



SEPTEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER



Embracing Change

Every school year at HVRHS starts with excitement, energy, and a recommitment to the importance of learning. That is especially true this year as we transition to a **new daily schedule** and **grading practices**.

To assist our students with this evolution, we dedicated the first few days to making sure they understood how to navigate their new schedules and the Flex Blocks they will use to access extra help and enrichment activities.

As we start to operate in this **new daily schedule**, slight modifications will occur. One such adjustment is to separate Flex Block from the lunch period to make it easier for students to meet with teachers. Starting on September 7, Flex Block will happen before the lunch block, and students will begin to use “flex time” according to the schedule they design for themselves through the Enriching Students program. This web-based platform allows students to take responsibility for how they spend their Flex time by scheduling themselves to see teachers for extra help or intervention. Their PLP teacher reviews the schedule on Day 6, looking at students’ academic progress and making changes as necessary to get them the help they need for the following five days. We are looking forward to seeing how students use this time, and we will keep you apprised of the progress.

Grading Practices are another significant change this year; they are based on the philosophy that grades should reflect student achievement and that a student must meet a clearly defined level of proficiency to earn credit for having taken a course.

Any student who receives a grade below 70 on a major assessment (i.e., test, essay, project, etc.) will earn a “Not Yet Proficient” (NYP) mark in their gradebook. This mark is similar to an “Incomplete”: it must be resolved in order for students to earn credit in a course. More than just the average of work assignments, however, students must demonstrate proficiency on the major concepts of a course in order to pass. Central to this policy is the opportunity for

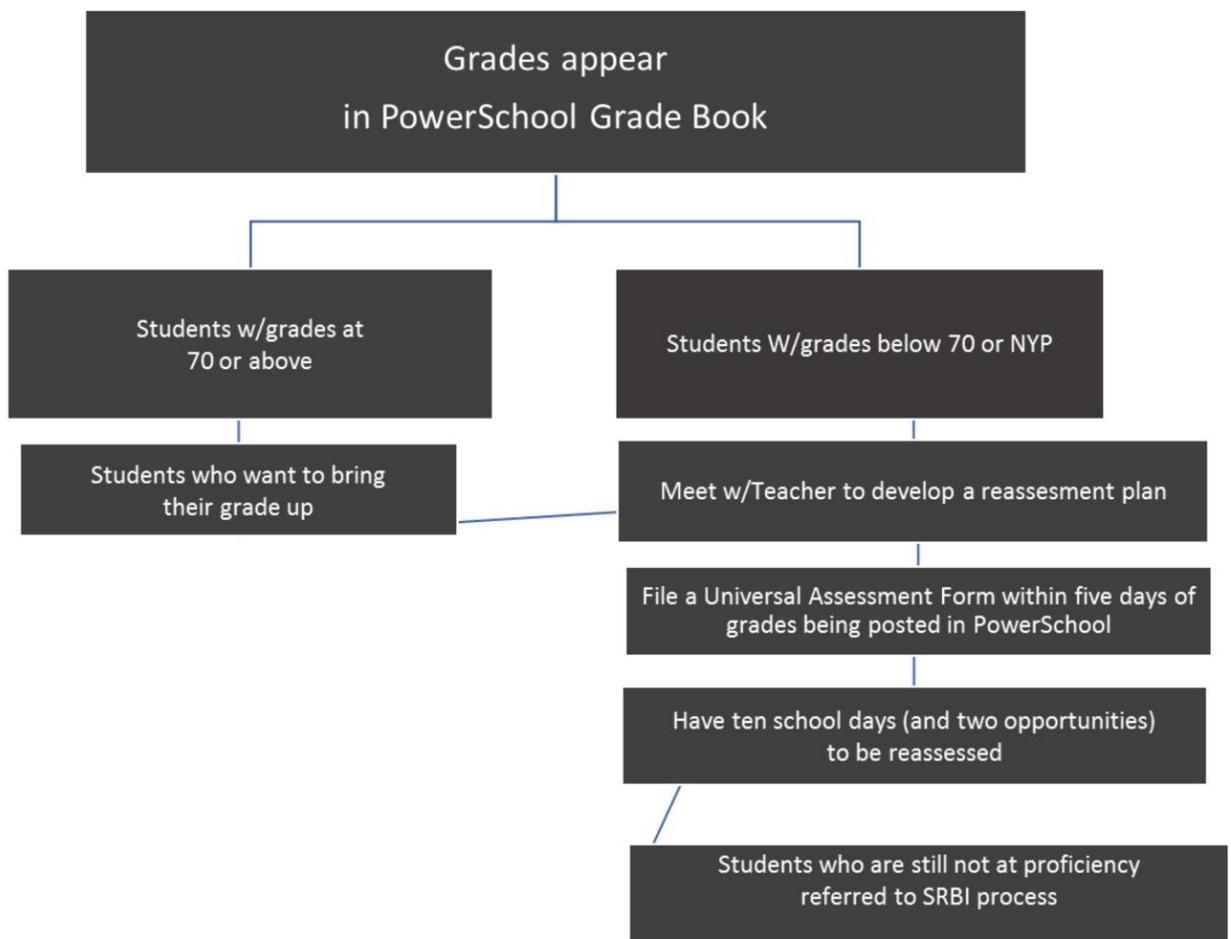
“reassessments”: additional attempts to meet course expectations after working with the teacher to address misunderstandings. Whether students are at “NYP” or at an 85% average, they may opt to reassess to improve their performance and understanding.

This approach fundamentally differs from the previous policy in its belief that students must master course concepts in order to earn credit. Using the former “average” approach, students may have passed a course, even though they had not understood some significant portions of the class. A helpful comparison is the medical model: we would not want to graduate a doctor who did not fully understand the nervous system, and we at Housatonic do not want to graduate a high school student who cannot effectively read, write, calculate, and problem solve (for starters!).

The details of how a student may remedy their NYP and demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency are detailed after the chart below. Please review this carefully and contact your child’s counselor or PLP Coach if you have any questions.

At HVRHS, faculty and administration are dedicated to improving every student’s comprehension and development; we also know the importance of inspiring our students to take an active role in their own growth. From freshman year to senior, we steward your teenagers toward developing a foundation of skills that will help them navigate their transition to college, trade schools or work, whichever path is in their unique future.

Overview of How “Not Yet Proficient” Works



HVRHS Student Grading Practices

September 5, 2017

Glossary of Key Terms:

Summative Assessment – a larger-scale assignment that addresses the most significant learning of a subject area

Formative Assessment – any non-graded practice task that follows concepts or skills discussed in class

Not Yet Proficient (NYP) - means the student did not meet the learning or performance expectations for a summative assessment. Numerically, this means they did not attain a course grade of 70 or higher.

Universal Assessment Form (UA Form) - is the paperwork the student needs to complete after receiving the NYP grade in order to develop a plan for reassessment.

Artifacts of Mastery – practice work, additional problems, or extra help that a student undertakes in order to prepare for a reassessment

SRBI Process – (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) a tiered model of assistance for students that is based on monitoring their performance throughout the year

How New Grading Practices will work:

- Grades of 70 or higher will be posted in the PowerSchool Grade Book
- Grades lower than 70 will be posted as “NYP”
- Formative assessments (practice work) will not be included in grading
- Students with an NYP at the end of the term will not receive credit for the course until they resolve that grade
- If a student wants to be reassessed for proficiency or to improve their grade, they must submit a UA Form within five days of course grades being posted in PowerSchool
- The UA Form is available through each teacher and will explain the reassessment plan the student and instructor have agreed upon to meet the standards originally laid out for the course
- Students may have two opportunities to satisfy the terms specified in the UA Form
- If proficiency is still not achieved after the second try, the teacher will refer the student for additional support through the SRBI process
- Artifacts of Mastery are to be submitted with the UA Form to demonstrate to the teacher that a student has prepared for a reassessment
- Students have ten days after the marking period or contract ends to complete the reassessment process
- Disputes are to be handled by the Department head and then by administration if necessary
- NYP grades awarded at the end of the fourth marking period must be approved by the principal

New This Year:

The Bridges Program

The Bridges program is an alternative school program being developed for students as another route to graduation. The program's goals are to ensure that these students receive academic, social, and emotional support while providing more individualized schedules and long term projects.

School to Career was designed to help students gain awareness of career possibilities, develop “soft skills”, assess student interests in career paths, and arrange and facilitate career exploration opportunities in the community. See attached for more details.

Faculty and Staff Members

Jonathan Bruno, Special Ed

Charles Francisco, Spanish

David John Douglas, Science

Christiane Olson, French

Mary O’Neill, School to Career

(Full bios and photos, on page A5 of the August 31st edition of the Lakeville Journal)

Freshman Orientation

Almost 95% of the incoming class of 2021 attended orientation before school officially began. It was their first opportunity to meet as a group, be introduced to upper classmen and faculty. While they were here, they toured campus, participated in team-building activities, and had a walk-through of their upcoming daily schedule.



Announcements

Message from the Athletic Director - All parking for athletic events should be in front of the school (not by the gym and not by the ag/art garage area). If anyone needs assistance getting to any of the fields, please contact her at amacneil@hvrhs.org or 860-824-5123 X164.

artgarage is open to all students from 2:30-5PM on Tuesday – Thursday per the late bus schedule. Two professional artists are always on premises to help students explore their individual creativity. Artist-Mentors include visual, ceramic, digital and fiber artists from around the Northwest Corner. Students are encouraged to pursue their passions and explore new ones. Permission slips available at www.facebook.com/groups/theartgarage and in the main office.

Drivers Ed classes start October 2nd, if interested contact The Next Street, www.thenextstreet.com, at 800-732-8090

Crop Walk will be on Sunday, September 21 at HVRHS, registration at 1:00 pm and the walk starts at 1:30 pm. Register your team at crophungerwalk.org/fallsvillage. There will be a meeting on Thursday, September 7th at 6:30pm at Trinity Church in Canaan to discuss this year's crop walk.

Calendar

9/5	artgarage opens: 2:30pm
9/7-8	Senior Portraits: 9am-2pm
9/14	HVRHS Open House: 6:30pm
9/19-20	Picture Day: 9am-2pm
9/20	Senior Parent Night in Room 133: 6:30pm
9/28	Late Opening: 10am

Save the Dates

10/23	Photo Retakes
11/1	Financial Aid Night Room 133
11/4	SATs at HVRHS
11/16	Auditions for Spring Musical
11/17	Turkey Olympics FFA Banquet
12/1	Ag Ed Holiday Sale Starts
12/15	Winter Concert