

Da Vinci Schools

Board Policy and Procedures

GRADES AND EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DA VINCI COMMUNICATIONS, DESIGN, SCIENCE, AND RISE

The Board of Trustees believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians understand performance expectations and identifying the student's areas of strength and those areas needing improvement.

For each student in grades 9-12, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall maintain a transcript recording the courses taken, the term that each course was taken, credits earned, final grades, and date of graduation.

Mastery-Based Grading

Da Vinci Communications, Design, Science, and RISE utilize a mastery-based grading system where students focus on skill development and showing evidence of their mastery rather than calculating points necessary to achieve a letter grade without reference to academic progress. Mastery-based grading gives students and parents specific feedback about what skills the students have and have not learned, which can be used to direct learning.

Students shall have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, tests, projects, portfolios, and/or class discussion as appropriate. Other elements that are not a direct measure of knowledge and understanding of course content, such as attendance, effort, student conduct, and work habits, shall not be factored into the academic grade but may be reported separately.

Students are graded on a four-point scale, which are connected to the conventional letter-grade system:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Letter Grade Equivalent</i>
4	Evidence demonstrates detailed understanding	A
3	Evidence demonstrates understanding	B
2	Evidence demonstrates basic understanding	C
1	Evidence demonstrates partial understanding	I
0	No evidence	I

Grades become final at the end of each semester. Students must earn a "C-" or higher in an academic course in order to earn credit for that course. A grade of "I" in a course at the end of the semester shall become an "F". Students will have an opportunity to re-take the course through credit recovery options available at each site.

In reporting grades on report cards, the following grading scale applies:

<i>Cutoff Mastery Score</i>	<i>Cutoff Percent</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Mastery Score/ GPA</i>	<i>Grade Value (/100)</i>
≥ 3.83	≥ 95%	A	4	100%
≥ 3.5	≥ 87%	A-	3.667	92%
≥ 3.16	≥ 79%	B+	3.333	83%
≥ 2.86	≥ 70%	B	3	75%
≥ 2.5	≥ 62%	B-	2.667	67%
≥ 2.16	≥ 54%	C+	2.333	58%
≥ 1.83	≥ 45%	C	2	50%
≥ 1.5	≥ 37%	C-	1.667	42%
≥ 0	≥ 0%	F	0	0%

When the principal or designee has approved a student to receive credit for coursework completed at a community or four-year college, the student shall receive the same letter grade as issued by the college.

A student who received, from a previous school, a “D” in an “a-g” course required for high school graduation at Da Vinci Schools shall re-take that course to obtain a “C” or higher.

A student with a disability on the State Minimum Diploma Path may earn a “D” and receive credits in courses specified in his/her individualized education plan or Section 504 plan.

Honors Courses

Courses that have honors credit status award one additional grade point to a student’s grade. The grades for these courses shall be entered into the student transcript and will be calculated into the GPA accordingly.

Pass/Fail Grading

The principal may identify courses or programs for which students shall earn a Pass or Fail grade instead of a letter grade.

Students who receive a Pass grade shall acquire the appropriate number of credits for the course. The grade shall not be counted in determining class rank nor shall it be included in the determination of a student’s grade point average (GPA).

Repeating Courses

With the approval of the principal or designee, a student may repeat a course if he/she received a grade of “D” or “F” in that course. Both grades received shall be entered on the student’s transcript, but the student shall receive credit only once for taking the course. The highest grade received shall be used in determining the student’s overall GPA.

Withdrawal from a Course

With the approval of the principal or designee, a student may withdraw from a course. A course dropped within the first two weeks of the grading period shall not be entered on the student's permanent record. A course dropped after the first two weeks of the grading period shall receive a grade of "F" and entered on the student's permanent record and transcript, unless otherwise decided by the principal or designee because of extenuating circumstances.

Effect of Absences on Grades

Whenever a student misses an assignment or assessment due to either an excused or unexcused absence, he/she shall be given full credit for subsequent satisfactory completion of the assignment or assessment.

A student who has accrued 14 or more unexcused absences during a grading period may not receive any credit for the course regardless of the grade received. The student and parent/guardian shall have a reasonable opportunity to explain the absences. (Education Code 49067).

If a student receives a failing grade and/or not credit for the course because of excessive unexcused absences, the student's record shall specify that the grade assigned and/or the credits withheld are because of excessive unexcused absences. (Education Code 49067).

A student in foster care who is absent from school due to a decision made by a court or placing agency to change his/her placement shall not have his/her grades lowered as a result of such absence. (Education Code 49069.5)

Challenging a Grade

Teachers are solely responsible for assessing the level of mastery their students have demonstrated on each of the essential skills of the course. In the absence of clerical or mechanical error, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, a student's grade as determined by the teacher shall be final. A grade assigned by the teacher shall not be changed by the Board or the Chief Executive Officer except as provided by law or Board policy. (Education Code 49066)

An adult student or parent/guardian may submit to the principal or designee a written request to challenge the student's demonstrated level of mastery on any of the essential skills within 30 calendar days of receiving the grade. The principal or designee shall meet with the student, parent/guardian and the teacher who issued the grade within 30 calendar days of receiving the request. The teacher shall be given the opportunity to state, orally and/or in writing, the reasons for which the grade was given.

After considering all relevant information, the principal or designee shall sustain or deny the allegations of the adult student or parent/guardian. (Education Code 49070).

If the allegations are sustained, the principal or designee shall order the correction of the grade. (Education Code 49070)

If the allegations are denied, the adult student or parent/guardian shall be informed of his/her right to submit a written objection to that grade. Any statement submitted shall be maintained with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and shall be disclosed whenever the related part of the record is disclosed. (Education Code 49070)

Parent Notifications

At the beginning of each semester- or year-long course, teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians how academic performance will be evaluated in their classrooms. Parents/guardians shall also be informed at the beginning of the school year that class credit may be withheld because of excessive unexcused absences.

Parents/guardians and students have the right to receive course grades that represent an accurate evaluation of the student's academic performance. Report cards displaying students' grades in each subject or course shall be distributed to parents/guardians at the end of each grading period.

When reporting student performance to parents/guardians, teachers may add narrative descriptions, observational notes, and/or samples of classroom work in order to better describe a student's level of mastery on any of the essential skills.

Whenever it becomes evident to a teacher that a student is in danger of failing a course, the teacher shall arrange a conference with the student's parent/guardian or send the parent/guardian a written report. (Education Code 49067)

Parents/guardians shall have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher(s) to discuss the grades and strategies to improve their child's performance.

A report card for a student with a disability may contain information about his/her disability, including whether that student received special education or related services, provided that the report card informs parents/guardians about their child's progress or level of achievement in specific classes, course content, or curriculum. However, transcripts that may be used to inform postsecondary institutions or prospective employers of the student's academic achievements shall not contain information disclosing the student's disability.

Withholding Grades, Diploma or Transcripts

Da Vinci Schools shall not, because of a debt owed to Da Vinci Schools, take negative action against a student or former student, including, but not limited to, the denial of full credit for any assignments for a course, or the denial or withholding of grades, diploma or transcripts. (Education Code 49014)

However, when a student willfully cuts, defaces, or otherwise injures real or personal property of Da Vinci Schools or willfully does not return Da Vinci Schools' property that has been loaned to the student, the student's parents/guardians may be required to pay the costs of all damages within the limits established pursuant to Education Code 48904. Until the student's parents/guardians have paid for the damages or the student has completed voluntary work or

other nonmonetary alternative offered by Da Vinci Schools in lieu of monetary damages, the Chief Executive Officer or designee may withhold the student's grades, diploma, and/or transcripts. (Education Code 48904, 49014)

This provision does not apply to a student who is a current or former homeless or foster youth. (Education Code 49014)

Before withholding a student's grades, diploma, and/or transcripts, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall inform the student's parents/guardians in writing of the student's alleged misconduct. The student shall be afforded due process consistent with procedures established for the expulsion of students. (Education Code 48904)

When a student who is transferring into Da Vinci Schools has had grades, a diploma, and/or transcripts withheld by the previous school, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall continue to withhold the student's grades, diploma, and/or transcripts until notified by the previous school that the decision to withhold has been rescinded. (Education Code 48904.3)

Upon receiving notice that a student whose grades, diploma, and/or transcripts have been withheld by Da Vinci Schools has transferred to another public school in California, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall provide the student's records to the new school and notify the new school that the student's grades, diploma, and/or transcripts are being withheld from the student and parents/guardians pursuant to Education Code 48904.

The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall also notify the student's parents/guardians in writing that the decision to withhold the student's grades, diploma, and/or transcripts will be enforced by the new school. (Education Code 48904.3)

Grade Point Average

Each student's GPA shall be calculated using the grade point assigned to each letter grade in accordance with the scale provided under "Mastery-Based Grading" above, which reflect distinctions for plus and minus grades. The grade points for all applicable coursework shall be totaled and divided by the number of courses completed. Pass/Fail grades shall not be included in the determination of a student's GPA.

By October 1 of each year, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall provide to the Student Aid Commission the GPA of all Da Vinci Schools students in grade 12, except for students who have opted out or are permitted by rules of the Student Aid Commission to provide test scores in lieu of the GPA. (Education Code 69432.9)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

48205 Excused absences

48800-48802 Enrollment of gifted students in community college

48904-48904.3 Withholding grades, diplomas or transcripts

49014 Public School Fair Debt Collection Act
49063 Notification of rights regarding student records
49066 Finalization and challenge of grades
49067 Mandated regulations regarding student's achievement
49069.5 Students in foster care, grades and credits
69432.9 Cal Grant program; notification of grade point average
76000-76002 Enrollment in community college

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

30008 Definition of high school grade point average for student aid eligibility

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34

99.1-99.67 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

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