

KMS Parents/Guardians,



The purpose of this letter is to update and inform our community about some adjustments that have taken place this school year at Keokuk Middle School, after a lot of planning and research last school year, in terms of our grading practices. Currently, our science and math teachers are piloting Standards Based Grading - Standards Based Grading is an approach to grading that emphasizes achievement of the course standards and removes older punitive grading practices like including citizenship, attendance, behavior etc., all combined into one letter grade. We still value citizenship greatly, thus our attention and efforts with PBIS and KPRIDE, we are just separating citizenship marks from the academic grade so that we can focus our efforts, supports, and interventions more clearly on what students know and are able to do both academically and behaviorally. Our “pilot” of Standards Based Grading will not impact the current letter grading system that is visible through PowerSchool. However, it does change all of our teacher’s approaches and philosophies of what a grade represents at KMS. Much more emphasis will be placed on how students perform on their assessments where they will demonstrate their knowledge over the specified standards being assessed.

Here are the KMS Grading Practices agreed upon by all KMS Teachers:

GRADING PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of grading in the Keokuk Community School District is to communicate achievement status to students, parents and others. Grades are not rewards or punishments = they are communication of achievement and demonstration of knowledge over the Power Standards.

Secondary purposes of grading include:

- *providing feedback to students for self-assessment and growth*
- *encouraging student progress and self-monitoring of learning*

GRADING GUIDELINES:

1. *Entries in the grade book that count towards the student final grade will be limited to course or grade level standards. Emphasis will be placed on knowledge demonstrated on assessments.*
2. *Extra credit will not be given except for additional practice = it will not count towards the final grade.*
3. *Students will be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of classroom standards in various ways. Retakes and revisions of assessments will be allowed if additional student practice has taken place (or the missing practice work has been completed).*
4. *Teachers will determine final grade book entries by considering multiple points of data emphasizing the most recent data and provide evidence to support their determination. The “average” will not be the determining factor.*
5. *Students will be provided multiple opportunities to practice the standards through homework or other practice class work. Practice assignments and homework/related activities will be consistent with classroom power standards for the purpose of providing feedback.*
6. *Practice assignments, including homework, will not be included as part of the final grade – final grades are based on assessment achievement.*

Below are resources on Best Educational Practices in Grading. I encourage you to preview these as we at KMS and KCSD transition to a more appropriate grading system. Research shows this method of grading to be best practice in education for long-term student achievement and lifelong success.

Website - [Frequently Asked Questions About Standards Based Grading](#)

Article - [Making the Case for Standards Based Grading](#)

Website - [General Info. On Standards Based Grading](#)

Video - [Grading Smarter Not Harder Webinar](#)

Article - [5 Obstacles to Grading Reform](#)

As I mentioned at the Block Party, and I will mention again, learning should be hard work. If students are truly being challenged, they will struggle at times. Students will encounter new academic grade-level material and our revamped approaches to grading will show a student's academic strengths and weaknesses. Our mentality at KMS is that of a **Growth Mindset** where we place more emphasis and value on how students perform at the end of a unit of learning than at the beginning. **Growing Students is Our Business!**

Feel free to contact me if you have any further questions as we transition to a more appropriate method of measuring student knowledge and growth.

Sincerely,

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KMS Principal

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- **Mission Statement - KMS provides a positive culture and learning environment that empowers personal success.**