

POLICY

SOMERSET COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Subject: Grading, Promotion, and Retention Policy	Date Approved: April 16, 2019
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose for this policy is to establish the protocol for student grading, promotion, and retention in Somerset County Public Schools. The primary purpose of grading is to keep parents, guardians and students fully informed of a student's progress and to provide a continuous and accurate record of each student's achievement. This policy will also establish the process for acceptance of transfer credits, class honors, describe the impact of attendance on grades and set procedures for approval and documentation of any changes to grades.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Grading and promotion in Somerset County Public Schools provides important information about a student's progress in relation to standards set for individual courses. While a completely uniform grading system at and between all school levels may not be possible, the grading system must be fair and consistently applied.

3. POLICY

A. Early Childhood (Grades PK-K) – Students will be assessed based on the State standards and graded in a manner appropriate to these standards. For Prekindergarten students, report cards will be issued three times a year to coincide with the administration of the Early Learning Assessment (ELA). For Kindergarten, report cards will be issued quarterly.

B. Elementary through High School (Grades 1-12)

Report cards in these grades will be issued on a quarterly basis. There will be no quarter grade below 40% issued. In these cases, the report card will contain a comment identifying the actual percentage earned. Quarterly grades will be determined based on a system of category weighting established in the Administrative Procedures of this policy. Interim progress reports will be issued approximately halfway through each quarter. The following grades will be used for determining overall performance.

A – 90 – 100% - Excellent

B – 80 – 89% - Above Average
C – 70 - 79% - Average
D – 60 – 69% - Below Average
E – 40 – 59% - Not meeting expectations
AF – 59% - Attendance Failure

Pass/Fail Grades - For courses carrying a pass/fail grade, a grade of “pass” will receive credit toward graduation in a course required for graduation in Somerset County Public Schools. Successful completion of a pass/fail course not required for graduation will be identified as an acceptable elective credit for graduation. Grades for pass/fail courses will not be computed to numerical grades on the student’s grade transcript and will not be included in the computation for class ranking.

C. Home & Hospital Grading: See **Board Policy 500-28**

D. Final Course Grades: Final course grades (Y1) will be calculated based on the quarterly grades issued on the report card as follows:

- 1) **In grades 1-8**, the final (Y1) grade will be the average of all four quarters in year-long classes. In quarter classes, the final grade will be determined by the category weighting established in the administrative procedures of the grading policy.
- 2) **In grades 9-12**, a final (Y1) grade will be determined as follows:

Semester classes – the final grade will be determined by weighting each quarter grade at 45% of the overall grade and any final exam at 10% of the overall grade.

Yearlong classes – the final (Y1) grade will be determined by first calculating each semester grade individually. The grade for Semester 1 will have a midterm exam that is calculated as 10% of the (S1) grade and two quarter grades each worth 45% of the overall (S1) grade. Semester 2 will have a final exam that is calculated as 10% of the (S2) grade and two quarter grades worth 45% of the overall (S2) grade. At the end of the year, both semester grades will be averaged together to determine the final (Y1) course grade.

Quarter classes – the final grade will be determined by the category weighting established in the administrative procedures of the grading policy.

Certain classes at the high school level may be exempt from having the Final Exam weighted into their grade because of the impact of State Testing. In that case the Final Grade will be determined by averaging the two quarter grades to determine a semester grade in yearlong classes and a final grade in semester classes. Midterm exam grades will remain part of the calculation for Semester 1 in yearlong classes.

E. Attendance Impact – **Board Policy 600-07** sets forth the impact of attendance on student grades.

Elementary and Intermediate students who are unlawfully absent the equivalent of more than ten (10) full days per year will have a mandatory retention conference to determine eligibility for promotion.

High School and Academy students who are unlawfully absent for more than five (5) class periods in a semester course will receive a failing grade in the course. High School and Academy students enrolled in a yearlong course will receive a failing grade for each semester in which they are unlawfully absent for more than five (5) days.

Make-Up Work for absences – Contact for make-up work must be made by the student and/or parent/guardian during the first two (2) days after returning from being absent. The student in collaboration with their parents/guardians shall be responsible to see that all requested makeup work is completed within a maximum of five school days of receiving the make-up work. For extended absences, the guidelines will be five days after receiving the make-up work for the first day of absence and one day for each additional day of absence thereafter. Make-up work not completed within this timeline will result in the student receiving failing grade for the missed assignments. Teachers will provide written documentation to parents indicating opportunities given and a list of assignments that were not completed. Teachers will have the discretion to extend this time period should they feel it is warranted.

Attendance Failures can be appealed following the procedures defined in **Board Policy 600-07**. Documentation for any changes to grades that result from an attendance appeal will be retained in the student's permanent record.

F. Criteria for Non-Promotion

At the elementary and intermediate level, the criteria and process for retention of a student is set forth in detail in **Board Policy 500-32**. Factors that will be considered include:

1) Elementary (Indicators)

- a) Has a specific reading skills deficiency.
- b) Has poor skill development in mathematics
- c) Has difficulty following directions
- d) Has difficulty working independently
- e) Has poorly developed motor skills
- f) Seems immature socially and emotionally
- g) Is absent excessively without justifiable cause
- h) Has test scores that show a disparity between mental maturity and achievement
- i) Has failing grades in two or more of the major subjects – Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, or Science

2) Intermediate (Indicators)

- a) Has a specific reading skill deficiency.
- b) Demonstrates very poor skill development on the mathematics objectives for his/her grade level.
- c) Experiences difficulty working independently.
- d) Demonstrates poorly developed study skills.
- e) Demonstrates chronic failure to complete assignments.
- f) Is absent excessively without justifiable cause.
- g) Demonstrates social and emotional immaturity.
- h) Has test scores that show a disparity between mental maturity and achievement.
- i) Has failing grades in two or more of the major subjects – Language Arts, Mathematics,

Social Studies, or Science.

- 3) Promotion of Secondary students - **Board Policy 500-23** sets forth eligibility requirements for promotion at the secondary level which will be based on required Carnegie Units/Credits and graduation requirements accumulated. The following are the minimum number of cumulative credits for promotion/graduation.

Grade 9	4 credits
Grade 10	9 credits
Grade 11	14 credits
Grade 12	22 credits

Four high school courses must be completed by the student during the twelfth grade year, unless an exception has been granted in accordance with **Board Policy 500-25** - Guidelines for Alternate Routes to High School Graduation.

In order to be promoted to the twelfth grade, students must be on schedule to complete all graduation requirements by the normal graduation date of that year.

G. Calculating Class Rank and Honors

A class ranking list of students proceeding toward graduation will be compiled at each high school. Class ranking will be determined on the basis of final and potential credits in grades nine (9) through twelve (12)

- 1) The course grade of “C” or better earned for each Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses, and (beginning 2019-2020 SY) Biomedical Science Level 3: PLTW Medical Intervention and Biomedical Science Level 4: Biomedical Intervention taught in SCPS buildings by SCPS staff will be weighted with one additional quality point to be computed in the determination of class rank. The computation for Advanced Placement and qualifying dual enrollment course grades shall be as follows:

A = 5 Quality Points
B = 4 Quality Points
C = 3 Quality Points
D = 1 Quality Point
E = 0 Quality Points

- 2) The computation for all course grades in grades 9 through 12, except Advanced Placement and qualifying dual enrollment courses shall be as follows:

A = 4 Quality Points
B = 3 Quality Points
C = 2 Quality Points
D = 1 Quality Point
E = 0 Quality Points

- 3) Final numerical grades will be converted to quality points, and then multiplied by the number of credits. The total number of points will be divided by the total number of credits to come up with a Grade Point Average.
- 4) College Course Dual Enrollment Grades - Determination of whether a college course can substitute for graduation requirements is made through approval of the Dual Enrollment Council prior to student enrollment in the course. With principal approval and parent responsibility for course matriculation, transportation and associated college fees, a student may enroll in college courses during the junior and senior year. If the course is taught by a SCPS teacher within our buildings, the teacher will adhere to the grading requirements established in the administrative procedures for all SCPS courses. The final grade will be included in GPA calculations and will be weighted on the final transcript as indicated above. If the course is taught on the college campus or within our school by a college instructor, it will not count towards GPA calculations. College course grades provided to the high school guidance counselor will be recorded on the student's high school transcript.
- 5) Recovery credit – A student may repeat a course that he/she has failed. When this occurs, the grades of both classes (original and retake) will be recorded on the transcript and be calculated into the student's grade point average.

H. Selection of Valedictorian and Salutatorian

- 1) The graduating class valedictorian will be the senior student who has maintained the highest grade point average computed for the four years following grade eight. The salutatorian will be the senior student who has maintained the second highest grade point average computed for the four years following grade eight.
- 2) To be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian, a student must successfully complete a minimum of twelve (12) honors or AP level courses and have completed the last two years (junior and senior years) in a Somerset County Public high school.
- 3) The calculation to determine the class valedictorian and salutatorian is set forth in the administrative procedures for **Board Policy 500-23**.

I. Transfer grades – Students transferring from another public school within the State of Maryland will receive full credit for courses successfully completed towards graduation in another public school system in Maryland. The Maryland course catalog will be referenced to determine appropriate credit type. For students transferring from a private school or a school in another state, the transcript will be evaluated against the SCED listings and course credit awarded as appropriate.

J. Report Card Grade Changes - If it is found that a student's grade needs to be changed the, following procedures should be adhered to.

- 1) Within thirty (30) calendar days of a student's grade being published, the teacher/guardian/student shall submit to the principal's designee for grade changes, in writing, a letter indicating why there is a need for a grade change.

- 2) Within five (5) school days of receiving said request for a grade change, the principals' designee will review the request to determine whether to approve or reject the request. The reason(s) for the approval or rejection of the request must be included on the form along with the date and signature of the principals' designee. This form will then be given to the principal for signature of approval. Final approval of all grade changes will be submitted, reviewed and authorized by the Superintendent's designee.
- 3) Notice of authorization from the Superintendent's designee will be sent to Principal who will then forward a copy of the form to the guidance counselor, teacher and guardian/student. The guidance counselor will, if the grade change has been approved, make the necessary grade change in the student information system within five (5) school days. If the guidance counselor is unable to make the change, a copy of the request will be sent to the Student Information System Coordinator, who will make the grade change in the student information system.
- 4) If a grade change is denied, the teacher and the guardian/student will have five (5) calendar days to appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The request for the appeal must be in writing containing the rationale for the appeal and a copy of the original request. A final decision will be rendered within ten (10) calendar days.
- 5) Copies of the original form will be maintained in the student's permanent file, at the school.
- 6) At the end of each school year, a list of grade change(s) will be generated from the student information system. The Student Services Department, will randomly select 20% of the grade changes for that school year to review. At the conclusion of the review for appropriate documentation and adherence to procedures, a compliance report containing their findings will be sent to the Superintendent. Any evidence of non-compliance will result in corrective action and reported to the Superintendent.