

Lafayette Parish School System Uniform Grading Policy:

It is important that there is a unified grading practice across the district to ensure equity among grading practices for students. The value of an “A” in a subject should be the same regardless of the teacher or the school. According to author Douglas Reeves, a grade should be fair, accurate, specific and timely. This was not always the case.

Since the summer of 2014, teachers could grade however they chose or according to the guidelines established at their school, including various weights and values or formative and summative assessments. Some assessments included performance, compliance, behavior, participation and bonus points for materialistic goods. In some instances, student learning and knowledge was a small part of a student’s grade.

The Louisiana State Department of Education has established academic standards for seven subjects, including English language arts (reading and writing), math, science, social studies, foreign languages, physical education and health. “Academic standards define the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn in a subject in each grade. Academic standards are designed to provide a clear path for students to gain the proficiency that is required to learn increasingly complex material in the next grade. Students who learn the knowledge and skills defined by the academic standards, year after year, are on track to graduate from high school on time and ready to enter college or the workforce.” See www.louisianabelieves.com

An academic standard defines *what* students need to know but not *how* students learn or *how* teachers instruct. Teachers use the academic standards to develop lesson plans, assignments and assessments that help their students master the knowledge and skills defined by the academic standards. Students in grades 3 through 11 take state assessments in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These assessments are aligned to the Louisiana academic standards and students are measured towards mastery of the standards. To be aligned in meeting the academic standards, the professional staff of Lafayette Parish reflected and addressed grading practices.

The Louisiana Department of Education requires all local educational authorities to complete a plan called the Pupil Progression Plan. Part of our plan includes our uniform grading practices. In developing the grading practices, district staff and community members (principals, leadership teams, teachers, and parent representatives) had to agree upon definitions of grading terms.
{Lafayette Parish School Board 2016 – 17 Pupil Progression Plan, August 2016, pages 82 – 85}
Available online at www.lpssonline.com

Academic Grade: A representation by a letter grade of A, B, C, D, F which communicates the achievement level earned in a course based on mastery of the course academic standards. This definition applies to the end of marking period grades and final course grades. A student demonstrates mastery based on the student’s performance on assessments. An academic grade is not based on attendance, completion, participation, behavior, or compliance.

Assessment: The process of gathering information on student learning from a variety of sources to understand how well students are achieving the academic standards of a course.

Formative Assessments: Assessments that gather information for constructive and specific feedback to guide improvements for instruction and student learning. Examples of formative assessments include quizzes, rough drafts of papers, and lab reports. Additional items are interim checks of project work and in-class practice work evaluated for correctness. These examples are used to determine student progress toward the mastery of content necessary for success on summative assessment.

Summative Assessments: Assessments that measure the level of success, mastery, or proficiency that has been obtained by comparing it to content standards or benchmarks. Examples of summative assessments include unit tests, final grades on major projects and papers, performance assessments, embedded assessments, and any other major assessments that may occur at the end of a unit of study to measure student mastery of course content.

Grading is the process for evaluating the quality of student work based on identified criteria and assigning a value to represent the level of achievement attained. The purpose of grading is to communicate the quality of student work and degree of content mastery to the student and the parent.

The reason that a formative assessment would have less value is that this is where mistakes should occur and allows for adjustments in instruction or pace of the delivery of instruction to occur. Formative assessments provide feedback and are used to monitor learning. Summative assessments would have a higher value as this is measuring student learning for understanding and mastery. The value would be higher in regards to what students have learned. At the end, the student's academic grade should be reflective of how a student would perform on a state assessment.