

PURPOSE: Mandate uniform grading practices for quizzes/tests in STEM subjects. E.g., Calculus, Foundations, Physics, etc.

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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SENATE:

SECTION ONE (REASONING):

There is a noticeable discrepancy between grading policies within academic departments at MSMS. Already under the stress of high-level classes, students should not feel at a disadvantage because of their teacher's grading practices – especially if their peers are being graded differently for the same work. This bill would establish a clear policy for each department regarding grading, quiz corrections, and test corrections.

1. Consistent grading expectations are linked to higher student achievement and engagement. Students taught under clearer grading standards performed better in current classes and later courses, and even showed higher attendance for classes. https://childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/gershenson_2022/.
2. Because teachers often receive little formal training in grading practices, grading systems can become inconsistent and unintentionally biased. Uniform policies help reduce inequities and ensure that students in the same subject are evaluated under comparable expectations. <https://www.aasa.org/resources/resource/equitable-grading-tales-three-districts>.
3. Research shows that differences in grading policies between teachers lead to student anxiety, confusion, and unfair academic pressure. When students must follow multiple grading systems at once, they spend more energy managing policies than focusing on learning. This is especially stressful in competitive academic environments where GPA matters. <https://www.the74million.org/article/every-teacher-grades-differently-which-isnt-fair/>.

SECTION TWO (SPECIFIC CHANGE):

COURSE SYLLABI

The faculty will provide a course syllabus to each student on the first day of class attendance. Each class, regardless of instructor, will provide a standard syllabus for each subject. General policies, such as whether quiz/test corrections are offered, will remain consistent throughout all departmental STEM courses. The syllabus will serve as the basis of expectations between the

teacher and the student. Each syllabus will state the course requirements, grading policy, grading scale, exemption policy, attendance policy, dates of major tests, papers and/or assignments, late work policy and any required or optional fees associated with the course. To make parents aware of course expectations, MSMS recommends that students copy each syllabus for their parents or send them electronic copies.

SECTION THREE (APPENDIX):

“Now, about Quiz/Test Corrections: the idea here is that a course taught by different faculty, say AP Stats, should have quiz corrections allowed from any faculty that teach AP Stats, correct? If so, I agree, but foresee some complexity. What if, for example, one teacher allows quiz/test corrections for students and the other does not. However, the teacher that does not allow corrections applies a curve to their students' tests. The teacher that does allow corrections applies the same curve after the corrections. Ultimately, there is not a real difference here as far as the scores go.” (MSMS Teacher)

“Faculty will naturally want control over their teaching process. This means there will be pushback on too much course standardisation. This isn't my opinion, just know that there will be faculty that resist rules they feel restrict their control over content.” (MSMS Instructor)

“I like this because I never needed quiz corrections until I got to Calculus 2. However, the teacher I had did not do quiz corrections because “college professors wouldn't do that.” I feel I could've retained a lot more of what I learned if quiz corrections were the standard for the ENTIRE math department.” (MSMS Senior)

“...There have been times where I wished I had another teacher, where maybe I could get my desired grade without all the stress and extra effort without quiz corrections.” (MSMS Senior)

“If two classes are, in theory, testing on the same thing, the two tests should be graded similarly, no?” (MSMS Junior)

“It's better to have some consistency for once.” (MSMS Junior)

“I think it's necessary, particularly with Biology and Physics, I've taken Mr. Barnard's class both semesters, and I get the impression that he generally goes easier on the grading than Dr. Palagi (not saying the grading is bad, but there is a discrepancy there that shouldn't be).” (MSMS Junior)

“I wish it was all the same and 'fair' but that's never going to happen.” (MSMS Senior)

“This is kind of hard to do because although some teachers grade differently, they also prepare their students at a different level.” (MSMS Senior)

SECTION FOUR (RESEARCH):

4. ~~Consistent grading expectations are linked to higher student achievement and engagement. Students taught under clearer grading standards performed better in current classes and later courses, and even showed higher attendance for classes.~~
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