

July 28, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In 2014, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) established a grading and reporting committee to review and update *Policy 5210 – Factors Involved in Student Evaluation*. The grading and reporting committee began their work by collecting and reading the most recent and relevant research which included books, articles, and current available research. The committee, comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators reviewed grading and reporting practices from across the state and the nation. Based on the information gathered, the committee determined the policy needed to be rewritten to reflect more current research-based practices to better align your child's grades with his/her achievement of grade-level standards.

To that end, the new Board of Education [Policy 5210 Grading and Reporting](http://www.bcps.org/system/policies_rules/policies/5000Series/POL5210a.pdf) was approved in June of 2015 for full implementation beginning August, 2016. A copy of the new Policy and Rule 5210 are available on the BCPS Web site accessing the following links: http://www.bcps.org/system/policies_rules/policies/5000Series/POL5210a.pdf and http://www.bcps.org/system/policies_rules/rules/5000Series/RULE5210a.pdf.

As outlined in the new policy, starting this school year all student grades will align to identified course or grade-level standards and be based on a "body of evidence." A body of evidence is simply the information a teacher collects to determine a student's level of performance. In addition to making sure all grades are based on evidence aligned to standards, (BCPS) wants to ensure that the purpose for assigning grades is clear and consistent across all schools. To do this, BCPS established that the primary purpose for determining marking period grades is to accurately communicate a student's level of achievement in relation to the course expectations at a given point in time.

The school system commits to providing *equitable, accurate, specific, and timely* information regarding student progress towards course expectations which includes feedback to you and your child in order to guide next steps and indicate areas growth areas.

To promote alignment to research-based practices and stakeholder input, the committee oversaw the creation of a procedures manual, which is broken down into six guiding practices:

1. Grading practices must be supportive of student learning.
2. Marking-period grades will be based solely on achievement of course of grade-level standards.
3. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
4. Grades will be based on a body of evidence aligned to standards.
5. A consistent grading scale will be used to score assignments and assessments.
6. Accommodations and modifications will be provided for exceptional learners.

At the end of each section, a chart summarizes the "recommended" and "not recommended" grading practices.

In the second half of the manual, you will see a section called Reporting, Grade Calculation, and Codes. This section of the manual brings together important information about grading codes, calculations, and procedures into one location.

The 2016–2017 *Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual* can be downloaded from the BCPS [Grading and Reporting Web site](#). The Web site also includes sections on Research, Rational, and Frequently Asked Questions.

As we begin the school year, you and your child will be receiving additional information about the new grading procedures. We encourage you to visit the Grading and Reporting Web site, ask questions, and provide feedback. We also strongly encourage you to attend Back-to-School Night where you will have the opportunity to attend an overview session on grading and reporting as well as receive more specific information from your child's teachers.

Sincerely,

Pat Goldys
Principal, Norwood Elementary