

Article 6 – ACADEMIC MATTERS

Section 1 Purpose and Goals of Academic Achievement

The Pierce Public Schools Board of Education is committed to providing a quality education for all Pierce Public Schools students consistent with the school's mission statement. Effective, quality instruction by teachers is an essential means of meeting the District's mission of providing a quality education.

Section 2 Teaching to Student Understanding to Assure Learning

Each teacher is responsible for teaching in a manner to meet the mission of the District and to assure student understanding and learning of the principles and concepts to be presented to students within the curriculum adopted by the District. Teachers will model classroom instruction on the educational model implemented by the District and reflected in the teacher evaluation instrument adopted by the Board of Education. Teachers are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the instructional model and the principles of instruction set forth in the evaluation instrument. The administration shall provide periodic in-services regarding the instructional model.

State and federal laws and regulations have been enacted which require that students with certain needs be provided instruction and services consistent with those special needs. Examples include students who have been verified as in need of special education ("special education students"), students with other disabilities which impact the educational program ("504 students"), and limited English proficient students ("LEP or ELL students"). The District's policy is to comply with the state and federal laws and regulations in all respects. Teachers who are assigned special education, 504, or LEP/ELL students are required to provide instruction and services consistent with legal requirements and the requirements of Board policy and regulation.

Section 3 Instruction in the Curriculum

Teachers shall instruct students in the curriculum, including the use of curriculum materials, adopted and implemented by the Board of Education and as directed by the administration.

Section 4 Measuring and Reporting Academic Achievement

Grades and Grading. Measuring and accurately reporting the level of each student's academic achievement is of critical importance to students, parents, staff, the board of education and community. To this end, each teacher shall develop a variety of assessment instruments and techniques to measure student achievement in the curriculum adopted and implemented by the school district, record the results of such assessment, and report such results on Report Cards. Teachers should endeavor to measure student learning and understanding on a frequent basis during each quarter to provide an accurate evaluation of each student's academic achievement for that period. It is recommended that the teacher record at least two grades per week. It is generally preferable to give numerical grades for tests, quizzes, and daily work. **GRADES MUST BE RECORDED FOR ALL CURRICULAR AREAS.**

Recording Grades. Each teacher shall record grades in the Daily Class Record. A sufficient

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number of grades must be recorded in the grade book to justify all quarter and semester grades for each student. Please keep consistent and complete records. Teachers must be able to support and justify the grades that each individual student earns.

Grade Scales. Teachers are to use only the grading scales set forth by their building. Any deviation from the approved grade scales must be approved by the building principal.

The grade scales are expected to be used according to the following guidelines:

1. No other grade scales are to be used on official records or reports.
2. "Failing," "unsatisfactory" or equivalent terms indicate that student performance does not meet the minimum requirements established for the course. A final mark of "failing" or "unsatisfactory" in a credit-bearing course means that credit hours will not be granted.
3. The mark given at the end of each reporting period is considered an evaluation of the pupil's status at the time (for example, the final mark in a semester course is an evaluation of the pupil's status as of the close of the semester; not an average of two nine-week marks).
4. Teachers may exercise professional judgment in distributing marks. Marks are not expected to be distributed on a normal curve.

Reconsideration of Grades/Marks

Questions raised concerning duly assigned grades will be resolved cooperatively in a conference which includes the teacher(s) involved and the Principal. In the event a grade is questioned by parents or students, the parents/guardians and/or student may be included in the conference.

Failure to resolve the issue will result in a second conference involving the Superintendent or designee and the participants in the initial conference described above. The grades designated by teachers will not be changed unilaterally by the Superintendent unless the Superintendent determines that the grade is not consistent with the requirements of law, Board policy, or the best interests of the District.

Reduced Credit. Some students in certain situations may qualify for less than the number of credits normally granted for a course. Late entry or a serious injury at an awkward point in the semester would be a couple of examples. If a student is excessively absent from a class for any particular reason, a teacher may request reduced credit. All cases of reduced credit should be recorded on a "Reduced Credit/Error Summary" form and be approved by the Principal.

Transfer Grades. A student transferring into Pierce Public Schools at the fifteen-to eighteen-week time period will have all grades on transcript from an accredited school accepted for semester credit. Grades must be approved for credit by the Principal.

Reports to Parents. Grades and credit are assigned on a quarter (9 weeks) or semester basis (18 weeks). Reports are sent to parents at the close of each nine weeks during the school year.

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The grade reports are produced from information supplied by teachers and distributed to students at school or are mailed to parents.

All term or mid-quarter grades are calculated on a cumulative basis; i.e., the grade given at the end of the first quarter represents an evaluation of work done during that quarter, and the grade given at the close of the semester represents an evaluation of all the work done during the entire eighteen weeks.

The end-of-quarter and end-of-semester reports are directed to parents, not to students. Students probably know quite well how they stand in such areas as citizenship, attitude, cooperation, attendance, preparation of assignments, etc. The parents do not have this knowledge. If any such factors have significant bearing on the student's grades or their relationship with teachers, notes should be sent to parents. Arrangements will be made to place these teacher-written notes with the grade report forms. The notes may call attention to deficiencies, faults, or failures; or they may be commendatory in nature. If carefully prepared, they can be most valuable. Parents need to have information about areas of strengths and areas needing improvement and progress being made by their child. For their instruction, and for our ultimate well-being, if and when problems arise, it is essential that the reports be as informative as possible. Teachers should, in all cases, plan to keep on file duplicate copies of the notes which are sent to parents.

Please accept, cooperatively and professionally, the responses that parents may make subsequent to the distribution of term or mid-quarter reports. Parents are not always helpful or reasonable under these circumstances but they do need information and direction. Please encourage parents to discuss their student-centered problems with you and give them all possible assistance.

Mid-Term Progress Reports To Parents. Mid-quarter progress reports are prepared at or near the middle of the fourth and the thirteenth weeks of each semester. These reports will be mailed to all parents.

Section 5 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are a critical opportunity for teachers to dialogue with parents (or guardians) of students regarding student achievement and learning. To this end, semester Parent-Teacher conferences may be scheduled and held during the school year. Teacher attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences is mandatory. A teacher may only be excused from attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences in writing by the Superintendent. The schedule setting forth the dates and times for the Parent-Teacher conferences for the school years is included in the school calendar. Teachers are expected to be prepared for such conferences. Being prepared includes having completed grade books which include all student assignments, work or tests completed within five (5) days of the date of the Parent-Teacher conference.