

GRADING CHANGES 2016–2017 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Were there changes to the South Carolina uniform grading scale?

Yes. South Carolina has changed the state uniform grading scale as approved by the State Board of Education. This uniform grading scale and the system for calculating grade point averages (GPAs) and class rank applies to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle/junior high school level.

These changes allow South Carolina students to compete for admission to college and college scholarships with students in neighboring states more equitably.

Lexington County School District One will use numeric grades for all students in Grades 3 through Grade 12.

All report cards and transcripts will use the following numeric grades for students in Grades 3 through Grade 12:

A	90–100
B	80–89
C	70–79
D	60–69
F	59 and below

World Language courses, performing arts and other courses graded using proficiency scales as opposed to grades will continue to use proficiency guidelines and rubrics instead of traditional assessments and grades.

What other changes in grading are taking place in 2016–2017?

The district is changing some of its other testing and grading processes such as the processes used to determine when students can retake an assessment and when students can submit overdue assignments.

Which students are affected by these other changes in grading processes?

Students in Grades 6–12 are affected by these changes.

Why did the district decide to change its grading practices?

After beginning work as superintendent on May 2, Dr. Greg Little spent much of his time meeting with staff, students, community members, business owners and local residents.

He quickly visited as many departments and schools as he could before the school year ended and held four community meetings in May — one in each of the Gilbert, Lexington, Pelion and White Knoll communities.

At all those meetings, Dr. Little took the time to not just talk to the individuals he met, but also to carefully listen to their stories about the things they love about

Lexington One, the things they'd like to change and the things they'd like the district to do next.

One of the areas that came up repeatedly was the district's grading practices.

At the same time, a team of principals and teachers were also meeting about the district's assessment and grading practices.

The combined efforts of all these groups resulted in some changes to the district's grading and assessment practices.

First, the group agreed that the primary purpose of grades is to communicate a student's level of progress on specific standards-based learning goals with the student and his/her parents.

Second, the group agreed that assessment practices should support a student's learning, achievement and mastery of standards by connecting descriptive, timely, ongoing and consistent teacher feedback directly to standards.

The district has two categories of assessments — formative and summative — which both focus on standards-based learning targets. Formative assessments are considered "practice," while summative assessments are considered the "end performance."

Formative assessments help students learn and let teachers know when students are ready for a summative assessment. They usually make up about 15% of a student's grade.

Summative assessments measure a student's ability to demonstrate the concepts, skills and knowledge embedded in standards-based learning targets and usually make up 85% of a student's grade.

Will students still have "retakes"?

Yes. Now, however, students have two types of retakes: choice retakes and recovery retakes.

What is a choice retake?

For middle school courses, **middle school students** will have the opportunity to attempt to improve one summative grade per class per nine weeks (4 per year) on an assessment they made a high enough score on to show that they have mastered the information (80% or greater).

Middle school students taking high school credit bearing courses will follow the high school guidelines for retakes.

For high school credit bearing courses, **high school students** will have the opportunity to attempt to improve one summative grade per class per nine weeks on a block schedule or one per semester for year-long courses on an assessment they made a high enough score on to show that they have mastered the information (80% or greater).

If the student scores higher on the retest, that student can replace the first grade with the highest grade earned.

What is a recovery retake?

Middle and high school students will also have an opportunity to demonstrate their growth and improve grades on any summative assessment when their initial score is below minimal expectations for mastery (less than 80%).

If the student scores higher on the retest, that student can replace the first grade with the higher one earned — up to 80%.

This applies to all college prep, honors, International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement courses in Lexington County School District One.

Dual credit courses follow the guidelines dictated by the cooperating college, university or technical college.

What about missed assignments or late work?

When a student returns to school after an extended absence, teachers use their professional judgment to determine what assignments or assessments the student needs to make up, etc., and they let the student know any new deadline for a summative assessment with no grade penalty.

If, on the other hand, a student misses a deadline but has not been absent or had some other extenuating circumstance, he/she may request a one-time extension per class. This extension enables him/her to complete the work with no penalty to his/her grade. Any other missed assignments could earn no higher than 80%.

August 10, 2016

Dear Parents of Students in Grades 6–12:

I wanted to take a moment to let you know about a few changes taking place this year in Lexington County School District One’s grading processes.

First, you may know that South Carolina has changed the state uniform grading scale to a 10-point numeric scale. This uniform grading scale and the system for calculating grade point averages (GPAs) and class rank will allow South Carolina students to compete with students in neighboring states on a more even basis when applying for admission to college or for college scholarships.

Lexington County School District One will use this new numeric scale with all students in Grades 3 through Grade 12. All report cards and transcripts for students in Grades 3 through Grade 12 will use the following numeric grades:

A	90–100
B	80–89
C	70–79
D	60–69
F	59 and below

World Language courses, performing arts and other courses graded using proficiency scales as opposed to grades will continue to use proficiency guidelines and rubrics instead of traditional assessments and grades.

Second, the district is also changing some of its other testing and grading processes such as the processes used to determine when students in Grades 6–12 can retake an assessment and when they can submit late assignments.

As your new superintendent, I spent my first four months here meeting with staff, students, community members, business owners and local residents. I also visited schools and held four community meetings in May — one in each of the Gilbert, Lexington, Pelion and White Knoll communities.

At all these meetings, teachers, parents and students commented on the district’s grading practices — something a team of principals and teachers had already begun studying. As a result, we’re making some changes to the district’s grading and assessment practices. For instance, students now have two types of retakes: choice retakes and recovery retakes.

What is a choice retake?

For middle school courses, **middle school students** will have the opportunity to attempt to improve one summative grade per class per nine weeks (4 per year) on an assessment they made a high enough score on to show that they have mastered the information (80% or greater).

Middle school students taking high school credit bearing courses will follow the high school guidelines for retakes.

For high school credit bearing courses, **high school students** will have the opportunity to attempt to improve one summative grade per class per nine weeks on a block schedule or one per semester for year-long courses on an assessment they made a high enough score on to show that they have mastered the information (80% or greater). If the student scores higher on the retest, that student can replace the first grade with the highest grade earned.

What is a recovery retake?

Middle and high school students will also have an opportunity to demonstrate their growth and improve grades on any summative assessment when their initial score is below minimal expectations for mastery (less than 80%). This is not limited to one summative assessment grade per nine weeks if they are on a block schedule or one per semester if they are on a year-long course schedule. If the student scores higher on the retest, that student can replace the first grade with the higher one earned — up to 80%.

These changes apply to all college prep, honors, International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement courses in Lexington County School District One. Dual credit courses follow the guidelines dictated by the cooperating college, university or technical college.

Third, we tweaked the way we deal with students missing deadlines for submitting work. When a student returns to school after an extended absence, teachers use their professional judgment to determine what assignments or assessments the student needs to make up, etc., and they let the student know any new deadline for a summative assessment with no grade penalty.

If, on the other hand, a student misses a deadline but has not been absent or had some other extenuating circumstance, he/she may request a one-time extension per class. This extension enables him/her to complete the work with no penalty to his/her grade. Any other missed assignments could earn no higher than 80%.

Please be patient with us as we work with the S.C. Department of Education to convert to the new 10-point grading scale and as we work within our schools to adjust our assessment practices.

We have some commonly asked questions and answers on our website (www.lexington1.net). If, however, you have a question about this that is not on that Q&A, please let your principal know. Your principal will make sure that we know what those questions are so that we can clarify any confusion or unanswered questions.

I hope your student has a wonderful experience this year.



Dr. Gregory Little
Superintendent