

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE RE-DO POLICY

1. Students will receive an “I” on any assignment not turned in, and *One* or more “I”s will result in an “I” grade for any report period. Theoretically, if a student has an A or B average on all other assignments, and has only one missing assignment, if the student does not complete the assignment, he/she would receive an I for the grading period. If the work is never made up, then the I for the grading period will turn into a grade of F (just as it would in a college course or on the job); one can never choose not to do the work and still receive good grades or an average of the other grades. All work must be completed. Our work over the past four years shows that this scenario has never, to our knowledge, happened in any of our schools. The interventions that are required to take place have effectively removed the I, and the student has earned his grade. For teachers who are worried about litigation, etc., grades are supposed to now represent the degree to which students have met the standards in the courses – not just the percent of standards met. If a student has not completed an assignment that legitimately represents his/her ability to meet that assignment, then the student has not met the standards for the course. These teachers should not worry ahead of time about these situations, if they were ever to occur, but rather, when they occur, the principal, teacher, parent and student can meet together to resolve the grade through an alternative assignment, etc. if it were to get to that point.
- 2a. Students no longer receive zeros when work isn't turned in; they don't have an option not to turn in work.
 - Teachers have made this clear from the beginning of the year
 - Teachers have other “consequences” for work not done, not done completely or not done satisfactorily
- 2b. Teachers no longer assign grades below a C; students are required to redo/revise work to get it at least to the ‘basic’ or ‘C’ level.
3. Students *cannot* receive an A (or a B in some schools) on any assignment that is late or turned in incomplete (some schools have instituted specific time periods), and students never receive an F if an assignment is completed within the year or semester (determined by each school as appropriate).
4. Late work is just that – late – but it must be *completed* if teachers are to correctly determine if students know and understand the standards being taught and assessed.
 - Retakes are required, but be reasonable. Each teacher may need to come up with their own method of doing retakes. It doesn't have to be a school-wide policy, but it could be.
 - The time that students would have to spend completing these assignments in lieu of studying for the tests to begin with is extraordinary.
 - Most students will now begin to study for their tests prior to taking them instead of ‘blowing it off’ as many are prone to do.
5. Students must be given extra help opportunities (*required*) to complete the work during the school day (not during the teachers' classes – ever), after school, Saturday School, or whatever fits your school's possibilities. (This piece is completely up to schools to determine how this help can best be delivered.)
 - Some schools require students to attend extra help prior to turning in any late or redo work. (contact Valerie Carrier, principal, Rivera Middle School, Dade County Florida)
 - Some schools require students to complete all assignments prior to being able to take the major test covering this material (if they miss the regularly scheduled test, an alternate test is given).
6. Consequences change for students not having work ready to turn in on time:
 - Requires that teachers contact students' parents and solicit their assistance – this must begin early and will have the greatest impact. Email, telephone, agenda, whatever works best for each student. Teachers should keep logs of these communications.
 - Requires a parent conference at a pre-determined number of missed assignments or failed tests, etc.
 - Require students to stay after school in an extra help setting to complete work, and/or
 - Require students to attend an extra help class during the school day, and/or require students to attend extra help in a Saturday School setting
 - Some schools *require* all students to attend extra help prior to turning in any late assignment or redo work.
 - Some policies limit students who have 'I's on any assignments from attending certain student activities, fun days, field days, certain fun-related field trips, etc.
 - Some policies state that students are not allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activity (sports, band, chorus, clubs – events and practices), if they are missing any assignments or have attempted to turn in poor quality work. (This step should not be attempted until a school has been successfully using the Power of I for at least one full year.)
7. Tests *may* be excluded from the policy. Teachers *may* choose to give students *opportunities* to raise test score to a C by coming in during extra help times to retake tests. Teachers may *require* all students who do not pass a major test to *retake* the test during extra help time until they make a passing grade.
 - a. If so, the highest grade to be recorded in the grade book should be the lowest C grade.
 - b. Teachers *may* allow any student to retake a test for a higher score, but this is not a part of Power of I.
 - c. Teachers who give ALL students chances to retake tests to make higher grades (even a B to an A or a low A to a higher A) can still do this, but it is NOT a part of the Power of I grading practice.

* Caution: students may choose to not study and simply retake tests if they think they can get a higher A or B grade.

8. Teachers must become more judicious about the kinds of assignments they give and assign a grade to.
- Which assignments are worth “chasing down”?
 - Can some assignments be “bundled” and count as one grade instead of multiple grades (such as several homework assignments, practice work, class worksheets, etc. that can be collected in folders in classes daily and graded during a test or silent reading period. The grade will reflect the percent of practice work completed. Math homework, for example, might be checked, corrected and collected in folders each day, but graded once every week or two weeks with the grades looking similar to this: 7 or 8 of 8 assignments completed and corrected = A; 6 of 8 = B; 5 of 8 = C; <5 = I. These students might be required to complete either one more for a C or teachers may elect to have students with less than 5 to complete ALL homework assignments in that bundle before they can receive any grade for their homework bundle. This grade might then be the lowest C or even a D at that point. This way, teachers are not “chasing down” 8 individual assignments from 120 kids; rather, they chase only those students who are not completing most of their homework.
 - Should teachers ‘chase down’ cross word puzzles and work searches?
9. When assignments aren’t ready, or they are incomplete or seriously below the standard and quality of expectation, teachers can use the POWER of the “I”= Give a grade of incomplete *The goal is to get all groups of students to meet grade-level course standards at an acceptable level.* Knowing that it WILL NOT WORK for all students, each school should set goals by tracking the success of this program using appropriate data. First,
- % of students currently making zeroes= Then,
 - % acceptable after first semester=
 - % acceptable after first year= after year two=

Strategies for Implementation

Schools must

- Determine the scope of initial implementation
 - Whole school; Department/s, Course/s, High Failure-rate Course/s
- Create a Culture of High Expectations and Commitment for All Stakeholders
 - Get commitment from all staff members who will be participating (have a plan)
 - Have them report to the faculty often regarding the progress, the data, the pros and the cons
 - Communicate expectations to students, parents, district office and to boards of education members.
 - Notify the feeder pattern schools and invite teams to visit planning meetings
 - Develop a focus team to gather and report on data
- Work together to develop what a Power of I or ABC not yet grading practice will look like in their school/subject.
 - Begin with a written plan that is a working draft, and know that it will need to be tweaked as teachers begin to run into implementation snags.
 - Use workbook pages for ideas, sample policies, sample letters.
- Determine the extra help opportunities available or possible at school/district
- Solicit support for transportation
- Standardize Grading Procedures by department, grade or school
- Reach consensus on weight of grading in same course subjects
 - Major tests, class work, Projects, research papers, homework
- Develop a school- or department-wide homework policy
 - Re-examine the type of homework given
 - Create homework assignments that engage the student and are necessary for the next day’s activity (make it useful)
 - Determine the purpose of homework and relay that to students often
 - Have teachers meet together to discuss successful assignments and policies
- Emphasize New Content

- Too much of some content is review, throughout middle school and especially in grade nine
- Many students report that less than half or even less than 25% of content in each grade is new content
- Get organized for accepting late work
 - Require students to attach a cover sheet with the title and date of the original assignment
 - Designate a place in your room for quick student access to all assignments
 - Consider keeping an assignment notebook with a page for each day of class; assignment sheets, rubrics, handouts, etc. can be slipped into clear pockets
- Get organized for removing “I”s
 - Work with school/district personnel on correct ways to record “I”s and remove them
 - Try to make this as easy as possible for everyone
 - The more difficult this step is, the more likely the policy will be successful
- Get organized for contacting parents
 - Develop a plan that includes
 - Collecting or accessing email address and other contact information
 - Developing email groups of students to use for those with consistent problems
 - Designating a time to call parents at work or home
 - Work with other teachers to develop a script to be used with all parents so that phone calls are quick and non-threatening. Ensure parents they are partners in the students’ success
 - Develop a phone call ‘instruction card’ to use when making parent calls
- Get organized for unexpected issues to arise
- Establish a focus team or committee that
 - collects and analyzes the data
 - develops drafts of solutions of new issues such as honor roll, selection into service organizations, etc. and presents to staff

Teachers must

- Communicate to students and let them know that learning takes effort and is sometimes difficult
- Be careful not give in to student/ parent requests for ‘what’s my average without the I?’ inquiries.
- Hold the I grade for as long as possible.
- Examine assignments and student work together in teams to keep getting it better and better
- Examine teacher and ready-made tests
 - Almost all tests and assessments are at or *below basic*
- Quality Teaching Is a Necessity
 - Highly Qualified Teachers
 - Highly Engaging Activities
 - Hands-on, Real World, Meaningful Assignments, Lose the Handouts, Worksheets, Drill Sheets, Word Searches
- Rubrics Are Required for *Power of I* to work
 - Adapt Rubrics for Self and Peer Review
 - Samples and Sources for Rubric Design : Rubrics.com, Rubristar.com
- Quality Assessment Required
 - Backward Design
 - Bloom’s Taxonomy
 - Emphasis on Higher-Order Skills and Learning
 - De-emphasis on Recall, Memorization of Facts
 - Move away from the enemy of learning: Study Guides

Principals must

- Work with administrators/district technical support to determine how to record and remove “I” grades.
- Work to find funding for paying teachers to provide extra help in the afternoons in a structured extra help setting.
- Get Stakeholder Support
 - Principal, superintendent, BOE, Parents, Business community or local school advisory council

Communication Requirements

- Principal to Teachers

- Set up a committee to chart the progress; Be open to teacher frustrations and implementation snags; help to work out the bugs
- Principal and Teachers to Parents
 - Initial letters sent home; Outline the policy and the availability of extra help
 - Open House, Newsletters, Student Handbook, Website, A progress chart update
- Teachers to students
 - Course Syllabus (required); Assignment sheets (required in writing to students)
 - Reminders or bulletin board charts for those with incomplete work
- Teachers to students
 - Rubrics (required, specific, vertical and horizontal)
 - Availability of extra help (required, multiple opportunities preferred)
 - Encouragement a MUST for successful implementation (for students *and teachers*)
- School
 - Faculty meeting agendas; Department meeting agendas; Oversight committee or focus teams

Expect adjustments to the policy to be suggested and have a plan for how to deal with each recommendation (some will be good).

Schedule conference calls with groups of teachers and SREB.

Use the sample letters as samples, please, but please revise them to fit your school/community.

Remember:

- Change is hard, especially cultural changes that affect grades and grading.
- Don't give up, and work through your frustrations.
- Remember to keep your eye on the prize and know that not every student can/will be saved; most will.

Essential Conditions

Just adding a Power of I policy won't do it all by itself. This policy works best under the following conditions:

- Developing *Engaging, Challenging and Meaningful Student Learning Activities* and ditching poor quality handout sheets
 - Establishing homework criteria that recognizes homework should matter and be useful.
 - Having teachers who know the subject and make it interesting and useful.
- Setting high standards and helping students meet them
 - Indicating the amount and quality of work needed to earn an "A" or "B"
 - Encouraging students to do well in school and to help and learn from each other
 - Sending a consistent message about what all students must do and what level of quality is expected.

How Do you know the Power of I is working?

- Collect data to convince others that the policy is working
 - understand the impact of the policy
 - keep it moving by having teachers give testimony on how it's working and share their data

Collect comprehensive sets of data

- *HSTW* assessment data; Promotion/retention percentages, College-preparatory course enrollment percentages, Dropout Rates, Completion Rates, Distribution of grades, Norm-referenced and state tests, Attendance at extra help sessions, Quality of Work, Responses from student and parent interviews and focus groups

Ideas for Your School

Elements of your school policy (draw from the nine elements on previous page or from group discussions).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

