



# A Plan for Competency-Based Grading

Merrimack High School

6/17/13

## **Overview**

### **What is Competency-Based Grading?**

A competency is a set of skills and knowledge, derived from standards that can be applied and/or demonstrated in a variety of contexts. Competency-Based Grading is a means to assess students on achievement of defined standards and report on their mastery of these standards.

### **Why is MHS moving toward Competency-Based Grading?**

In accordance with educational best practices and a directive from the NH Department of Education, MHS is working toward compliance with the implementation of Competency-Based Grading.

### **How is MHS going to implement Competency-Based Grading?**

MHS departments have defined competencies for each course offered. From 2011-2013 teachers piloted a Competency-Based Grading System in conjunction with traditional grading. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, a student will receive the traditional grade and credit only when he/she meets the competencies. If any one course competency is not met, the student will receive an asterisk in place of the final grade indicating that coursework has not been completed.

A student will be offered an opportunity for remediation of a competency when he/she scores a 1 on a scale of 4. Attempts at remediation for the failed competency/competencies can be via assistance labs, credit recovery, Evening Academy, Nova Net, Summer School, etc. Course credit will be based on the current MHS grading system.

However, if a student fails via the traditional grade and yet passes the competencies, a student will be awarded a grade of MC (Met Competency) which will carry the weight of a D (65%).



### **What impact will this have on my child's education?**

- The use of course level competencies will give teachers, students and parents more focused information about student achievement.
- Educational outcomes will be concretely defined and instruction will be focused on student mastery of these outcomes.

### **2013-2014 Implementation of Competency-Based Grading**

- Grading and course credit will be based on the current MHS grade-reporting system with the addition of an asterisk (\*) and an MC (Met Competency) as outlined above.
- Students will receive from each teacher a course description that will include the competencies for the course.
- Instruction will be designed to maximize student acquisition of knowledge and skills in each competency.
- Formative assessments will be used to gauge student progress, and instruction will be adjusted as necessary to ensure each student has an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in each competency.
- The grade for each competency will be based on student performance on summative assessments.
- Competency grades will be assessed based on rubrics and recorded with indicators of 4-3-2-1 with 4 reflecting the highest level of proficiency and a 1 indicating that competencies have not been met.
- Competency grades will appear in the PowerSchool Parent-Student Portal only and will not appear on the report card or transcript.



## **Definition of Terms**

**Competency:** A set of knowledge and skills, derived from course standards that can be applied and/or demonstrated in a variety of contexts

**Competency-Based Curriculum:** A set of educational expectations for student learning based on course-content standards

**Competency-Based Lesson:** Instructional activities designed to develop student knowledge and skills in the course-competency standards

**Competency-Based Assessment:** A formative or summative assessment of student knowledge and skills

**Competency-Based Grading:** Grade based on student level of mastery of a competency

**Assessment:** A tool used to evaluate student knowledge and skills such as a test, project, quiz, lab, essay, etc.

**Formative Assessments:** A set of ongoing measures designed to monitor student progress and focus instruction to help a student achieve mastery

**Summative Assessment:** An assessment designed to measure student mastery of a competency

**Mastery:** Demonstrated proficient level of achievement as defined by a rubric

**Rubric:** Definition of levels of proficiency for a given competency based on a scale of 4-3-2-1



## Course Competency Sample

English 9 College Prep has four course competencies: Reading, Writing, Listening/Speaking, and Viewing. Below is a description of the reading competency and the corresponding grading rubric.

<b>Course Title</b>	English 9 A College Prep
<b>Course Description</b>	This course requires that students develop their listening comprehension and critical thinking skills by being active listeners during class discussion. Students are also required to develop their speaking skills through informal class discussion and more formal presentations such as role-playing, recitation, choral readings and storytelling. The literature component of the course emphasizes cultural diversity in readings from a variety of genres including mythology, the short story, the novel, drama and poetry. Through their study of literature, students will develop an understanding for and an appreciation of the literary devices and techniques that authors use to develop the themes in their works. In conjunction with their literary study, students will have opportunities to develop library, critical viewing and study skills. Students will refine their writing skills while practicing paragraph and essay structure. As part of the writing process, students will develop their own ideas and strengthen their editing techniques. Students will continue their study of grammar. Their vocabulary and etymology study will enhance their understanding of literature. All students will participate in a unit of study on plagiarism and a unit of study on advertising. They will also complete a sequence of advanced reading skills. Students will work in groups as well as on their own.
<b>Course Competency</b>	<b>Reading</b>

<b>1. Concept</b>	Literature serves as a catalyst for reflecting upon the principles, events and values of various cultures
<b>2. Content</b>	Foundations of plays, short stories, novels and poetry
<b>3. Skills</b>	Students will apply reading strategies appropriately according to genre
<b>4. Competency</b>	Students will demonstrate their understanding of the elements of fiction in a literary selection and support an opinion by referring to details in the text.
<b>5. Sample Assessment</b>	Students will read a short story, answer multiple choice questions and respond in short answer form to reading comprehension questions.
<b>6. NH Curriculum Framework</b>	R:LT:1, 2, 3, 4 R:RS:1, 2 <a href="http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/index.htm">http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/index.htm</a>



**English 9A College Prep  
Assessment Rubric  
Reading**

Score	Proficiency Level	Description
4	Proficient with Distinction	Students show they are proficient with distinction by interpreting literary elements of fiction in level-appropriate texts.
3	Proficient	Students show they are able to make relevant assertions about story elements at a proficient level with level-appropriate texts.
2	Partially Proficient	Students demonstrate inconsistent ability to comprehend story elements in level-appropriate texts.
1	Substantially Below Proficient	Students demonstrate minimal ability to comprehend story elements in level-appropriate texts.

Each course at MHS has a set of course competencies, assessments and corresponding rubrics. The development of this work is an ongoing process subject to review, revision, and amendment. For more information please contact the respective department chairperson. Email addresses are located on the Merrimack High School website at: [www.merrimack.k12.nh.us/mhs](http://www.merrimack.k12.nh.us/mhs).

***“Believe, go forward, and inspire!”***



# Sample Report Card

Merrimack High School

## SCHOLARSHIP REPORT for

STUDENT NAME

STUDENT NUMBER

GRADE

HOME ROOM

COUNSELOR

**Doe, John**

000000000

11

F104

Young

ADDRESS

SCHOOLWIDE MESSAGES

Parent(s) of Doe, John

38 McElwain St.

Merrimack, NH 03054

Course	C#	S#	Teacher	Q1	AB	TD	Q2	AB	TD	EX	S1	Credit	Q2 Comment(s)
U S HISTORY CP	20252	3	Lemay, Allen B	D	0	1	D+	0	0	D	*		Positive and Cooperative Attitude Quality of Work Varies
COMPUTER GRAPHICS 1 CP	90914	1	Pope, Marcelle I	A	0	0	A-	0	1	B	A-	0.5	Performance is Satisfactory
SPANISH 2 CP	30316	3	Olivares, David	C-	0	0	C	0	0	C	C	0.5	Performance is Satisfactory Homework Assignments Missing
ALGEBRA 2 STAND	40454	1	Leonard, Lisa G	B+	0	0	B+	0	0	A-	B+	0.5	A Pleasure to Have in Class
ENGLISH 11 CP	10152	7	Fitzgerald, Kathleen	B	0	0	D	0	0	D	C	0.5	
FOOD CHEMISTRY YEAR STAND	50558	4	Floras, Eleni M	F	1	0	D	0	0	F	MC	0.5	

Did not meet competency

PREVIOUS CREDIT 12.00

S1 CREDIT 3.00

S2 CREDIT

TOTAL CREDIT 15.00

ELIGIBLE to participate in activities/athletics.

Failed traditional grade but met competency

\* Has not met competency requirement. Must pass competency to receive course credit.

MC -Failed but passed competencies and will receive course credit.

