

# **JOINT GRADING COMMITTEE TASK FORCE**

Summary of Work

Township High School District 211 Board of Education

Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> , 2011

---

# JOINT GRADING COMMITTEE

---

## ✦ Committee Members:

Jason Spoor, Tim Little, Jim Britton, Tim Cannon, Lisa Small, Gary Steiger, Terri Busch, Julie Nowak, Frank Stark, Paul Belo, Rachel Bartlett, Ron Cregier, Brigid Tileston, Steve Hernandez, Eric Jacobsen, Dave Gwizdala, Eric LeBlanc, Asra Syed, Michelle Eggerding, Jason Campbell, Alina Morelli, Don Davis, Bob Coakley, Josh Schumacher, Laura Mallon, and Jessica Medinah

# PURPOSE

---

- ✘ The purpose of the meeting was to develop a vision statement that clearly identifies and defines our district's vision on the definition and purpose of grades. The vision statement is supported by four fundamental elements that will guide our reflective practice on grading.
- ✘ Effective grading practices must be ***Accurate, Fair, Specific, and Timely***. Our belief statements on the elements of grading are founded on the work of Dr. Douglas Reeves and are identified and explained in the book, ***Elements of Grading: A Guide to Effective Practice***.
- ✘ In addition, the committee worked on potential revisions of the district policies on grading to better align these policies with standards based practices.



# VISION STATEMENT

---

A grade communicates an accurate measurement of student performance and progress toward mastery of academic standards over a given period of time, providing descriptive feedback to students, families, teachers, employers, and postsecondary institutions.

# ACCURACY

---

An accurate grade reflects a clear representation of student mastery of skills and content within a given course. There should be a common definition of how to assess mastery from teacher to teacher and school to school.

# FAIRNESS

---

A fair grade reflects a student's performance in meeting specific, academic learning standards. A fair grade reflects the quality of a student's work and not differences in gender, ethnicity, or social class. Fairness allows time for students to reach specific learning standards according to their different needs.

# SPECIFICITY

---

For grades to be specific, they need to communicate to students, families, teachers, employers, and postsecondary institutions. To inform instruction, specificity helps teachers plan, teach, and remediate. To support student learning, specific grades indicate how students can improve their performance. Finally, specific reporting effectively informs parents on how students measure against set objectives and standards.

# TIMELINESS

---

In grading systems, timeliness refers to the communication among students, families, teachers, employers, and postsecondary institutions about the current levels of performance on specific components of learning. Teachers should seek to provide descriptive feedback to students in a timely fashion, promoting achievement and increasing motivation. By providing preemptive communication with parents, students will have time to improve performance and correct behaviors inhibiting success

---

“Those who experience success gain the confidence needed to risk trying...Students who experience **failure** lose confidence in themselves, stop trying, and...fail even more frequently. As it turns out, **confidence** is the key to success in all learning situations.”

-- Rick Stiggins, Student Involved Classroom Assessment

---

**A Repair Kit for Grading (15 Fixes for Broken Grades) a Reflective Activity on Best Practices in Grading**

*a D211 Joint Grading Committee Initiative*

Based on the work of Ken O'Connor, author of

***A Repair Kit for Grading,  
15 Fixes for Broken Grades***

# A REPAIR KIT FOR GRADING: 15 FIXES FOR BROKEN GRADES

**Fix #1:** Don't include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) in grades; include only achievement.

**Fix #2:** Don't reduce marks on "work" submitted late; provide alternate deterrents and provide support for the learner.

**Fix #3:** Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.

**Fix #4:** Don't punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades; apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.

**Fix #5:** Don't consider attendance in grade determination; report absences separately.

**Fix #6:** Don't include group scores in grades; use only individual achievement evidence.

# A REPAIR KIT FOR GRADING: 15 FIXES FOR BROKEN GRADES

**Fix #7:** Don't organize information in grading reports by assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, etc.) or simply summarize into a single grade; organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals or targets.

**Fix #8:** Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards; provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations.

**Fix #9:** Don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students; compare each student's performance to preset standards.

**Fix #10:** Don't rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality; rely only on quality assessments.

# A REPAIR KIT FOR GRADING: 15 FIXES FOR BROKEN GRADES

**Fix #11:** Don't rely only on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment.

**Fix #12:** Don't include zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternative deterrents and use alternative grading such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence.

**Fix #13:** Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades; use only summative evidence.

**Fix #14:** Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities; in those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.

**Fix #15:** Don't leave students out of the grading process. Involve students; they can – and should – play key roles in assessment and grading that promotes achievement.

# NEXT STEPS

---

The committee will break up into smaller groups (Spring and Summer of 2011 and early next fall) to discuss elements of grading and other targeted areas which include: 40/40/20 determination of semester grades, accepting late work, dealing with zeros, and developing a dual grading system (i.e. separating standards versus behavior).

# **JOINT GRADING COMMITTEE TASK FORCE**

Summary of Work

Township High School District 211 Board of Education

Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> , 2011

---