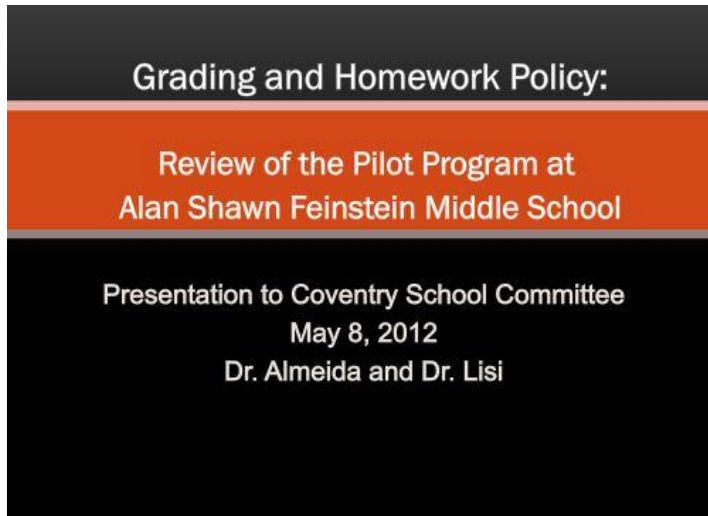


ASFMS Grading and Homework Policy Update Presented

The School Committee was presented with revisions to the ASFMS Grading and Homework Policies.

By [Lauren Costa](#) | May 11, 2012



At Tuesday night's School Committee meeting, [Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School](#) Principal Dr. Michael Almeida and Asst. Principal Dr. Arthur Lisi presented a review of the [Grading and Homework Policy Pilot Program that was instituted at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year](#).

The policy aims to make sense of why some students are not successful in their academics, to bring guidelines up-to-date and synchronize them with the current

standards-based assessments and to develop procedures based on educator surveys and research.

As discussed in September when the pilot program began, the policy's guiding beliefs focus on assessing a student's performance on his or her authentic learning (Product), work ethic skills (Process) and academic progress (Progress.) According to the presentation, skills and qualities such as work ethic, homework, behavior, attendance and timeliness are integral to the learning process yet need to be distinguished from the reporting of learning and academic progress.

One of the changes that has been discussed in relation to this idea is to limit the maximum percentage of a student's grade that homework can account for to 25%.

"We decided to limit the homework percentage because there are students who will fail a class because they don't do all of their homework, but still perform well on assessments," said Dr. Almeida.

A policy revision will now allow a student to submit missing assignments or comparable work without penalty to the Product grade within 10 calendar days after the midpoint of the trimester or within 10 calendar days after the close of trimester grades.

Dr. Almeida presented several short videos from public speaker and teacher Rick Wormelli that explain why classrooms should allow students these opportunities in order to encourage successful and lasting learning.

"We think we're teaching responsibility and deadlines, but it's actually not sound instruction," said



Wormelli in the video "[Redos, Retakes and Do-Over](#)s". He went on to point out that a magnitude of assessments throughout various fields allow for infinite redos, including LSATS, Bar exams, driver's license tests, pilot licensing tests and more.

In order to report accurate grades and progress, teachers will now need a minimum of three assessment options to review before justifying a report card grade. If the minimum number of assessments is not met, an Insufficient Evidence (IE) grade will be given and makeup plan for missed or incomplete work will be arranged.

Another policy revision is to change the number of days that a student has to resolve an Insufficient Evidence status from 15 to 10 calendar days after the midpoint of the trimester or within 10 calendar days after the close of trimester grades (the same time frame as makeup work). If the status is not resolved within this period, the IE will translate to a numerical grade of .5 on the report card.

"We think the policy is having a positive effect on kids' grades," said Lisi. "It is a lot of work for teachers but it seems to be paying off."

Committee members were presented with survey results that show 89.1% of ASFMS faculty members are confident that they understand the new grading and homework policies and 92.9% are confident that they are implementing them.

"This was the pilot year and most teachers already know about and how to implement the policies," said Almeida. "There are still some struggles but we knew that would happen to some extent."

The School Committee lent its support to move forward with the revisions and will be presented with a final reading of the policies for approval in July. If approved, full implementation will begin at the start of the 2012-2013 school year.