

**Iber Holmes Gove Middle School
Lamprey River Elementary School
Raymond, NH**

To: Dr. Tina McCoy

From: Bob Bickford, Bryan Belanger

Re: School wide trimester grade reporting proposal for the 2018/2019 school year

Date: February 2, 2018

IHGMS:

Currently our core academic classes are on a quarterly grade reporting schedule and our unified arts classes are on a trimester grade reporting schedule. The IHGMS leadership team would like to propose that all classes be on the trimester schedule starting with the next school year.

We had to move the unified arts to a trimester grade reporting schedule so that we could fit all the unified arts classes into the rotation. The trimester schedule also allows students to be enrolled in band or chorus all year long. They have either band or chorus every third day throughout the year. (Every other day for 8th grade.) Currently we do not see a way of redoing the unified arts master schedule so that they could be scheduled on a quarterly basis and meet these criteria.

The current grade reporting schedule at the middle school causes several challenges for both families and the school. We have received many comments from families that they are confused about the different grade reporting schedules of their children's core academic courses which are reported on a quarterly basis and their unified arts classes which are reported on a trimester basis. The only time during the school year when these two schedules align is the first day of the school year and the last. The differences in the reporting schedules also prevents the unified arts classes being considered for honor roll. This has left some to perceive that our unified arts classes are not as important, that they don't "count".

Aligning the course reporting schedules to trimesters will allow for teachers to complete more units per marking period including the summative assessment. With quarters being shorter than trimesters it is common that units have to split between quarters with a summative being given before the end of the unit but by the end of the quarter. Then there is another summative in the following quarter at the end of the unit. This additional summative process takes away from instructional/learning time.

The middle school does not foresee any challenges related to the district's transition to competency based education with a shift to all courses being on a trimester reporting schedule. As all our core academic classes are year long, the most significant change is that those year long classes will now have the same reporting dates as our unified arts classes. This would allow us to use all academic classes in the determination of our honor roll.

Our teachers are expected to update their grade books at least once every fourteen calendar days, regardless of the length of the marking period. So the grades available to students and parents in the Parent Portal will be updated with the same frequency as they are now. Most teachers update the student grades much more frequently than this requirement.

In relation to extracurricular eligibility the majority of our after school activities are year long so the change to trimesters would not have an impact of those activities. With three sports seasons, the transition to trimesters will align with each of those three seasons more closely. Under the quarter schedule the end of the quarters frequently fall within a season.

LRES:

Currently all academic classes are on a quarterly grade reporting schedule. The LRES leadership team would like to propose that all classes be on the trimester schedule starting with the next school year.

Proposal:

We'd like to propose that student progress for all courses be reported out on a trimester basis. This is the rationale:

IHGMS

- Currently English, math, science, social studies, band and chorus are reported out on a quarterly basis plus the end of the year average of the four quarters, F1 in PowerSchool Parent Portal. This requires five columns of scores in the parent portal. (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, and F1)
 - With the unified arts classes being on a trimester schedule that is an additional three columns of grades. (T1, T2, & T3)
 - Currently the columns in the Parent Portal are - Q1, T1, Q2, T2, Q3, T3, Q4, & F1. Parents have reported that this is somewhat confusing. Currently, the only time that all grades are up to date at the same time is the end of second quarter, which is also progress reporting for second trimester, and the end of the school year.
 - Under this proposal there would be four columns; T1, T2, T3, & F1.
- Well over 90% of our families are checking their student's progress through either the PowerSchool app on their computer or mobile device. 65% are receiving regularly scheduled progress reports through the Parent Portal and are not waiting until the school reporting dates to learn their student's progress.
- Having the same grade reporting schedule for all classes and all grade levels will be beneficial to our students, their families, and the staff by creating consistency for all.

LRES

- Parent conference times would correlate better with report cards allowing teachers more time to observe and teach students and gather valuable data.
- The proposed change gives classes the chance to delve deeper into the curriculum before reporting out to parents.
- Students have more time to practice and master a new skill before they are graded
- Parent Conferences and Progress Reports are still available
- This change would not impact scheduling at LRES
- More time between reporting blocks would allow teachers more time to address the same amount of standards with better integration in units
- Frequent standards assessments and reporting out 8 times a year takes away from learning time

The LRES UA Team has discussed trimesters and have come up with the following pros and cons:

Pros:

- Without any interruption with holidays or snow days, the trimester schedule gives students in our Unified Arts Classes 480 minutes of seat time, as opposed to 360 minutes before formal evaluation (report cards).
- A longer time frame between terms will give more time to complete projects, as we only see our classes one time per week.
- During the winter, snow days will not effect the term as much, because it will be a longer time frame.
- Grading approximately 450 students is overwhelming. Trimesters would allow more valuable time to evaluate students.
- We will be consistent with IHGMS, as they are currently using a trimester schedule.

Cons:

- We wondered how trimesters would affect parent conferences? Not sure this is a con or not.
- Formal feedback to parents would be less, but using Powerschool allows parents to follow up with their students grades as needed. Not sure if this is a con either.

Final Note: Both IHGMS and LRES will have report cards available next year (in electronic form). Under the trimester proposal, parents will receive report cards less frequently than they would in a quarter system. This could be considered a 'con' by some individuals.