



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide guidance in the implementation of the grading and reporting systems as it relates to the grade change authorization and appeals process to be used in all schools.
- II. **POLICY:** The Board of Education believes that all students can learn and achieve at high levels, that rigorous performance standards and achievement standards are essential components of developing and delivering quality instruction, and that regular assessment is an important component of an effective teaching and learning environment and an important tool in measuring students learning (Board Policy 5121).
- III. **BACKGROUND:** As directed by COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations) 13A.03.02.08, each local school system shall develop a written policy on grading and reporting. This policy will serve to provide direction specifically for the grade change authorization and grade appeal process related to the school district's written grading policy.

Principals, or their designees, under the guidance of district personnel, are responsible for ensuring that grading and reporting policies are applied consistently within their school. The need for a clear procedure to addressing the process for grade changes must be defined, implemented and be strictly adhered. Principals, or their designees, will need to review this procedure with all instructional staff, students and parents in order to ensure that it is understood and implemented with fidelity.

IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

- A. **Assigned Teacher** - Teacher of record for a course in question during the specified time period as assigned in the electronic student record system. A co-teacher assigned to the course also qualifies as the assigned teacher.
- B. **Evidence** - Information including but not limited student work, SchoolMAX reports, emails and other forms of communication and written statements that are provided to the SIT, parent/ student and/or by assigned teacher to assist in identifying the necessity for a grade change.
- C. **Final Grade** - Grade calculated based on average quarter grades based on course assigned term code (quarter, semester and full year).
- D. **Grade Appeal Hearing** - Process utilized by the Student Intervention Team to determine the outcome of dispute related to assigned grades.
- E. **Grade Change** - Changes to existing quarter and/or final grade by the assigned teacher during the grade entry window. Grades entered by school staff during a student transfer do not apply and, therefore, are not required to complete



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116
Procedure No.

July 1, 2018
Date

the grade change authorization process.

- F. Grade Entry Window - The time period prior to the end of each quarter where teachers are responsible for entering grades.
- G. Grade Manager - Assigned school personnel responsible for changing quarter and final grades in SchoolMAX.
- H. PS-140 - Grade Change Authorization form. The electronic version of the PS- 140 must be completed for any grade change requested after the established closing of the grading window.
- I. Quarter Grade - Grade assigned to a student at the end of the nine week marking period.
- J. SIT - Student Intervention Team (SIT) is a school-based problem solving team comprised of faculty members (usually general educators) who meet to help a teacher(s) identify and implement appropriate interventions for students who need support so that they are ready and able to learn, as well as students who are in need of support for acceleration. Its members include:
 - 1. General Educator(s)
 - 2. Professional School Counselor(s)
 - 3. Administrator(s)
 - 4. School-based Specialist(s) (e.g. Reading Specialist, Math Specialist, Special Area/Elective Subject Teachers)
 - 5. School Nurse
 - 6. Other staff as appropriate
- K. Transcript Manager - Assigned school personnel responsible for changing transcript in SchoolMAX.

V. GENERAL PROVISIONS:

- A. A classroom teacher's grade shall be clearly defensible and nothing shall be construed to prevent a principal or other local school administrator from discussing the grade of a student with a classroom teacher. Any grade change made by a person other than the classroom teacher must be done using the Grade Change Authorization process and the electronic form must indicate the person responsible for making the request and responsible for approving such grade change.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

- B. No classroom teacher shall be required by the local board of education, Chief Executive Officer, or any local school administrator or other staff member to change the grade of a student. No classroom teacher shall be disciplined by the local board of education, CEO, or any local school administrator or other staff member for not changing a grade of a student.

This protection shall not apply, however, when a teacher has failed to comply with grading policies or procedures adopted by the local board of education that are applicable to the grading process, unless such policy or procedure would require a student be given a grade different than the actual grade achieved.

VI. PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORIZED GRADE CHANGES:

A. Entry of Grades

Recognizing the responsibility of administrators and teachers for implementing effective grading and reporting practices, the following procedures must be followed.

1. All students in an assigned teacher's course must receive a grade during the end of the quarter grading window if enrolled 20 or more days in the course.
2. Principals, or their designees, are responsible for ensuring that all grades are submitted prior to the closing of the grading window.
3. Grade managers are responsible for identifying teachers who fail to post grades prior to and after the closing of the window. The Grade Manager must complete the "Failure to Post" (Attachment A) form and submit it to the Principal within 48 hours.
4. Principals, or their designees, are responsible for storing a "Failure to Post" form (Attachment A) for a period of four years in the Principal's office.
5. After the closing of the teacher grading window but prior to the Grading Manager reporting that the school grading file is "ready to print", the grade manager must complete a Post-Cutoff-Date Correction entry to ensure that every student has a grade. The Grade Manager must collect documentation demonstrating how these grades were provided and include it when submitting the "failure to post" form.
6. After the Grade Manager has reported the grade file is "ready to print", all subsequent grade changes must occur using the electronic PS-140 form.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

B. Grade changes initiated by the Assigned Teacher

1. Assigned teachers must use the Electronic PS-140 in order to initiate grade changes.
2. Grade changes may only be initiated for the following reasons:
 - a. Completion of make-up work. A copy of the completed make-up work must be attached to the electronic grade change authorization form.
 - b. Error in grade entry or calculation
 - c. Other reasons such as:
 - i. Lawful absences as defined in COMAR and AP 5113, including student illness;
 - ii. Student transferring from outside jurisdiction;
 - iii. Failure to provide allowable accommodations in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 plan; or
 - iv. Failure to provide supplementary aids and services in accordance with a student's IEP.
3. The Teacher must provide a rationale/ explanation for the requested change, along with evidence to support the grade change.
4. The Principal must approve, deny, or require additional information to support the request for a grade change. If approved, the Principal must forward the approved electronic PS-140 to the grading manager for entry. All evidence will need to be filed with the PS-140 and placed in the student's cumulative folder.
5. If a grade change involves a final grade change, the grade manager will be responsible for adjusting in the Grades module accordingly. The original grade as recorded on the electronic report and the final report card will be printed. Grade Managers must also go to the Grade Summary Information page and check the boxes for the affected GPAs (Quarter, Year to Date and End of Year) and then click the Recalc button to recalculate them.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

6. If a grade change involves a final grade change, the transcript manager will be responsible for adjusting in the transcript accordingly. The original grade as recorded on the electronic report and the final report card will be printed. The new grade, recorded on the transcript will be initialed and dated by the principal. Transcript Managers must also go to the Grade Summary Information page and check the boxes for the affected GPAs (Quarter, Year to Date and End of Year) and then click the Recalc button to recalculate them.

C. Grade changes initiated by the Principal

1. If a grade change needs to be initiated outside of the 15 day grade change window, the Principal must seek approval from the Instructional Director.
2. Once approved, the Principal must use the Electronic PS-140 in order initiate a grade change.
3. Grade changes may only be initiated for the following reasons:
 - a. Completion of make-up work. A copy of the completed make-up work must be attached to the electronic grade change authorization form.
 - b. Error in grade entry or calculation
 - c. Other reasons such as:
 - i. Lawful absences as defined in COMAR and AP 5113, including student illness;
 - ii. Student transferring from outside jurisdiction;
 - iii. Failure to provide allowable accommodations in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 plan; or
 - iv. Failure to provide supplementary aids and services in accordance with a student's IEP.
4. The Principal must provide a rationale/ explanation for the requested change, along with evidence to support the grade change.
5. The Teacher is required to identify whether they agree or disagree with the findings. Teacher disagreement will not supersede the decision of the Principal. Failure to identify either agreement or disagreement will not delay the processes of approval



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

or filing. If the teacher refuses to provide input, the SIT Chair or Principal will check “teacher failed to provide input” on the electronic grade change authorization form.

6. The Instructional Director must approve, deny, or require additional information to support the request for a grade change. If approving, they must forward the approved PS-140 to the grading manager for entry in the SchoolMax system. All evidence will need to be filed with the PS-140 and placed in the student cumulative folder.
7. If a grade change involves a final grade, the transcript manager will be responsible for adjusting the transcript accordingly. The original grade as recorded on the electronic report and the final report card will be printed. The new grade, recorded on the transcript will be initialed and dated by the principal.

D. Grade changes initiated by the SIT Chairperson

1. Grade changes by the SIT Chairperson must only occur as a result of the outcome of a SIT appeal hearing.
2. SIT Appeal hearings will occur at least once a quarter, if the need arises, and will be held no later than two days prior to the closing of the grade change window.
3. Grade changes may only be initiated for the following reasons:
 - a. Completion of make-up work. A copy of the completed make-up work must be attached to the electronic grade change authorization form.
 - b. Error in grade entry or calculation.
 - c. Other reasons such as:
 - i. Lawful absences as defined in COMAR and AP 5113, including student illness;
 - ii. Student transferring from outside jurisdiction;
 - iii. Failure to provide allowable accommodations in accordance with a student’s IEP or 504 plan; or
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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

4. Grade changes by SIT Chairperson must be initiated using the electronic PS-140 no later than two school days prior to the closing of the identified grade change window. The SIT Chairperson must use the Electronic PS-140 in order to initiate grade changes.
5. The SIT Chairperson must provide a rationale/ explanation for the requested change, along with evidence to support the grade change.
6. The Principal must approve or require additional information to support the request for a grade change. If approving, they must forward the approved PS-140 to the grading manager for entering in the system and filing in the student record file. All evidence will need to be filed with the PS-140.
7. The teacher is required to identify whether they agree or disagree with the findings. Teacher disagreement will not supersede the decision of the SIT committee. Failure to identify either agreement or disagreement will not delay the processes of approval of filing. If teacher is refusing to provide input, the SIT Chairperson will check “teacher failed to provide input” on the electronic PS-140 identifying their failure to respond.
8. The Principal will be responsible for approving or requesting additional information regarding the request. If approving, they must forward approved Electronic PS-140 to the school’s grading manager for filing in the student record file. All evidence will need to be filed with the Electronic PS-140.
9. All grade changes must be approved no more than 15 school days after the release of report cards from the prior marking period. Finalizing grade changes outside of this timeline will require approval by the Instructional Director.

E. Grade Changes for Dual Enrollment Students

1. Due to the misalignment of quarter and semester grading systems for PGCPS and dual enrollment colleges/universities, schools will need to place a grade of U for the quarters where there are no grades received from the college/university at the time that PGCPS grades are due.
2. Once final grades have been received from the college/university the school should convert the U grade to the highest numeric grade equivalent to the letter grade received from the college/university (e.g., College/University grade is a B and the PGCPS numeric grade entered will be 89).



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116
Procedure No.

July 1, 2018
Date

3. A Dual Enrollment Grade Changes Exception Notice (Attachment F) must be completed for each student and attached to the copy of the official transcript from the college/university. Both documents (the notice and transcript) must be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

II. **PROCEDURES FOR APPEAL (See Attachment E for flow chart):**

A. General Provisions

1. The Principal may not be a participant in the SIT appeal hearing.
2. All appeals must be completed prior to the closing of the grade change window for the prior quarter.
3. Grades can be appealed for students in grades K-12

B. Parent/ Student Initiated Appeals

1. Grade appeals must be initiated by the parent/ guardian and/ or the student within 5 school days of the release of report cards.
2. The parent/ student must submit a Grade Appeal Reporting Form (Attachment B) to the teacher and Principal identifying the reason for appeal with supporting evidence. Reasons for appeal include:
 - a. Completion of make-up work. A copy of the completed make-up work must be attached to the electronic grade change authorization form.
 - b. Error in grade entry or calculation.
 - c. Other reasons such as:
 - i. Lawful absences as defined in COMAR and AP 5113, including student illness;
 - ii. Student transferring from outside jurisdiction;
 - iii. Failure to provide allowable accommodations in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 plan; or
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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

3. Appeals that lack evidence supporting the concern will not be addressed. Evidence includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Written communication
 - b. Student work
 - c. SchoolMax reports
4. The teacher must respond to the request for appeal. If the teacher is in agreement, they are required to communicate with the Principal their intent to initiate a grade change using the Grade Appeal Request Form. The teacher would then initiate the grade change using the Electronic PS-140 providing evidence supporting the grade change. A SIT Committee hearing is not required if the teacher agrees with the parent and initiates the grade change prior the SIT hearing date.
5. If the teacher is not in agreement with the rationale for the request, they must provide their own rationale and evidence to the Parent and SIT Chairperson using the Grade Appeal Response form (Attachment C). The teacher must provide feedback to the parent within two days. Failure to communicate rationale by the teacher will lead to the SIT Committee making a determination on the appeal without teacher input.
6. If the teacher expresses that they are not in agreement with the request, or if the teacher has not communicated with their intent prior to the hearing date, the Principal will determine if there is sufficient cause to move the concern to the SIT committee. If it is deemed that there is sufficient evidence to warrant a hearing, The Principal will forward the Grade Appeal Reporting Form and all ancillary evidence to the SIT Chairperson.
7. The SIT Chairperson will convene a SIT appeal hearing to weigh the evidence provided by all parties as well as evidence collected during the process of investigation using the Grade Appeal Response form (Attachment C) to capture the investigation.
8. Appeal hearing participants must sign the completed Grade Appeal Response Form (Appendix C) after rendering a decision. If the outcome of the hearing requires a change in grade, a copy of this form will be submitted with other documentation for filing in the student's cumulative folder along with the signed PS-140 and all associated evidence.
9. The SIT Committee will render a decision regarding the concern prior to the close of the grade change window and communicate with the parent/ student and teacher within two school days of rendering the decision. If the SIT Committee denies the request for grade change, the teacher or parent can appeal the decision to the



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116
Procedure No.

July 1, 2018
Date

Instructional Director. This must be done within 10 school days of receiving the decision from the SIT Committee.

10. If the SIT determination necessitates a grade change, the SIT chair will initiate the change using the Electronic PS-140 prior to the closing of the grade change window.
11. The Principal will be responsible for approving grade changes and ensuring that all forms and evidence is forwarded for filing in the student's cumulative folder.

C. Appeals initiated by Administrative Personnel

Appeals submitted by administrative personnel must be submitted to the SIT committee. Teachers must be notified of the grade appeal request made to the SIT committee. The same appeal hearing process as those initiated by parents/ students will be followed.

1. Reasons for these appeals include:
 - a. Completion of make-up work. A copy of the completed make-up work must be attached to the electronic grade change authorization form.
 - b. Error in grade entry or calculation.
 - c. Other reasons such as:
 - i. Lawful absences as defined in COMAR and AP 5113, including student illness;
 - ii. Student transferring from outside jurisdiction;
 - iii. Failure to provide allowable accommodations in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 plan; or
 - iv. Failure to provide supplementary aids and services in accordance with a student's IEP.
2. The teacher must respond to the request for appeal within two school days. If the teacher is in agreement, they are required to communicate with the Principal their intent to initiate a grade change using the Grade Appeal Reporting form. The teacher would then initiate the grade change using the Electronic PS-140 providing evidence supporting the grade change. A SIT hearing is not required if the Teacher agrees with the initiator and initiates the grade change prior the SIT hearing date.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

3. If the teacher is not in agreement with the rationale for the request, they must provide their own rationale and evidence using the Grade Appeal Response Form. The teacher must provide feedback regarding the concern within two school days. Failure to communicate rationale by the teacher will lead to the SIT making a determination on the appeal without teacher input.
4. The SIT Chairperson will convene a SIT appeal hearing to weigh the evidence provided by all parties as well as evidence collected during the process of investigation using the Grade Appeal Response form (Attachment C) to capture the investigation.
5. SIT appeal hearing participants must sign the completed Grade Appeal Response form (Attachment C) after rendering a decision. If the outcome of the hearing requires a change in grade, a copy of this form will be submitted with other documentation for filing in the student's cumulative folder along with the signed PS-140 and all associated evidence.
6. The SIT Committee will render a decision regarding the concern prior to the close of the grade change window and communicate with the parent/ student and teacher within two school days of rendering the decision.
7. If the SIT Committee denies the request for grade change, the teacher or parent can appeal the decision to the Instructional Director. This must be done within 10 school days of receiving the decision from the SIT Committee.
8. The SIT Committee will render a decision regarding the concern prior to the close of the grade change window and communicate with the initiator, parent/ student and teacher within two school days of rendering the decision.
9. If the SIT Committee determination necessitates a grade change, the SIT Chairperson will initiate the change using the Electronic PS-140 prior to the closing of the grade change window.
10. The Principal will be responsible for approving grade changes and ensuring that all forms and evidence is forwarded for filing in the student's cumulative folder.

F. Appeals for Multiple Students

Appeals for multiple students in the same class requires the completion of Reporting Form (Attachment B) and Response Form (Attachment C). In addition, evidence must accompany the PS-140 in each student's cumulative folder.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116

Procedure No.

July 1, 2018

Date

G. 4th Quarter Grade Appeals

1. Parents of students in grades K-11 will have the opportunity to appeal grades by the fifth day of the next (new) school year. All grade changes must be submitted two weeks from the grade appeal deadline.
2. For students in grade 12, the Principal will review all grades on the day after the grading window is closed. If the principal believes that a 4th quarter grade was submitted that is not aligned with the grade submitted during the progress report period and evidence from monitoring the required two grades per week does not support the grade submitted by the teacher, a request must be made to the Instructional Director requesting authorization of a grade change. If approved, the principal must then complete the electronic grade change form for final approval by the Instructional Director.

III. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In an effort to ensure that the grade change authorization and appeals process is implemented, the following monitoring tools and processes will be utilized annually.

- A. All staff members will review the grade change authorization and appeals process by September 30th of each school year. A record containing staff signature to signify completion of this task will be kept on file in the Principals office for four (4) years.
- B. Notification will be sent to all parents informing them of the timeline for filing grade appeals at the end of grading period. Dates for quarterly grade appeals will also be posted on the systemic calendar posted on the PGCPS website.
- C. Area Offices will utilize PS-140 Application Reporting tool or APEX Reports to run quarterly reports of all grade changes submitted and approved by the established deadline. The report will be provided to the Deputy Superintendent no later than 5 school days after the deadline for quarterly grade change approvals.
- D. A random audit of student cumulative folders in elementary school, middle school and high school will be done once a year to ensure compliance with the grade change authorization and appeals process. The audit will be conducted by staff from the Division of Teaching and Learning. Findings from the audit will be shared with Area Offices to determine next steps and ways to support schools to ensure full compliance with the grade change authorization and appeals process.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADE CHANGE AUTHORIZATION AND APPEALS

5116
Procedure No.

July 1, 2018
Date

VIII. **RELATED PROCEDURES:**

Administrative Procedure 5111.2 Admission of Students from Non- Approved or Non-Accredited school grades 9 to 12;

Administrative Procedure 5113, Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy;

Administrative Procedure 5121.1, Grading and Reporting for Elementary Schools, Early Childhood Through Grade Five;

Administrative Procedure 5121.2, Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools, Grade Six Through Grade Eight;

Administrative Procedure 5121.3, Grading and Reporting for High Schools, Grade Nine Through Grade Twelve

IX. **LEGAL REFERENCE:** Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, §7-301 and 7-302; COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations) 13A.03.02.08

X. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** The Office of the Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning will be responsible for updating these procedures as needed.

XI. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDES:** None

XII. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2018

Attachment(s):

- A. Failure to Post Form (Attachment A)
- B. Grade Appeal Reporting Form (Attachment B)
- C. Grade Appeal Response Form (Attachment C)
- D. Grade Appeal Decision Form (Attachment D)
- E. Grade Appeal Flow Chart (Attachment E)
- F. Dual Enrollment Grade Change Exception Notice (Attachment F)

Distribution: Lists 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11