

Alice Buffett Magnet Middle School

Updated Grading Policies

For Parent Review

2009 -2010

Our goal is to provide academically rigorous education that is fair and equitable for all students. One of the means of reaching academic excellence is through standardized policies and practices between and amongst teachers. It is a far easier task for students and parents to understand and support our school when all staff utilizes a standardized set of practices and policies. To this end we have created Buffett's best practices for assessment, grading and homework. We know student achievement increases when effective assessment and descriptive feedback is used. With grading, assessment, descriptive feedback and homework as our focus, we have spent more than three years reviewing research and the impact on student achievement.

Research clearly shows descriptive feedback from the teacher during learning that guides the student on how to change and improve is the most powerful single influence on student achievement. When students understand what needs to be corrected for improvement, they not only make the needed corrections but also learn at significantly higher levels. In addition, when students receive rubrics and student samples of work that illustrate A,B,C, and D level work they clearly know the target and expectations. Teachers have participated in professional development training on best practices in grading, assessment, descriptive feedback and homework.

A team of teachers and administrators completed a review of the research on grading and homework practices and the impact on student achievement. A detailed report on our grading policies has been completed listing the research and rationale for the practices which will be followed at Buffett. Please contact me (Dr. Kehrberg) if you'd like to receive a copy of the full report. A condensed version is listed below:

Behavior Policy #1: Nonacademic factors such as behavior, attendance and effort are not incorporated into grades. We believe the purpose of grades is to communicate achievement and show the students level of competence. The academic factors used to determine grades will be: practice assignments, formative assessments, and summative assessments.

Redo Policy #2: In each course students will be allowed a minimum of three redos of formative assignments for full credit each quarter if the original assignment was turned in on time. Because summative assignments have been taught and assessed previously, they are not eligible to be redone. Assignments for practice and late assignments are not eligible to be redone. Generally only formative assignments should be allowed for redos.

Late Policy #3: One or more late assignments without penalty will be allowed per quarter. Teachers with notification of their team may determine for students with chronic late issues to have a grade reduction of four percent each day on an assignment that is late. Maximum reduction would be up to 20 percent grade reduction. Work not turned in (at all) within five contact class days will receive a Not Handed In (NHI) failing grade of 54%. No late work will be accepted during the last 10 days of a grading period (quarter or semester) to allow for grades to be entered.

Weighting Policy #4: Grades are composed of assignments and assessments that are both completed in class or assigned as homework. Assignments and assessments fall into three categories: practice, formative and summative assignments or assessments. These will be weighted as follows: Practice assignments are worth 10%, formative assignments are worth 35%, and summative assignments are worth 55% of the total grade. In our computerized grading program, the grades for students stay the same regardless of whether the teacher enters the score as a raw score or as a percentage.

The practice assignment will be discussed in class enabling the teacher to gauge understanding and make decisions about how to reteach and proceed with instruction. Students will receive either verbal or written descriptive feedback on their practice work. Formative assignments will entail homework and summative assignments may as well.

Accommodations Policy #5: Accommodations are provided to students with special needs without adjusting or reducing grades. Since we believe all grades should demonstrate what the students know and what they are able to do, we remove any barrier to students to know the material and demonstrate mastery. We strive to meet the needs of all students.

Content Policy #6: Grading is based on content not decorations. While we encourage neatness, it is the higher level understanding that must be measured not the quality of the handwriting or the decoration.

Extra Credit Policy #7: There will be no extra credit or bonus points. The student must be accountable for the same learning outcomes as the original assignment to demonstrate mastery. Teachers may make challenge points available to students on graded assignments, including homework. We do expect and encourage students to go above and beyond requirements on all assignments.

Group Grade Policy #8: Group grades are not utilized. Group grades do not reflect any individual student's achievement or growth and can't be used to document progress, provide feedback or as a basis for instructional decisions. We encourage cooperative learning activities and consider this strategy to be an outstanding teaching technique. However, group grades do not demonstrate proficiency of individual students.

Bell Curve Policy #9: Grading is not based on a curve. Curved grades compare students with others in their grade level...not against mastery. Instead, grades are based on a student's demonstration of knowledge and skill scored against a set of established criteria in a rubric. Grades are used for documenting progress, providing feedback, and guiding instructional decisions.

No Zero Policy #10: Zeros are never used. A student who attempts the assignment and fails is to receive a failing grade of 62% Doesn't Meet Expectations (DME). Students will receive a Not Handed In (NHI 54%) for work not handed in. Zeros skew the grade to a point where its accuracy is distorted which in the 100 point scale results in inaccurate grades. At Buffett, when zeros are turned into 54% in our grade books, we are not giving students something for doing nothing. We're adjusting the grade intervals so any averaging we do is mathematically justified and, even more important, any grade we determine from the pattern of grades is a valid indicator of mastery. We know from best practices that a student who receives a zero will automatically have an inaccurate overall class grade.

Note: A zero mathematically over emphasizes the value of failing by at least five times. Just as we would never have an A worth five times as much as any other grade with a scale for A of 100% - 31%, we will not have a scale for F that is equal to 69% - 0%.

Descriptive feedback and *Posted Grade Policy #11*: Grades will be posted every other week and descriptive feedback with rubrics will be provided on 75% of all assignments. Students will chart their progress. Parents may view their students grades at anytime via our grading website. Teachers will post all grades. For families who do not have email access teachers may print and mail progress reports, or send progress reports home with students, or call parents of students who do not receive email.

***Quantity of Homework and Assignments Policy #12*: Students will have 10-15 minutes of homework per night times their grade level. Generally speaking 5th graders will have 50-75 minutes, 6th graders 60-90 minutes, 7th graders 70-105 minutes, and 8th graders 80-120 minutes. Fifteen or more assignments will be recorded in Infinite Campus each quarter in all classes except PE and music. PE and music courses will have 8 or more assessments or assignments each quarter. Daily reading course will have 30 per quarter.**

Buffett OPS Grading Scale

A = 100% – 93%

B = 92% – 85%

C = 84% – 78%

D = 77% – 70%

F = 69% – 63%

DME= 62% (Doesn't Meet Expectations)

NHI= 54% (Not Handed In)

Buffett Grading Policy Reference Tables Weighting and Number of Assessments Per Quarter

| Assessment Categories & Weighting | Interdisciplinary | Daily Reading | Cooperative Arts | PE / Music |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Practice 10% | 7-10 or more homework and practice | 14-20 or more homework & practice | 4-9 or more homework and practice | 2-4 or more practice |
| Formative 35% | 5-9 or more formative | 10-18 or more formative | 9-11 or more formative | 5-6 or more which includes practice and participation |
| Summative 55% | 3-4 or more summative | 6-8 or more summative | 2-3 or more summative | 1-2 more summative may include concerts |
| Total Number of Quarterly Grades | 15-23* | 30-46* | 15-23* | 8-12* |

*Reading 5/6/7 courses that meet daily will have 30 grades per quarter as a minimum.

*1st Quarter grades may have a fewer number of assignments due to the time spent teaching procedures and routines at the beginning of the school year.

Buffett Grading Scale / CRT Grading Scale

| Percents | Grade | CRTs In IGPro | Percent Value for CRT | Grading Terms |
|----------|-------|---------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 100%-93% | A | ADV | 95 Please use the exact CRT raw score that has been calculated for each CRT. The district "base" numbers are on the left. | |
| 92%-85% | B | PROF | 86 | |
| 84%-78% | C | PROG | 79 | |
| 77%-70% | D | BEG | 71 | |
| 69%-63% | F | | | |
| 62% | | | | Doesn't Meet Expectations (DME) |
| 54 % | | | | Not Handed In (NHI) |

Minutes of Homework Per Night

| Grade | Minutes per Night | Minutes per Night with a Reading Assignment |
|-------|-------------------|---|
| 5 | 50 minutes | 75 minutes |
| 6 | 60 minutes | 90 minutes |
| 7 | 70 minutes | 105 minutes |
| 8 | 80 minutes | 120 minutes |

*Interdisciplinary team teachers will collaborate to coordinate homework assignments.

Updated August 14, 2009