

Dear Parents,

Welcome back! A new school year is underway and we are very excited to have your child at (*name of school*). We hope you and your family enjoyed a restful summer and that you are ready for a new school year.

This letter is to inform you about the new countywide *Grading Practices/Guidelines* and the reasons for the new guidelines. While many of the guidelines are the same as what we have used in the past, there are some new practices.

Beginning this school year 2011-2012, Gaston County Schools has established countywide *Grading Practices/Guidelines* for grades 3-12 to ensure that students are given sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their comprehension of a subject or course.

In the past, GCS like many other districts in the state, had no countywide grading guidelines or practices that outlined how much a quiz, homework or a major test would count. Nor did the district have guidelines for the minimum number of tests that must be given in a course. Therefore, it was left to each school or the classroom teacher to decide whether to give one or six tests and the value of a test as compared to homework, class work or a special project assignment.

The new guidelines provide standard grading practices for GCS elementary, middle and senior high schools. The grading practices ensure that all students are given ample opportunity to show evidence of their skills or mastery of a subject or course and that a student has learned the basic skills and knowledge for a given subject.

These guidelines will help ensure that your child gains the skills, knowledge and problem solving abilities he/she needs to master the subjects taken at each grade level. The *Grading Practices/Guidelines* are aligned with the State Standard Course of Study, which means it will help ensure that students are prepared for state tests.

Attached is a copy of the guidelines for our school that you may want to review. If you have questions, please let your classroom teacher know. In addition, we will discuss the grading practices at our (*PTO Meeting or Open House*) on (*date*) and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.

Thank you for your continued support. We are looking forward to another great year at (*name of school*).