

Parent Partnership Meeting 9/25/2017

Discussion topic: Grading Practices

There were 25 participants at this meeting.

Much discussion about the current status of grading practices at the high school. Three handouts were issued:

1. Grading Practice FAQ's, (pg 1-5)
2. Student Grading Practices at HVRHS (pg 6-7)
3. Athletic Requirements for Participation (DRAFT) (pg 8)

Next meetings: October 23rd & November 27th (both begin at 6:00pm)

Grading Practice FAQ's

1. I've heard that no one has to do homework at Housatonic. Is that true?

No. Teachers assign homework on a regular basis to reinforce learning from the classroom. However, homework does not count towards a student's final grade. Students are expected to complete the homework and any other practice materials they need in to be able to demonstrate mastery of the learning target on a summative assessment.

2. Why doesn't homework count towards students' grades at Housatonic?

Grading policy research suggests that having a greater focus on assessments than practice is a better way to increase student achievement. To use a sports analogy, homework is viewed as practice before a game. If you do not practice, you will probably not play as well as you can in the game. Homework still matters greatly and has a direct correlation to how students perform on summative assessments.

3. What is a summative assessment?

Summative assessments can be a test or exam, but could also be projects, presentations, oral discussions, etc. Summative assessments are given when a student has had sufficient time to meet the required standard(s) of a course.

4. *What is formative assessment, and what is its importance?*

Formative assessments describes all of the learning activities that inform all interested people about a student's progress toward achievement of an standard: the teacher, the student, and the parent(s)/guardian(s). The results of a formative assessment describe the student's progress toward the desired course standards. The teacher and student use the results of the formative assessment to make necessary changes in instruction and practice.

5. *What is NYP?*

Recognizing that all students are capable of meeting rigorous and high level standards in all of their course work, we will not allow students to elect to do poorly on assessments. So, when a student's work does not demonstrate mastery of the important standards of a course, the student will be assigned a grade of "Not Yet Proficient" (NYP).

6. *What happens if my child receives an "NYP" on an assessment?*

If a student earns an "NYP" on a test, it means that the student is "Not Yet Proficient" in that concept or skill. The teacher and student will determine a plan to help the student to become proficient with material they have not yet learned. This plan should include the work and practice the teacher and student deem appropriate to learning the material and a timeline for completion (no longer than ten days after the student learns of the NYP).

When the student has completed the work/practice within the timeline, they will be allowed to participate in a re-assessment activity.

7. Is it true that students can retake tests as many times as they want?

Schools are safe places in which students are provided with opportunities to learn interesting, important, and relevant content and skills. When students do not demonstrate that they have learned the content or mastered the skills, they should continue to work with a teacher until they can demonstrate that learning. If students do not successfully demonstrate the required learning on an assessment, they may participate in re-assessment activities after fulfilling the plan for the reassessment described above. If the student does not show mastery on the reassessment, they should work with the teacher to create a new plan for reassessment. For practical reasons, the faculty has determined that two re-assessments provides ample opportunity for a student to demonstrate mastery. If they have not demonstrated mastery by the end of those re-assessments, referrals for more intensive interventions will result in an effort to help students become proficient. It should be noted that due to the sequential nature of the learning standards in many courses, it could be very detrimental to a student's future success if they do not master standards in a timely manner during a given course.

8. Why is there no extra credit at Housatonic?

Extra credit is not awarded because we believe that a student's grade in a course should reflect the student's knowledge and skills that are germane to the course. Students are expected to practice with formative activities, learn the material, and then demonstrate their knowledge and skills on a summative evaluation. Instead of "extra" credit, students earn credit on the summative assessment.

9. *Doesn't student effort count for anything?*

We believe that all students can be successful in all of the courses they take. Therefore, their effort is invested in activities that will help them to master the important content and skills for the courses in which they are enrolled. Effort aids students in their mastery of the material that must be learned or the skills that must be developed. So, we do not need to grade a student's "effort," as their effort will result in successful demonstrations of their learning.

10. *Why did Housatonic develop this practice?*

We believe that a student's grade should reflect what they know, not what they did (or didn't do) to acquire that knowledge. Students must be aware of what they know and can do, and they must know what they don't know, so appropriate skills can be developed.

11. *My student does all of their homework and studies for hours. Why doesn't my student get A's on all the assessments ?*

The teacher and student can analyze the assessment results to determine the types of errors or misunderstandings that are occurring. Then, the student and teacher (or parent) can begin to think about the formative assessment activities in which the student demonstrated success and those in which the student may have struggled to inform their development of a re-assessment plan. It is also very important that students make a true effort at homework, not just see practice opportunities as things to get done while engaging in other activities. Students must devote quality time and attention to delivering their best work, every time. If students consistently underperform on summative assessments in spite of quality effort on the formative assessments, they can meet with their teachers during Flex Block to identify the study methods that can be improved.

12. How does the grading practice prepare students for life in the 'real world'?

Students will better understand the consistent need for producing quality work and that this work is continuous. Students cannot wait until the last minute to complete tasks and expect quality results. With clear timelines and expectations, students realize what it takes to "get the job done."

Students will better understand the expectations of colleges, universities, and trade schools since those grades are dependent on summative assessments.

Student Grading Practices at HVRHS

The following grading practice guidelines were developed from the belief that grades should reflect student achievement.

Therefore...

- ...graded assessments should reflect student achievement of course outcomes.
- ...zeros will not be included in achievement grades.
 - No score lower than a seventy (70) will be used in our grading scale.
 - Any assessment that does not meet minimum requirements (70 or above) shall receive a “Not Yet Proficient” (NYP) in the gradebook.
 - Students with an “NYP” should be scheduled for a Flex Block at least once a week until they have demonstrated proficiency in the course outcomes required in that assessment.
 - Any “NYP” that remains as an assessment mark at the end of a term will result in an “NYP” for the course, and must be completed in order to earn credit for that course.
 - Arrangements will be made with the course instructor or department head to demonstrate proficiency in those standards in order to earn full credit.
 - Students may opt to reassess, even if they met minimum requirements on the initial attempt. The highest score on the assessment will stand. Students seeking to improve their score will need to submit the Universal Reassessment Form.
- ...practice work should not be included in a student’s grade.
- ...students who do not demonstrate proficiency in a course outcome should be allowed additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
 - Proficiency is measured by a score of at least 70% on an assessment
 - Students must complete a plan for reassessment in order to be eligible for a retake (see below).
- ...students will be allowed to demonstrate the extent of their achievement through reassessment of course outcomes.
- ...the content of any assessment should not be a surprise to the student. The content of the reassessment shall be equivalent to the content of the original assessment.
- ...if student work is only completed outside of class, it cannot be considered a summative assessment; however, work that is completed outside of class and supported by continuing guidance from the teacher can be considered to be summative.

Practices that support the implementation of these policies:

- Students will have five days to submit the Universal Reassessment Form (from the date when that assessment is listed in PowerSchool) to explain their plan for reassessment. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the classroom teacher. Teachers will assign the assessment a “Not Yet Proficient” (NYP) in PowerSchool so that students know which assessments are eligible for resubmission.
- Up to two reassessments will be allowed, provided students satisfy the terms that were outlined on their reassessment form. If proficiency is not achieved after two reassessments the teacher should refer student for additional support through the SRBI process.
- Students must submit an artifact(s) of mastery on the due date for an assessment. If an assessment is not submitted, the student must submit the reassessment form that explains the steps they will take in order to complete the assessment.
- “Not Yet Proficient” grades should be resolved within ten days after the end of the marking period (or with a contract). NYP grades awarded at the end of the fourth marking period must have prior approval of the principal.
- Clearly define practice work (formative assessment - not graded) and summative assessments (graded) for students in advance. Practice work is defined as any task that leads to demonstration of mastery, or a task that follows concepts or skills first developed and discussed in class.
- Questions about whether an assignment constitutes practice will be handled first by the Department Head and then by administration if necessary.

Athletic Requirements for Participation (DRAFT)

To be eligible for a sport (per CIAC and HVRHS rules) a student must,

- have a current physical examination with completed forms (available from the Main Office) on file in the school nurse's office before the first practice,
- complete online registration through Family ID,
- have received credit for at least four (4) classes at the close of the school year preceding the fall season to be eligible for fall sports (CIAC Rule I.A),
- not received a NYP in two or more classes at the end of the marking period preceding the start or during the current season (or end of year for fall eligibility) (HVRHS Handbook pgs ***, 37),
- have not reached his or her twentieth (20th) birthday (CIAC Rule II.B),
- have changed his or her residence if new to the school (CIAC Rule II.C),
- have attended not more than eight (8) semesters unless granted a waiver by CIAC (CIAC Rule II.B),
- not play or practice with an outside team in the same sport while a member of the school team after the first scheduled game in any season (CIAC Rule II.F),
- always participate under his or her own name (CIAC Rule II.G),
- not receive personal economic gain because of athletic skill for participation in any sport (CIAC Rule II.G),
- participate in a minimum of ten (10) days of practice prior to competition (CIAC Section 4.6.H),
- not participate in or represent his or her school in more than one sport after the date of the first contest (CIAC Rule II.D),

Students must meet Housatonic's academic standards to be eligible to participate in athletics at Housatonic. When a student is not eligible at the start of a season, the student may practice with the team, but not play in contests, until the next distribution of marking period grades providing the student completes bi-weekly progress reports showing that he or she is currently meeting the academic standards (HVRHS Handbook pg 33). Students who become ineligible or remain ineligible at the time of distribution of marking period grades during any season may be permitted to stay with the team only with permission from the coach. School Administrators must approve summer school classes after checking for similarity of course content.