shall prevail.

When and where will a student retake an assessment?

- Teachers will communicate retake deadlines. If many students need to retake an exam, it may be administered in the classroom. Other options include taking the retest with the teacher after school or in our Testing Centers so as not to miss instructional time in class.

What opportunities for additional help are available when students do poorly?

- Students may receive extra help either from their teacher or in the COOL Place tutoring lab during their lunch periods. Support will also be available in after school tutoring centers. Teachers are continuing to work very hard to deliver the best possible instruction in a way that will make sense to their students. At times, different groupings will be used in class or differentiated instructional strategies will be used in response to assessment results.

How will this new policy be communicated to parents/students?

- Classroom teachers and administrators will discuss the details of this policy during the first week of school. The grading policy will be addressed in each course syllabus. We also encourage parents to have a conversation with their children regarding this new policy.
- Additional opportunities will be available for optional informational meetings at Registration, Back to School Night, and throughout the first semester.

How are we holding students accountable or teaching students responsibility when we allow them to retake assessments?

- This policy will increase student responsibility for their learning as they develop plans to improve their grade. We are keeping student learning as our ultimate goal. We recognize that students learn at different rates and students have a variety of issues that may affect their testing ability on any given day. By allowing students to redo work, we promote a growth mindset that is vital to success and we are making a strong statement that the skills and concepts assessed are important for learning. Many real life final tests such as driver's license, ACT, MCATS, and the Bar Exam offer multiple opportunities for mastery with no penalty for the number of attempts.

What if my student is anxious about taking tests?

- Anxiety will naturally be reduced as the policy promotes opportunities to learn, relearn, and retake assessments.
- If anxiety is an issue, teachers will work with students individually to help them work through their anxiety by perhaps offering a different setting or way of testing to help them eventually find success in traditional testing situations.

What about retakes for performance classes like PE, Art, Music, Industrial Technology, etc.?

- We recognize the unique challenges presented with performance type assessments. These retakes may take place on a smaller scale as students reach critical stages towards the completion of a long-term project, product, or performance.

Who can I contact if I have more questions or concerns?

- We welcome your feedback and questions regarding this new policy. Please direct questions to either the classroom teacher or to any school administrator in your building.

If you are interested in doing some reading on grading practices, here are some authors we would recommend: R. Marzano, R. Guskey, D. Reeves, J.W. Popham, R. Stiggins, R. Wormeli, K. O'Connor, and G. Wiggins.