

**Fort McMurray Composite High School 15 Fixes for Broken Grades**  
**Adapted from the work of Ken O'Connor et al**

**A helping hand in everyway possible, but no free rides.**

**November 23, 2008**

1. We will include achievement in grades, except where the Program of Studies requires that levels of appropriate behaviour and participation be assessed as part of a student's grade. We will model traits that develop our students into good and decent citizens.
2. We will provide all support possible for the learner, e.g. offers of extra help in and outside of class time, help in Learning Strategies classes, contacts home for those who have missing assignments. Typically, significant late penalties will not be given for assessments turned in late. However, if the missing work is part of a group assessment that is expected according to the Program of Studies, the deadline must be met. Secondly, if in the professional judgement of the teacher, the quality of the missing assignments is significant, the student may be awarded an incomplete until those missing assessments have been satisfactorily completed, even if the official end of the course has come and gone.
3. We will seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement. We will not give points for extra credit or use bonus points. We may, however, use this student's work as an exemplar to inspire others (with the student's permission). Secondly, exemplary work may influence professional judgement when determining the final grade.
4. We will apply other consequences for academic dishonesty, e.g. having the student report to the parent, within your presence, that they cheated. We will reassess, e.g. giving the students another equally rigorous test, essay or other assignment, written outside of class time, to determine the actual level of achievement. We will not punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades.
5. We will report absences separately and not consider attendance in grade determination. However, if the Program of Studies requires that levels of appropriate behaviour and participation be assessed as part of a student's grade, we will do so.
6. We will use only individual achievement evidence when determining grades. If an assessment involves students working in a group, only what the individual does in that assessment will be counted in that student's grade.
7. We will organize information in grading records by General Learner Outcomes, e.g. in Biology 20, students will explain that the biosphere is composed of ecosystems, each with distinctive biotic and abiotic characteristics. We will not organize information by assessment methods, e.g. quizzes, tests, projects.
8. We will provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations directly related to the Program of Studies introducing exemplars, rubrics and other marking schemes at the beginning of an assignment. We will show our students the target. We will not assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards.

9. We will compare each student's performance to preset standards, e.g. rubrics and other marking schemes. We will not assign grades based on a student's achievement compared to others.

10. We will rely only on quality assessments, developed collaboratively whenever possible and refined over time. The quality standard set by Alberta Education in Provincial Achievement Tests, Diploma Examinations, and approved resources will be used to guide teachers' when developing their own assessments. We will not rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality.

11. We will consider other measures of central tendency, other than the mean (average), such as the mode of the whole body of evidence, to help guide us in our professional judgement when determining a student's final grade.

12. We will provide every opportunity to satisfactorily complete missing assessments. However, if in the professional judgement of the teacher, the quality of the missing assignments is significant, the student may be awarded an incomplete until those missing assessments have been satisfactorily completed, even if the official end of the course has come and gone. As well, in performance-based classes or assessments, e.g. Dance, Drama, and Music, it may be impossible for students to replace a performance assessment, such as a concert or group debate, therefore, a student who illegitimately misses the assessment, will have to receive a zero for that assessment.

13. We will use our professional judgement and consider the whole body of evidence provided by the student, including formative and summative assessments, when determining a student's final grade.

14. We will use our professional judgement and consider the whole body of evidence provided by the student, whether it is recent or not, including formative and summative assessments, when determining a student's final grade.

15. We will involve students in the assessment and grading process whenever possible, e.g. co-construction of assessments, self-evaluation. We will not deliberately leave students out of the assessment and grading process.