

# Liberty Middle School Grading Policy

2020-2021

## Grading Philosophy

Fairfax County and Liberty Middle School's grading philosophies are based upon best practice and research. In middle school, students are at varying stages of development and readiness and are continuously learning. We believe the purpose of grades is to provide information about a student's achievement at a given time and about learning trends during the school year. Additionally, we support that academic grades must be separate from work habit grades.

## Guiding Principles

At Liberty Middle School, teachers and administrators are dedicated to assessing students' knowledge using clear and objective measures and communicating the results of the measurements to students and parents.

To this end, grades must:

- Convey achievement of identified standards as outlined in the Fairfax County Program of Studies (POS)
- Be determined by achievement and not behavior
- Be based on high quality, complete evidence
- Be calculated appropriately
- Support student learning
- Be clearly communicated to parents and students on an ongoing basis

## Rolling Gradebook

A rolling gradebook is a cumulative gradebook in which final grades are determined by a combination of all assignments and assessments rather than the average of quarter marks. The grade posted at the end of each traditional quarter is a snapshot of a student's current progress in the course. Increased opportunities for students to show mastery is the primary benefit of a rolling gradebook.

## Grade Categories

Liberty Middle School has four grading categories:

- Independent practice
- Graded assignments
- Major assessments\*
- Minor assessments\*

The only retakable grading category schoolwide is assessments (major and minor). Departments and teacher teams determine which assignments fall under our given categories as well as what weight each of our schoolwide categories will carry. All departments and teacher teams will communicate their assignment descriptions and weights per the schoolwide categories in their syllabi.

### Independent Practice Purpose

Independent practice is an important part of the learning process and takes a different form per content area. When independent practice is done accurately and in a timely manner, it can increase understanding of concepts, strengthen skills, and improve achievement. Depending on the content area and individual student needs, some classes and content areas may assign more independent practice than others. Independent practice is only assigned when it is critical for student understanding or allows students to practice skills that build throughout the year.

### Reassessment Policy

Students who have not shown mastery on [assessments](#) have the additional opportunity to show mastery of content through teacher team developed reassessment in each curricular area. The goal is to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate learning that was not indicated as mastered on the initial assessment. Any student may participate in a reassessment. Teachers and teacher teams will determine the appropriate reassessment format or tool, type of preparation needed, and window of time in which to remeasure student mastery. Students will need to demonstrate that they have done the necessary preparation to be successful on a reassessment. The student's highest score will be entered into the gradebook.

### No-Zero Policy

Since zeroes mathematically misrepresent actual achievement and can negatively impact a student's motivation to learn, we maintain a No-Zero Policy. We believe a No-Zero Policy holds students accountable for their own learning and the completion of their work. Grades are recorded on a scale of 50-100%. No score below **50%** will be recorded. If a student earns below a 50% on an assignment/assessment, the original score earned will be recorded in the notes section of the gradebook.

### Work Completion Policy

We expect that all students complete 100% of their work 100% of the time. As a result, all teachers expect students to complete and turn in assignments even when late. Students will have two weeks to replace an "AB," "M," or "Inc" for an actual grade for full credit. Some teacher teams may give a late penalty (no higher than 10%) on select long-term assignments, for example: essays and projects. Teachers and teacher teams have discretion to provide flexibility of waiving late penalties or extending the timeline for extenuating circumstances or individual situations. A variety of interventions are available to assist students on Mondays and during teacher office hours.

- If a student is absent and has not completed an assignment, the teacher will record the grade as "AB" which indicates that the student was absent and must complete the assignment. An "AB" is calculated as a 50% point value. The AB code will be replaced with a grade as soon as the student submits the work they missed while absent.
- If a student has had the opportunity to complete an assignment but has not, the teacher will record the grade as "M" (missing work) which indicates that the student had the opportunity to complete the work but has not. "M" is calculated as a 50% point value.

Parents and students are advised to review ParentVue and ensure that any assignments receiving an "AB" or "M," are completed within permitted timelines.

## Honor Code

It is the expectation at Liberty Middle School that students take credit only for work that is their own. Deliberately copying or using the work of others is considered cheating, plagiarism, or forgery. Students are prohibited from sharing work or discussing assessments with others. Students who violate the honor code must accept responsibility for their actions and the accompanying consequences, which may include:

- A parent/guardian-student-administrator conference
- Retaking an assessment
- A lowering of the grade or receiving a 50% for the assignment/assessment
- An alternative assignment or recompletion of the original assignment/assessment

## Grade Scale and Descriptors

### **A (93-100%), A- (90-92%):**

Designates the status of a student who consistently demonstrates accurate and complete knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS Program of Studies (POS), and applies that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.

### **B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%):**

Designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of content and skills specified in the FCPS POS, with some improvement needed in accuracy and/or consistency in performance, applying that knowledge to solve problems in a variety of settings.

### **C+ (77-79%), C (73-76%), C- (70-72%):**

Designates the status of a student who demonstrates knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS POS, but requires additional practice and instructional experiences to acquire skills necessary to solve problems.

### **D+ (67-69%), D (64-66%):**

Designates the status of a student who needs significant practice and instructional experiences to acquire the knowledge of basic content and skills specified in the FCPS POS necessary to solve problems. As a final mark, it is not necessarily sufficient to meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level in a sequence of courses.

### **F (below 64%):**

Designates the status of a student who has not demonstrated the basic knowledge of content and/or skills specified in the FCPS POS and requires additional practice and instructional experiences in order to succeed.

**M:** Missing work which should be completed as soon as possible and within a two week period.

**AB:** Designates the student has been absent and has not completed the work but still has an opportunity within two weeks of their return.

## Work Habits

At Liberty, we support the separation of grades into two categories: academic and behavior (work habits). The work habits that we value at Liberty are based on FCPS Portrait of a Graduate attributes.

### *Communicator*

- Applies reading, writing, and listening skills appropriately
- Speaks clearly
- Uses electronics and technology responsibly

### *Collaborator*

- Demonstrates ability to work interdependently
- Respects different perspectives
- Participates responsibly

### *Ethical and Global Citizen*

- Class behavior respects self and others
- Acts responsibly and ethically

### *Creative and Critical Thinker*

- Engages in learning
- Use different strategies to learn and understand content

### *Goal-Directed and Resilient Individual*

- Demonstrates strong work habits
- Shows consistent effort
- Comes to class prepared
- Stays on task
- Completes work in timely manner
- Uses a planner to stay organized
- Displays a positive attitude

These work habits are stressed throughout all classes, but not assessed or included in academic grades. We recognize that responsible behaviors lead to academic success. Since student achievement is directly affected by work habits, teachers recommend that parents and students discuss and identify the behaviors that help and hinder their student's academic achievement.

**S:** S indicates that the student meets teacher expectations for being a successful student.

**N:** N indicates the student still has areas for growth.