

Grading/Attendance Task Force Update

Karen Bechdol, Sean Fitzsimons

Task Force Co-facilitators

May 23, 2023

Task Force Membership

Task Force Facilitator: Frank DelSignore (District Admin)

Task Force Facilitator: Sean Fitzsimons (AHS Teacher)

Task Force Facilitator: Joe Slichko (AHS Operations Principal)

Craig Ascher, MS Teacher

Kim Baker, AHS Guidance Couns.

Kim Carioto, District Admin

Orly Contreras, AHS Teacher

Katie Dring, AHS Teacher

Tom Giglio, District Admin

Jim Grove, Teacher Union Rep.

Jen Houlihan, District Admin

Ashlyn Ledbetter, AHS Teacher

Eric Lewis, AHS Teacher

Karla McDowell, District Admin

John Rosenzweig, Attendance Teacher

Patricia Wolfe, District Admin

Margot Wyan, AHS Teacher

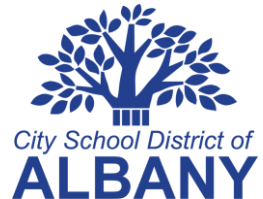


Task Force **CHARGE**

- Review current grading and attendance policies, procedures and practices
- Review current credit recovery procedures and practices
- Conduct open forums with secondary staff
- Review relevant data including passing rates connected to credit recovery efforts, grade changes, etc.
- Explore policy implication

Task Force Meetings

- Feb. 1 - Review grading and attendance policies
- Feb. 15 - Complete review of policies and discussion
- March 1 - Legal counsel present to respond to questions from the Task Force
- March 15 - Staff survey creation (Opportunities, Challenges, Suggestions)
- March 23 - Survey review - qualitative feedback sorted into categories (226 responses)
- March 28 - APEX credit recovery review and data review
- March 29 - Begin crafting recommendations
- April 5 - Continue crafting recommendations
- April 20 - Continue crafting recommendations
- April 26 - Finalized recommendations
- May 4 - Reviewed recommendations with the Board of Education



Findings: Policies & Legal Counsel

- Policies are consistent with NYSSBA guidance (model policies) with some variances (for example, no minimum attendance days for course credit)
- Guidance documents are consistent with the policies as written
- Policies generated many questions for legal counsel (minimum attendance, chronic absenteeism, daily vs. period attendance, seat time, impact of attendance on grading, etc.)
- Policy implementation & our practices contribute to challenging attendance and grading issues in our secondary schools
- Legal counsel answered questions at a subsequent meeting, noting any district's "local control" for policy and policy implementation
- Legal counsel noted that policies & practices can be revised



Findings: Survey Data

- Qualitative survey - staff were asked the same three questions for grading and attendance
 - What opportunities do our current grading (attendance) practices provide for our students and teachers?
 - What challenges do our current grading (attendance) practices pose for our students and for teachers?
 - What suggestions do you have to improve and strengthen our grading (attendance) practices?
- Feedback Categories:
 - Minimum 55
 - Expectations, accountability & consequences
 - Minimum attendance for course credit
 - APEX and summer school
 - Late work protocols
 - Hallway truancy
 - Overall concern about learning and proficiency

Findings: **SchoolTool Data**

Task Force was provided an extensive data review (2018-19 & 2021-22)

- ~20,000 records each year (courses, not students); about 17,000 completed records (courses with a final mark)
- Students earning a credit in a course with more than 15% absence
 - 2018-19
 - 20% of students with full-year enrollment
 - 37% of students with less than full-year enrollment
 - 2021-22
 - 32% of students with full-year enrollment
 - 44% of students with less than full-year enrollment
- Students earning a credit while failing three or more quarters
 - 2018-19: 0.5%
 - 2021-22: 2.4%

Findings: **SchoolTool Data**

Some factors contributing to earning credits:

- APEX
 - 2018-19: 2.4%
 - 2021-22: 1.6%
- Regents overrides
 - 2018-19: ~0%
 - 2021-22: 0.5%
- Final Mark overrides
 - 2018-19: not calculated
 - 2021-22: 2.7%

Findings: **SchoolTool Data**

Students earning a 55 in a course per quarter at AHS:

School Year	Total # Courses	Marking Period 1 - # Courses with 55	Marking Period 2 - # Courses with 55	Marking Period 3 - # Courses with 55	Marking Period 4 - # Courses with 55
2018-19	17159	1854	2614	3014	3439
2021-22	16616	2744	3536	3804	4657

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task Force **POLICY** Change Recommendations

1. **Eligibility for minimum 55% quarterly grade** (High School & Middle School)
 - a. Year 1 - Students with more than 20 (10 for ½ year course) absences in the quarter for a class would not be eligible for the minimum 55% and will receive their actual grade
 - b. Year 2 - Students with more than 15 (8 for ½ year course) absences in the quarter for a class would not be eligible for the minimum 55% and will receive their actual grade
 - c. Year 3 - Students with more than 10 absences in the quarter for a class would not be eligible for the minimum 55% and would receive their actual grade (5 for ½ year course)
 - d. Additionally, middle school students would only be eligible for the minimum 55% in quarters 1 through 3; middle school students will receive their actual grade in quarter 4
2. **Eligibility for summer school** - students will only be eligible for summer school when they have less than 28 total absences in the failing class
**** Safety Net - MTSS process to review individual cases**

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task Force **GUIDANCE/PRACTICE** Recommendations

3. APEX - Students can make up credit for a class for the prior quarter, but would need to maintain 85% attendance in the current quarter in order to receive that credit at the current quarter's end.
4. APEX - Students would earn a maximum of 65% upon successful completion of the required APEX curriculum modules for the prior quarter.
3. Partial absences in classes - Students would be marked present for a class if they attend at least 50% of the period or have a "known" absence.
4. Late work protocols - Each department would develop guidance and procedures for submitting assignments past their due date that are consistently implemented and shared with students and parents in the beginning of the year verbally and in class syllabi.
5. All marking period and final school marks would reflect the calculated averages on the grading platform. Teachers have the discretion to increase that grade based on established grading practices.
6. This language would be removed from the Grading Guidance Document: "Teachers may also consider using the minimum grade requirement (55%) as the lowest grade on individual assignments."
7. All cases of students passing a Regents but not the correlate course would be reviewed by the principal and discussed with the teacher of record.

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task force **MIDDLE LEVEL** Recommendations

10-12. Middle school concerns were raised on the topics of promotion, eligibility to participate in moving-up ceremonies, and eligibility for summer school. These issues were not studied as deeply as those above as they are largely related to the Promotion and Retention Policy 4750 which was outside the charge of the task force.

- a. The task force recommends that a review of the Promotion and Retention Policy 4750 and related practices take place, and all actions communicated to relevant stakeholders prior to the start of the 2023-2024 school year, if changes take place.
- b. In the interest of full transparency, the task force recommends that the timeline and process for such review be shared with stakeholders by the end of the 2022-2023 school year.



Remaining Work:

Stakeholder Feedback

- Teacher Survey
 - Emailed May 3. Responses due May 10
 - Solicits degree of agreement (scale of 1-5) with each recommendation
- Admin Survey
 - Emailed May 3. Responses due May 10
 - Solicits degree of agreement (scale of 1-5) with each recommendation
- Community Feedback
 - 5 community forums
 - **Monday, May 15** - virtual via Microsoft Teams - 6-7 p.m.
 - **Thursday, May 18** - virtual via Microsoft Teams - noon-1 p.m.
 - **Monday, May 22** - in-person, Hackett Middle School - 4:30-5:30 p.m.
 - **Tuesday, May 23** – in-person, Edmund J. O’Neal School of Excellence, 6-7 p.m.
 - *NOTE: Translators will be available in multiple languages for our English as a New Language students and families*
 - **Wednesday, May 31** - in-person, Albany High - 5:15-6:15 p.m.



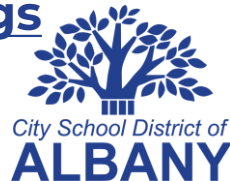
Community Feedback

Additional questions and comments will be collected using the Feedback form on our website through Wednesday, June 7

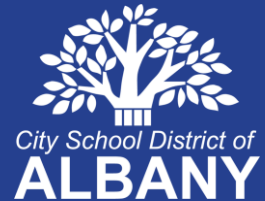
albanyschools.org/feedback

You also can visit our website for an extended version of this presentation, featuring additional detail about each recommendation covered in today's presentation:

albanyschools.org/news/1766505/grading-attendance-meetings



QUESTIONS?



CSDA Grading & Attendance Task Force **POLICY** Change Recommendations

Identified Concern	Recommendation	Rationale
<p>1) There is no minimum attendance requirement for students to attend school and class. Class period attendance is much lower than building attendance; some students are coming to school, but not always attending class.</p>	<p>In order to be eligible for the 55% minimum marking period grade, students must meet a minimum attendance threshold.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the first year of this policy's implementation, students may have no more than 20 class absences for a full-credit course or 10 class absences for a half-credit course, per marking period.• In the second year of this policy's implementation, students may have no more than 15 class absences for a full-credit course or 8 class absences for a half-credit course, per marking period.• In the third year of this policy's implementation, students may have no more than 10 class absences for a full-credit course or 5 class absences for a half-credit course, per marking period. <p>For students who are not enrolled for the entirety of a marking period, this threshold will be prorated to reflect a comparable percentage of their attendance.</p>	<p>This policy recommendation incentivizes attendance. The recommendation to phase in this recommended policy change allows students time to acclimate to the change. The district would also have the opportunity to evaluate the policy change and adjust, if needed.</p> <p>All recommended changes to policy and practice will include a mechanism to address exceptions and extenuating circumstances for students that employs a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) methodology and a shared-decision making approach inclusive of all relative stakeholders.</p>



CSDA Grading & Attendance Task Force **POLICY** Recommendations

Identified Concern	Guidance/Practice Change	Rationale
<p>1A) Middle School Only:</p> <p>Students at the middle school tend to be in attendance, but in the 4th marking period the minimum 55 grading policy results in some students who have already earned a passing grade for the school year to disengage from instruction and stop completing class assignments.</p>	<p>At the middle-school level, students who meet the recommended minimum attendance threshold will be eligible for a minimum 55% in marking periods 1, 2 and 3 only.</p>	<p>This will incentivize engagement in the 4th marking period.</p> <p>All recommended changes to policy and practice will include a mechanism to address exceptions and extenuating circumstances for students that employs a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) methodology and a shared-decision making approach inclusive of all relative stakeholders.</p>
<p>2) Students who are not attending classes during the year are attending summer school as a less rigorous pathway to course credit.</p>	<p>Students must have no more than 28 class absences for a full-credit course or 14 class absences for a half-credit course in order to be eligible for enrollment in a credit-bearing course in summer school.</p> <p>For students who are not enrolled for the entirety of a marking period, this threshold will be prorated to reflect a comparable percentage of their attendance.</p>	<p>The task force believes the district should reinstate the pre-COVID policy.</p> <p>All recommended changes to policy and practice will include a mechanism to address exceptions and extenuating circumstances for students that employs a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) methodology and a shared-decision making approach inclusive of all relative stakeholders.</p>

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task Force **GUIDANCE/PRACTICE** Recommendations

Identified Concern	Guidance/Practice Change	Rationale
<p>3) Some students are de-incentivized to attend classes during the school day due to current APEX practices. Of the 310 records that earned a credit by using APEX, 251 were chronically absent from said course, 81%. Attendance is currently reviewed reactively to finalize an APEX grade change.</p>	<p>Students are eligible to participate in credit recovery (APEX) in a given course for the previous marking period, if they maintain at least 85% attendance in that course during the current marking period.</p>	<p>This recommendation aims to have students prioritize attending classes during the school day, to eliminate compounding learning loss.</p> <p>All recommended changes to policy and practice will include a mechanism to address exceptions and extenuating circumstances for students that employs a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) methodology and a shared-decision making approach inclusive of all relative stakeholders.</p>
<p>4) Students participating in APEX for credit recovery are achieving passing grades without demonstrating proficiency for the coursework in which they are enrolled, as evidenced by their performance on summative assessments and/or Regents exams.</p> <p>The APEX grade is averaged with the previously assigned 55% minimum marking period grade.</p>	<p>Students participating in credit recovery (APEX) to ameliorate a failing grade from the previous marking period in a given course may earn a maximum marking period grade of 65% upon successful completion of the required APEX curriculum modules.</p>	<p>This recommendation ensures credit recovery grading practices do not incentivize students to pursue a pathway to course credit that denies them the advantages and experiences that live instruction delivered by a certified teacher in collaboration with their peers during the school year affords.</p>
<p>5) Some students are frequently tardy to class, missing instruction and contributing to hallway traffic that disrupts the school environment.</p>	<p>Students will be marked present for a class period if they attend at least 50% of that period or have a known* absence. If a student attends a class period for less than 50% of that period, the teacher will mark the student absent and note the approximate number of minutes attended.</p>	<p>The task force believes the district should reinstate this pre-COVID practice.</p> <p>Note: *Known absence is an internal coding for reasons such as music lessons, office appointments, etc.</p>

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task Force **GUIDANCE/PRACTICE** Recommendations

Identified Concern	Guidance/Practice Change	Rationale
<p>6) Some students are de-incentivized to complete assignments on time because current practice dictates there is often no penalty for submitting assignments past their due date, resulting in outcomes that do not serve them well (i.e., the impact of poor time management on stress levels). Some students submit a large volume of assignments at the end of the marking period, which tends to diminish the quality of their learning experiences because they are completing assignments well after the correlate lessons in class. This results in a focus on task completion as opposed to authentic learning, which is then often reflected in their proficiency relative to content and skills.</p>	<p>Each department will collaboratively develop guidance and procedures for submitting assignments past their due date that are consistently implemented across particular grades, courses, or the department as a whole. Procedures for turning in assignments past their due date will be reviewed annually by the department and approved by the Instructional Supervisor.</p>	<p>Inconsistent late work protocols contribute to a culture that does not incentivize meeting deadlines and do not prepare students to be college and career-ready.</p> <p>The task force recognizes that departments have varying demands pertaining to the timeliness of assignment completion and its impact on the quality of students' learning experiences.</p>
<p>7) The practice of inflating grades by automatically "rolling up" marking period and final marks from 62.5-64.9 to 65 misrepresents student performance as communicated by grades, ultimately misleading students by encouraging an inaccurate sense of performance and proficiency.</p>	<p>All marking period and final school marks will reflect the calculated averages determined by the district's grading platform. A calculated average may be increased by the teacher based on established grading policies and practices.</p>	<p>This recommendation addresses the past practice of rolling marking period and final marks from 62.5% and above automatically to a 65%.</p>

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task force **GUIDANCE/PRACTICE** Recommendations

Identified Concern	Guidance/Practice Change	Rationale
<p>8) In response to guidance in the Secondary Grading Handbook, some teachers assign a minimum of 55% to individual assignments and assessments, which results in cumulative grade inflation that misrepresents student performance as communicated by grades, ultimately misleading students by encouraging an inaccurate sense of performance and proficiency.</p>	<p>Remove “Teachers may also consider using the minimum grade requirement (55%) as the lowest grade on individual assignments within the gradebook.” from Secondary Grading Policy Guidance document, page 12.</p>	<p>Because of past practice, we are intentionally removing this language. While teachers may continue this practice, the inclusion of the language is sometimes perceived as leading.</p>
<p>9) Some teachers are concerned about the process by which students who achieve a passing grade on a New York State Regents exam, but do not pass the correlate course, receive course credit in accordance with regulations that afford principal’s discretion in this regard.</p>	<p>The building principal will review all cases in which students achieve a passing Regents exam score but do not achieve a passing grade in the correlate course and afford the student and teacher of record an opportunity to discuss and contextualize the student’s individual performance and circumstances. The building principal reserves the right to change a final grade.</p>	<p>Grade changes without a conversation with the teacher of record would contribute to a culture of mistrust and misunderstanding between teachers and administrators. Including existing policy language within our grading guidance document will increase clarity and transparency.</p>

CSDA Grading & Attendance Task force **MIDDLE LEVEL** Recommendations

Identified Concern	Guidance/Practice Change	Rationale
<p>10) At the middle level, students are being promoted to the next grade level, without earning a passing grade in any core classes, and often without attending summer school. This is resulting in diminishing skill and proficiency level at each grade and is de-incentivizing students from completing assignments and passing courses.</p>	<p>The task force recommends that a review of the Promotion and Retention Policy 4750, and related practices, take place and all actions communicated to relevant stakeholders prior to the start of the 2023-24 school year.</p>	<p>The task force suggests a more in-depth review of these concerns with all relevant stakeholders represented.</p>
<p>11) Some students are de-incentivized from passing ALL classes in grade 8 because the requirement was removed as a prerequisite for attending the moving up ceremony. Since COVID, students have been required to pass at least three core classes.</p>	<p>Furthermore, the task force recommends that the timeline and process used for the review be communicated to those stakeholders by no later than the end of the 2022-23 school year.</p>	
<p>12) Middle-level summer school accountability does not consistently require student attendance during summer school to successfully complete summer school.</p>		