

Grading for Learning at Lincoln High School 2015-16 Update

August 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Beginning this year, Lincoln High School will implement a change in our grading system. This letter is one of a variety of ways we would like to provide information that explains this change. Our primary purpose for grading is to communicate academic progress to students, their families, employers, and post-secondary institutions. A grade should reflect what a student knows and is able to do in a course. The new grading system, called **Grading for Learning**, better reflects the standards-based instruction and assessment with which our teachers and students work every day.

Non-academic factors are valuable, but will not be communicated in the academic student grade. This includes attendance, attitude, and behavior in class unless specifically outlined within the content area core standards. Grading through the use of formative and summative assessments will be reported through established standards and learning targets. The goal of learning is to master the content and not be in competition with other students. With the emphasis on grading based upon learning targets, we feel strongly that the emphasis shifts to content mastery.

There are many reasons for this change:

- To prepare students for state assessments and new scoring methods.
- To ensure consistent expectations, grading policies, and teaching practices across courses.
- To help teachers and students focus on established standards in their learning.
- To enable our students to meet course requirements to receive high school credit and meet college entrance requirements, which have become much more rigorous.
- To close the gap between our knowledge of grading and reporting methods and common practice.
- To provide feedback regarding each student's proficiency level, allowing the teacher to better address the specific needs of each student.

Our Grading for Learning initiative is part of an important and beneficial collaboration with Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School and East Junior High School. Our Grading for Learning initiative will evolve as we continue to focus on standards based learning.

There are four parts to grading:

1) A School-wide Grading Scale

Mastery	A	100-93	Beginning	D+	69-67
	A-	92-90		D	66-63
Proficient	B+	89-87	Does Not Meet Expectations	D-	62-60
	B	86-83		F	59-0
	B-	82-80			
Approaching	C+	79-77			
	C	76-73			
	C-	72-70			

- **Mastery:** Through extensive evidence, the student consistently surpasses the proficient level and demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the standards of the course.
- **Proficient:** The student regularly meets the standard and demonstrates a working knowledge of essential skills, while there are still some weaknesses, the strengths are dominant.

- **Approaching:** Though the student is occasionally demonstrating a working knowledge of the essential skills that encompass the standards, there are still more weaknesses than strengths.
- **Beginning:** The student shows partial understanding and has some skills demonstrated but with greater omissions and/or errors.
- **Does Not Meet Expectations:** The student has not yet demonstrated skills or understanding of the learning targets.

2) Common School-Wide Weighting of Grades

Summative assessments will be used to determine a majority of the student grade. They more accurately reflect what students really know and can do. Summative assessments are assessments of learning. The goal of a summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against a specific standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have high point values. *Formative assessments* are assessments for learning. The goal of a formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. Formative assessments are generally low stakes, which means that they have low point values.

Student grades will be determined based upon summative and formative assessments. Summative assessments will be weighted 80% of the student grade while formative assessments and/or practice will be weighted 20%. As a result, a grade will emphasize skill mastery more significantly than individual homework assignments. Individual instructors will identify the learning targets and assessment formats throughout the course in unit introductions.

3) Retake/Re-perform of Summative Assessments

Students will be allowed to retake/re-perform a minimum of two summative assessments per trimester up until the last 6 days of the trimester. A final exam/assessment for a course may not be retaken/re-performed. The student will follow the retake policy/re-perform ticket that each course has developed. Students who achieve below 80% (level of proficiency) will be allowed to retake or re-perform the summative assessment. The student will receive the highest score of the summative assessment up to an 80%. This is the minimum for retakes/re-performs. Individual departments may modify this for individual courses.

4) Extra Credit

There will no longer be individual extra credit assignments or extra credit points on assessments. Students may complete enrichment exercises as determined by the individual classroom teacher. Courses are not required to provide graded enrichment opportunities to benefit an individual grade.

**Please note that dual enrollment, transcribed, advanced standing, and some virtual courses may have grading practices that are different due to guidelines set by our post-secondary and virtual partners.

It is our hope that our **Grading for Learning** changes will provide a more meaningful representation of your student's learning and guide him/her in the endeavor to develop and improve!

On behalf of the LHS Grading Analysis Team,

Ronald A. Rasmussen
Principal

Teacher Only Section

Summative assessment retakes/re-performs during the last two weeks of the semester and/or final exam may be given only with teacher approval.

With department approval, individual courses may have a retake/re-perform policy that allows retakes for scores above 80% and allow for scores above 80%.