HOPKINTON MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

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Memorandum

To:	**Hopkinton School Board**
	Superintendent of Schools
From:	**Mr. Christopher Kelley**
Date:	**December 12, 2014**
Reason:	**Change In Grading Policy**

Current Practice:

Competency-based credit acquisition has been mandated by the New Hampshire Department of Education. Competencies are defined as content, skills and understandings that are essential to the current and future academic success for all students. To earn high school credit, students must demonstrate proficiency in all competencies for that course by achieving a grade of 75% or better on each competency. Students who do not meet that standard need to remediate the competency until a 75% is achieved or they will need to repeat the course.

In conjunction with the competencies, students must achieve an overall grade of 60% to pass a course. If a student does not achieve a passing course grade, traditional credit recovery programs are available for students (repeating a course, VLACS options, etc.)

Proposal:

We would like to propose a model for students, in grades seven through twelve, which assigns a passing grade to be a 70% for both competency assessments and summative coursework that is included in the final grade. This would eliminate the dual grading approach while supporting the idea of receiving a grade that demonstrates the students learning and knowledge.

Rationale:

We state that a passing grade is a 60%, however students must achieve a 75% on each competency to earn credit. This dual grading system is not *efficient or sustainable*. Conversations with the staff have indicated that we should move away from this model and move towards a single grade for passing. Moving to a 70% for both competency assessments and summative coursework I believe will support the District goal of Ensuring Student Learning and Ensuring High School + For all Students.

Research to Support the Rationale:

The Competency Steering Committee met during the 2013 – 2014 school year to discuss the topic of the dual grading system. As a committee, we researched how other high schools approach grading. In particular the committee looked at two schools, Spaulding High School and Sanborn Regional High School. We took the time to review two white papers about both schools that addresses their approach to grading and a competency based learning model. During our review of the white paper about Spaulding High School we discovered that they implemented a system that reflected competency based learning. Spaulding High School utilizes this

system throughout and at the end of a course a student receives an A for advanced work; a B for work considered to be beyond competent; a C for work considered to demonstrate competency; NYC (Not Yet Competent); and IWS (Insufficient Work Submitted). It is important to note that Spaulding High School does not give numerical grades. They have designed a set of rubrics that specifically outline what students need to do in order to earn an A, a B, or a C.

After the review of Spaulding High School's white paper, I took a team of teachers to Spaulding High School where we met with members of their staff and their administration. At the meeting we discussed how the new system was implemented and how it was structured. The meeting was informative and gave us some direction and topics to think about for the future.

Future Work:

Looking toward the future I believe that we will need to consider adopting the competencies listed in our Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations. We need to support the notion that grades should reflect the students' learning and knowledge. In other words, grades should equal what students know and are able to do. This would mean that we consider the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a summative grading system that limits or eliminates formative grading. Formative assessments and assignments should be strictly seen as predictive pieces of student work that helps to inform instruction so that we work to reach all children.

I would also like to consider the adoption of a NYC (Not Yet Competent) classification and an IWS (Insufficient Work Submitted) classification or similar model.

Revised on December 12, 2014