



**Middle School Grading at PS/IS 276**

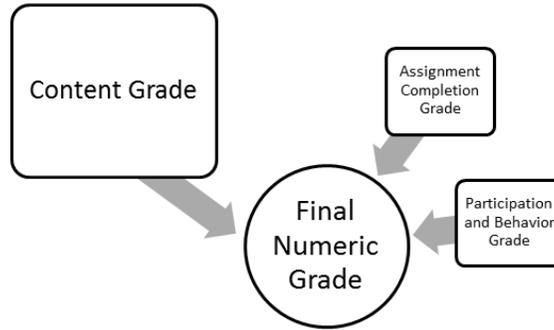
**How it's usually done...**

Student gets one numeric grade per class: 75, 80, 85, 90, ...

This is confusing! Students often ask things like, "How come I got an 80 instead of an 85 or 90?"

**How we do it...**

Student gets one numeric grade per class, but sees how that grade was computed based on content/skills grades and work habits grades.



**Content/skills grades** – will show understanding of content/skills taught

- MS=meets standards
- AS=approaches standards
- FB=falls below standards
- NE=no evidence (work not turned in)

Sometimes, teachers will offer students opportunities to meet a higher, more challenging standard. In that case, a student who meets that higher standard would receive a MHS (meets high standard).

**Work habits grades** – will give feedback in two categories:

- (1) assignment completion and responsibility for learning, and
- (2) participation and responsibility to community.

Students will get 1-4 (4 being highest) for each category, according to the rubric below:

	4	3	2	1
Assignment completion and responsibility for learning	Student consistently completes work by designated time/date (or arranges an alternate plan with teacher prior to due date) and follows all directions for assignments. Student takes initiative by seeking out extra help when necessary. Student consistently strives for improvement.	Student often completes work by designated time/date and generally follows all directions for assignments. Student sometimes takes initiative by seeking out extra help when necessary.	Student only sometimes completes work by designated time/date (or arranges an alternate plan with teacher prior to due date) and/or only sometimes follows directions for assignments.	Student rarely completes work by designated time/date (or arranges an alternate plan with teacher prior to due date) and/or rarely follows directions for assignments.

Participation and responsibility to community	Student is consistently an active participant in all settings: whole class, group and partner discussions. Student consistently displays on-task behavior in individual, group and whole class work. Student consistently follows class procedures.	Student is often an active participant in whole class, group and/or partner discussions. Student often displays on-task behavior in individual, group and whole class work. Student often follows class procedures.	Student is sometimes an active participant in whole class, group and/or partner discussions. Student sometimes displays on-task behavior in individual, group and whole class work. Student sometimes follows class procedures. Student needs some redirection by teacher.	Student is rarely an active participant in whole class, group and/or partner discussions. Student rarely displays on-task behavior in individual, group and whole class work. Student rarely follows class procedures. Student needs frequent redirection.
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Here's how the two kinds of grades will be combined into a final numerical grade:

At the end of the semester, the content/skills and work habits grades in each class will be factored together to come up with a numeric grade using a 100-point scale. Here is the scale that will be used:

	<b>4/4</b>	<b>3/4</b>	<b>2s</b>	<b>1s</b>
<b>MHS</b>	100-96	95-90	85-80	n/a
<b>MS</b>	95-90	85-80	75-70	65
<b>AS</b>	85-80	80-70	70-65	65
<b>FB or NE</b>	n/a	n/a	55	55

*Note: The lowest grade given is 55 (failing). 65 is the lowest passing grade – there are no 60s.*

*Above a 65, grades are given in increments of 5 (70, 75,...) until 90, after which they are given by 1s (91, 92, 93,...)*

This is what it looks like on the report card:

You will see the subject, teacher's name, grade for the term, comments from the teacher, and their content grade, their work habits grade, and their participation grade.

#### **6TH MATH / DAWN SCHAFER**

**90**

Teacher Comments | *Meets standards in modeling mathematics to solve problems from everyday life. Meets standards in understanding ratio concepts and using ratios to solve problems. Hesitates to ask for help. MS 4 3*

This model of grading benefits all students, as working towards improved work habit grades positively impacts all grades.

#### Pass / Fail Classes

Classes that are pass-fail still give work habits grades so that students and families get this feedback.

#### Honor Roll / Principal's honor roll:

The criteria for honor roll and principal's honor roll are tied to the grading policy.

To qualify for honor roll, a student must:

- Have no content/skills grades below an MS
- Have only 3s and 4s in work habits (with at least 1/3 being 4s, NO 1s or 2s in any classes)
- Pass all pass/fail classes
- Get a 90 or above in physical education

To qualify for principal's honor roll, a student must meet the criteria for honor roll, plus:

- Earn MHS in at least three classes

### Make-up Assignments:

Students who have been absent from class for verified, legitimate reasons (such as illness, family emergencies, attendance at funerals, etc.) are to be given a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work, including examinations and quizzes. Handwritten notes from parents and/or physicians verifying legitimate absences will be accepted by teachers. Students are responsible for making up the work they missed and understanding all content. Make up assignments cannot be accepted after the end of the marking period.

### Appealing Grades

To appeal a teacher's final grade, students/parents must present all documentation to the teacher to argue their case. If the teacher denies the appeal to change the final grade, the student/parent may appeal to the principal who will make a determination for the final grade based on evidence provided by both the teacher and the student/parent. If the principal should decide to change students' final grades based on evidence provided, the principal will provide a written notice and rationale of the change to the teacher, in accordance with UFT agreement.

### Timeline for Changing a Grade

A teacher may also change a student's grade up to 20 days after a marking period has ended for legitimate verifiable reasons such as a miscalculation or student submission of make-up assignments. These changes can be completed during these 20 days on the NYC Department of Education STARS system. After these 20 days, teachers must submit a 'Change of Grade' request form with appropriate documentation to support the grade change. After reviewing the documentation, the Principal may or may not approve the change.

### Opportunities to Discuss Student Progress

In addition to the two Chancellor's conference days, parent-teacher conferences will take place twice a year (fall and spring). Teachers, counselors and supervisors can also be reached via email to discuss student progress anytime outside the scheduled conferences. Please allow school staff 48 hours to respond to requests.

### Timeline of Student Grades

We use a trimester system. Students receive report cards three times a year -- December, March and June.

Parent teacher conferences are scheduled 4-5 weeks before the December and March report cards so that students and their families have a heads up on grades and have an opportunity to turn in missing work or revise work or work habits for an improved grade.

### Promotion Decisions

Promotion decisions are made using multiple measures of student performance throughout the course of the school year and standardized State exams. If a student's promotion to the next grade is in jeopardy at the end of the school year, the main opportunity to make up the coursework is during summer school. For these students, failure to attend summer school may result in retention at the same grade level the following school year. Students in 8th grade are required to pass all four core academic subjects: math, ELA, social studies, and science.

### FAQs

*How do I know what my child's homework is?*

Middle school students at 276 record homework on paper planners and receive email notifications of homework through google classroom. Teachers are posting assignments on their google classroom pages with due dates. Many teachers also include links to uploaded documents that assist with homework.

*How do I get access to google classroom?*

You should have your child's bpcschool email and password. This will provide you full access to google classroom. Your child's school email is [firstname.lastname@bpcschool.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@bpcschool.org). You should ask your child for his/her password. It is actually safest internet practice for parents to have passwords for all electronic and social media accounts for their children.

*How do I know if my child's homework is late or missing?*

Teachers at 276 are NOT using Google classroom to record grades. Each teacher has external grade books that they use to track student progress and completion of assignments. Because of teacher workload, different teachers have different policies. Many teachers have students email parents if 3 or more assignments are missing. If there is a big concern, teachers contact parents.

Because of how Google classroom is structured, teachers are not able to mark late, missing or on time assignments within Google classroom. Teachers often offer homework time or extra help at lunch. Students can also contact teachers directly with any questions.

*What is an MHS project? Do all teachers give them? How do I know if it is an option?*

MHS projects are NOT extra credit. These projects are content enrichment opportunities designed to deepen student engagement and exploration of key concepts in a given unit. Students are never penalized for trying an MHS project (though, if they opt for an MHS project and don't complete the meeting standards component, there will be consequences). If students do not meet standards, they are ineligible to receive credit for meeting high standards opportunities. Teachers inform students of MHS opportunities. Depending on the class, MHS work may be an extension of an assigned project with the criteria described on the class rubric; a more complex question on a test that requires students to synthesize learned skills into a new context or problem; or an additional project.

*My child doesn't want to do an MHS. Can you require it for him/her?*

Not all students opt to complete MHS projects. We strongly believe that this should be a middle school student's choice. We are working towards students setting goals for themselves. If students are doing MS work well and exhibiting good work habits grades, they are in a good place in terms of grades. Middle school students have many diverse interests. We want to make sure we help them be successful in the clubs and interests they choose to pursue. We also want to give them the opportunity and encouragement to try out different extracurricular activities. Students who are active on sports teams or in after school theater or arts programs are doing important learning that may not be strictly academic. At 276, we value these pursuits as well. Students learn important executive function and social skills from these activities.

*My child got a 100 on a test. Why isn't this an MHS?*

Tests given in school are standardized based. If a student gets a 100 on a test, that student is meeting standards. To get an MHS, the student needs to complete the more in-depth task. However, just because a student attempts the task does not mean they get MHS credit. This is where rubrics come in. They describe the qualities of work that meet high standards.

*Why not just give number grade (high schools only look at this grade) on my child's report card?*

Number grades can be uninformative to parents. While it might give an average score for assigned work, a number grade does not include work habits. As a school, we believe that it is important to nurture growth mindsets. Simple number grades with no context do not let the students know how their learning is progressing. And it does not let us value the importance of work habits. Research done by Carol Dweck and others highlights the importance of making sure we tell students the value of effort. Students with a growth mindset have more confidence in the power of effort to impact learning and achievement and research shows that they have greater resilience, stronger problem solving skills, and more ability to transfer knowledge and skills from one context to another. See page 15 in our family handbook for more information. With that being said, high schools only see number grades from the end of year report cards (which is an average of all three numeric trimester grades). The final grade is what shows up on a student's transcript.

*Why use the scale of FB, AS, MS, MHS in addition of the 1-4 for work habits?*

The letter grades indicate achievement towards standards, as indicated on Common Core Standard-aligned rubrics. Students get two number grades. One to reflect assignment completion and responsibility for learning. The other reflects participation and responsibility to community. These two categories are important aspects of effort. The grade calculation grid explains how different combinations can impact grades. For the most part, all students benefit from this scoring rubric. Students who may be approaching standards or meeting standards who have strong work habits grades have better number grades as a result of this policy.

*What are the expectations of Progress Reports and of advisors/teachers giving feedback during P/T conferences?*

Our middle school teachers feel strongly that students and parents receive reports of progress during parent teacher conferences. These documents give a "heads up" about a student's current performance. The conference is used as an opportunity for reflection and goal setting with student, parent, and advisor. Our structure of conferences in middle school gives students an important voice in this reflection process and maximizes the amount of time that parents, advisors, and students have to discuss student progress. If parents have additional specific concerns, they should reach out to teachers to arrange for additional time.