



DMPS GRADING PRACTICES

TEACHERHANDBOOK



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dmschools.org

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Additional resources and information may be found at <http://grading.dmschools.org>

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Summary

One of the most prominent topics of discourse in education on the national stage is also one of the most controversial: effective grading practices. In the spring of 2012, Des Moines Public Schools identified the development and utilization of district-wide effective grading practices as the next step for implementation of the Common Core Standards. A Grading and Reporting Task Force was organized in August 2012 for the purpose of developing district-wide guidelines and practices that would ensure effective and consistent implementation of both the grading and the reporting of students' learning. The team consisted of teachers, administrators, and support personnel from across the district's secondary schools. The initial question posed by the task force was *How confident are we that the grades assigned to our students are consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning?* (O'Connor, 2011). The responses to this question varied widely and in so doing reinforced the district's earlier position that implementation of effective grading practices is the next critical phase in Des Moines Public Schools' mission to ensure that all students possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful at the next stage of their lives. To this end, the task force worked collaboratively to develop Guiding Practices [now Grading Practices] which support teachers and administrators in decision making as the district moves with focused intentionality towards truly effective grading practices.

Original District Task Force

A special "thank you" to the following individuals who invested numerous hours in an effort to improve our system for students:

Curriculum	High School	Middle School	Special Programs
Noelle Tichy Kim O'Donnell Christi Donald Mike Sherman	Mindy Euken BJ Van Vleet Cheryl Bjurstrom Pamela Harshbarger Sara Curto Doug Wheeler Crista Carlisle Mike Vukovich Jeri Moritz	Audrey Rieken Chris Reeves Cheryl Modlin David Johns Jake Troja Patty Gronewold Josh Brown Liz Griesel Mike Pentek	Vinh Nguyen Theresa Routh-Chapman Susan Hope Janet Young Casey Dunley

Task Force 2

A district-wide high school task force was brought together in Semester 2 of the 2017-18 school year to revisit some of the grading practices outlined in the SRG Teacher Handbook. The purpose of this work was continuation of efforts to ensure effective and consistent implementation of both the grading and the reporting of students' learning. The work of Task Force 2 continued into 2018-2019, particularly with efforts to ensure leaders on this task force supported SRG practices in schools. Task Force 2, like the original task force, worked collaboratively to clarify, modify, and tighten grading practices and to promote leadership which supports teachers and administrators in instructional decision making and effective and fair learning for all students.

A huge thank you goes out to the following educators who unselfishly gave many hours to the work of Task Force 2 in 2018-19:

High School	Special Programs	Teaching & Learning
Allison Chartier Alyssa McDonald Jean Mullen Ashley Schryver	Nikki Dorr Melinda Hamann Christian White	Casey Dunley Brad Jacobson Nikki Ellis Tim Coleman
		Noelle Nelson (Noelle Tichy) McKenzie Kennedy Cecilia McDonald Michael Vukovich Becca Lindahl

Our Why

We believe it is every child’s civil right to be held to high expectations, regardless of zip code.

Core Belief

Des Moines Public Schools commit to all stakeholders to provide fair, accurate, specific, and timely information regarding student progress toward agreed-upon common standards as well as feedback for next steps and growth areas. Grades communicate what students know and can do.

Fair	The same work, by the same student, should receive the same grade, even if the teacher is different.
Accurate	Grades are based solely on achievement, which means other factors, like behavior and attendance, are not used to calculate a grade.
Specific	Grading policies should be so clear that students should be able to tell teachers what grade they have earned, even before the teacher calculates it.
Timely	Feedback to students is so timely that students can actually use that feedback, right away, to improve their performance on tests and assignments.



Grading Practices

1. A consistent 4-point grading scale is used.
2. Academic achievement is reported separately from behaviors.
3. Scores are based on a body of evidence.
4. Achievement is organized and reported by learning topic. In secondary schools, topic scores are converted to a grade at semester’s end.
5. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
6. Accommodations and modifications are provided for exceptional learners.

Grading Practice 1:

A consistent 4-point grading scale is used.

This is the general scale for DMPS:

Scale Score	Academic Descriptor	Student-Friendly Description
4	Exceeding Standard	I have demonstrated deep understanding that goes beyond the learning goal.
3	Meeting Standard	I have met the learning goal that's in the topic scale.
2	Developing Toward Standard	I have foundational skills and knowledge for the learning goal and I am almost there.
1	Insufficient Progress	The evidence that I've submitted shows I have a long way to go to reach the learning goal.
0	No evidence of student understanding in submitted work	In work I've submitted, I haven't yet shown I understand the learning.

Marzano references considerable meta-analyses of educational studies that show that a grade based on frequent use of scales with clear descriptors results in a more accurate rendering of students' mastery at the end of a grading period. Studies have shown that the reliability of a score obtained by a single teacher using a smaller scale is .719, whereas the reliability of a score obtained using the traditional point system is .294 (Marzano, 2006, p. 118).

In order to create objective, accurate grades, it is necessary to utilize a scale with specific descriptors for each performance level. The smaller the scale, the higher the reliability, which means individual distortions are less likely. For example, an A in Teacher 1's class represents the same level of mastery as an A in Teacher 2's class across the hall or across the district. While the above example is a general scale, each course has common content scales for every topic within a course. Teachers across the district will use the common content scales to plan for instruction, assess student learning, and provide feedback to students.

In DMPS, we use the **general scale** above to ensure students, teachers, and parents consistently understand what the different levels mean in terms of meeting a standard of learning. We use **content scales** (or **topic** or **proficiency scales***—**these three terms all mean the same thing**) so that students and teachers realize exactly what must be understood and demonstrated to meet certain levels. The scale is used to plan for, deliver, and assess learning. What follows is an example of content scales.

* "Proficiency scale" is a proprietary term used occasionally in this Handbook. It is adapted from:
Heflebower, T., Hoegh, J.K., & Warrick, P. (2014). *A school leader's guide to standards-based grading*. Marzano Research Laboratory.

This is a sample English III Evaluating Arguments topic scale for DMPS:

Unit 2: Literary Analysis	
<p>Unit Narrative: In <i>The Warmth of Other Suns</i>, Pulitzer Prize-winner Isabel Wilkerson crafts a history of the Great Migration. Through analyzing her work and a series of related literary and informational texts, we will explore the following question: How do we construct the story of a complicated history? We will examine the push-and-pull factors of the Great Migration caused by the social and political climate in the United States in the aftermath of slavery as well as the immediate and long-term impacts of the decision to migrate. We will also explore the ways in which writers and artists have represented aspects of this time period and will analyze in depth Wilkerson's use of various voices, stories, and outside texts to convey the complexity of this history. Our work will culminate with an expository essay that examines the significance and impact of Wilkerson's approach to structure as she constructs and tells the story of the Great Migration in <i>The Warmth of Other Suns</i>.</p>	
<p>Topic Overview: This topic asks students to explore the many ways authors integrate multiple literary elements and complex ideas over the course of a text to create a cohesive understanding. Students should be able to draw conclusions about literary details and vocabulary that enhance how complicated narratives are shared with an audience and how those elements build upon one another.</p>	
Topic	Achieving Grade Level (AT)
<p>When collecting evidence related to the 3, it will be recorded in these topics in Infinite Campus.</p>	<p>The Level 3 Targets are the grade level expectation for students in all classes. Success Criteria (listed below the target) should be clarified/revised by the building level PLC as they collaborate to unpack the Level 3 targets.</p> <p>Guiding Question to complete this process: What are the essential pieces of knowledge students need to have to show progression towards the grade-level standard/expectation (level 3)?</p>
Topic 3: Analyzing Literary Elements	<p>LT3A- Analyze the author's various uses of literary elements including how they develop or relate to one another</p> <p>Learning that shows evidence of progressing towards grade-level learning target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Describe specific literary elements in a text (characters, setting, plot, conflict) <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze how an author's use of literary elements helps develop their purpose/perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Infer how one literary element supports or develops another literary element (e.g., how setting affects characterization, how characterization affects theme, or how setting affects plot) <input type="checkbox"/> Support analysis with evidence from the text
	<p>LT3B- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events by examining how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact over the course of a text or historical account.</p> <p>Learning that shows evidence of progressing towards grade-level learning target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Describe a complex set of ideas or sequence of events <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events develop or unfold <input type="checkbox"/> Explain the relationship between individuals, ideas, and/or events <input type="checkbox"/> Support analysis with evidence from the text

This top section contains descriptors for the unit and topic.

The rest of the scale has targets and success criteria aligned to standards.

The following terms are critical when planning for instruction:

Topic Scale: A continuum that articulates distinct levels of knowledge in relation to a learning goal. "Topic scale" is used interchangeably with "content scale" and "proficiency scale."

Learning Goal: The content standard(s) that communicates what students should know and be able to do. This is reflected in Grade level targets of the topic scale; **the grade level targets put together convey the full learning goal of grade-level content.**

Learning Targets: Standards are unpacked into instructional targets. These are then further unpacked into success criteria.

Success Criteria: Success criteria are used to explain the essential learning necessary to meet each grade level learning target. These help students and teachers monitor learning.

Actions Consistent with this Grading Practice:	Actions Inconsistent with this Grading Practice:
<p>Do provide rigorous learning targets and 4-level performance scales instead of a 100-point scale</p> <p>Do use common scales to score student work</p> <p>Do communicate learning targets and success criteria to students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Share targets and success criteria with students prior to instruction and assessment <p>Do give formative, descriptive feedback that communicates where the student is in relation to the target and what the student needs to do to reach the target</p>	<p>Don't translate the 100-point scales to a 4-point or 4-level scale</p> <p>Don't give feedback only in the form of a score</p> <p>Don't average scores</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This penalizes a student for early learning attempts

This grading practice in action—What might this look like in the classroom?

- At the beginning of a unit, teacher makes sure they understand the content scale for any given topic.
- This teacher's understanding of the scale first results from common understanding through PLC conversations.
- Teacher builds routines to ensure students understand what's expected in their learning:
 - Teacher provides regular visual reminders of the target and success criteria.
 - ▮ Targets and SC at the top of organizers
 - ▮ Targets and SC posted and updated around the classroom
 - ▮ Targets and SC shared at the beginning and/or end of class
 - Teacher ensures that all students understand what the targets and success criteria communicate so they understand how each learning activity connects to the bigger picture.
 - Teacher has students keep track of their own learning as they work towards proficiency on each target.
 - Teacher considers printing targets and success criteria at the top of any type of written assessments or tasks they give so students have immediate access and teacher can provide descriptive feedback right on the target.

Grading Practice 2:

Academic achievement is reported separately from behavior.

If we incorporate behavior, attendance, and effort in the grade, we no longer consider grades accurate indicators of mastery of written standards. The grade should reflect what the student knows and is able to do (Wormeli, 2006).

Measurement that includes behavior does not reflect what the student knows and is able to do academically. We can provide anecdotal evidence, such as amount of time and resources students spend on a task; however, we do not have a commonly accepted, legally justifiable, non-subjective method for measuring how hard or sincerely someone is working. Although we teach behavior the same as we teach academics, the two should NOT be averaged into a grade. Inclusion of positive behaviors can artificially inflate grades; inclusion of negative behaviors into performance has been shown to be a disincentive to academic motivation. “Low grades push the students farther from our course, they don’t motivate students. Recording a D on a student’s paper won’t light a fire under that student to buckle down and study harder. It actually distances the student further from us and the curriculum, requiring us to build an emotional bridge to bring him or her back to the same level of investment prior to receiving the grade” (Guskey and Bailey, 2001).

<i>Actions Consistent with this Grading Practice:</i>	<i>Actions Inconsistent with this Grading Practice:</i>
Do assess students on academic work, regardless of the time, effort, and participation it took to reach proficiency on a standard <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Ex: At semester, student receives a grade based only on a body of academic evidence</i>	Don’t skew a student’s assessment score(s) with behaviors such as late work, frequent attempts, attendance, disruptions, or non-participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Ex: Don’t give student the next higher or lower grade at semester because of effort.</i>

A note about participation:

While as a general rule participation is not included in the determination of an SRG grade, there will be some circumstances where participation is a specific standard called for in the design of a course. Examples include, but are not limited to, participation in physical education classes or meeting deadlines in a journalism class.

Assessing Participation within a target

<i>Actions Consistent with this Grading Practice:</i>	<i>Actions Inconsistent with this Grading Practice:</i>
Do assess specific skills related to the standard. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Ex: Assess students for eye contact during a speech, vocal intonation during performance, demonstrating safety procedures during a lab</i>	Don’t give students credit for simply attempting OR withhold credit when a student does not attempt a task.

This grading practice in action—What might this look like in the classroom?

- From the beginning of a unit or term, teacher ensures their students understand that they will be assessed on their academic learning of standards through different types of tasks.
 - The teacher also makes sure students understand that their behaviors in the classroom are very important and that their behaviors do impact their academic learning.
 - Teachers work with students to develop shared classroom norms and expectations.
 - Throughout the semester, teacher may consider asking students to self-assess their alignment to the shared classroom norms and expectations; teacher may then offer own assessment against students’.

Grading Practice 3:

Scores are based on a body of evidence.

Body of Evidence

Our purpose in collecting a body of evidence is to:

- Allow teachers to determine a defensible and credible topic score based on a representation of student learning over time.
- Clearly communicate student achievement in relation to the 4-point scale to inform instructional decisions and push student growth.
- Show student learning of targets through varying points of data (See Grading Practice 5).
- Provide opportunities for feedback between student and teacher.

Scoring

A collaborative scoring process is encouraged to align expectations of the scale to artifacts collected. Routine use of a collaborative planning and scoring protocol results in calibration and a collective understanding of evidence of mastery. Enough evidence should be collected to accurately represent a progression of student learning as measured throughout the topic by each target.

Teachers look at all available evidence to determine a topic score (See “Determining a Topic Score” page 12). All topic scores should be defensible and credible through a body of evidence.

When collecting evidence of each learning target as the Body of Evidence, teachers should use the following feedback language for scoring student work. In assessing student proficiency of learning targets, we use feedback language, in determining a Topic Score we use numbers (see page 12):

Learning Target Proficiency Feedback	Description of Proficiency
ET <i>Exceeds Target</i>	The student demonstrates evidence of learning that goes above and beyond (<i>complexity, depth of understanding, etc.</i>) the learning target.
AT <i>Achieving Target</i>	The student demonstrates mastery of the full target. This is shown through evidence of mastery of each success criteria combined in service of the full language of the target.
PT <i>Progressing Toward Target</i>	The student demonstrates mastery of one or more success criteria but has not yet shown mastery of the full target. They need more time and support to reach the target.
NM <i>Not Meeting Target</i>	The student demonstrates evidence related to learning, but the evidence does not yet show mastery of at least one success criteria.
M <i>Missing Target</i>	There is no evidence to show where the student is at in terms of meeting the learning target.

Role of Homework

In DMPS, we support homework as practice. Homework is not about perfection but about practicing what was learned in the classroom. Teachers should help students understand how homework helps them to master the concepts worked on in class.

There *are* longer-term, multistep projects or papers that do need to be done outside of class. Teachers will use professional judgment as they gauge what will be worked on inside of class and outside of class. Students can be asked to complete a reflective piece at the end of a multistep project to help further gauge individual student understanding of standards in the project.

Ultimately, what is termed “homework” (practice of new learning away from the classroom) is not within the body of evidence used to determine a topic score.

Actions Consistent with this Grading Practice:	Actions Inconsistent with this Grading Practice:
<p>Do base all tasks on the targets and success criteria in each scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Align tasks to targets ○ Assess each task according to the aligned success criteria 	<p>Don't assign an arbitrary number of points for a task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don't use points at all (<i>We now use topic scales for instruction and assessment</i>) ○ Don't convert the 100-pt scale to a 4-pt scale ○ Don't use the traditional 100-pt scale at all
<p>Do reveal assessment components at the beginning of a unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design assessment prior to instruction ○ Align each assessment item to the corresponding target 	<p>Don't reveal components of summative assessment just on "test day."</p>
<p>Do work in collaboration to develop (and score) assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with course-alike colleagues to develop assessments prior to instruction ○ Collaboratively score common evidence according to the target scale, using a scoring protocol, at least occasionally in order to calibrate 	<p>Don't work in isolation</p>
<p>Do assess representative sample of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assign meaningful work that will enable you to see what students know about a learning target ○ Look at representative samples to determine student understanding 	<p>Don't follow traditional habits of grading stacks of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It's not about scoring/grading every single thing a student does; it's about assessing representative, meaningful work in the description on the left
<p>Do consider adding the target and success criteria to the top of an assessment or task so the students always have in front of them the expectations for learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A target-based rubric can also provide specific language to help students self-assess their learning. 	
<p>Do assign meaningful work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give students time to practice while you are available to answer questions/correct misconceptions ○ Let students practice without tying it to their grade 	<p>Don't assign homework daily or for each concept taught, just for the sake of assigning homework.</p>

Below you will find two methods for documenting a body of evidence in Infinite Campus. These methods support tracking at the target level.

Method A (previously option 2):

		Body of Evidence			
Student	Topic Score 11/09/21	1A – Q1 10/23/21	1B – Q1 10/23/21	1B – Q2 10/30/21	1C – Q2 10/30/21
Student One	2.5	AT	PT	AT	PT

Explanation: In this example, a teacher has gathered two pieces of evidence. Quiz 1 assesses targets 1A and 1B; Quiz 2 assesses 1B and 1C. Because Student One is Achieving Target (AT) on 1A and 1B over time but is Progressing Toward (PT) target on 1C, they have earned a 2.5 for their topic score. Use the following abbreviations to denote student learning (replacing any other coding, such as + - /).

- ET: Exceeding Target
- AT: Achieving Target
- PT: Progressing Toward Target
- NM: Not Meeting Target

Method B (previously option 3):

		Body of Evidence		
Student	Topic Score 11/09/21	1A: Imperialism	1B: WWI	1C: WWII
Student Two	2.5	AT	AT	PT

Explanation: In this example, a teacher is documenting Student Two’s current understanding of each learning target without providing a chronological history of her pieces of evidence. Because they are Achieving Target (AT) on 1A and 1B over time but is Progressing Toward (PT) target on 1C, she has earned a 2.5 for her topic score. While specific information about pieces of evidence is not being logged in Infinite Campus, it should be available from the teacher upon request. **These scores should be updated as students provide further evidence of their learning.** Use the following abbreviations to denote student learning (replacing any other coding, such as + - /).

- ET: Exceeding Target
- AT: Achieving Target
- PT: Progressing Toward Target
- NM: Not Meeting Target

Grading Practice 4:

Achievement is organized and reported by learning topic. In secondary schools, topic scores are converted to a grade at semester's end.

Teachers organize and report evidence of student learning using pre-established learning topics aligned to the course standards.

Each learning topic score is determined by the teacher, by examining evidence collected throughout the semester (*see Grading Practice 3*). This score is reported in the grade book using the district 4-point scale (*see Grading Practice 1*).

All guidance in this grading practice assumes a teacher has a complete body of evidence from which to create a topic score. If teachers have an incomplete body of evidence *please follow the guidance found on page 15 for INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE*.

Semester course letter grades represent the **unweighted average** of a student's overall performance across topics. According to Robert Marzano, an unweighted average "simply means that all learning goals are considered equal—no goal has more weight than any other goal" (Marzano, 2010, p. 105).

This grading practice in action—What might this look like in practice?

Determining a Topic Score:

This chart helps a teacher think of how to reach a credible and defensible topic score.

Evidence shows the student ...	Topic Score
Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in all learning targets and success at Level 4	4.0
Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in all learning targets with partial success at Level 4	3.5
Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in all learning targets	3.0
Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in at least half of the learning targets	2.5
Demonstrates some success criteria (PT) toward all learning targets	2.0
Demonstrates some success criteria (PT) towards some of the learning targets	1.5
Does not yet meet minimum criteria for the targets.	1.0
Produces no evidence appropriate to the learning targets at any level	0

Start at Level 3 when determining a topic → score.

A teacher looks at a student's body of evidence, with the connected topic scale out for reference, and determines a credible and defensible score. Use the chart above to determine a correct topic score.

Once a topic score is determined, further support is here:

The difference between “posting” in Infinite Campus and “entering evidence” in Infinite Campus:

- **Posting:** a teacher posts a topic score (for a topic scale) after a student has submitted the evidence needed for the teacher to decide on a topic score; a teacher can repost when needed.
- **Entering evidence:** a teacher uses and tracks marks to show evidence of learning against learning targets in a topic scale. There might be few or several pieces of evidence in the body of evidence for a topic scale.

Basic guidelines for posting

Teachers are expected to update Infinite Campus as frequently as possible, in compliance with building directives. Until the topic is complete, base your in-progress topic score off of the targets you have fully assessed. Students *must* have the opportunity to submit evidence for all learning targets before a topic score is finalized.

Consider posting a general comment to all students while the topic is in progress. Examples include but are not limited to:

- **Topic still in progress.**
 - o When the topic is complete autofill with an update the changes in progress to complete.
- **Topic score only based on _ of _ targets.**
 - o When the topic is complete autofill to denote topic is complete.

When assigning a topic score, it’s not about giving the benefit of the doubt, it’s not about assuming the student really did master the targets but just didn’t show it in the evidence, and it’s not about looking through a body of evidence and estimating what an appropriate score might be. *It is about assessing that evidence against the criteria in the scale, using professional judgment, and being confident in the topic score assigned.*

Here is what Infinite Campus will resemble when determining a topic score from your body of evidence:

Infinite Campus Example METHOD A

Grade Totals	Posted		In Progress				Categories		Topic Score	Body of Evidence			
	Grade	Fill Rpt Crd Comments	Points	Possible	Percent	Post Grade	TOPIC SCORE	*BODY OF EVIDENCE	TS Seq: 1.00 Due: 05/31 TOPIC SCO Points: 100	3A-Q1 Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI	3B-Q1 Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI	3B-Q2 Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI	3C-Q2 Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI
		CC	2.50	100	2.50 %	2.5	2.50 %	2.5	2.5	AT	PT	AT	PT
		CC	2	100	2.00 %	2.0	2.00 %	2	2	PT	NM	PT	PT
		CC	3.50	100	3.50 %	3.5	3.50 %	3.5	3.5	AT	PT	AT	ET

The topic score is entered in this column in Infinite Campus. The topic score is based on consideration of multiple targets within the same topic. Teachers use the Topic Score scale and professional judgment. Emphasis is placed on the most recent evidence but the body of evidence includes historical evidence that will not be used to determine the topic score.

Learning targets are coded (3A-Q1, etc.). The student score for each target on each piece of evidence is entered.

Infinite Campus Example METHOD B

Grade Totals	Posted		In Progress				Categories		Topic Score	Body of Evidence		
	Grade	Fill Rpt Crd Comments	Points	Possible	Percent	Post Grade	TOPIC SCORE	*BODY OF EVIDENCE	TS Seq: 1.00 Due: 05/31 TOPIC SCO Points: 100	LT3A Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI	LT3B Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI	LT3C Seq: 1.00 Due: 01/16 BODY OF EVI
		CC	2.50	100	2.50 %	2.5	2.50 %	2.5	2.5	AT	AT	PT
		CC	2	100	2.00 %	2.0	2.00 %	2	2	PT	PT	PT
		CC	3.50	100	3.50 %	3.5	3.50 %	3.5	3.5	AT	AT	ET

The topic score is entered in this column. The topic score is based on consideration of multiple targets all within the same topic. Teachers use the Topic Score scale and professional judgement to decide on this using the body of evidence.

Learning targets are coded (LT3A etc.). The comprehensive score for each learning target is entered. (Each piece of evidence is tracked elsewhere.)

SECONDARY ONLY: Conversion to a single grade:

After topic scores are determined by the professional judgment of teachers, Infinite Campus computes a grade for the course at the end of the semester (secondary only).

Course letter grades are determined at semester using the following scale:

- A (Honors) = 3.50 to 4.00
- A = 3.00 to 3.49
- B = 2.50 to 2.99
- C = 2.00 to 2.49
- D = 1.75 to 1.99
- F = 0.00 to 1.74

Example of Final Topic Scores converted by Infinite Campus and converted to a letter grade:

Final Topic Scores (based on body of evidence + teacher professional judgment)	Average of Final Topic Scores (computed by Infinite Campus)	Letter Grade for Course (converted by Infinite Campus)	Traditional GPA Value
Topic A: 3	2.66	B	3.0
Topic B: 2.5			
Topic C: 3			
Topic D: 2			
Topic E: 2.5			
Topic F: 3			

Insufficient Evidence

To the point:

- **When to give a F/IE:** a student has a zero for one or more topics due to insufficient evidence and can recover the missing evidence in the two weeks after the end of the semester.
- **When to give a F:** a student has submitted evidence for all topics but topic scores average to an F (per Infinite Campus), or the student cannot make up the amount of missing evidence within the two-week timeframe.

Details:

A failure due to insufficient evidence (F/IE) is used by teachers to communicate students are missing or do not have enough required evidence for **all topics** and, therefore, cannot pass a course. If the student completes topic recovery then the F/IE is replaced with the new earned letter grade.

If a student is at risk for receiving a F/IE, teachers are expected to make parent/guardian contact as soon as possible to proactively avoid assigning a failure and the need for future recovery.

Posting a F/IE must be done manually by the teacher because topic scores could automatically average to a different grade.

Note regarding Insufficient Evidence: F/IE does not pertain to elementary level.

Mobility

Outside-of-District Transfers

When handling transfers from outside the district from non-SRG schools, we want to accomplish the following:

- Honor the work of students transferring into our classrooms.
- Provide grades for topics that have been taught and assessed in the classroom.
- Communicate a grade that is fair to the student, accurate, and maintains the integrity of the system.
- Honor the professional judgment of teachers of those students transferring in.

Concerning students from outside DMPS schools:

- Registrar receives letter grades from original school
- Registrar sends letter grades to teachers of **like courses**
- Teachers will convert letter grades into topic scores for topics missed based on following scale:
 - A = 3.0
 - B = 2.5
 - C = 2.0
 - D = 1.75 (this transfer situation is the **only** time a teacher would use a 1.75 for a topic score [instead of .5 increments])
 - F = 1.0
- Teachers will enter converted score for all missed topics as both a single piece of evidence and the topic score
- A note for each of these entries stating “**TRANSFER GRADE**” will be added

Additional pieces of evidence can be added during the remainder of the semester, which can lead to an adjustment of the transfer topic score.

If a student from out of district comes in and has **unlike courses** with letter grades, the situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis, most likely by teachers and counselors.

Inside-of-District Transfers

Concerning students from within DMPS schools:

- Grade books are updated by original teachers
- Registrar from original school sends topic scores to registrar at the new school
- Registrar at new school sends topic scores to new teachers
- New teachers enter topic scores in grade book

INFINITE CAMPUS SRG GRADEBOOK

Term Course Semester/Topic

Semester view of IC gradebook

Students	Posted					In Progress				1) ENSCI-PB: Populations and Biodiversity		1) ENSCI-ER: Energy Resources		1) ENSCI-ECE: Ecosystems: Cycles of Energy		1) ENSCI-ECM: Ecosystems: Cycles of Matter	
	Percent	Grade	Fill	Rpt Crd	Comments	Points	Possible	Percent	Post Grade	Composite Percent	Composite Grade	Composite Percent	Composite Grade	Composite Percent	Composite Grade	Composite Percent	Composite Grade
11 Cane, Candy								2.87%	B	2.00	2.0	3.00	3.0	4.00	4.0	2.50	2.5
11 Mouse, Mickey								2.75%	B	3.00	3.0	3.00	3.0	3.00	3.0	2.00	2.0
11 Ronie, Pepe								3.25%	A	4.00	4.0	3.00	3.0	3.00	3.0	3.00	3.0
12 Smurf, Clumsey								2.12%	C	1.50	1.5	3.00	3.0	3.00	3.0	1.00	1.0
11 Smurf, Grouchy								2.75%	B	1.00	1.0	3.00	3.0	3.00	3.0	4.00	4.0

The scores for each topic are averaged together by IC to determine the grade for the class using the following conversion scale.

A(H) = 3.50 to 4.00
 A = 3.00 to 3.49
 B = 2.50 to 2.99
 C = 2.00 to 2.49
 D = 1.75 to 1.99
 F = Below 1.74

These topics are averaged by IC to yield the grade for the course.

This grading practice in action—What might this look like in practice?

Posting Topic Scores

Big Picture:

- Ensure students have access to the entire learning goal before eventually determining a topic score. Collect a body of evidence. Record it in Infinite Campus. Determine a topic score by using professional judgment. Do not average.

Topic Scores (see also Grading Practice 3):

- Update Infinite Campus topic scores as often as possible, as evidence is collected, so progress on topic scales can be seen by students and families.
- Each time the topic score is updated, use the “post” function in Infinite Campus.
- Most schools require topic scores to be updated every two weeks.

Grading Practice 5:

Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.

Multiple Opportunities—Philosophy:

There are two forms of multiple opportunities, both of which require backwards design and intentional planning. One form is opportunities planned by the teacher throughout the unit of study and/or throughout the semester. Our curriculum builds on itself: our later topics often provide opportunities to collect evidence of earlier learning. “Multiple opportunities” is about allowing students to demonstrate their learning again throughout the course. The other form is reassessment of learning which happens *after* completing assessment of learning at the end of a unit or chunk of learning (see information below on “Two Cycles in Planning for Multiple Opportunities”).

Students will be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. If after these opportunities students still have not mastered the learning targets, they may then be afforded the chance to reassess.

Boundaries, Duties, and Expectations:

- Every teacher plans for regular practice of learning by students throughout Cycle 1, Core Instruction.
- All students are expected to participate in Cycle 1 instruction.
- Cycle 2 instruction is planned by the teacher for students who need additional opportunities to achieve proficiency.
- Students are not guaranteed access to Cycle 2 if they haven’t willingly engaged in Cycle 1.
- Students who have missed Cycle 1 due to circumstances beyond their control must engage in Cycle 1. The teacher must ensure that this happens. *How* the students engage in Cycle 1 in these circumstances is at the discretion of the teacher.

Deadlines

Due to the structure of our semesters and grading periods, there will need to be a cut-off date for multiple opportunities. When thinking about the end of a semester, **a teacher can limit the collection of evidence—from previous topics—that they will accept in the last two weeks of the semester.** This *must* be clearly communicated to students and parents/guardians early and often during the semester.

An example:

Imagine a teacher plans for four units over a semester. In the last two weeks, they can accept evidence from Unit 4, but they have the right to deny evidence from Units 1, 2, or 3. This is because students have already had ample opportunity to submit evidence through earlier units.

Extra Credit

Extra credit does not exist in a standards-based system. Like other behaviors, extra credit distorts a grade. Additional “points” will not be given simply for doing more work or putting in more time. Semester grades reflect learning, not a gathering of points.

Two Cycles in Planning for Multiple Opportunities (see next pages)

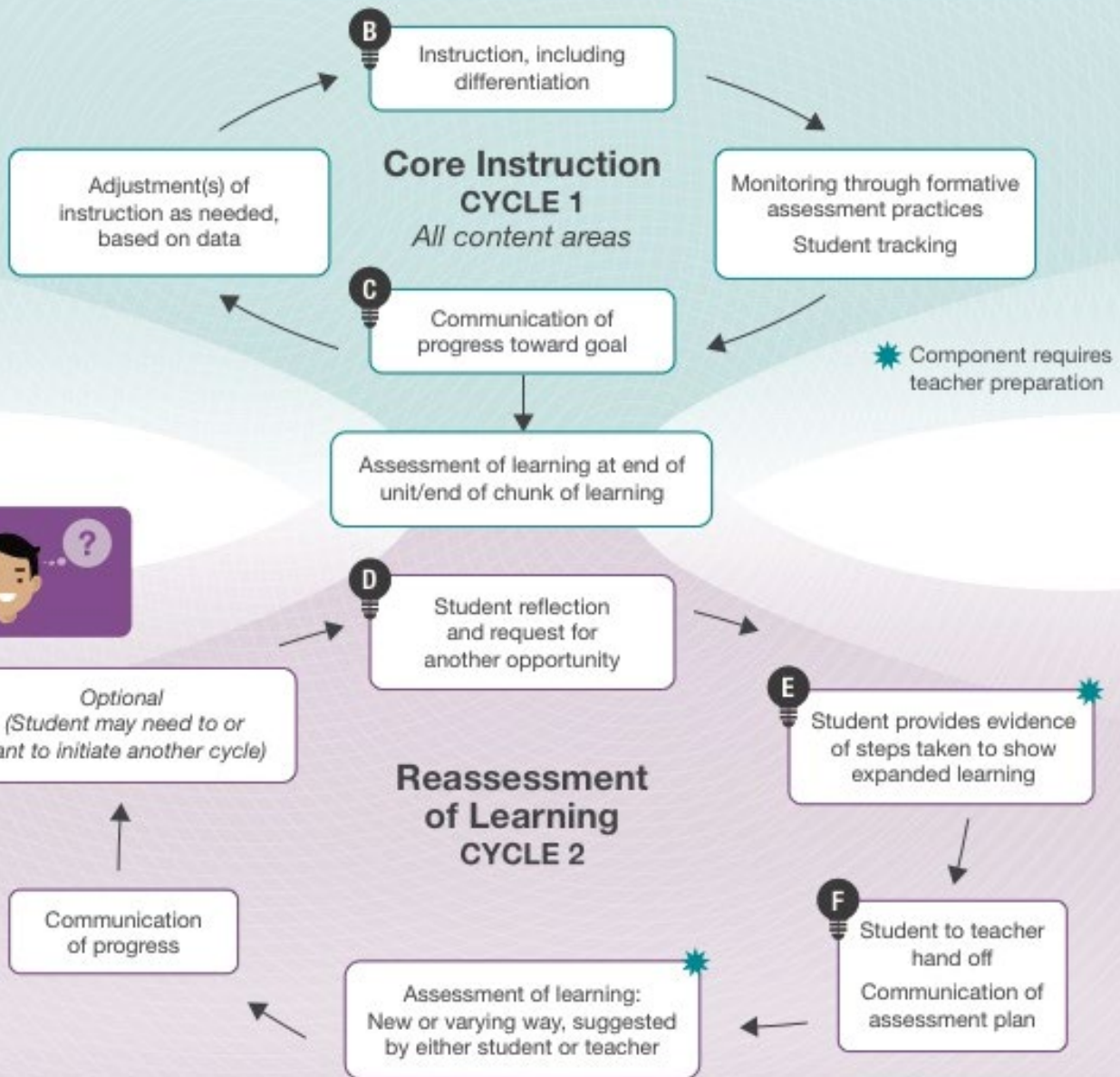
On the next page, there are two cycles shown. Every student, through a teacher’s instruction, moves through Cycle 1, Core Instruction (upper part of the graphic). Cycle 2, Reassessment of Learning (lower part), is kicked off by a student’s not *demonstrating* mastery of Grade level targets in Cycle 1 (not mere disengagement in Cycle 1). Cycle 2 is an option for students after completing the assessment of learning at the end of the unit or end of a chunk of learning. ***Pages 22-23 represent the heart of teacher planning, instruction, & assessment.***

Planning for Multiple Opportunities within The Instructional Cycle



A Initial Planning of Learning Opportunities

- Assessment *for* learning
- Assessment *of* learning
- Possible reassessment of learning
- Ways for students to provide evidence of new learning in Cycle 2
- For students to track learning
- Communicate with students the plans for multiple opportunities over the semester or year



Instructional Cycle

(Expanded Information)

Core Instruction: All Content Areas Cycle 1



Assessment for learning: Assessment processes or products that check for understanding of goals and targets *during* learning to inform instructional decisions; often called formative assessment

Assessment of learning: Assessment or evaluation designed to provide information to be used in making professional judgments about or toward the end of a chunk of learning; often called summative assessment

Examples of “Ways for students to provide evidence of new learning in “Reassessment of Learning: cycle” through Stipulated Second Chances

It is appropriate and reasonable for departments to require students to take additional steps to show expanded learning prior to reassessment. This can take many forms, including but not limited to these examples:

- evidence of new learning
- written reflection
- small project
- conversation with the teacher that focuses on learning targets from scale to show corrections in earlier misunderstood concepts

- working with a teacher outside of class
- doing more practice (possibly through a website or software tool)
- creation of a video to explain a concept

Examples of “Students tracking their own learning”:

- Students are given topic scales with designated spots to self-assess, take notes, and record their current understanding of the learning targets

- Students are given recordkeeping sheets of learning targets and proficiency levels; they self-assess regularly and keep these sheets in a binder



Instruction: Teacher teaches the content, including differentiating based on student need. Teacher provides instruction based on the principle that students learn in different ways and at different rates.



Examples: Infinite Campus; e-mail/parent contact; students track own progress; timely/scale-based feedback on student work

Reassessment of Learning Cycle 2



Student reflection and request for another opportunity.

Teacher then asks students questions such as the following:

- What is the skill/topic/target that you would like to demonstrate?
- When do you plan to demonstrate your learning for this skill/topic/target?
- What are the steps you will take to prepare for another learning opportunity?
- What do you need from me (the teacher) to successfully complete the additional learning opportunity?

- How has your knowledge of this skill/topic/target changed?
- What is your goal in completing another learning opportunity?
- In the future, how will you reflect on your learning needs prior to a final assessment?



Student provides evidence of steps taken to show expanded learning: Student must show there has been improvement in what s/he knows and can do compared to their previous assessment of learning. Methods for this might include but are not limited to: working with a teacher outside of class, doing more practice (possibly through a website or software tool), creation of a video to explain the concept, etc.



Communication of assessment plan: Teacher communicates where, when, and how the student will engage in the reassessment of learning.

Grading Practice 6:

Accommodations and modifications are provided for exceptional learners.

Exceptional Learners

Exceptional learners are students whose current performance level is significantly discrepant from grade level standards. Exceptional learners include but are not limited to Gifted & Advanced; Twice Exceptional Learners; students with disabilities, who may have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or 504; and English learners. An exceptional learner may or may not have a 504 or an IEP (Individualized Education Plan).

Adaptations: Two Types

1) Accommodations are adaptations that “level the playing field” for a student. Accommodations **do NOT change the learning standard(s)** for the student but allow the student to participate in and demonstrate mastery of the standards. Decisions to accommodate are made by the teacher. If a student has a 504 or IEP, it is mandatory to provide the documented accommodations.

2) Modifications are changes in content and assessment based on the recommendations from the student’s educational team. ***The standard(s) itself is modified through a formal team process.***

English Learners

Language accommodations in the content areas will be provided to English learners. Accommodations will be documented on the Team Review and Consent for Course Modifications form. The student’s educational team, including the parent, will decide if modifying curriculum standards is appropriate. If a student is not meeting grade level standards with appropriate accommodations, then modification of the curriculum will be considered. Modifications made to the curriculum will be revisited as the student’s English develops.

Gifted & Advanced Learners

Gifted and advanced learners are students that demonstrate potential to perform at significantly higher levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. A gifted or advanced learner may or may not have a PEP (Personalized Education Plan) or an extended learning plan.

Students with Disabilities—Special Education IEP and 504

Schools will use the same report cards for students who have an IEP as they do with general education students.

Students with disabilities may not be discriminated against because of their disability. All students may earn A through F.

Students on the Iowa Alternate Assessment may participate in classes for reasons other than achieving standards and may be graded with a Pass or No Pass.

Neither a report card nor a grade transcript may identify the student as a student with a disability.

Twice Exceptional Learners

Twice exceptional learners are students identified with high potential in one or more areas but also have learning disabilities that make them at risk in meeting their educational and social/emotional needs.

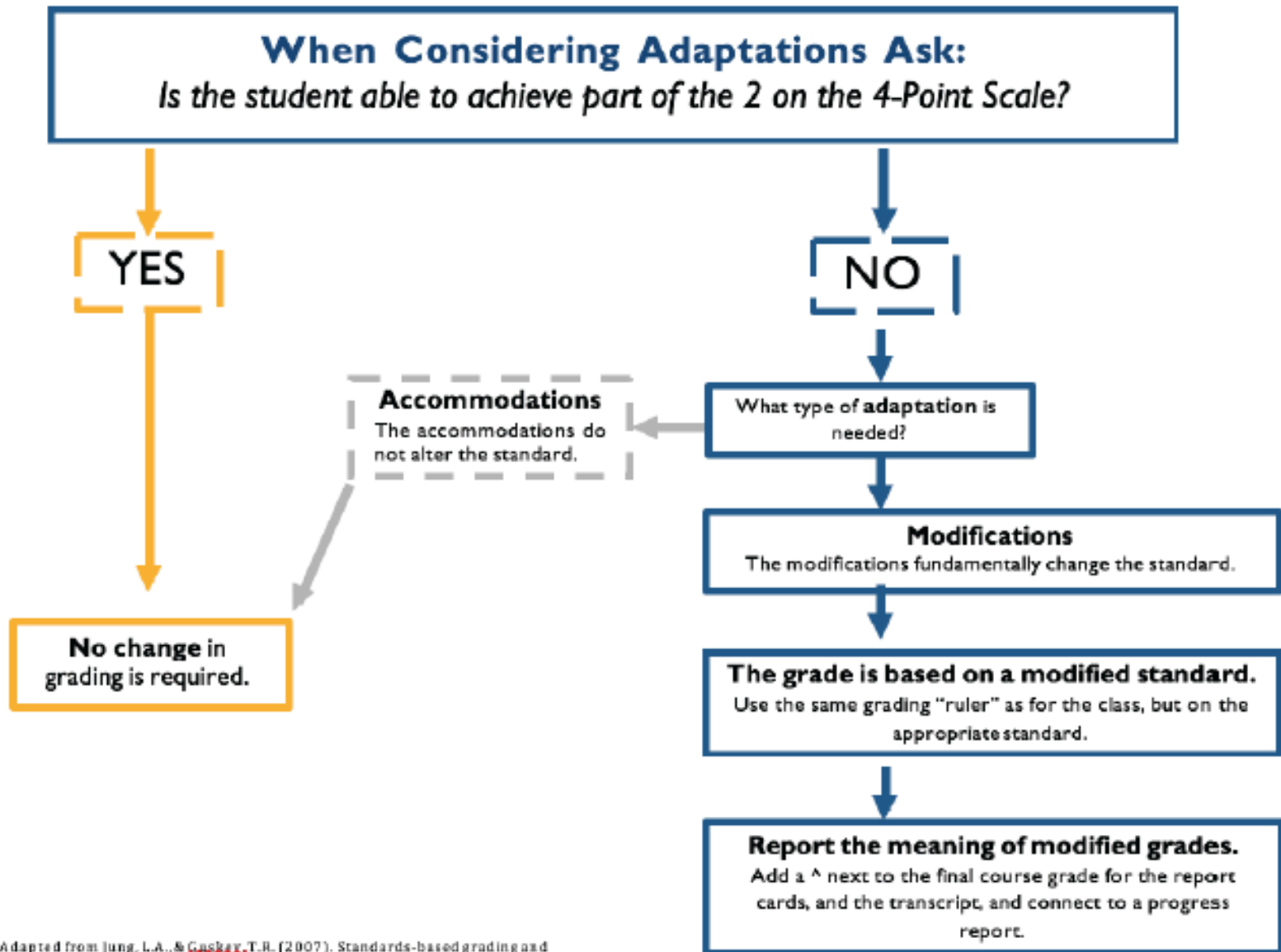


Examples of Adaptations

When the adaptation “levels the playing field” but does not change the standard, it is an accommodation .	When the adaptation alters the standard, it becomes a modification . <i>Remember, a modification to a standard is done rarely and then only by the student’s education team.</i>
Extended Time	
Accommodation: The standard is not changed when the rate/speed is NOT part of the standard. <i>Example: Extended time on a writing prompt</i>	Modification: When rate/speed IS part of the standard <i>Example: Math fact fluency</i>
Having fewer questions on a task or assessment	
Accommodation: When all questions are of equal difficulty and the number given is adjusted but the standard is still measured <i>Example: Fewer questions with equal difficulty on an assessment</i>	Modification: When the complexity of the standard is altered <i>Example: Eliminating the number of answers on a multiple choice test</i>
Use of a calculator	
Accommodation: When the standard is NOT assessing computation <i>Example: Solving one- or two-step equations</i>	Modification: When the standard IS assessing computation fluency <i>Example: Fluently adding and subtracting decimals</i>
Reading text to a student	
Accommodation: When the standard is NOT assessing reading accuracy, fluency, or comprehension <i>Example: Science common assessment</i>	Modification: When the standard IS assessing reading accuracy, fluency, or comprehension <i>Example: English reading common assessment</i>
Enrichment/Extension	
Accommodation: When the learner requires enrichment through differentiation <i>Example: Flexible cluster groups and an advanced curriculum are provided to learners that have demonstrated the need; each learner is assessed individually</i>	Modification: Grade/content or course level acceleration <i>Example: Making the determination with a building team & Gifted/Advanced support staff to accelerate a 3rd grade student to 4th grade</i>

For further guidance on choosing appropriate accommodations, see “Iowa Guidelines for the Use of Accommodations during Instruction and District Wide Assessments for Students with Disabilities”

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Iowa%20Accommodations%20Guidelines.pdf>



Source: Adapted from Jung, L.A., & Goshay, T.R. (2007). Standards-based grading and reporting: A model for special education. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40 (2), 40-53. Copyright 2007 by the Council for Exceptional Children. Reprinted with permission.

Procedures for Course Modification

The decision to modify must be made by the student's educational team. The team must include a parent, the student, a school leader, a specialist, and the general education teacher for the course being modified.

Roles:

School Leader: Ensures the process and procedures are followed; is the identified contact for the school.

General Educator: Ensures alignment to the core.

Specialist (Consultant/Teacher/Program Coordinator for GT/MTSS, ELL, 504, IEP): Ensures modifications are in place.

Key Considerations

- When considering any modification to course standards for a given student, a school must follow district policies and procedures.
- A parent must be invited via the meeting notification letter **at least ten days prior** to the meeting. If the student has an IEP, use the required meeting notification letter in the IEP Program.
- Communication always needs to be in the parent/guardian's home language. Contact the ELL Department for translated forms or interpreters.
- The student's team will use the "Team Review and Consent for Course Modifications" document to consider modification of standards.
- In the case of a student with an IEP, this process occurs as a part of an IEP meeting, which may require an IEP meeting to be scheduled prior to the annual review.
- Schools will use the same report card with all students regardless of the adaptations. After the team meeting, the teacher will manually override the grade in Infinite Campus to include the ^ (caret symbol) next to it to denote modification. The registrar will confirm the caret was a team decision based on school leader confirmation.
- Consideration for modification should occur on or before the end of the first nine weeks of the semester.
- When a course modification is ended, a student must have demonstrated evidence on each topic.



Notification Letter to Parents/Guardians

The Des Moines Public School District wants to ensure that all students are successful. We will convene an educational team to discuss the individual needs of your child and the implications of modifying standards for one or more courses. We value your input in this process.

This meeting is scheduled for:

Date

Time

Location

Course(s) that will be discussed at the meeting:

You may contact the school representative with any questions or if you need to reschedule this meeting.

School representative (name):

At: (school phone number):

OR (email address):



Team Review & Consent for Course Modifications

Student Name:		Meeting Date:
Date of Birth:	Grade	Credits Earned:
Course:		Semester 1 / Semester 2

Team Members Present	
Name	Role
	Parent
	Student
	School Leader
	Specialist (Consultant/Teacher/Program Coordinator for ELL, GT, MTSS,, 504, IEP)

What suggests this student is unable to demonstrate evidence of part of Level 2 (at a minimum) for each topic (standards) required for this course? (Please attach evidence of each of the following considerations.)

Instruction has been provided by a Highly Qualified Teacher or through Reverse Consultation
 Student has had adequate opportunities to learn based on his/her entitlement (SDI/ELL)
 Required accommodations have been provided; are appropriate and implemented consistently
 Additional accommodations related to the standard/task have been added when needed
 Learning targets have been added to scaffold to Level 2 on the 4-point scale
 Student has participated in quality Tier I, II, and III interventions
 Student still unable to demonstrate part of Level 2 (2 or 1.5) on the course's 4-point scale

- Modifications in standards will be done using:
- Iowa Core Essential Elements (Alternative Assessment)
 - Language Arts Vertical Articulation Guide
 - Algebra Foundational Competencies
 - If in secondary school, English Language Proficiency Standards will be used.
 - The Cognitive Abilities Test, or the MAP test, or the Iowa assessments to determine specific academic modifications.

By providing your consent, your child's course and grade will be modified. This modification will appear on the official transcript and be visible to external institutions. RAI and NCAA implications have been explained and provided.

Yes, I consent to a modified grade in the following course(s):

Course(s)	Semester 1 / Semester 2
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

No, I do not consent to modified grading at this time.

Parent Signature

Date

Additional Considerations: Modified Standards

The Transition Plan in a student's IEP should guide decisions made for individual students.

Potential Opportunities	Possible Limitations
Admission to a community college (May increase readiness for college level course work)	Admission to a Regent University upon graduation: Meeting the required RAI Score
Transfer to a Regent University (After community college success)	National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility
Intensive instruction in goal areas to increase the potential for future college success	
Increased focus on transition planning in high school	
Participation in vocational classes	
Future admission to vocational programs	

Implications for Post-Secondary Opportunities

Regent Admission Index (RAI)

The Regent Admission Index (RAI) combines four factors that strongly predict success at Iowa's regent universities: ACT score (or SAT equivalent); high school percentile rank; high school grade point average (GPA); and the number of high school courses completed in core subject areas.

How is the RAI Used?

A student's RAI score is used for automatic admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and is one of the criteria used for admission to the College of Engineering. It also is used in awarding some university scholarships. For additional information, go to: <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/RAI/>. It is recommended that students work with their case manager, transition coordinator, and counselor on post-high school planning. Other circumstances may impact college acceptance.

Primary RAI Formula

(for students whose high school provides class rank)

$$\begin{aligned} & (1 \times \text{Percentile class rank}) \\ & \quad + \\ & (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) \\ & \quad + \\ & (20 \times \text{Cumulative GPA}) \\ & \quad + \\ & (5 \times \text{Number of years of high school courses complete in the core subject areas}) = \text{RAI Score} \end{aligned}$$

RAI Score -- Alternative RAI Formula

(for students whose high school does NOT provide class rank)

$$\begin{aligned} & (3 \times \text{ACT composite score}) \\ & \quad + \\ & (30 \times \text{Cumulative GPA}) \\ & \quad + \\ & (5 \times \text{Number of years of high school courses completed in the core subject areas}) = \text{RAI Score} \end{aligned}$$

Other situations connected to courses and eligibility

Course Numbers and the Impact on Board of Regents Approval

Only a general education **course** number, **from the core subject areas** will be approved by the Board of Regents. If a student is in a class with a course **number** such as English I (LA1030) and meets the general education standard at a 1.5 (part of the Level 2 on the course's 4-point scale) or above, **THEN** the course **number** should be changed to a general education course number, for example, English I (LA103) in **Infinite Campus**.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and Eligibility Requirements

For academic eligibility purposes, the NCAA defines a disability as a current impairment that has a substantial educational impact on a student's academic performance and requires accommodation. A student with an education-impacting disability (EID) must meet the same requirements as all other students but may be provided certain accommodations to help meet those requirements. A student with an EID may take three additional core-course units completed after high school graduation prior to full-time collegiate enrollment, provided the student graduates on tie within four consecutive academic years (8 semesters) with his/her class (as determined by the start of ninth grade). A student with a documented EID must still meet all NCAA initial-eligibility requirements to receive athletic aid to be eligible to practice and compete in the initial year of full time collegiate enrollment at an NCAA Division I or II institution.

Eligibility Center

If a student wants to play NCAA sports at an NCAA Division I or II school, the student needs to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at www.eligibilitycenter.org. The Eligibility Center works with students and their high schools to certify student initial eligibility.

Core Courses

Not all high school classes are NCAA core courses. A core course prepares the student for a four-year college and is taught at or above the high school's regular academic level. Visit www.eligibilitycenter.org for a full list of core courses.

Grade Point Average

Only classes on the high school's list of NCAA courses will be used for the core-courses GPA.

Test Scores

Division I schools match test scores and core-course GPA on a sliding scale. After August 1, 2018, Division II schools will also use a sliding scale. Find the sliding scale at www.eligibilitycenter.org

An SAT combined score is calculated by adding reading and math scores. An ACT sub score is calculated by adding English, Math, Reading, and Science scores. A student may take the SAT or ACT as many times as desired before enrolling full time in college. If a student takes either test more than once, the best sub score from each section is used for initial-eligibility purposes.

When student registers for the SAT or ACT, if they use the NCAA Eligibility Center code of 9999, their scores will be sent directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Test scores on transcripts will not be used in a student's academic certification.

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