

## Farmington Public Schools Grading and Reporting 7 - 12

The primary **purpose** of reporting grades is to communicate student achievement, in summary form, to parents and colleges or universities.

Farmington's standards-based grading and reporting system is based on the following guiding **principles of mastery-based learning** in order to help every student meet or exceed content-specific learning targets and the transferable thinking and learning skills of the ***Vision of the Graduate***.

1. Standards are clearly defined and made public - All assignments and assessments are linked to essential learning targets for the course. Grades are based on a student's level of performance on these learning targets.
2. Assessment promotes a learning orientation – Students have opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback as they grow their competencies. Students are encouraged to do their best work without penalty for beginning attempts at mastery.
3. Learning is personalized – Teachers differentiate instruction and provide support and challenge as needed. Grades are not used to reward or punish behavior.
4. Students develop a growth mindset – Students set goals and monitor their own progress. They learn to become resilient and resourceful learners using feedback to revise and improve their work throughout the learning cycle.

Teachers align assessment and grading **practices** with these guiding principles in mind. As has always been the case, teacher practices may vary from course to course, however, there are some overarching ideas that are common to all departments. When the school year begins, teachers explain their assessment and grading methods and how students can access extra support when needed.

- Grades are based on evidence of understanding connected to the essential learning targets for the class. Students have a clear understanding of how they are performing on each learning target and know where they need to improve.
- Students receive specific, timely, and actionable feedback and have opportunities to improve performance. Practice attempts are not counted toward the grade. Improvement over time is prioritized in a teacher's grading practices.
- Teachers differentiate instruction and assessment knowing that students learn in different ways and at different rates. Students may be given choices about the ways in which they can demonstrate understanding, or they may have opportunities to retake, revise, or delay assessments before a final grade is determined.
- Extra help is provided in different forms so that students can access the support they need when they need it. Tutorials, videos, and online resources all support academic achievement and prompt students to become advocates for their own learning. Teachers and tutors are available for structured support after school and during some study hall periods.

## **Q and A about Grading and Reporting**

### **Is Farmington implementing a new grading system?**

No. We use, and will continue to use, letter grades and a numerical scale to represent levels of achievement.

### **Will colleges understand a student's grades and transcript?**

Yes. The high school transcript will continue to report a student's overall GPA and letter grades in the classes they have taken. Our transcript will communicate achievement in terms of letters grades which is what we have always done. Colleges establish relationships with high school counselors to better understand the school's programs and expectations. Admissions officers value the rigor of FHS's curriculum and know that students from FHS are well-prepared to be successful in college. Our students' acceptances to colleges have been and continue to be impressive. The school counseling office monitors this data and annually presents information to the Board of Education regarding standardized testing data and College Board results and outcomes. Farmington is widely regarded as a leading district with exceptional student outcomes and our reputation for excellence is an advantage in the college application process.

### **Will my child for be prepared for college or employment?**

Yes. Colleges and employers want students who know how to be self-directed and resourceful learners. They also want assurance that a high school diploma means that students have mastered core content goals and can think, reason, problem solve, communicate, and work well with others. Our students know how to ask questions, how to advocate for themselves, and how to improve the quality of their work. This is the promise of the FPS Vision of the Graduate. Farmington is committed to ensuring that every student who graduates is ready to be successful and that the grades on his/her transcript have real meaning and value.

### **What is the grading scale in use?**

We are using a 40 to 100 scale because each letter grade represents a 10 point interval. There is an inherent flaw with the 0 to 100 scale in that each letter grade, A, B, C, and D, is worth ten points; however, the "F" is comprised of 60 points. Mathematically the intervals need to be equal in order to fairly represent levels of performance. Zeros to indicate work that has not been completed make it nearly impossible to recover from a score that has 5 times the impact of any other grade. A student who does not submit work, or fails to make up an assessment altogether, is required to meet with the teacher and make up the work. If that never happens, then the score of 40 (an "F") is recorded.

**What evidence do you have that students are benefiting from the implementation of mastery-based learning principles?**

Department leaders have monitored data comparing average grades in courses year to year. There is no evidence of declining grades, and in fact, we are seeing stronger performance over time on mid-terms and final exams which does impact the final grade in a course. We are also seeing evidence that these practices are helping to close the achievement gap.

As we observe students in classes and talk with them about their learning experiences we can confidently claim that students are developing the skills and dispositions to be self-directed and resourceful learners. Through improved assessment practices students are becoming academically resilient. They are motivated to take on intellectually challenging work and approach those challenges with a “growth mindset.”

**How are these principles aligned with the VOG?**

Farmington’s Vision of the Graduate articulates the thinking and learning skills, transferrable across all content areas, that all students must develop in order to be fully prepared for college, career, and citizenship in a rapidly changing global society.

Grading practices in a mastery-based system place more emphasis on students as assessment-capable learners who understand their own strengths and can use feedback to improve and learn. We often refer to this student-centered approach as developing students who are “leaders of their own learning.” Teaching, learning, assessment, and grading are all aligned to support self-directed and resourceful students.

This chart illustrates the assessment and instructional shifts that support students as “Leaders of Their Own Learning”

<b>Traditional Methods:</b> “Coverage Approach” with students as passive receivers of information	<b>Student-centered Methods:</b> “Inquiry Approach” with students as active engaged learners
Teacher as expert presenter	Teacher as model, coach, and designer
Memorization	Strategic Thinking
Quiet listening	Interaction and talk
Student compliance	Student responsibility
Reliance on textbook, assuming accuracy and no need for other perspective	Multiple resources, analyzing / questioning source and author bias
Visual and verbal sources only	Multimodal learning
Teachers grading work and tests, students accumulating points	Students giving and receiving feedback, setting goals for improvement, aiming for mastery of learning targets
Hearing about the discipline, completing worksheets and assignments for the teacher to grade	Doing the work of experts in the field, authentic learning experiences, opportunities to present to and get feedback from real audiences