

Grand Island Public Schools

FAQs About Secondary (6-12) Grading & Reporting Practices

This information is provided to help staff, students, and parents better understand the district's grading and reporting process. Please visit the GIPS website for more information.

What is the GIPS secondary grading scale?

- A 90 - 100%
- B 80 - 89%
- C 70 - 79%
- D 60 - 69%
- F 50 - 59%

How are secondary grades weighted?

In order to help strike an appropriate balance between the two weighted portions -- 1) Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments & Performance Tasks and 2) Lesson Practice & Progress Checks -- all GIPS secondary teachers will weight the scores collected in their grade books according to the GIPS Guidelines for Weighting Secondary Grades (chart below). This "70% plus and 30% minus" balance reflects the district's emphasis on assigning periodic grades (quarterly at middle schools and six weeks at high school) mostly on culminating types of evidence, so that grades are more indicative of actual achievement than practice opportunities..

2007-08 Grand Island Public Schools Weighting of Secondary Grades	
<p style="text-align: center;">Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments & Performance Tasks</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Major Assessments FOR and OF Learning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">measures understanding and use of knowledge (range of 4-6 per quarter or 7-12 per semester)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO LESS than 70% of final grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Unit assessments, and also mid-unit assessments for long units, which measure course and unit standards <input type="checkbox"/> Major performance tasks -- mainly products, performances, and projects (e.g., essays; artwork; visual representations; models; multimedia; oral presentations; lab experiences; live or recorded performances) <input type="checkbox"/> District Assessments, which measure course standards 	<p style="text-align: center;">Lesson Practice & Progress Checks</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assessment FOR Learning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">provides practice in order to learn (not all practice must be scored)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO MORE than 30% of final grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Independent practice on daily work (daily assignments and homework) <input type="checkbox"/> Brief progress checks (e.g., short quizzes over multiple lessons; reviews or warmups)

What type of work is considered Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments and Performance Tasks?

After a student has had sufficient instruction and practice on a topic, it is then reasonable to judge their mastery of the information or skills. Any work done at that point is considered a major assessment. The purpose of Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments and Performance Tasks is to evaluate how well a student has learned the course content.

Why are Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments & Performance Tasks weighted differently than Lesson Practice and Progress Checks?

In order to be an accurate measure of what a student has learned, a grade needs to be based primarily on work that was actually scored at a time when the student has had sufficient instruction and practice to be held responsible for the results. Therefore Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments and Performances are weighted more heavily. It is not fair to weigh Lesson Practice and Progress Checks as heavily as Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments and Performance Tasks because during this time a student is still learning the content, and it is reasonable to expect mistakes.

How many major assessments and performance tasks should secondary students be assigned each grading period?

Students should have ample opportunity to provide evidence of learning, so several major assessment task scores should be entered in the grade book each grading period (approximately 4-6 per quarter at the middle school level and 7-12 per semester at high school). The body of evidence for all Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments & Performance Tasks should reflect a variety of relevant and meaningful assessments and tasks, each of which directly measures the course standards.

If Lesson Practice and Progress Checks are only 30% of the grade, why should a student bother completing it?

The purpose of Lesson Practice and Progress Checks is to provide students with experience learning new concepts, evaluate how well they are learning it, and then provide additional instruction and practice as needed. If the Lesson Practice and Progress Check work does not get completed, these benefits are lost, and the scores on the Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments and Performances will likely decrease as a result. Failing to complete work is also a behavioral problem and will result in behavioral consequences.

What if a secondary student doesn't complete a Lesson Practice or Progress Check?

For middle school students, work in the Lesson Practice and Progress Checks portion will be recorded as "incomplete" (INC) in the Infinite Campus Gradebook. Teachers will make multiple attempts to intervene with and communicate to students and/or parents about incomplete work. Middle school students will have until the end of the quarter to complete these activities or the incomplete (INC) will remain.

High school students will have five days beyond the assignment date to complete Lesson Practice and Progress Checks, unless there are extenuating circumstances. A late work penalty may be applied up to a total of 10%. After five days and multiple teacher attempts to intervene with the student, an M will be entered in the grade book until the work is turned in or until the end of the six-week grading period. Work still not complete at the conclusion of the six week grading period will be designated as (M) and will be factored into the final six-week grade as a zero.

What if a secondary student doesn't complete a Major Assessment or Performance Task?

Every effort will be made to get students to complete all Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments so there is sufficient evidence as to how well they have mastered course/grade level standards. Not completing any of the major work is unacceptable, and could result in assigning a lowered or even failing grade for the grading period.

A middle school student who has not completed major assessments by the end of the quarter will receive an incomplete (INC) on the report card. The student will then have two weeks after the end of the quarter to make up any missing assessments and remove the incomplete. If the assessments are not made up, the incomplete (INC) will remain on the report card.

At the high school, missing assessments or projects will be entered as missing (M) in the grade book until the work is completed or until the end of the semester. After five days and multiple teacher attempts to intervene with the student, the work is turned in to coordinators for Get Above Passing (GAP) for grade 9 or Assessment Completion Today (ACT) for grades 10-12. When the work is completed it will be scored and recorded in the grade book subject to late penalties (up to 10%).

A high school student who has not completed major assessments or projects by the end of the semester may receive No Credit (NC) if the student has failed to demonstrate mastery or basic competency on an essential learning goal. An NC marking will have a GPA value of zero on a five-point scale (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0).

How should secondary teachers use their professional judgment to determine summary grades?

The grade assigned for the grading period -- nine weeks at middle school and semester at high school -- must be based on both the body of evidence (all scores) and professional judgment. Teachers are responsible for assigning summary grades, and have the authority for infusing their professional judgement, based on the district's established grading practices and principles. Professional judgement involves considering the most appropriate calculation method (mean, median, or mode) and how best to address more recent scores. Professional judgement requires asking the question "which grade makes the most sense?"

Based on evidence and professional judgment, teachers are expected to assign the most appropriate summary grade at the end of the grading period. Students need to understand that a teacher's professional judgment, based on the body of evidence, may override their average score and result in either a higher or lower grade. Students may receive a failing grade when the body of completed work is insufficient to measure the course standards.

At the high school, students need to understand that eventually, all incompletes must be converted to some type of score, and that if they have failed to show sufficient evidence relative to the course standards, a failing grade may be appropriate.

Why won't secondary grades always be calculated based on the mean average?

The mean average has long been the main method secondary teachers have used to calculate summary grades, although many variations have been used by individual teachers. When grading students' work, there is no one method that is always best to determine a grade that actually represents student achievement. Determining a summary grade when a student performs consistently throughout a grading period is relatively easy, and using the mean average works as well as any method.

However, the teacher's professional judgment is particularly needed for students who perform inconsistently during a grading period, or don't complete all assigned work. In such cases, GIPS secondary teachers are encouraged to use the middle score (median) as the default method for Unit and Course/Grade Level Assessments and Performance Tasks as this method most often provides the most accurate summary grade. The mean or the most frequent score (mode) should also be considered for representing the the most accurate summary grade. More recent performance also needs to be considered for heavier weighting, since it is more important whether -- rather than when -- a student achieves the learning targets.