

Grading Practices Update

April 2, 2025



Purpose

Provide the Board of Education with an update on grading practices in CVUSD, including progress made and teacher perspectives

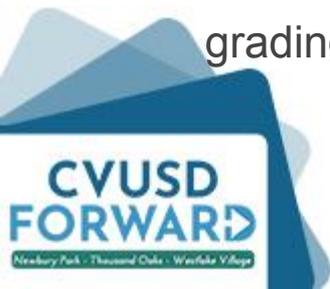


Pertinent CVUSD policies

- *The Superintendent or designee shall establish a uniform grading system based on standards that apply to all students in that course and grade level. Principals and teachers shall ensure that student grades conform to this system. Teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians how student achievement will be evaluated in the classroom. ([CVUSD Board Policy 5121](#))*
- *A teacher shall base a student's grades on impartial, consistent observation of the quality of the student's work and his/her mastery of course content and district standards. Students shall have the opportunity to demonstrate this mastery through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, homework, tests, projects, and portfolios, and/or class discussion as appropriate. Other elements that are not a direct measure of knowledge and understanding of course content, such as attendance, effort, student conduct, and work habits, shall not be factored into the academic grade but may be reported separately. ([CVUSD Board Policy 5121](#))*
- *The teacher of each course shall determine the student's grade. The grade assigned by the teacher shall not be changed by the Board or the Superintendent except as provided by law, Board policy, or administrative regulation. ([CVUSD Board Policy 5121](#))*

Key Background

- **Spring 2021:** Board of education established a goal for an equitable secondary grading policy.
- **Fall 2022:** Initial teacher training on mastery grading principles. Teacher-led book studies at some school sites on "Grading for Equity" (Feldman).
- **2022-2023:** Pilot implementation of equitable grading strategies across secondary school sites and in individual teacher classrooms.
- **Feb 2023:** Teacher presentation to the Board on mastery grading.
- **Spring 2023:** UACT townhall for teacher-driven grading reform.
- **2023-2024:** Ongoing secondary training and collaboration.
- **2023-2025:** Additional Grades 3-12 professional learning and collaboration on grading pillars.



Three Grading Pillars:

Accurate

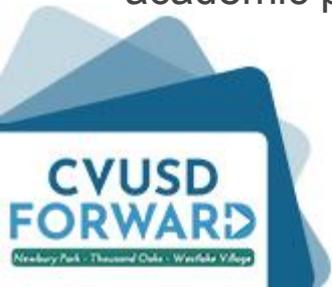
“Grading must use calculations that are mathematically sound, easy to understand, and correctly describe a student’s level of academic performance.”

Bias-Resistant

“Grades should be based on valid evidence of a student’s content knowledge, and not based on evidence that is likely to be corrupted by a teacher’s implicit bias or reflect a student’s environment.”

Motivational

“The way we grade should motivate students to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset, and give students opportunities for redemption. The way we grade should be transparent and understandable that every student can know her grade at any time and know how to get the grade she wants.”



Districtwide Actions Taken This Year

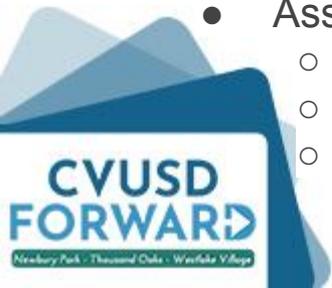
- Pillars of grading presentation to all CVUSD administrators
- CVUSD Grading Practices [Memo](#)
 - Distributed to all teachers and administrators August 20, 2024
 - Administrative Regulation updates
 - Focus on Accurate, Bias-Resistant, and Motivational
 - Clarification on “mastery-based grading”
 - Timeline and plans for this school year
- Teacher Support
 - Q tips included in each monthly Technology TOSA newsletter, including tips for implementing accurate, bias-resistant, and motivational grading practices in Q Gradebook.
 - Facilitating discussion in Math Framework training on the intersection of grading practices and the new Math Framework, such as flexible assessment.
- Parent/family engagement - DELAC

Elementary Actions

- Grade 3 transitioning from a letter-based report card to a numeric based report card
 - Committee of Grade 3 Teachers, UDL TOSA, Math TOSA
 - Identified standards for reporting
 - Creating assessments for standards
 - March 17, 2025 updates for Grades 3-5 and feedback
- The new Grade 3 report card will report progress on standards based on a 4 point scale.
 - 4 = Exceeds Standard
 - 3 = Meets Standard
 - 2 = Approaching Standard
 - 1 = Not Meeting Standard
- Grades 4-5 learning focusing on four main shifts from traditional grading
 - Avoiding zeros, even for missed assignments
 - Weighting more recent performance more heavily
 - Using 1-4 scales on work and assessments to indicate standards progress
 - Allowing retakes and redos to show standard mastery

Secondary Actions

- Secondary Principal resource folder for grading best practices
 - Fairness, Accuracy and Motivation
- Analysis of D/F lists at Quarter and Semester marking periods
 - All Students and Subgroup Data (ML, Students with IEPs, Foster/McKinney Vento, Hispanic)
 - UDL
- Foundations of Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
 - Know, Show, Grow, Glow
 - Essential Standards
 - Common Formative Assessments
 - RTI and Enrichment
- Assessments
 - Review of grading practices through Department PLCs
 - Departmental policies for make ups, retakes and late work
 - Minimal Grading (0-4 Scale), Sequoia Middle School IB Grading Scale (1-8)

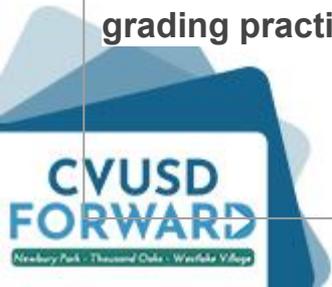


Grade Span Distribution Over Time

| | 2021-2022 | | 2022-2023 | | 2023-2024 | | 2024-2025 | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | <i>A, B, C</i> | <i>D, F</i> |
| <i>Total Elementary</i> | 88.7% | 11.3% | 89.6% | 10.4% | 89.9% | 10.1% | 90.2% | 9.8% |
| <i>Total MS</i> | 89.5% | 10.5% | 90.3% | 9.7% | 91.9% | 8.1% | 91.9% | 8.1% |
| <i>Total HS</i> | 89.3% | 10.7% | 90.1% | 9.9% | 91.5% | 8.5% | 91.4% | 8.6% |

Measuring Implementation: Secondary Teacher Survey

| | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 | Spring 2025 |
|--|---|---|---|
| Number of survey responses | 165 teachers | 151 teachers | 129 teachers |
| How many teachers report changing their grading practices to align with mastery grading concepts? | 83% | 81% | 100% |
| What's been the most helpful for teachers to understand mastery grading practices? | <p>Learning from individual colleagues using these practices (68%)</p> <p>Discussions as a department (61%)</p> <p>My own research and learning (39%)</p> | <p>Discussions as a department (66%)</p> <p>Learning from individual colleagues using these practices (61%)</p> <p>My own research and learning (51%)</p> | <p>Discussions as a department (59%)</p> <p>Learning from individual colleagues (54%)</p> <p>My own research and learning (54%)</p> |



Measuring Implementation: Secondary Teacher Survey

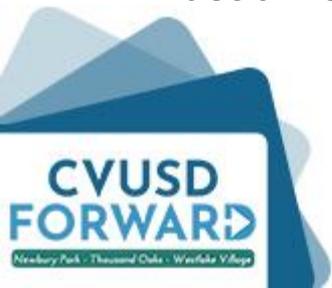
| | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 | Spring 2025 |
|--|---|---|--|
| Which grading for mastery practices have teachers implemented or attempted? | <p>Allowing for retakes and redos (76.6%)</p> <p>Accepting late work without a grade penalty (67.2%)</p> <p>No extra credit (52.6%)</p> <p>Minimum grade of 50% (51.8%)</p> <p>Excluding student participation and effort from grades (47.4%)</p> | <p>Allowing for retakes and redos (74.6%)</p> <p>Accepting late work without a grade penalty (62.3%)</p> <p>No extra credit (53.3%)</p> <p>Excluding student participation and effort from grades (51.6%)</p> <p>Minimum grade of 50% (47.5%)</p> | <p>Allowing for retakes and redos (77.5%)</p> <p>Accepting late work without a grade penalty (69%)</p> <p>No extra credit (50.4%)</p> <p>Excluding student participation and effort from grades (48.8%)</p> <p>Minimum Grading 50% (59.7%)</p> |

Measuring Implementation: Secondary Teacher Survey

| | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 | Spring 2025 |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>How do teachers generally describe the student impact of these changes to grading practices?</p> | <p>Student grades are MORE representative of their knowledge and understanding of standards-based content (43.1%)</p> <p>Students generally have the SAME motivation (40.9%)</p> <p>Student letter grades have NOT CHANGED much since I've implemented the above practices (38.7%)</p> <p>Student letter grades are generally HIGHER (31.4%)</p> | <p>Students generally have the SAME motivation (46.7%)</p> <p>Student grades are MORE representative of their knowledge and understanding of standards-based content (41%)</p> <p>Student letter grades have NOT CHANGED much since I've implemented the above practices (41%)</p> <p>Student letter grades are generally HIGHER (32.8%)</p> | <p>Students generally have the SAME motivation (43.2%)</p> <p>Student grades are MORE representative of their knowledge and understanding of standards-based content (44%)</p> <p>Student letter grades have NOT CHANGED much since I've implemented the above practices (36%)</p> <p>Student letter grades are generally HIGHER (41.6%)</p> |

Additional Teacher Survey Responses

- Concern about the inconsistent implementation among teachers
- Increased workload associated with providing multiple assessment opportunities in a mastery-based grading system
- Decline in student motivation to complete homework and classwork when grades are primarily based on assessments
- Gap in understanding between new grading practices and parent/student expectations
- Concerns about grade inflation and real world preparation for accountability and deadlines

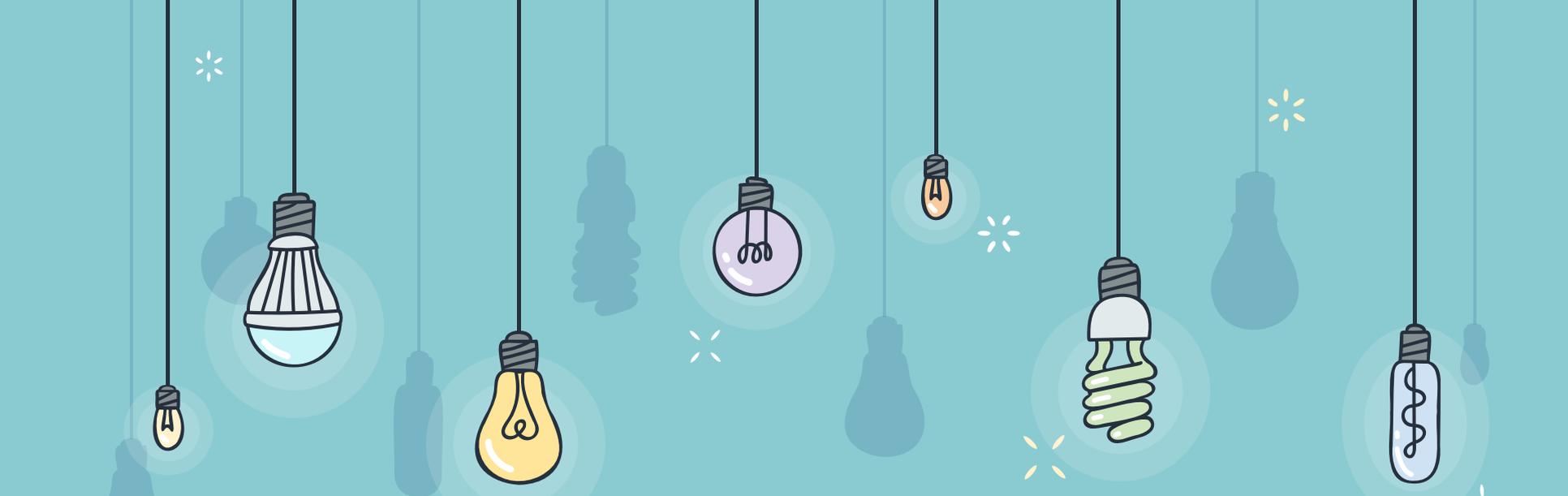


CVUSD Teacher's Perspective:

Karin Hochevar - Sequoia Middle School

David Pulsipher - Westlake High School



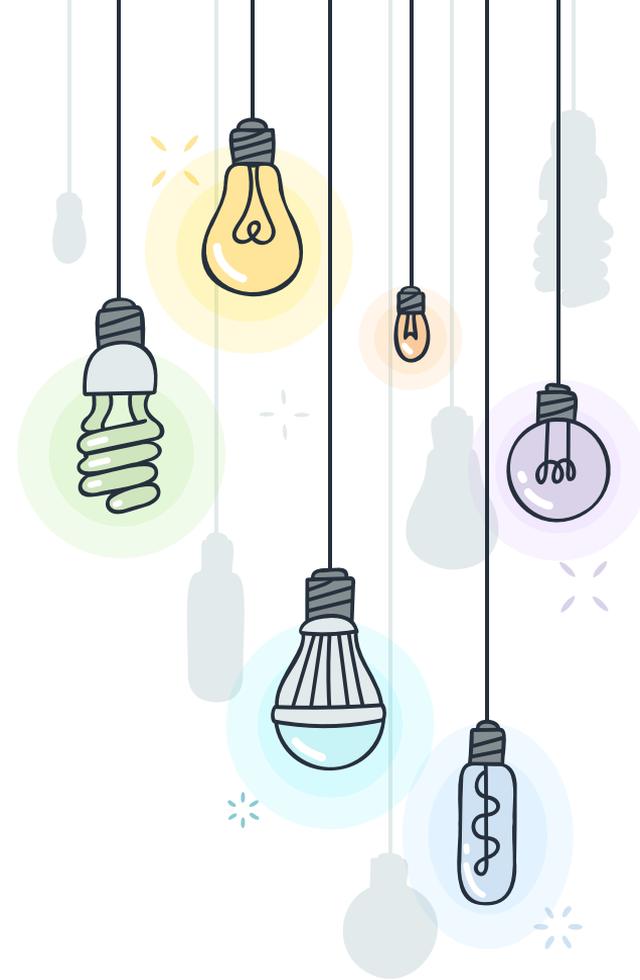


GRADING FOR EQUITY

KARIN HOICHEVAR, M.ED.
SEQUOIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

LOOKING AT ASSESSMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF:

- ✦ + Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - removing barriers for students so everyone can access the curriculum
- + Impact Teams - using rubrics to accurately assess student learning
- + Checking our own bias and removing the subjectivity while grading



PRACTICES I'VE CHANGED IN MY CLASSROOM

Old practices

Grading practice work

Grading participation

Grading community service

Giving extra credit

Deducting points for late submission

Giving points for bringing materials

New practices

Grade summatives

Grade standards

Accept late work



IB 1-8 GRADING SCALE



IB

Grade

8

A

8-7: Sophisticated

7

A-

6

B

5-6: Clear, competent

5

C+

4

C

3-4: adequate

3

D+

2

D

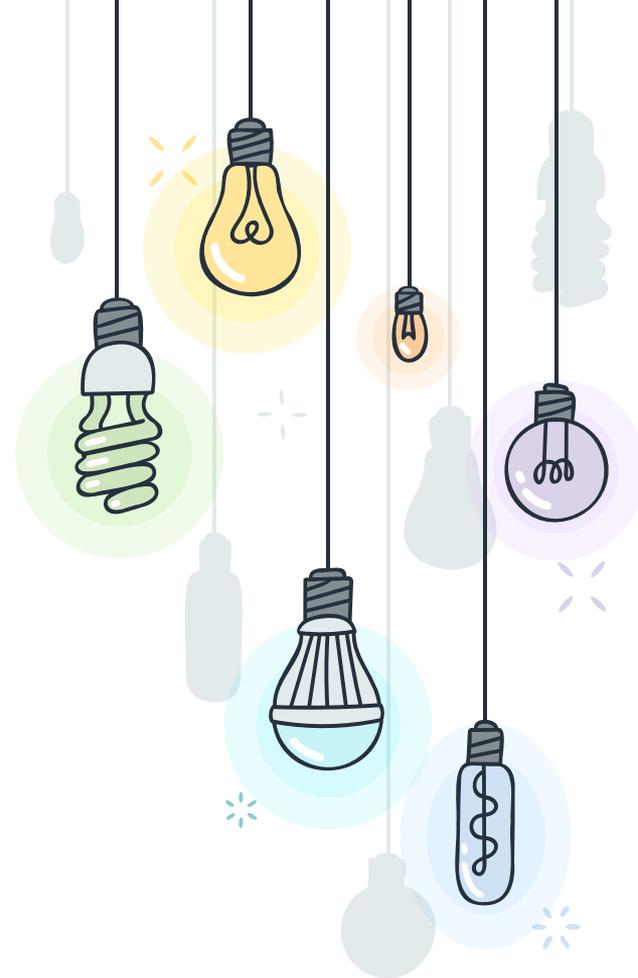
1-2: limited, minimal

1

F

0

Incomplete/no work submitted



The pros of using the 1-8 grading scale are:

- a more accurate gradebook
- higher student motivation
- more objectivity, removing bias
- focus on learning, not grades



The cons of using the 1-8

“grading scale are:

- It takes time to change our teaching and grading practices
- Q doesn't work with 1-8 scale
- Some teachers and parents have a fixed mindset of what grading should look like



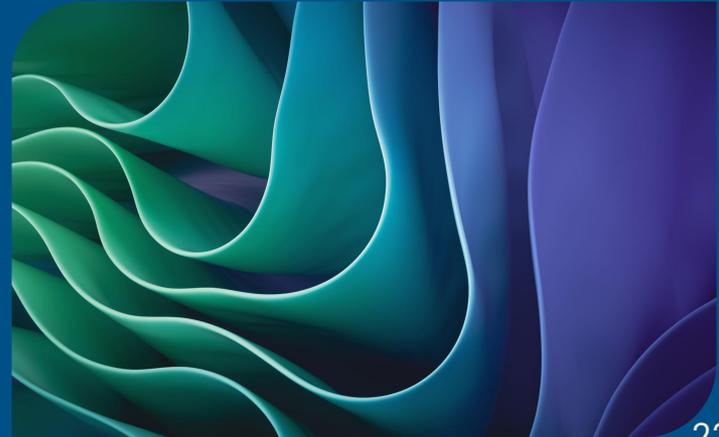
“ We want grading to be truthful, dignifying our students by telling them exactly where they are academically and what they need to be successful (Feldman 2022).



Connections with Grading for Equity & UDL through PLC



David Pulsipher,
Westlake High School



Agenda

- **Why Grading for Equity?**
- **Our Journey...**
- **Connecting UDL & Grading for Equity**
- **How PLCs Support This Work**
- **Next Steps**
- **Future Impact on Students & Teachers**

Why Grading For Equity

- Traditional grading often reflects behavior and compliance over learning.
- Grading for Equity (GFE) promotes fairness, accuracy, and motivation.
- Supports diverse learners by reducing bias and increasing transparency.

Our Journey...

- 2022:
 - Grading For Equity Introduction
 - Grading For Equity Book Study
 - Incorporate Easier Suggestions
 - Minimum Grade, Revised Grading Scale, Grade Summative Assessments, Remove Grades For Behaviors
- 2023:
 - WASC visit identify goals focusing on PLC time
- 2024:
 - Began CAPS Training
 - Shift to Ensuring Student Learning
 - Revised Mission Statement
 - “Westlake High School utilizes a student-centered approach to bring high levels of learning to all our students.”
 - Professional Learning Teams focused on Identifying Essential Standards creating a Guaranteed and Viable curriculum for all students

Connecting UDL & Grading for Equity

- **UDL (Universal Design for Learning)**
 - Ensures multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.
- **Grading for Equity Principles (Accuracy, Bias Resistance, and Motivation)**
 - Align with UDL focus on student-centered learning.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**
 - Help integrate these frameworks into daily instruction and assessment.

How PLCs Support This Work

- PLCs foster collaboration among educators to refine grading practices.
- Teachers analyze data, share strategies, and ensure consistency.
- Encourages a growth mindset and continuous improvement.

Next Steps

1. Continue work to effectively implement and refine PLC process to shift focus from teaching to learning
2. Common Grading Practices are a natural part of effective PLCs
3. PLC work to identify essential standards
4. Common Formative Assessments
(Assessment *for* learning vs *of* learning)
5. Discussions of Grading Practices occur organically in PLTs

Future Impact on Students & Teachers

- **Students:** Increased confidence, ownership of learning, and equitable outcomes
 - Correspond to the why's of Grading For Equity
- **Teachers:** More meaningful feedback, improved assessment alignment, and stronger collaboration
 - Common Formative Assessments, Essential Standards, Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, Shift Focus On Student Learning

Questions?

