

HIGH SCHOOL GRADES/EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Governing Board believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians identify the student's areas of strength and those areas needing improvement. Parents/guardians and students have the right to receive course grades that represent an accurate evaluation of the student's achievement.

(cf. 5020 - Parent Rights and Responsibilities)

Note: Education Code 49066 provides that the grade assigned by a teacher is final, absent any clerical or mechanical mistake, fraud, bad faith or incompetency, and that the Board and Superintendent cannot order a student's grade changed unless the teacher, to the extent practicable, is given an opportunity to state the reasons for which such grade was given and to be included in all discussions regarding the changing of the grade; see AR 5125.3 - Challenging Student Records. In *Las Virgenes Educators Association v. Las Virgenes Unified School District*, the court determined that a citizenship mark is a "grade" within the meaning of Education Code 49066 and upheld a teacher's right to make the final decision regarding a citizenship mark.

The teacher of each course shall determine the student's grade. The grade assigned by the teacher shall not be changed by the Board or the Superintendent except as provided by law, Board policy and administrative regulation. (Education Code 49066)

(cf. 5125.3 - Challenging Student Records)

Teachers shall evaluate a student's work in relation to academic content standards which apply to all students at his/her grade level. The Superintendent or designee shall establish and regularly evaluate a uniform grading system, and principals shall ensure that student grades conform to this system. Teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians how student achievement will be evaluated in the classroom.

(cf. 5124 - Communication with Parents/Guardians)

(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)

Grades should be based on impartial, consistent observation of the quality of the student's work and his/her mastery of course content and objectives. Students shall have the opportunity to demonstrate this mastery through a variety of methods such as classroom assignments, tests and portfolios.

When reporting student grades to parents/guardians, teachers may add narrative descriptions, observational notes and/or samples of classroom work in order to better describe student progress in specific skills and subcategories of achievement.

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(continued)

Unexcused Absences

If a student misses class without an excuse and does not subsequently turn in assignments, take a test or fulfill another class requirement which he/she missed, the teacher may lower the student's grade for nonperformance.

(cf. 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work)

***Note: Pursuant to Education Code 49067, the Board may authorize teachers to assign failing grades to students with excessive unexcused absences, the number to be set by the Board. ***

Fifteen (15) unexcused absences per grading period shall constitute excessive unexcused absences. Students with excessive unexcused absences may receive a failing grade and not receive credit for the class(es) for failure to complete required classroom assignments and assessments.

(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Superintendent or designee shall recommend to the Board the methodology to be used in calculating students' grade point averages.

The Superintendent or designee shall also recommend to the Board whether extra grade weighting will be assigned for honors courses that are substantially similar in depth, breadth and rigor to an Advanced Placement course, an entry-level college course or a community college level course.

(cf. 6141.5 - Advanced Placement)

Legal Reference: (see next page)

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Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

48070 Promotion and retention

48205 Excused absences

48431.6 Required systematic review

49066 Grades; finalization; physical education class

49067 Mandated regulations regarding student's achievement

49069.5 Students in foster care, grades and credits

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

10060 Criteria for reporting physical education achievement, high schools

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

6101-6251 School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994

COURT DECISIONS

Owasso Independent School District v. Falvo (2002) 122 S.Ct. 934

Las Virgenes Educators Association v. Las Virgenes Unified School District (2nd Appellate District 2001) 86 Cal.App.4th 1

Swany v. San Ramon Valley Unified School District (N.D.Cal. 1989) 720 F.Supp. 764

Johnson v. Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education (App. 2 Dist. 1986) 224 Cal. Rptr. 885, 179 C.A. 3d 593

Management Resources:

CDE PUBLICATIONS

Elementary Makes the Grade!, 2001

WEB SITES

CDE: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

Advanced Placement Challenge Project: <http://www.apchallenge.net>

Policy
adopted: February 23, 1999
Revised: May 25, 2004

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Visalia, California

HIGH SCHOOL GRADES/EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Prior to the start of each school year, every teacher will submit to the Superintendent or his/her designee the standard of determining grades for the teacher’s class that shall be included in a published class syllabus and course outline and available to each student’s parent/guardian.

Grades for Achievement

Grades for achievement shall be reported for each marking period for 9-12 students as follows:

A	(90-100%)	Outstanding Achievement	4.0 grade points
B	(80-89%)	Above Average Achievement	3.0 grade points
C	(70-79%)	Average Achievement	2.0 grade points
D	(60-69%)	Below Average Achievement	1.0 grade points
F	(0-59%)	Little or No Achievement	0 grade points
I		Incomplete	0 grade points
NM		No Measurable Achievement	not calculated
P		Pass	not calculated

Grades for Advanced Placement Courses

Grades for achievement shall be reported for each marking period for 9-12 students as follows:

A	(90-100%)	Outstanding Achievement	5.0 grade points
B	(80-89%)	Above Average Achievement	4.0 grade points
C	(70-79%)	Average Achievement	3.0 grade points
D	(60-69%)	Below Average Achievement	2.0 grade points
F	(0-59%)	Little or No Achievement	0 grade points
I		Incomplete	0 grade points
NM		No Measurable Achievement	not calculated
P		Pass	not calculated

Whenever it becomes evident to a teacher that a student is in danger of failing a course, the teacher shall arrange a conference with the student's parent/guardian or send the parent/guardian a written report. (Education Code 49067)

(cf. 5123 - Promotion/Acceleration/Retention)
(cf. 5124 - Communication with Parents/Guardians)

At the secondary (9-12) level, parents/guardians will be notified every six (6) weeks, regardless of the academic status for each academic class.

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An Incomplete is given only when a student's work is not finished because of illness or other excused absence. If not made up within six weeks, the Incomplete shall become an F.

Plus and minus signs may be used at the option of the teacher but will not be considered for grade point average computation.

Students in grades 9 through 12 must earn at least a 2.0 or C grade point average with no more than one "F" in order to participate in extra/cocurricular activities.

(cf. 6145 – Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)

Teachers are encouraged to allow for trends in the quality of student work. When a student finishes a grading period doing high quality work which requires skills acquired throughout the grading period, low grades at the beginning of the grading period need not diminish the appropriate evaluation of the student's achievement. Similarly, high grades at the beginning need not compensate for a downward trend in achievement.

Criteria for determining grades for achievement may include but are not limited to:

1. Preparation of assignments, including accuracy, legibility and promptness.
2. Contribution to classroom discussions.
3. Demonstrated understanding of concepts in tests.
4. Application of skills and principles to new situations.
5. Organization and presentation of written and oral reports.
6. Originality and reasoning ability when working through problems.

Honor Roll – Grades 9 through 12

Each school shall maintain an Honor Roll. All courses except Pass/Fail shall be counted in computing eligibility for the Honor Roll. To qualify for the Honor Roll, a student must receive no current grade below a C and have a grade point average of 3.3 or better.

Grades for Physical Education

No grade of a student participating in a physical education class may be adversely affected due to the fact that the student, because of circumstances beyond his/her control, does not wear standardized physical education apparel. (Education Code 49066)

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Student performance in high school physical education courses shall be based upon evaluation of the student's individual progress, attainment of goals in each instructional area, tests designed to determine skill and knowledge, and physical performance tests.

(cf. 6142.7 - Physical Education)

Grades for Citizenship and Effort

Grades for citizenship and effort shall be reported each marking period as follows:

O	Outstanding
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

Criteria for determining grades for citizenship may include but are not limited to:

1. Student obeys rules.
2. Student respects public and personal property.
3. Student maintains courteous, cooperative relations with teachers and fellow students.
4. Student works without disturbing others.

Criteria for determining grades for effort may include but are not limited to:

Student takes responsibility for having necessary tools and materials.

1. Student shows interest and initiative.
2. Student goes to work immediately, and completes assignments.
3. Student uses free time resourcefully.

Pass/Fail Grading – Grades 9-12

With parental approval, students may elect to earn a “Pass” or “Fail” grade instead of an A-F grade in the following courses:

1. All courses taken in the Special Education Program,

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2. Specified 9-12th grade noncollege preparatory courses taken in summer school, or
3. Other as prescribed by an IEP, ILP or a 504 Plan.

Students who receive a Pass grade shall acquire the appropriate semester units of credit for the course. The grade shall not be counted in determining class rank, honors list, or membership in the California Scholarship Federation. Students who receive an F grade shall not receive credit for taking the course.

Students shall be graded Pass/Fail for classes in which they serve as student aides unless predetermined goals and objectives related to specific subject knowledge are on file and have been approved by the principal or designee.

“No Measurable Achievement”/NM– Grades 9-12

A “No Measurable Achievement” (NM) is given when a student has, because of extended absences or other unforeseen circumstances when in the best interest of the student, been unable to maintain measured progress in a class. The “No Measurable Achievement”(NM), nor the class in which it was received, will be used when calculating the student’s grade point average. No units of credit toward graduation will be granted.

Peer Grading

At their discretion, teachers may use peer grading of student papers and assignments as appropriate to reinforce lessons.

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Repeating Classes – Grades 9-12

In the computer computation system, grades are calculated in the GPA based upon the assignment of credit for each specific course. When students repeat courses in which D or F grades were earned, it is understood that the repeated grades, if C or better, will be used to compute the district total GPA. However, both grades should be maintained on the transcript, and both grades should be reported, when required, on college application, etc., most especially when the repeated courses are in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

Students should not repeat courses in which college-qualifying marks (C or better) have been earned. If repeated anyway, the assignment of credit should remain with the original qualifying grade.

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Clearing Deficiencies Due to D or F Grades After High School Graduation

Students who, by the time of high school graduation, have deficiencies due to D or F grades in certain subjects may clear those grades in the summer immediately following high school graduation by enrolling in appropriate high school or college courses. Both grades received will be entered on the student's transcript. The highest grade received will be the permanent grade on the student's transcript.

The highest grade received shall be used in determining the student's overall grade point average.

Withdrawal from Classes

A student who drops a course during the first three (3) weeks of the semester may do so without any entry on his/her permanent record card. A student who drops a course after the first three (3) weeks of the semester shall receive an F grade on his/her permanent record, unless otherwise decided by the principal or designee.

Absences from School

Teachers who withhold class grades because of excessive unexcused absences shall so inform the class and parents/guardians at the beginning of the semester.

When an unexcused absence occurs, the student and parent/guardian shall again be notified of the district's policy regarding excessive unexcused absences.

(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)

The student and parent/guardian shall have a reasonable opportunity to explain the absences. (Education Code 49067)

If the absence is not verified as excusable within 10 days, it shall be recorded as unexcused. The person receiving any explanation of the absence by the parent/guardian shall make a record of this explanation and the date when it was given.

If a student receives a failing grade because of unexcused absences, resulting in the failure to meet course requirements for achievement, the student's record shall specify that the grade was assigned because of excessive unexcused absences. (Education Code 49067)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

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Grades for a student in foster care shall not be lowered if the student is absent from school due to either of the following circumstances: (Education Code 49069.5)

1. A decision by a court or placement agency to change the student's placement, in which case the student's grades and credits shall be calculated as of the date the student left school
2. A verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity

Transiency Issues

For a student enrolled 20 days or more, the teachers of record complete a drop slip including grades and conferences with parent/guardian, and provide a current progress report as appropriate.

For a student enrolled less than 20 days, the teachers of record complete a drop slip, including any pertinent information. The drop slip indicates that "Child enrolled _____ days. No grades given."

Number of days

For a student who moves after being enrolled for 20 days or more, the teachers of record will complete the district drop slip and provide a current progress report to be placed in the child's cum to be sent to the new school.

Regulation
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