

Ms. Ortiz Franklin, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Gonez - Exploring Mastery-Based Learning and Grading (Res-013-20/21) (For Action February 23, 2021)

Whereas, Nationwide, school districts are revisiting grading practices and social-emotional supports to respond to the shifting learning context as a result of distance learning and the ways in which traditional grading contributes to inequitable outcomes for historically marginalized students;

Whereas, Research, including but not limited to that cited in Joe Feldman's "Grading for Equity," indicates that traditional, behavior-oriented grading systems stifle growth mindsets, hide meaningful information and provide misleading information, invite conscious and unconscious biases, demotivate and disempower both students and educators;

Whereas, The District's Fall 2020 15-week report card showed double digit increases over the previous year in the number of D's and F's for high-need students including Black and Latinx students, English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth and students experiencing homelessness;

Whereas, The Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District supports District educators in the use of grading and feedback practices that reflect standards-based proficiency and student learning, clearly communicating with students and families the distinct expectations of academics, work habits and cooperation marks;

Whereas, Mastery Learning and Grading is a growth mindset approach to teaching and learning, based on the expectation that everyone can learn when provided with the right conditions and support, and a wealth of academic literature and research supports the importance and effectiveness of implementing a mastery-based approach to teaching as a more accurate reflection of student learning and growth;

Whereas, The District currently has over 1,800 certified educators and 130 certified facilitators in Mastery Learning and Grading, waiting lists for professional development opportunities, and multiple courses for independent study on Schoology; and

Whereas, Becoming proficient in mastery-based learning and grading is a learning process for educators, families and students, and implementation must reflect and respect the learning of individuals and school communities; and now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District commits to achieving equity in college readiness for all students, especially for Black, Latinx, and Filipino students, emergent bilingual speakers, students with disabilities, foster youth and students experiencing homelessness, and recognizes that a supportive approach to mastery-based learning and grading may be one important step towards doing so;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to develop a comprehensive and multi-year plan by May 2023, based on recommendations from the Grading Advisory Group (described below) and that includes a path to mastery-based learning and grading practices, including all requisite supports necessary for universal and differentiated implementation;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to establish a Grading Advisory Group, chaired by the Division of Instruction, to advise the Superintendent on the proposed

creation and implementation of a District-wide comprehensive equitable grading plan and to present progress to the Board quarterly, beginning in May 2021 and ending in May 2024. The Grading Advisory Group shall:

- Consist of 20-30 diverse representatives who are teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, students, and others with expertise and/or an important perspective on grading policies, as determined by the Division of Instruction;
 1. Each Board Member shall select up to 3 representatives (educators, counselors, parents, students, and/or community partners, etc.)
 2. In consultation with the District parent committees (PAC, CAC, DELAC), the Parent and Community Services branch shall select up to 3 representatives
 3. The Division of Instruction, UTLA and AALA shall each select up to 3 representatives
- Review current and relevant research, articles and tools, including the District's Mastery Learning & Grading Elementary Rubric, Secondary Rubric, and Implementation Rubric;
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data, including at least A-G C+ on-track by student group, alignment of grades and performance on SBAC and other assessments, and key questions from the School Experience Survey;
- Seek additional input from relevant stakeholders, beginning with educators who have participated in Mastery Learning and Grading professional development;
- Develop recommendations for District-wide multi-year SMARTE (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound and equitable) goals and strategies towards equitable grading;
- Provide recommendations to the Superintendent on the proposed revisions of the District's marking practices and procedures policy, so as to reflect the current research and best practices for equitable grading as well as cohesion between elementary and secondary grading;
- Consider options and approaches for providing educators the ability to choose and use multiple assessments for grade-level learning targets across all disciplines that are easily accessible and understandable, beginning with samples from grade levels and content areas assessed statewide;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to update District plans and systems to support more educators in their efforts towards mastery learning and grading by May 2021:

- Promote awareness of professional learning opportunities to build educator's background knowledge about the inequitable impact of traditional grading and the research-based best practices to shift to mastery-based learning and grading;
- Communicate supports and resources currently available for educators to progressively incorporate equity-based grading practices, prioritizing practices that support students during distance learning, such as:
 - Avoiding grading practices that reduce an academic grade because of behavior or attendance
 - Providing multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning, considering the most recent or consistent evidence of proficiency

- Limiting the weight of practice assignments (e.g. homework) in a student's final academic grade
- Documenting intervention and supports, including communication with students and their families, provided before issuing any Fails on final report cards
- Invest in necessary upgrades to the Gradebook in Schoology, the District's Learning Management System, to give teachers the necessary tools and resources to implement mastery-based grading (including refining grading comments to incorporate standards-based feedback and progress); and, be it finally

Resolved, That with quarterly updates from the Grading Advisory Group, the Board may take timely action to discuss potential policy changes and to implement recommendations from the Advisory Group.