



The Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations

April 2, 2009

Elizabeth Brown, Director
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Rm 254
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Parent Feedback on Updates to Student Grades

Dear Betsy:

At the Grading and Reporting Implementation Team meeting held in January, parent and student stakeholders were asked to check with their constituents to determine if a problem exists in MCPS with teachers inputting student grades within three weeks. It is understood by parents, that teachers must input the grade within three weeks of a task or assessment's due date.

A poll of parents in the County revealed that in most cases, grades are being updated within three weeks. We would like to thank the teachers who are able to complete and record student grading within that time frame. Thirty-nine percent of the parents who responded, however, stated that grade input within three weeks is a problem with at least one teacher and, at times, more than one teacher. A slightly higher percentage of the parents who experience an issue with grades being input within the three-week period responded by saying that they regularly experience one or more teachers taking longer than three weeks to input grades and return work. A summary of the poll is attached for your review. This issue is especially important to students and parents just before an end of unit assessment and is most important during the week before a semester-end or year-end final exam.

The parents are glad to hear that the Grading and Reporting Implementation Team is taking time to review compliance with this contractually required grade update period and will look forward to hearing more about how compliance with this rule will be communicated to all and how we can work together to lessen the number of late updates.

Very truly yours,

Kay Romero, President
Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA)

Enclosure

cc: Shirley Brandman, President, Board of Education
Mr. Erick Lang, Associate Superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs

3 Week Rule for Posting Grades

At the January Grading and Reporting Implementation Team meeting, the parent members were asked to poll parents about issues concerning secondary school teachers and the **3-week rule for posting grades**. Please take a moment to reply to the questions below so that we can take those responses back to GRIT. For ease of tallying your responses, I would greatly appreciate it if you would provide your answers in the table below when responding.

1. Is this an issue at your middle or high school? (Yes/No)
2. Do teachers update grades within 3 weeks? (Yes-All/No-Not All)
3. Do teachers return graded work to students within 3 weeks? (Yes-All/No-Not All)
4. Do you regularly experience 1 or more teachers taking longer than 3 weeks to update grades and return work? (If so, please provide details in the Comments section below.) Table below represents same 4 questions above.

	1. Is the 3 Week Rule an Issue? (Yes/No)	2. Are Grades Updated w/in 3 weeks? (Yes-All or No-Not All)	3. Is Graded Work Returned w/in 3 Weeks? (Yes-All or No-Not All)	4. Work Regularly Returned Beyond 3 Weeks? (Yes/No)	Comments to Question #4
1	No	Yes	Yes	No	
2	Yes	No	No	Yes	Some teachers assign long term projects due on a certain date, work and do not post grade for 8 weeks after due date. When I mentioned this fact to the principal he said, "it is not relevant since quarter is over." The parent then asked the Principal if he wouldn't like to use this sort of feed back as "constructive criticism," he replied tersely, "no."
3	Yes	No	No	Yes	My daughter had at least one teacher who was 6-8 weeks behind in updating and returning work. The work sat on the teacher's desk for weeks, ungraded.
4	Yes	No	No	Yes	But this past quarter, there were 3 of my child's 8 teachers who hadn't updated grades in many

					<p>weeks. In fact, at the end of the quarter (end of January), one teacher hadn't updated grades, or returned assignments since the first week in December. So, we didn't know my child's grade until the day that the teacher processed the grades, which is too late to dispute something or re-do an assignment. Teachers need to be held accountable -- students can't hand in their homework whenever they get around to it so teachers shouldn't be able to update grades whenever they get around to it either.</p>
5	Yes	No	No	Yes	<p>We try to use EDLINE to monitor our children's classroom work and grades (1 child at each of 3 schools). We have had many issues and I have spent hours on the phone and by email with specific teachers and EDLINE coordinators at each school. Here are the problems that I am having with EDLINE and have brought to the attention of the teachers/schools:</p> <p>Some teachers don't put in data often enough. One middle school teacher waited until finals to enter the entire second quarter.</p> <p>DUE DATE is not being used all the time. It is not possible to tell your child to get the assignment done if it is missing without a due date!</p> <p>All assignments being entered into the same category (13 Summative Assessments for 50% of the grade, but no "HW for Prac/Prep" for 10% or Formative Assessments for 40%</p>

					<p>of the grade). I believe that this is misuse of the policies.</p> <p>Descriptions for the assignments in foreign language classes being entered in the foreign language. I would like to know what the assignment is that my child did for his grade, but I can't read it.</p> <p>Edline data should be entered within 24 hours of the due date of any assignment. My child needs the immediate feedback, and we need to 'remind' him of his missed assignments before it is too late to get the problem resolved with the teacher.</p> <p>About actually seeing the graded and return papers? These are teenagers that don't share anything with the parents. We have to discover it ourselves.</p>
6	Yes	No	No	Yes	Sometimes. Sometimes not at all. In one case a teacher "lost" all the assignments (for a major project!) and then the students were all given the same grade
7	No	Yes	Yes	No	
8	No	Yes	Yes	No	Grading isn't an issue; grades returned within 3-week period. (I hope I got questions right). Thank you for conducting the poll to help students.
9	Yes	No	No	Yes	My son's pre-Calc teacher, 2nd quarter, posted grades on 12/4/08 and did not post another grade until 1/22/09. My son's class did not regularly get their work returned to them. He is now in another class. I spoke with his counselor and the principal. I do not know how the principal handled this issue.
10	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes	High school science teacher takes more than three weeks to post grades on Edline. If student has missing assignment, it is too late to make up the assignment. Last

					<p>quarter, my daughter's grade was a "B" throughout quarter, but suddenly dropped to "D" when teacher finally posted a bunch of grades on Edline on the last day of the quarter. My daughter had missed assignments.</p> <p>Also high school history teacher takes more than three weeks to post grades, but has allowed the work to be made up late.</p> <p>Three weeks is too long anyway. Grades should be posted weekly.</p>
11	No	Yes	Yes	No	
12	No	Yes	Yes	No	
13	Yes	No	No	Yes	I think that most of my son's teachers update grades within 3 weeks. As to returning graded work within 3 weeks, the answer is maybe not—I haven't seen much of the graded work, since my son is an 11 th grader and not in sharing mode. His English teacher last year kept their written work in a portfolio so I never saw graded work, especially longer papers.
14	Yes	No	No	Yes	Most Teachers comply but not all. Administration does not follow through with those that do not or with complaints.
15	No	Yes	No	No	
16	Yes	No	No	Yes	There are one or two teachers each semester that let grades lapse for weeks at a time.
17	No	Yes	Yes	No	
18	No	Yes	Yes	No	Occasionally a teacher may take a couple weeks to update grades, but I think even P.E. and Tech classes always have well within the 3 weeks. WOW, they have 3 weeks?!
19	No	Yes	No	Yes	
20	No	Yes	Yes	No	
21	No	Yes	Yes	No	
22	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	One teacher did not fall within my yes responses (ex: we

					waited 30 days for the results of a Unit Test last December). However, improvement has been made since I have involved school administration, and grades are now being updated well within the 3 week rule.
23	No	No	Yes	Yes	Sometimes there is one teacher who does not update Edline in the three-week turnaround time.
24	Yes	No – Not all	No – Not all	Yes	We have had one teacher who does not return many of the grades or papers until the end of the quarter so the student has no idea how they are doing. I complained once and he apologized but has repeated the problem many times since. There are other teachers who update Edline but don't hand the papers back for the students to review.
25	Yes	No	No	Yes	
26	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
27	No	Yes	Yes	No	
28	Yes	No	No	Yes	Overall, 3 weeks is too late to impact performance and learning.
29	Yes	No	No	Yes	This issue needs work. I have a senior this year. Updates to grading has been better this year than in the past.
30	No	Yes	Yes	No	
31	Yes	No	No	No	Rarely, work is not returned within 3 weeks. Sometimes it's the substitute teacher. Very few occasions it's the regular teacher.
32	No	Yes	Yes	No	
33	No	Yes	Yes	No	
34	No	Yes	Yes	No	
35	Yes	No	No	No	
36	No	Yes	Yes	No	
37	No	Yes	Yes	No	Long-term subs take longer to

					update grades.
38	No	Yes	Yes	No	
39	No	Yes	Yes	No	
40	No	Yes	Yes	No	
41	Yes	No	No	Yes	There are usually 1 or 2 teachers per semester who fall behind in grading each marking period. I haven't noticed a wide-spread problem and it's often the same teachers who fall behind and/or don't return graded work. Suggest a requirement that grades be entered and graded papers returned to students at least 2 to 3 school days before a summative assessment in addition to the 3 week rule.

Miscellaneous Comments:

There are at least 2 courses where work is never returned, except for the parent to go into the classroom to review the test results in a binder. I do not understand this policy, that is supposedly County Wide, so that exams can be reused?

1. It is inconvenient for the parent who wants to go over the exam errors with the child
2. Reusing exams is lazy
3. Middle schoolers are generally not that organized to pass on an exam to someone who could use it

For classes where work is returned, it is within 3 weeks.

Why is there not a requirement that students receive graded work back before a summative assessment (less than 3 weeks)?

Summary | Responsive Schools (18)

1. Issue?	2. Grades Updated in 3 weeks?	3. Work Returned in 3 Weeks?	4. Work Returned > 3 Weeks?	Responding High Schools	Responding Middle Schools
				Richard Montgomery	Roberto Clemente
Yes 16	Yes-All 23	Yes-All 22	Yes 19	Walter Johnson	Argyle
No 25	No-Not All 18	No-Not All 18	No 22	Paint Branch	Briggs Cheney
		Unanswered 1		Springbrook	Hoover
				Northwest	Banneker
				Blair	

				Poolesville	
				Damascus	
				Churchill	
				Unknown (4)	