



CITY SCHOOLS OF DECATUR GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

FAQ

Why are we making this change? Are our students' GPAs inflated so they are getting into colleges they shouldn't and failing?

The change is being made to align our grading practices more closely with established norms in academic grading. Assigning GPAs exceeding 4.0 for coursework other than IB, Dual Enrollment, or Advanced Placement could potentially create misrepresentations, as it may give the false impression that students are prepared for coursework levels they have not actually completed or experienced. This adjustment aims to ensure that GPAs accurately reflect the rigor of coursework undertaken, maintaining fairness and transparency in our grading system.

Additionally, for non-IB courses, where state-level standards dictate the curriculum and reporting, it's crucial to ensure alignment. By doing so, all students receive a high-quality education that meets state-mandated learning objectives.

Why are there different grading scales in CSD between elementary and secondary?

BHMS and DHS both utilize the 1-7 grading scale, while K-5 uses a 1-4 scale. It's worth noting that elementary scales, especially at the K-2 level, tend to be different from the scales commonly used in middle and high schools. The primary reason for this variation in grading scales between elementary (K-5) and middle/high school (BHMS and DHS) stems from the developmental differences in the students and the educational goals at these different stages. Any potential adjustments to this configuration can be considered for future revisions which would take place under the framework of an established board policy on grading.

Is the purpose of the grading changes to reduce student GPAs?

The objective is to align the assignment of GPAs with the level of coursework wherein students are enrolled. In advanced (college level) coursework, students will retain the ability to earn up to a 5.0 GPA. While in general (college prep) coursework, students can achieve a maximum of 4.0. This adjustment ensures a more accurate reflection of the rigor and difficulty of the courses taken.

Is the new grade scale retroactive for students enrolled now?

The adjustment will only impact future grades and will not retroactively alter previous grades. The grading scale remains 1-7; however, for classes not classified as advanced content classes, students will be unable to achieve a GPA exceeding 4.0. This modification ensures consistency in GPA calculations and accurately reflects the level of coursework undertaken by students.



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Why are we still using a 1-7 scale, when teachers are only grading standards. Are we no longer an IB school?

Being an IB school while having students not enrolled in the IB Diploma Programme means you operate with a diverse student body and a mix of different educational programs. In such a setting, it's essential to acknowledge and operate under requirements and standards that apply to the different designs of coursework.

For non-IB courses, where state-level standards dictate the curriculum and reporting, it's crucial to ensure alignment. By doing so, all students receive a high-quality education that meets state-mandated learning objectives.

Why does there appear to be no distinction made between grades in the 80-89 range and those in the 90-100 range?

In numerous school districts, the standard grading convention is to consider a score between 100 and 90 as an "A," and a score between 89 and 80 as a "B." This practice is based on the idea of creating a broader range for what qualifies as an "A" when utilizing a wide 1-100 grading scale. On the DHS scale, a 6 and 7 qualifying as an "A" reflects this practice.

The rationale behind this broader range is to acknowledge that, on a 1-100 scale, there can be a significant variation in students' performance, and it might not be realistic or meaningful to assign a specific numeric cutoff for each letter grade. Any potential adjustments to this configuration can be considered for future revisions which would take place under the framework of an established board policy on grading.

Why are the incremental levels on the 1-7 scale not the same? Why is the scale not in .5 increments? The 3.25 has been a historical designation used at DHS for a 5. We delayed making other distinctions until we had an opportunity to gather input from the entire community and formulate a comprehensive policy. Any potential adjustments to this configuration can be considered for future revisions which would take place under the framework of an established board policy on grading.

What is the point of keeping 7 on the scale at all?

This practice adheres to the assessment criteria outlined by IBO for the Middle and Diploma programmes, both of which employ the 1-7 grading scale. There is specific guidance provided for assessing criteria within these programs using this scale, ensuring consistency and alignment with IBO's standards.

How will the teachers be instructed to issue a 7 over a 6 for summative assessments? This seems like it needs some guidelines to help eliminate subjectivity since both grades are now weighted the same.

The grading approach for summative assessments within individual classes remains unchanged and consistent. Teachers are expected to continue designing rubrics that clearly define and distinguish the attributes between the two. This practice enables students to understand how their performance is evaluated. Specifically, for the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme, each subject has predefined mark bands associated with the 1-7 grading scale, which dictates the grade a student receives.



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Why even bother converting our 1-7 grading scale to a 4.0 GPA scale? If colleges are doing their own calculations to level GPA scales from high schools across the country using calculators, why not just leave it as 1-7 for DHS students? The colleges will convert it and there will be no perceived inequity or grade inflation.

Yes, many colleges, universities, and scholarship boards conduct their own GPA calculations and evaluations when assessing student applications. Considering this, CSD may explore the possibility of not having a GPA scale in future revisions. This approach would need careful consideration and communication with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition and accurate representation of student achievements in the college admissions and scholarship application processes. Any potential adjustments can be considered for future revisions which would take place under the framework of an established board policy on grading.

Even if this change doesn't affect past grades my child's GPA will trend downward, no matter what she does. I wonder if the board would be open to a grandfathering process holding all things static for current high schoolers, allowing any new changes to be implemented for the class of 2028 and higher?

Students who have achieved a GPA above 4.0 in their general education coursework will not be able to sustain that level if they exclusively take general education coursework. This is because they won't accumulate bonus points, potentially leading to a gradual decline in their GPA. However, these students will still have the opportunity to achieve or maintain the highest possible GPA for general education coursework, which is 4.0.

On the other hand, students who engage in a combination of general and advanced coursework, such as IB, AP, and Dual enrollment courses, will continue to have the chance to earn and/or maintain GPAs at or above 4.0. These advanced courses are weighted, allowing students to earn up to 5.0 for their coursework, providing an opportunity for higher GPAs in such scenarios.

While the concept of grandfathering grades may initially appear to be a means of avoiding disruptions, it can introduce significant challenges. One practical issue that arises when grandfathering grades is the potential for students in different grades to attend the same course and produce comparable work outputs, yet earn different GPAs for that work. This inconsistency can create confusion and may not accurately represent the students' performance relative to their peers in the same course. It underscores the importance of having practices and policies that are transparent and consistently applied to all students, regardless of their grade level or the timing of the grading policy changes. Such policies help ensure that their achievements are accurately reflected in their GPAs.

Has the new grading scale been vetted through a comparison study using current students' GPAs on the old grading scale vs. GPAs on the new grading scale?

It's important to note that students who achieve a score of "6" or "7" in their general education coursework will not be able to exceed a 4.0 on the Grade Point Average Scale (GPA). If



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students choose to exclusively pursue general education coursework and are beginning the year with a GPA above 4.0, they may experience a gradual decline since they won't accrue additional points for the general curriculum. Nevertheless, they still have the opportunity to maintain the highest attainable GPA, which is a 4.0.

Students who participate in a combination of general and advanced coursework will still have the chance to achieve and sustain GPAs exceeding 4.0. This is because advanced coursework offers students the opportunity to earn grades that are converted to a scale of up to 5.0 on the GPA scale. To illustrate, a grade of "5" in general courses equates to a GPA of 3.25, whereas a grade of "5" in an advanced course translates to a GPA of 4.25.

Does remediation need to be completed prior to a retake?

Reteaching provides an opportunity to identify and address any misunderstandings or misconceptions that students may have about the material. This helps ensure that students have a solid foundation of knowledge before attempting the assessment again. Reteaching ensures that students take an active role in their education by addressing their weaknesses and seeking improvement.

Can we list the situations where a retake is not feasible?

At present, retakes are generally an option for most assessments. However, in situations where assessments involve long-range projects, retaking may not be practical due to the substantial time commitment required for such projects. In such instances, the assessment may not only be about evaluating the final product but also assessing the student's ability to effectively pace and break down a larger project into manageable components. This aligns with the important skill of project management and organization, which is valuable in real-world scenarios where individuals often work on complex tasks that require careful planning and execution.

Is Managebac still useful in some way or can families uninstall it?

DHS has transitioned from Managebac to Infinite Campus, and there are no longer any educational or administrative purposes for it. Families can uninstall it from devices if they wish to. However, it's advisable to confirm that there are no archived resources or information that might be needed before uninstalling it completely.

Why was this not finalized prior to the start of this school year?

We acknowledge that clear communication regarding these changes should have been provided before the start of the school year. However, as we transitioned from Managebac to Infinite Campus for grading and reporting, it became apparent that additional modifications were necessary. These adjustments were essential to align with standard grading practices and ensure accurate reporting in compliance with state requirements.

Upon becoming aware of these changes, the new administration initiated outreach efforts to schools and the board. This outreach, which included information from the high school principal, aimed to inform stakeholders about the adjustments. We are committed to continuing this outreach, ensuring that every parent has the opportunity to learn about and understand these changes and the process moving forward.



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At DHS Curriculum night, it was very clear the teachers were confused about how the changes should work. Teachers were candid in saying so, as well as getting different answers to the same question from different staff. Will teacher training be forthcoming?

Yes. On-going collaboration between the leadership team at DHS and teachers is crucial to ensure a shared understanding of the guidance on grading practices. Importantly, the grading process for teachers remains unchanged, and they will continue using the 1-7 grading scale. How teachers assess and provide opportunities for retakes is consistent with what has been done.

When confusion or questions arise among teachers regarding the grading system, the school team stands ready to offer support and clarification. This commitment to communication and support helps ensure that teachers can effectively implement the grading system.

Is there a committee I can join to help work on implementing this new grading policy at CSD? When the school board initiates the policy development process, there will be clear communication regarding opportunities for engagement. This ensures that all stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, and the community, have a chance to provide input and participate in shaping the policies that will affect the educational experience and outcomes for students.