



VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHARTING THE COURSE

**GUIDELINES FOR BEST
PRACTICES IN
EVALUATING, GRADING AND REPORTING
STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

September 2021

Mission Statement

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), in partnership with the entire community, will empower every student to become a life-long learner who is responsible, productive and engaged citizen within the global community.

Vision Statement

Every student is achieving at his or her maximum potential in an engaging, inspiring and challenging learning environment

Strategic Framework

Compass to 2025: Student-Centered for Student Success sets the vision and guides the work of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) with the focus on ensuring that every student is challenged and supported to reach his or her full potential.

Strategic Goals

Educational Excellence - Challenge and support all students to excel academically by demonstrating the foundational literacies, core knowledge, and transferrable life skills outlined in the VBCPS Graduate Profile.

Student Well-Being - Create an inclusive learning environment that supports the physical and mental health of all students and strengthens the social-emotional skills they need to become balanced, resilient learners who are personally and socially responsible.

Student Ownership of Learning - Engage all students in rigorous, authentic, and student-centered learning to help them identify their passions, take ownership of their learning, and create a plan for pursuing their postsecondary goals.

An Exemplary, Diversified Workforce - Foster a positive working climate that values and invests in a high-quality, diversified workforce who exemplify the division's core values.

Mutually Supportive Partnerships - Cultivate mutually supportive partnerships — among families, schools, the division, businesses, military, faith-based, civic and city agencies — to support student well-being, enhance real-world learning, and broaden opportunities for career exploration and experience.

Organizational Effectiveness & Efficiency - Pursue the effective and efficient use of division resources, operations, and processes to support the division's vision, mission, and strategic goals.

Core Values

Virginia Beach City Public Schools is committed to creating a culture of growth and excellence for our students, staff, and community. We strive to make this culture evident to all by actively reflecting on and engaging in behaviors that demonstrate our core values.

We Put Students First:

Student-Centered Decision Making - Choosing actions that, above all else, benefit and support student learning, growth, and safety.

We ask ourselves: How am I putting student interests and needs first when making decisions?

We Seek Growth:

Continuous Learning – Pursuing formal and informal learning opportunities to foster personal growth and improvement for all.

We ask ourselves: In what ways am I making my learning a priority?

We Are Open to Change:

Innovation – Encouraging new ideas or improved ways of teaching, learning, and working together to achieve our mission.

We ask ourselves: How am I implementing new or improved ideas to benefit my work and the work of the school division?

We Do Great Work Together:

Collaboration – Working together and building partnerships that will benefit our students, division, and community.

We ask ourselves: How and where am I working with others to improve my work and the work of the school division?

We Value Differences:

Respect – Fostering a trusting, open, ethical, honest and inclusive environment where diversity of thought and individual contributions are prized.

We ask ourselves: What am I doing to invite, recognize and esteem the perspectives of those around me?



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------|
| Introduction | 5 |
| Purpose of Grading | 5 |
| School Board Policies and Regulations | 5 |
| Teaching and Learning Framework | 5 |
| Assessment | 5-6 |
| Accountability | 6-7 |
| Evaluating Student Progress | 8 |
| Homework | 8 |
| Late Work | 8 |
| Zeros | 8-9 |
| Reassessment | 9 |
| Make-up Work | 9 |
| Extra Credit | 9 |
| Determining Student Grades | 10 |
| Grading Expectations | 10 |
| Modified 10-point Grading Scale | 10-11 |
| Nine-Week Grades (Marking Period) | 11 |
| Semester Grades (Term Grades) | 11 |
| Final Grades | 11 |
| Special Education | 11 |
| General Education Students with 504 Plans | 11 |
| Final Assessments | 12 |
| Examples of Determining Final Grades | 12 |
| Examples of Computing Grades with Excessive Absences | 13 |
| Example Conversion 5-Point Scale to Modified 10-Point Scale | 13 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS ...CONTINUED

| | |
|--|-------|
| Grade Change Procedures | 13-14 |
| Exemptions | 14 |
| Principal's List | 14 |
| Honor Roll | 14 |
| Communicating Student Progress | 15 |
| Parent/Student Course Information Guides | 15 |
| Class Expectations | 15 |
| Conferences | 15 |
| Progress Reports | 15 |
| Report Cards | 16 |
| Non-Custodial Parent Reports | 16 |
| ParentVue and StudentVue | 16 |
| Warning Notices | 17 |
| References | |
| Attendance | 17 |
| Promotion, Retention and Placement | 17-18 |

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Grading

The primary purpose of grading is to communicate academic progress to students, parents, and other adults. Student grades reflect the demonstrated level of mastery of the course objectives and aid in improving learning.

This set of guidelines is designed to ensure the interpretation of policies and the applications result in consistent assessment practices within schools and across the school division by:

- assisting classroom teachers in evaluating student progress fairly.
- describing the procedures for determining student grades.
- communicating to parents the progress of students attending VBCPS.

Teachers working within their school communities and with their administration will determine how best to achieve consistency within a school and across departments and grade levels. As such, school staff will come to a common agreement about specific practices suggested in the guidelines. To accomplish this, each school either by grade level or department or specialized course will annually develop and submit grading expectations to the Department of School Leadership.

School Board Policies and Regulations

The School Board policies and administrative regulations governing the administration of grading and reporting student progress are incorporated in the procedures and practices promulgated in this set of guidelines.

- Attendance – School Board Policy [5-17](#) and School Board Regulation [5-17.1](#)
- Homework – School Board Regulations [6-54.2](#) and [6-54.3](#)
- Promotion, Retention and Acceleration – School Board Policy [5-27](#) and School Board Regulation [5-27.1](#)
- Reporting Student Progress – School Board Regulation [5-28.1](#) and School Board Policy [6-72](#) and School Board Policy Regulation [6-72.1](#)
- Student Scholastic Records – School Board Policy [5-31](#)
- Custody Students – School Board Regulation [5-10.2](#)

Teaching and Learning Framework

The Teaching and Learning Framework drives our efforts inside the classroom to best prepare and challenge students. This framework includes four belief statements about our collective work as educators. The foundational pieces of effective instruction (planning, teaching, assessing and responding) are featured within the framework, leading to a safe, effective learning environment for every student, every day – a concept that is always at the center of our work.



Assessment

Assessment is a process of evaluating student knowledge and understanding what occurs throughout the teaching and learning cycle. When teachers assess, they:

- check daily for student understanding.
- collect and analyze evidence of student learning from multiple sources over time.
- use assessment data to support personalized learning.
- provide descriptive feedback to students in response to their formative and summative assessments.
- weigh evidence of learning with informed professional judgment to make decisions throughout the cycle.

Teachers will closely monitor student learning and conduct frequent formative assessments to respond to the instructional needs of students, providing progressive intervention as needed to ensure achievement.

Teachers will respond to information (data) from balanced assessments to examine, align, and identify student needs to provide appropriate support and intervention.

Continuous assessment of student learning provides opportunities for valuable feedback to students, promotes consistent student effort, encourages appropriate study habits, and ensures an adequate basis for the grade earned by the student. Teachers use assessment data to determine student needs and to plan future instruction to support students in achieving identified instructional objectives.

Teachers gather information daily to determine what the student knows and how the student performs on given tasks in relation to curricular objectives. Assessments can reflect both graded and non-graded measurements such as:

- Teacher Observation with Anecdotal Notes
- Work Samples
- Common Assessments
- Portfolios
- Rubrics
- Performance-based Assessments
- Class Discussion
- Entry or Exit tickets

Evaluation is the attachment of grades to independently completed student work that is representative of academic performance. Grades are assigned once the instructional material (reflective of grade-level instructional objectives) has been taught and sufficiently practiced. Criteria used for grading are clearly articulated to students and, where possible, high quality samples are offered as models. Student work is compared to standards, not to the work of other students.

Accountability

Accountability is the expectation that students take an appropriate level of responsibility for their learning in various ways, including completing assignments that align with curricular objectives. In fostering academic accountability/responsibility, teachers will:

- consider individual student circumstances, including, but not limited to a student's age and accessibility to online instruction.
- determine whether missteps (e.g., not turning in work, misunderstanding the content, mismanaged learning) are infrequent or chronic.
- identify the nature of each incident as the student "can't do," the student "didn't do," or the student "won't do."
- establish and communicate clear processes and expectations to prevent and respond to accountability concerns.
- establish clear criteria and provide opportunities for students to develop associated skills (e.g., organization, planning, goal setting).

Factors such as effort, participation, organization, and punctuality have an impact on the quality and amount of the evidence of learning. Teachers will strive to empower students to exercise developmentally appropriate academic habits and dispositions through built-in processes. Teachers will establish a system for identifying and communicating specific information about these and other factors as they relate to student progress.

Students who exhibit a chronic pattern of habits and dispositions that obstruct the learning process need further evaluation and increased levels of support. Examples may include:

- parental notification
- classroom interventions
- referral for guidance support services
- Student Response Team (SRT) meeting

EVALUATING STUDENT PROGRESS

(SB Policy [6-72](#))

Homework

(SB Regulation [6-54.2](#) (MS) & [6-54.3](#) (HS))

Homework is an extension and enrichment of the material taught in the classroom. It is designed to reinforce and extend classroom learning, prepare students for new information, and promote creative thinking and independent research.

Homework is defined as tasks assigned to students by teachers are intended to be completed outside the regular classroom instruction. Homework is a tool to provide teachers with critical feedback on how well students understand the concepts, skills, and information presented in class. In certain circumstances, homework assignments may prepare students for the introduction of new information and may also include reading assignments, projects, and book reports.

When assigning a homework task, teachers will:
consider students' readiness for a particular task and purpose.

- align the assignment to current curricular objectives.
- communicate the purpose of a particular assignment.
- consider the purpose of the task when determining whether and how the homework will be graded.
- not exceed 10% of a student's cumulative grade.

Late Work

When an assignment is not completed by the date due, teachers will exercise informed professional judgment to determine consequences and adjust deadlines if appropriate, taking into account the following:

- the nature and purpose of a particular assignment
- the timeliness of the assignment as it relates to the current instruction
- individual circumstances

Teachers will strive to empower students to exercise developmentally appropriate responsibility through built-in processes, such as strategic planning for long-term assignments.

Students who exhibit a chronic pattern of turning work in late need further evaluation and increased levels of support, such as:

- parental notification
- classroom interventions
- referral for guidance support services
- SRT meeting

Zeros

In assessing student learning, all student work is to be carefully considered. Teachers should refrain from initially assigning zeroes for work that is missing as this distorts the cumulative grade and does not reflect what the student has learned. Every effort should be made to hold students accountable for completing missed assessments before assigning a zero. However, teachers can and should treat this as late work. These guidelines also reflect an understanding that teachers must provide summative grades quarterly and are not expected to assign grades for work not completed within a quarter. Students who exhibit a chronic pattern of behavior around missing work need further evaluation and increased levels of support, such as:

- parental notification
- classroom interventions

- referral for guidance support services
- SRT meeting

Teachers should use an “I” for Incomplete until all efforts to hold students accountable have been exhausted.

Reassessment

Departments, grade levels or schools will establish and communicate clear processes and expectations for grading and planning for reassessment.

Any student who receives a failing grade on a summative (unit test, end of quarter test, major projects, or papers) assessment may be given an opportunity for additional instruction and reassessment provided the student has:

- participated in class.
- completed assignments.
- demonstrated evidence of best effort on the assessment and the learning leading up to the assessment.

In other instances, teachers will exercise informed professional judgment to determine when additional opportunities for reassessment are appropriate and/or necessary to obtain evidence of student learning as it relates to curricular objectives.

Reassessment is a productive part of the learning process when teachers:

- provide targeted instruction between assessments.
- incorporate student reflection of learning into the process.
- focus the reassessment on that which the student did not know.
- give credit for a student’s most recent or most frequent evidence of learning.

Make-Up work

(SB Regulation [5-17.1](#))

When a student is missing work due to an excused absence, teachers will:

- provide all relevant assignments.
- consider the length and reason for the absence when determining which assignments will be assessed and when they are due.
- accept and assess all assigned make-up work.
- provide reasonable and flexible deadlines that take into consideration a student’s individual circumstances.

In the event the teacher does not have adequate assessment data to provide a marking period grade that reflects the student’s knowledge of the course learning objectives, the teacher may consider assigning a grade of “I” for incomplete due to a lack of required evidence.

Students who receive unexcused absences may make up assignments at the discretion of the teacher, subject to the requirements communicated (provided) by the teacher at the beginning of the year. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of established guidelines and to follow those guidelines to make up the assignment.

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be used sparingly and purposefully as an opportunity for further learning. Teachers will clearly articulate to students how an extra credit assignment is aligned to curricular objectives. Extra credit will be related to the current topic of study, fairly available and accessible, and require the use of only those resources known to be available to all students. Extra credit will not be used for non-learning activities.

DETERMINING STUDENT GRADES

(School Board Policy [5-28](#) & SB Regulation [5-28.1](#))

In VBCPS, at specific points in the school year, assessment evidence is summarized and reported to parents and other stakeholders on the report card. A summative grade:

- occurs after students have been instructed on and had the time and opportunity to sufficiently practice and learn.
- reflects a student’s most consistent and more recent pattern of performance in relation to the criteria of success.
- derives from evidence present, not absent.
- reflects informed professional judgment.

In determining a summative grade, teachers will:

- finalize the collection of evidence of learning as related to curricular objectives.
- make thoughtful decisions about whether and when to use different measures of central tendency.
- carefully consider outlier grades which might distort the cumulative grade and might not reflect what the student has learned.
- calculate a grade using the approved process that is communicated in course expectations.
- report learning using the required format (grading scale, letter grades, etc.).
- avoid using methods to achieve a predetermined distribution of grades, such as the bell-curve.

Grading Expectations

Each department, teacher or school will exercise informed professional judgement to design a grading system that clearly shows how a marking period grade is determined. Grades may be calculated by any of a variety of methods to include total points, weighted categories, or different methods of central tendency. However, to ensure consistency each department, grade level or school will develop and establish weighting for homework, classwork, assessments, etc. These decisions will be communicated to students and parents.

Teachers may vary in their selection of a grading scale. However, all marking period, term, and final grades must be converted and recorded using the modified 10-point grading scale approved by the School Board (See the appendices for examples of conversions to a modified 10-point grading scale).

Modified 10-point Grading Scale

(SB Regulation [6-72.1](#))

It is essential that teachers and parents recognize the students themselves are not being graded. Rather, the codes and grades represent the level of performance demonstrated by students on specific objectives and expectations in each context and for a specified period of time. Additionally, assessment of intelligence and ability are not included in determining the codes or grades.

In VBCPS, the reporting of student progress at the secondary level is done via letter grades converted from a numerical scale. The grading scale below is the one currently in use in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

| | |
|----------|----------|
| 93 - 100 | A (4.0) |
| 90 - 92 | A- (3.7) |
| 87 - 89 | B+ (3.3) |
| 83 - 86 | B (3.0) |

| | |
|----------|----------|
| 80 - 82 | B- (2.7) |
| 77 - 79 | C+ (2.3) |
| 73 - 76 | C (2.0) |
| 70 - 72 | C- (1.7) |
| 67 - 69 | D+ (1.3) |
| 64 - 66 | D (1.0) |
| Below 64 | E (0.0) |

Marking Period (Nine-week Grades)

(SB Regulation 5-28.1)

The marking period grade reflects the student’s level of performance or achievement in relation to the curricular objectives in a particular class and is determined by using the procedure outlined in the individual teacher’s evaluation design. The report card reflects a letter grade.

Semester Grades (Term Grades)

The first semester grades for a year-long course is the average of the 1st and 2nd marking period grades. The second semester grades for a year-long course is the average of the 3rd and 4th marking period grades.

Final Grades

1. The final grade in a semester course is determined by calculating a weighted average of the final assessment grade and the grades for the two marking periods. Each marking period grade is to be weighted 4/9 of the total grade, with the final assessment weighted 1/9. Examples of determining a final grade on a semester course can be found below.
2. The final grade in a year course is determined by calculating a weighted average of the final assessment and the grades for the two semesters. Each semester grade is to be weighted 4/9 of the total grade, with the final assessment weighted 1/9. Examples of determining a final grade can be found in the Appendix.

Special Education

Students with disabilities are placed in special education classes or regular classes based upon their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Modifications and accommodations pertaining to the regular classroom structure and delivery of the curriculum are included in the IEP. Teachers will carry out these modifications and adaptations in the regular classroom environment to accommodate the needs of the student and enable the student to participate in the class in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Having established an appropriate learning environment within the regular classroom, a nondiscriminatory grading policy is applied; grading criteria for students with disabilities reflect the modifications and adaptations stated in the IEP. A collaborative relationship between the regular and special education teachers is important to ensure the modifications and accommodations, as well as the academic standards, are maintained. Federal guidelines mandate report cards and progress reports must be provided to the parents of students with disabilities at least as often as reported for students without disabilities.

General Education Students with 504 Plans

The same reporting procedures governing general education should apply to students with 504 Plans. Careful attention will be given to the type(s) of accommodations in instructional activities and strategies required to assist students in learning or demonstrating what has been learned.

Final Assessments

(SB Regulation [5-28.1](#))

Final assessments serve as a culminating activity and will be administered in all courses bearing credit toward graduation. They are developed to assess students' knowledge of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools course objectives and on Virginia Standards of Learning objectives. When course objectives require mastery of certain physical skills (e.g., physical education, technology, music, and art), the final assessment may include skills tests. Teachers will note the following:

- a make-up final assessment is permitted when a student is absent
- a re-take of the final assessment will be limited to those students who are eligible to pass the course with a satisfactory score on the final assessment and to seniors who are candidates for graduation
- administration of early final assessments is discouraged; however, there may be extenuating circumstances that warrant consideration. Individual requests to take final assessments early should be reviewed with the principal (or his/her designee). If granted, the final assessment should not be given earlier than the week before the established final assessment schedule
- the final assessment grade counts 1/9 of the final grade
- all copies of student final assessments are kept on file for a period of one year.

All assessments, tests, and quizzes, are the property of the teacher and the school, and therefore may be kept on file by the teacher. The teacher, however, must allow students to view their work and must make such documents available for parental perusal on school grounds.

EXAMPLES OF DETERMINING FINAL GRADES

Semester Grades in Year Long Courses

$[1^{\text{st}} 9 \text{ wk} + 2^{\text{nd}} 9 \text{ wk}] \div 2 = \text{First Semester Grade}$

$[3^{\text{rd}} 9 \text{ wk} + 4^{\text{th}} 9 \text{ wk}] \div 2 = \text{Second Semester Grade}$

Example: $[88(\text{B}+) + 94(\text{A})] \div 2 = 91(\text{A}-)$

Final Grade in a semester course

Each marking period grade counts as four-ninths of the final semester (term) course grade. The final assessment grade counts as one-ninth of the final semester course grade.

$[(1^{\text{st}} 9 \text{ wk} \times 4) + (2^{\text{nd}} 9 \text{ wk} \times 4) + \text{final assessment} \times 1] \div 9 = \text{Final grade for semester course}$

Example: $[98(\text{A}) \times 4 (392) + 90(\text{A}-) \times 4 (360) + 66(\text{D}) \times 1 (66)] \quad (818 \div 9) = 91 (\text{A}-)$

Final Grade in a year course

Each semester grade counts four-ninths of the final grade. The final assessment grade counts as one-ninth of the final grade.

Example: $[(1^{\text{st}} \text{ Sem} \times 4) + (2^{\text{nd}} \text{ Sem} \times 4) + \text{final assessment} \times 1] \div 9 = \text{Final grade for year course}$

$[96(\text{A}) \times 4 (384) + 88(\text{B}+) \times 4 (352) + 70(\text{C}-) \times 1 (70)] \quad (806 \div 9) = 90 (\text{A}-)$

Computing Grades When Students Have Received an "N" Due to Excessive Absences

| I. | <u>Semester Course</u> | <u>Semester</u> | <u>Final</u> | <u>Credit</u> | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| A. | Waiver Approved | C | C | .5 | |
| B. | Waiver Not Approved | N (63) | N (63) | 0 | |
| II. | <u>Year Course</u> | <u>S 1</u> | <u>S 2</u> | <u>Final</u> | <u>Credit</u> |
| A. | First Semester "N" | N (63) | C | D | 1.0 |
| B. | Second Semester "N" | C | N (63) | D | 1.0 |

*N is used only when a student has a passing grade and there is no decision to grant a waiver for excessive absences when the report card is printed for distribution.

Converting a 5-Point Grading Scale to the Modified 10-Point Scale

5-Point Grading Scale

Point Value

| | |
|---|---|
| A | 4 |
| B | 3 |
| C | 2 |
| D | 1 |
| E | 0 |

Modified 10 Point Conversion

Conversion Values based on Average Grade

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| A = 4.0 | A- = 3.7 | |
| B+ = 3.3 | B = 3.0 | B- = 2.7 |
| C+ = 2.3 | C = 2.0 | C- = 1.7 |
| D+ = 1.3 | D = 1.0 | |

Example:

Student's Grades (5-Point Scale)

Grades = (0, 0, 4, 4, 4, 3, 0, 4, 4)

determine the mean of all grades

Conversion $(0+0+4+4+4+3+0+4+4) \div 9 = 2.55$

Average = 2.55 / C+

Grade Change Procedures

(SB Regulation [5-28.1](#))

The teacher, as an agent of the School Board, has the responsibility for evaluating pupil progress and providing grades to represent scholastic achievement. If it becomes necessary to administratively correct grades that have been miscalculated, the correction will be made at or as near the source of error as possible. Any action taken will be compliant with school board policy concerning access, maintenance, and security of records.

If a student, parent, or legal guardian question a grade, the procedures listed below will be used.

1. The student and/or parent/legal guardian of a minor student will request the teacher review the grading process and computation.
2. Following the review, the teacher will decide if a grade change should be made and will inform the student and/or parent/legal guardian of a minor student of the decision.
3. An appeal of the teacher's decision may be made to the principal/school or center director.
4. If the teacher is not available, the principal/school or center director will review the grading process and/or computation and will inform the student and/or parent/legal guardian of a minor student and the teacher of the decision.

Exemptions

- If Virginia Standards of Learning test scores are received in time, any student who passes the SOL test for a specific course may be exempt from taking the final assessment in that course. The student may elect to take the final assessment to improve his or her grade.
- **(High School only)** Graduating seniors who have a "B" average in a given subject, such average will be calculated through the fourth marking period, will be exempt from taking the final assessment in the year course in question. This exemption applies only to graduating seniors and only to courses

in which eligibility has been established. This does not apply to semester courses.

- **(High School only)** Any student sitting for either an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam who has a “B” average in the course through the fourth marking period may be exempt from taking the final assessment in that course. The student may elect to take the final assessment to improve his or her grade.
- **(High School only)** Any students earning industry certification who have a “B” average in the course through the fourth marking period may be exempt from taking the final assessment in that course. The student may elect to take the final assessment to improve his or her grade.

Principal’s List and Honor Roll

(SB Regulation [5-29.1](#))

To be eligible for the Principal’s List, a student must receive all A’s. Receiving an A- will prevent a student from earning Principal’s List.

To make Honor Roll, a student must have a 3.0 grade point average. Receiving a C- will prevent a student from earning Honor Roll.

The electronic gradebook program computes Principal’s List and Honor Roll using points listed below. If a teacher uses letter grades in the gradebook, the letter grade is converted to the top number on the grade range, i.e., A = 100.

| Letter Grade | Range | Points |
|--------------|----------|--------|
| A | 93 – 100 | 4.0 |
| A- | 90 – 92 | 3.7 |
| B+ | 87 – 89 | 3.3 |
| B | 83 – 86 | 3.0 |
| B- | 80 – 82 | 2.7 |
| C+ | 77 – 79 | 2.3 |
| C | 73 – 76 | 2.0 |
| C- | 70 – 72 | 1.7 |
| D+ | 67 – 69 | 1.3 |
| D | 64 – 66 | 1.0 |
| E | Below 64 | 0.0 |

COMMUNICATING STUDENT PROGRESS

(SB Policy [5-28](#))

Effective communication and cooperative efforts between school and home are essential to student success. Teachers will use a variety of formal and informal means to regularly communicate a student’s progress in a fashion that is useful and understandable to the student and to parents. The following means of communication are used to keep parents informed of their children’s progress:

- report cards
- formal and informal progress reports
- conferences
- informal means of communication (e.g., telephone calls, written notes, e-mail.)
- classroom expectation sheets – including the grading system design
- syllabi
- websites
- planners
- open houses
- VBCPS – Parent Portal

Parent/Student Course Information Guides

Parent/Student Course information Guides are provided for parents. These guides inform parents of the school's expectations, define what students will be learning, and identify the standards by which the student progress will be assessed.

Classroom Expectations

The teacher will provide to each student an approved class expectation document and grading procedures at the beginning of the course. Teachers will include in their classroom expectations the key components of the guidelines for best practices (homework, late work, zero's, reassessments, make-up work, and extra credit).

Conferences

(SB Policy [5-28](#))

Conferences between parents or guardians and teachers are encouraged. Such conferences will be called to explore the needs of the student, to resolve misunderstandings, to devise plans for assisting the students to succeed or for other reasons relevant to the student's education. This one-on-one interaction promotes involvement of both the home and the school, fosters mutual understanding of the student's progress, clarifies the student's strengths and needs, and allows for the exchange of information and ideas needed to strengthen and reinforce student performance. Conferences may be requested by parents or by teachers. All conferences should be scheduled through guidance with a school counselor in attendance.

Progress Reports

(SB Regulation [5-28.1](#))

Progress Reports are issued at the midpoint of each marking period for students, including students with individual education programs (IEPs), who are performing below expected levels. Teachers will use various informal means of reporting student progress including email, telephone calls and conferences. Teachers will use the electronic gradebook version of the Progress Report. The progress report will either be a paper copy sent home to parents, posted in Parent Vue, or an electronic copy sent to parents with an email address in the Student Information System.

Report Cards

(SB Regulation [5-28.1](#))

Report cards will be issued in accordance with the school calendar following the end of each marking period. The dates of issuance are established each year by the division superintendent and published in each school's student-parent handbook.

Reports to Non-Custodial Parents

(SB Regulation [5-10.2](#))

If the parents of a student are separated or divorced, both parents have the right to be informed of their child's progress in school unless forbidden by a court order on file. To receive written reports and notification of conferences, a non-custodial parent is to submit a written request to the principal. In questionable cases, the principal is to seek the advice of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Parent Vue and Student Vue

Parents and students should be encouraged to use the VBCPS Parent Vue and Student Vue Systems. Training in the use of the Parent Vue and Student Vue systems should be provided to parents and students. Schools are expected to have clear and consistent teacher expectations for grade entry. At a minimum, teachers will update grades regularly - weekly (bell schedule) or bi-weekly (block schedule).

Assessment scores are maintained in the teacher's electronic grade book. The electronic grade book, which is subject to review as needed, is kept on file by the school upon completion of the school year. Teachers are responsible for explaining the grades and grading procedure for any student and/or parent upon request. The electronic grade book will be kept up to date as directed by the school's administrative staff.

Warning Notices

(SB Policy [5-28](#))

In cases where a student is in danger of failing a course or subject or experiences a significant negative change in performance, sufficient notice will be sent home at the end of the third marking period so that parents will be aware of the possibility of failure. **High school seniors** in danger of failing to meet the graduation requirements, the student, and his/her parents will be notified of the danger at the earliest possible time. Assistance should be provided where possible to help the student meet the requirements.

REFERENCES

ATTENDANCE

The school division has specific procedures for excessive absences and unexcused absences. Please refer to [SB Policy 5-17](#) and [SB Regulation 5-17.1](#) for detailed information.

Students of school age will attend their assigned schools during school hours in accordance with state law. Students are considered absent if they are not present on days that school is in session as determined by the School Board approved calendar or during make-up days determined by the Superintendent or School Board.

Excused Absences

Documented absences are defined as absences for personal illness, serious illness or death in the family, exposure to contagious disease, extremely inclement weather, school-sponsored activity, or observance of a recognized religious holiday. The parent or legal guardian will provide written notice to the school of the reason for the absence or tardiness. Pre-approved absences are defined as absences for cause and absences that occur with the full knowledge and consent of the parents. The principal, at his/her discretion, may accept as valid the reasons for these absences. Other verifiable reasons may be deemed excused at the discretion of the principal.

Unexcused Absences

Absences for reasons other than those listed above, including out-of-school suspension, are unexcused absences. Truancy is defined as the absence of a student for other than a legitimately recognized reason for all or part of a day when school is in session.

Parent Notification of Absences

For all absences, the school will contact the home each day of the child's absence from school using the automatic dialing system.

Class Attendance

Daily and punctual school attendance is essential to each student's academic development. Absence from school is detrimental to student achievement. A student is counted present for state reporting purposes if present for any portion of the day. Attendance is taken in the morning at the elementary level; attendance is taken in each class at the secondary level.

Excused absences for school-sponsored/related activities, authorized visits of students with school personnel, and recognized religious holidays should be noted as such. All absences require written confirmation from the parent. All absence notes will be preserved until the close of the school term, and the principal will be the judge of the signature validity.

Procedures for Excessive and Unexcused Absences

All excused and unexcused absences will be included in computing excessive absences except as follows:

- School-sponsored/related activities
- Authorized visits of students with school personnel
- Recognized religious holidays

Promotion, Retention and Placement of Students

(*SB Policy [5-27](#)*)

According to policy, placement of students will be made based on an evaluation of the student's acquisition of basic skills and other evidence of growth as determined by the student's teacher and principal as evidenced by the following factors: earned credits, SOL test scores, special needs, academic performance, prior retentions, attendance, physical size, reading level, work habits, intellectual ability, parental support, age, and school/family history. As soon as it becomes evident a student is experiencing difficulties in achieving instructional

objectives, teachers should confer with the parents. Parent conferences and academic interventions should be documented.

Retention will not be considered unless failure to meet the grade level objectives is verified by the report card grades earned by the student. When retention is not in the best interest of the student, the student should be placed in the next grade level. If a decision to waive promotion standards is made by the principal and the student is to be placed in the next grade level, teachers should complete a waiver form to be filed in the student's cumulative record folder.

Middle School

Students in grades six, seven and eight are promoted to the next grade on the basis of earning passing final grades in the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and a passing final grade in either health/physical education or the equivalent of a full-year course in the exploratories /electives. The following factors are also considered: academic performance, ability level; attendance in conjunction with poor classroom performance; chronological age in relation to the normal grade/age group; prior retentions; delayed/advanced physical development; maturity in emotional and social development; work and study habits; student and parent attitude; parental support; and SOL test scores at the end of grades six (6) through eight (8). The use of SOL test scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is prohibited.

High School

Promotion at the high school level is based upon academic achievement and the meeting of attendance requirements in individual courses. Promotion is based on the number of credits earned. The use of SOL test scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is prohibited. An assignment of class standing will be made on the following basis:

- Grade 12: at least 16 credits and/or eligible for June graduation
- Grade 11: at least 10 credits, but fewer than 16 credits
- Grade 10: at least 5 credits, but fewer than 10 credits
- Grade 9: fewer than five credits

Dr. Aaron Spence, Superintendent
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456

Produced by the Department of School Leadership.
For further information, please call (757) 263-1180.

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy and childbirth, or marital status. School Board policies and supporting regulation (Policies [2-33](#), [4-4](#), [5-7](#), and [6-7](#) and Regulation [5-44.1](#)) provide equal access to courses, programs, counseling services, physical education and athletics, vocational education, instructional materials, and extracurricular activities. Violations of these policies should be reported to the director of Student Leadership at 263-2020 or the Chief Human Resource Officer at 263-1133.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Department of School Leadership: Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P. O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 263-1170 (voice); 263-1240 (TDD); or e-mail DOSL@vbschools.com.



VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHARTING THE COURSE

No part of this publication may be produced or shared in any form without giving specific credit to Virginia Beach City Public Schools.