**Middle School Science**

**Grading Policy and Philosophy**

September 2014

Dear Parents,

In the fall, I attended a teacher workshop entitled, ***Differentiated Assessment and Grading***. It opened my eyes to many things that I had not considered before I became a Middle School Teacher. I originally searched the internet for examples of grading and grade set up (weights for each category.) I used that information as my guide. ***However, after some reflection and additional professional development, in addition to the shifts made as a middle school staff, I decided to change my weight system midyear.*** I strongly feel that good teaching and learning comes from continuous reflection on my part. I hope you can support my effort to more accurately display how your child is performing in Science class. And more importantly, a report of your child’s EVIDENCE that they have done the learning and achieved the learning objectives outlined in the Common Core Curriculum. It may take an adjustment on your thinking, but trust me, the results for the last two years were exactly what I had hoped for.

The biggest revelation was how strongly I had weighted Science homework, in class DO NOWs, homework, and in class work such as our ISNs. I have realized that these categories are PRACTICE! When students have difficulty with these things, it negatively affected their grade. This seems unrealistic because these types of assignments are the learning vehicles that bring students towards mastery.

Unit Assessments, Quizzes, and Performance Tasks (or projects) are the vehicle that students use to show their mastery of their learning. These are the assignments or tasks that are given after the practice takes place and serve as documentation that the learning objective(s) have been met and mastered. Included in this change is the idea of RE-DOs on assessments, quizzes, and performance tasks. I am continually working out the kinks here, as it may be different for each student. This is where ***differentiation*** steps in. But the most important thing to note about RE-Dos is they should encourage the concept of meeting the learning objective, not the grade! This workshop confirmed my philosophy that poor grades, low grades, or lack of evidence in meeting the learning objective should be ***RECOVERABLE***! Therefore, if you see anything in the Summative categories that are poor grades or low grades, two things may be true. First, your child may be in process of ***recovering*** the grade by RE-DOing the assessment, performance task, or project. Or secondly, your child may be choosing NOT to take the initiative to RE-DO the learning or follow through with the teacher’s requirement to ***RECOVER*** the grade in order to show evidence that they met the learning objective(s.)

I have also separated the practice type learning (ISNs, DO NOWs, in class sheets, and Homework) into a FORMATIVE category in my mind and my paper grade book. Therefore, they are no longer weighted as much. They will be graded with a check system. Because Power School doesn’t allow “checks,” I have to assign a numerical value to each. The percentages are as follows:

100 % = check plus EVIDENCE that the learning objective was met

90 % = check some EVIDENCE that the learning took place but with some missing pieces

80 % = check minus LACKS EVIDENCE of learning

The category of Participation/Behavior/Work Habits (late work, missing work, noncompliance to classroom rules) is not weighted as much but certainly is a factor in the student performance and will be recorded in the same check system above. The performance learning (Unit Assessments, Quizzes, Performance Tasks or projects, Major Investigations or labs) fits into a SUMMATIVE category in my mind and my paper grade book. Here is the new break down of the grade:

NEW GRADE SET UP FOR SCIENCE

70% • Unit Assessments / Quizzes / Performance Tasks (Tests, quizzes, and projects)

8% • ISNs, Homework Bundles, In-class worksheet packets, and DO NOWs

## 20% • Major investigations (Lab Reports)

## 2% • Participation, Behavior, and Work Habits (Participation, Behavior, Late or missing

assignments)

Please review the bottom of this NEW grade set up and grading philosophy with your child. If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to email me at [arandall@sau29.org](mailto:arandall@sau29.org). Thank you for your support!

With reflective and warm regards,

Mrs. Amy Randall

STUDENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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