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Subject: Equitable Grading Policies

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To LVJUSD School Board, the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent -

I find myself writing this as a plea for our district to be innovative in our approach to grading. **IF we care about mental health as much as we purport to**, we should seriously consider reducing the amount of stress that inequitable grading adds to our students' lives.

My son is a Junior at _____ and has a 504 plan. He has had multiple zeros and has had 2 grades on English assignments reduced by 50% this trimester. Both of these classes are AP classes, and neither of the teachers have offered any leniency, even though two of the late assignments were turned in 35 minutes late via the online portal. (I had my son speak to his two teachers, I wrote an email, I spoke to his VP and still no leniency.) So, even though he was given a grade 90% -100% on the two assignments, due to them being turned in past the deadline - and even with his 504 which is supposed to allow him more time (but only if he asks via email BEFORE it is late) he received a 45% and 50% on the assignments. So, my son has a D in a class - that if not for the arbitrary grading policy - would be an A.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS TO STUDENTS?? PARTICULARLY THIS YEAR!!!!

I do not understand why teachers are allowed to use **punitive grading policies - THIS YEAR IN PARTICULAR!!** But, even in the pre-pandemic days, how does this actually help students?? I will tell you, it doesn't. It is another stressor that contributes to students hating learning and hating school. It is counter to truthfully and honestly assessing them. I know it contributed to my older son wanting to drop out of highschool, and ultimately deciding to graduate early to escape school, which he constantly said he hated,

In addition, these kinds of punitive grading policies do not contribute to a healthy learning environment. Education should be about learning the curriculum, regardless of the time it takes, with opportunities to retake tests, redo homework and ultimately master the curriculum and content being taught.

After doing some research and talking to quite a few high school students, I know a lot of teachers (particularly those teaching AP and honors classes) use these methods in their grading. I think we, as a district, should approach this in a healthier way, focussed on the student learning the information, and the process, not just the outcome. I have read a few articles that say "**Instead of issuing zeros, penalizing late work, and grading formative assessments, teachers should make the classroom a place**

of hope instead of fear." from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/when-grading-harms-student-learning-andrew-miller>.

I would like to see our district be an innovator and move away from punitive grading policies, with a healthier focus on mastering the curriculum and approaching learning and grading (assessing) with a growth-mindset. It should be about the process towards mastery, not just a one time snapshot of either right or wrong.

Here are some articles on this topic:

<https://learningandteachingblog.com/2018/04/02/growth-mindset-and-grading/>

<https://www.teachervision.com/blog/morning-announcements/how-to-grade-with-a-growth-mindset>

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you about this!

Melanie Young