

Grading 2020 - 2021 School Year MOU



Memorandum of Understanding West Contra Costa Unified School District, United Teachers of Richmond CTA/NEA

The COVID pandemic has exacerbated already existing inequitable outcomes for our students in a Distance Learning environment. During this unprecedented time in education, we need to examine how our grading policies do, or do not, support our beliefs as educators. Many of these inequities are manifested in the grading practices used to perpetuate systems of sorting rather than providing meaningful feedback and communication that afford students the opportunity to build upon their strengths while growing as scholars. Our work is to establish recommendations and guidelines for more equitable grading practices during distance learning and beyond when we return to a physical classroom. This is an opportunity in time to challenge our mindset about report cards and grades, and align with the current research in this area. This year is transitional, as we will learn together. The guidance below represents the collaborative work of the district, site administration, UTR, and other stakeholders. With approval of the revised board policy the parties will be able to then finalize the assessment protocols for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

We commit to collectively delve more deeply into equitable grading practices and the methods by which we communicate student growth, development and mastery of grade level standards and content.

With learning as the focus and **equity** as the foundational underpinning, the parties above agree to support teachers in both elementary and secondary school sites in WCCUSD in the following manner to have a successful transition to the new grading and reporting process through a memorandum of understanding for the 2020-2021 School Year:

Elementary

Elementary schools will use a strengths-based narrative grading system for the 2020-21 school year.

- Grades will reflect a child's learning and progress toward grade level standards rather than timeliness or other factors which may be the result of circumstances outside a student's control.
- Students will be allowed to redo assignments for full credit. *The best learning happens through reflection as students wrestle with concepts and revise their work based upon quality feedback (Hattie and Timperley, 2007;)*
- Elementary Report Cards will continue with strengths-based narratives to describe what students can do and their next steps toward the mastery of skills along with the developmental progression.

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Secondary

Secondary schools will use the historical A-F grading system for the 2020-21 school year. With learning as the focus and **equity** as the foundational underpinning, we are encouraging the following grading practices:

- Grades should reflect learning and progress toward grade level standards rather than timeliness or other factors which may be the result of circumstances outside a student's control.
 - Work should be accepted within the 5 day period from the point of the assignment without penalty. Teachers may decide to extend the window to accept late work based on individual circumstance.
 - A student can advocate for more time, by contacting their teacher.
 - If a student is not regularly submitting gradable work, the teacher will facilitate contact with the family to encourage making up the learning and work
- Grades should prioritize feedback and progress toward grade level standards.
 - Students should be given timely meaningful feedback on assignments and have the opportunity to improve their work for full credit within the 5 day period.
 - Overall we should re-imagine our curriculum for mastery.
- On our journey toward equitable grading some mathematical and equitable best practices gradebooks may utilize the following:
 - Gradebooks designed around 1-4 rubric grading systems.
 - Eliminating zeros in gradebooks. Assignments, exams, quizzes, or projects will be marked "Missing" until completed.
 - Missing assignments will not be given a zero, but rather a failure to turn in or F in the gradebook to maintain the relative mathematical validity of the gradebook.

Elementary and Secondary Educators will be supported through:

- Ongoing central and site-based professional development and collaboration time around equitable grading practices.
- Professional Development around building standards based grading rubrics.
- The adopted MOU with teachers provides more time to enhance equitable grading through feedback and re-grading strategies.
- District engagement tracking.
- Recognition from educators that this is a unique time and that teachers will need to focus on core concepts and standards to emphasize mastery based learning. It's the intent of this document that the district, sites, and educators will work together over the course of the year to better define mastery based grading.
- For elementary only, the November 6 afternoon block will be provided for teachers to work on report cards. We acknowledge the shift to writing strengths-based narrative report cards may take more time than past report card methods.

This is a non-precedent setting agreement between the parties above. Further, this agreement is for the 2020-2021 school year only, the agreement will be revisited in May of 2021 to determine if the agreement will be extended for future years. Agreed upon this date September 4, 2020

Marissa Glidden, President
United Teachers of Richmond CTA/NEA

Tony Wold, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent
West Contra Costa Unified School District

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Appendix A

Chart for dates of trimester end, distribution, etc

Trimester	Trimester Start Date	Trimester End Date	Progress Report Distribution Date	PowerSchool Grade Reporting Window	Report Card Distribution Date
First Trimester	8/17/20	10/30/20	10/2/20	10/16/20-11/22/20	11/20/20
Second Trimester	11/3/20	3/1/21	1/27/21	2/08/21-3/29/21	3/29/21
Third Trimester	3/2/21	6/9/21	4/28/21	5/14/21-6/16/21	6/9/21