

## Considerations for Assigning and Reporting Grades

March 2020

KRS 160.345(3)(b) indicates local school boards shall adopt policies related to school-based decision making, including “assessment of individual student progress, including testing and reporting of student progress to students, parents, the school district, the community, and the state.” KRS 160.345(4) allows the local board of education to grant to the school-based decision making council any authority permitted by law. As a result, assignment of student grades is a matter determined at the local district level, often by school-based decision making councils.

### **Additional Resources for Consideration**

The following resources are meant to stimulate thinking about the assigning and reporting of grades in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources have not all been vetted by the Kentucky Department of Education, nor should this be considered an endorsement.

Guskey, Thomas R. (2020, March 29). Should We Consider Pass/Fail Grading? Retrieved from <https://tguskey.com/should-we-consider-pass-fail-grading/>

Sawchuk, Stephen. (2020, April 1). Grading Students During the Coronavirus Crisis: What's the Right Call? Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/04/01/grading-students-during-the-coronavirus-crisis-whats.html>

Staff. Grading Scales. Retrieved from <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/grading-scales>.

**Prior to making any decision, thoughtful consideration should be given to each policy requirement in order to best meet the needs of individual students.** Each district will have to make decisions that are unique to their student population, faculty, staff and available resources.

In general, when making local decisions, determine:

- What’s working and what’s not;
- The needs;
- The challenges; and
- Resources or next steps for overcoming those challenges.

### **Required**

[KRS 160.345\(3\)\(b\), \(4\)](#)

### **Local District Considerations**

- Since the assignment and reporting of student grades is determined at the local level, how will local decisions about school or district grading policies impact students? Is the policy equitable?
- How will local decisions about school or district grading policies impact student GPAs, the awarding of student Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) allocations and eligibility for participation in sports and extracurricular activities?

- What system must be in place to report grades if non-traditional instruction (NTI) days continue?
- How will student work be collected and graded?
- How will local schools and districts facilitate the reporting of grades to students and families?

### **Information from Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA)**

KHEAA has received questions from administrators at the secondary and postsecondary levels regarding the impact grading policy changes could have on KEES and the dual credit programs. The purpose of this information is to provide guidance to assist with decision-making processes.

### **KEES**

- Courses receiving pass/fail grades must be excluded from the KEES grade point average (GPA) calculation.
- Only courses receiving regular letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) are used when calculating a KEES GPA.
- Should a school decide to utilize pass/fail grading for the spring term, it is possible to calculate the yearly KEES GPA using final grades (and corresponding credit earned) for the portion of the year that has concluded.
- All coursework completed during a year can count toward the KEES curriculum requirement regardless of the grading policy that's applied. KEES curriculum is defined as the student earning a minimum of five credits per year.
- KEES awards become final upon a student's graduation from high school. Therefore, students who will be graduating this spring need to have coursework completed so their grades will be final when their KEES GPA is calculated and reported for the 2019-2020 year.
- KHEAA will allow KEES GPA recalculation for underclass students (grades 9-11) if a pass/fail course is retaken next fall for a regular letter grade. School districts will be responsible for notifying KHEAA if they offer retake options to students.

### **Dual Credit Coursework**

- Students enrolled in dual credit coursework receive weight in their KEES GPA calculation. It is KHEAA's understanding that all postsecondary institutions are issuing regular letter grades for dual credit. They are not offering pass/fail options to dual credit students. Since the letter grade assigned by the postsecondary institution is the grade the high school uses, all dual credit students should have letter grades to include in their yearly KEES GPA calculation.
- Note, grades for dual credit courses are weighted for KEES purposes. This means a student earning a "B" in a dual credit class will receive 1.0 additional quality point, making the grade the equivalent of an "A."

### **Notifying KHEAA of Grading Policy Changes**

KHEAA is requesting schools and/or districts notify them as soon as possible, but no later than June 30, 2020, if:

- Pass/fail grades will be used for the spring semester (except for dual credit coursework that will receive letter grades); or
- Students will be allowed to retake courses next fall so their 2019-2020 grade can be replaced and KEES GPA recalculated.

### **Dual Credit (DC) Scholarship & Work Ready Dual Credit (WRDC) Scholarships**

- Some districts have asked about impact to the DC/WRDC scholarship programs. From a grading perspective, there should be no impact as the institutions are issuing letter grades for dual credit coursework.
- The DC/WRDC scholarships pay the full tuition cost for DC/WRDC coursework. If a student fails or withdraws from a dual credit course, the institution is responsible for returning 50% of the scholarship to KHEAA. Students are held harmless, meaning the institution is not allowed to bill them when scholarship funds are returned. This is a normal procedure for the dual credit programs that has been in place for years.

### **Communication Plan/Audience**

- How will this grading and reporting information be communicated to educators, students, families?
- What are effective ways to ensure transparency?

