

KEYSTONE POLICY PROPOSAL FOR FACULTY EDLINE USE

The Parent School Relations Subcommittee is proposing the following policy to
Keystone council on May15, 2007

POLICY

Faculty at University High School will use an online grading system to inform students and parents of the students' grade in the course. These grades will be updated every two weeks.

ADDITIONAL RECCOMENDATIONS:

- Faculty and Administration need to continue research and development of online grade reporting programs that support the diverse grading procedure of the faculty at U-High. This may mean that in the long-term software options other than Edline may be considered.
- Faculty who do not currently use Edline may want to consider researching its impact on their communication with parents and students.
- Begin developing a program designed to educate "helicopter parents."
- Support exploration of further and more meaningful means by which faculty can report information about student progress, such as electronic portfolios and class-based parent listserves.

POLICY RATIONALE

It is in the best interest of the students and parents at University High School that they have access to current information about the students grade and progress in every course being taken at University High School. This policy for the mandatory use of regular online grade reporting is supported by research, the administration of University High School, parent survey data, and to some degree teacher survey data. Most faculty already recognize that the use of online grade reporting can increase student achievement and actually decrease the need for parent intervention. Mast faculty already use some sort of online grade reporting. Further, online grade reporting clearly supports a number of the school's Core Expectations for faculty including:

- (The faculty member) Displays an understanding of and willingness to use a variety of assessment processes.
- Demonstrates effective reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- Provides feedback to students
- Works positively and cooperatively with students, colleagues and parents.
- Utilizes technology tools to enhance course structure and student learning

DATAL:

Data consulted in the development of this proposal includes:

Parent Survey Results (11-25-05)
Faculty Survey Results (April 2007)
Administrative Endorsements
Research Summaries

Survey Results: Parent Survey 11-25-05

In a survey of parents developed by the Parent School Relation Subcommittee in 2005 which was designed to inform student teacher conferences there was a good deal of information about Edline received as well. There were 57 parent responses distributed fairly evenly though all of the classes.

Survey Question 1: Do you check your student's grades per Edline prior to Parent-Teacher conferences?

Yes	33
No	14

Comments:

- I check Edline frequently. Unfortunately, most teachers do not use it. Many who use it don't post often.
- Very helpful – wish more teachers would use Edline.
- More teachers should use Edline.
- Wish more teachers used Edline.
- Do not know what Edline is.
- We talk to (our child) about grades.

Survey Question 7: Other suggestions and comments [edited for this report]:

- Encourage teachers to post grades on Edline.
- Limit time parents can talk to teachers. I stood in line for 20 minutes waiting for parent to complete conference.
- Be sure report cards go out first.
- All teachers should post grades on Edline.
- Encourage all teachers to use Edline!
- Set time limits!

Based on these survey results the Parent School Relations Subcommittee endorsed the use of Edline in their end of the year report: “The Committee also proposes that all teachers are on board with Edline/Gradequick. The Committee suggests this with the understanding that the process itself can be as simple as posting letter grades from Gradequick to Edline (similar to what we're currently doing with Skyward.) If all teachers would post to Edline at least once or twice per quarter, we should be able to do away with the mid quarter grades.”

Survey Results: Faculty Survey April 2007

Faculty were surveyed by Keystone this spring on many issues, including specific questions regarding online grade reporting. There were 35 responses to the survey.

Survey Question 9: Do you use Edline or another means to report grades to students and parents?

Yes: 79%

No: 21%

Survey Question 10: Do you feel that Edline is easy to understand and use?

Yes: 89%

No: 11%

Survey Question 11: Would you be in favor of a policy requiring faculty to update parents regularly online regarding student progress (through Edline or a similar program).

Yes: 63%

No: 37%

Survey Question 12: If you currently use Edline (or a program like it) to update parents about student progress, how often do you update the information available to parents?

Daily 0%

Every other day: 0%

Weekly: 42%

Every other week: 38%

Monthly 21%

Survey Question 13: What are some of the benefits to using regular online progress updates (like Edline) that you have experienced or witnessed in your classes: *(Note: Not all of the data collected is presented here: representative responses to this open ended question have been included)*

- Parents understand why their student is doing poorly in my class when they can see the zeros or low test scores and can question their student right away
- Parents are informed! They are constantly aware of my students progress in my class. By making this information to the parents they are given some of the responsibility for accurately monitoring their child's success.
- Students can let me know if I made an error in entering their grades.
- It makes student more aware and responsible for their success in my class. In many cases it fosters positive communication between parents, teachers and students.

- It reduces the number of emails; parents know their students' grades.
- It eliminates the need for many phone calls.
- No surprises and no excuses.
- Reduces student anxiety.

Survey Question 14: Do you have any concerns with requiring all faculty to use and regularly update an online progress report? *(Note: Not all of the data collected is presented here: representative responses to this open ended question have been included; some responses have been paraphrased.)*

- As an English teacher I have grave concerns about mandated posting deadlines...there is never a time during the semester where I am totally caught up on my grading. I work hard to meet midterm and quarterly deadlines. Quite frankly, if additional deadlines are imposed I will not be able to meet them or I will be forced to alter the quality of the feedback or the assessments.
- It won't happen. Our faculty can't even post eligibility reports on time.
- Good idea but not too often. Not all classes work well with frequent updates.
- Some disciplines have a much greater grading load.
- There are no consequences if we don't use it.
- We should consider consolidating all of our grading software into one package. There are too many things to update.
- There are times where there is very little to report and students or parents may misunderstand what the average means when there are very few scores.
- This is an academic freedom issue.
- This could enable helicopter parenting.
- This could cause a problem with clinical experience student teacher aid work.
- Not all parents access this information. Some are not comfortable with the technology.

Survey Question 15: Do you have any concerns or problems with an online progress report that are specific to the use of Edline?

- There should be a way to upload of my classes at the same time.
- Edline does not have some of the features I would like: there is no way to weight grades and there is no means to remove the lowest in a set of scores. The program is too rigid.
- There is sometime more that goes into determining a grade than the scores a student receives. There is no way to do this using only Edline.

Statement from Jeff Hill:

I believe that University High School should use any means it has to deliver current information on student achievement, school programs, or and related school wide issues to parents in a timely manner. The increased communication concerning the core issues of our school will strengthen our bond with parents.

The only issue I think we need to consider is the system we are using. Is faculty still satisfied, or are there other more effective alternatives. This is more an implementation issue than a policy issue.

Statement from Steve Wilder:

One of our greatest responsibilities is to communicate with parents about their student's progress, and fortunately one of the benefits of technology is the ability to communicate quickly, and almost effortlessly. Utilizing Edline school wide will allow all parents access to their student's progress without having to take time to draft an e-mail, make a phone call, or write a letter. While there are always glitches and learning curves involved with using technology, I believe the benefits to both parents and staff far outweigh these issues.

In terms of policy, I would suggest that grades be updated weekly since eligibility is due weekly. This can be done throughout the week, at the end of each week, or in some other fashion. But, as long as eligibility is collected weekly, I think committing to having grades done every Friday is reasonable. That does not mean that everything has to be graded and entered (e.g. a test given on Thursday night), it means that anything that has been graded should be entered in to Edline.

Summary of Research:

“There are concerns that **Edline** (the company) does not have the capacity to support teachers, as some principals have reported teachers being on hold in excess of one hour waiting for help. Principals expressed concern about the amount of time needed to implement the programs and the amount of training required to be successful given the myriad of other county and school initiatives.”
-- The Washington Post, November 30, 2006

“If we take as a given that faculty are their own moral agents, and not mere agents of the educational institutions at which they work, online grading systems, which are increasingly popular and mandatory, compromise their ability to act ethically. This is because such systems reduce the nuances of a complex and challenging reality to the artificial rigidities of the radio button and its technological cousins. The point is illustrated with three case studies based on my actual experience as an instructor and professor.”
-- British Journal of Educational Technology, v36 n3 p559-561 May 2005

“For students too shy to ask or too forgetful to remember when it is posted in class, it makes life just a little easier. For students who need some motivation to

study, it helps to see that they've just fallen beneath the cutoff for an A or a B or a C, and if they work a little harder ..."

--Chicago Daily Herald

"Parental involvement is essential for education, and using technology to improve parental involvement is clearly the future," says Chadwick. "Edline is a part of that future and it's gotten our staff excited."

-- T.H.E. Journal 30 no2 76-7 S 2002.

"When Adrienne Damsky wants to check up on her 13-year-old son's grades and make sure he's completing his homework assignments, she doesn't call his Boca Raton, Fla., middle school or plan a parent-teacher conference. With Omni Middle School's online system, Edline, all Ms. Damsky has to do is log on to the school's Web site. "It's easy to get on to. All the grades, all the homework is right there," Ms. Damsky said. "If your child is failing, you know why." Thanks to such computer programs, students around the country can no longer hide missed homework assignments, failing grades, and lapsing attendance. With online programs, both commercial and school-created, parents have found a better way to keep tabs on their children's progress."

--Education Week 2/26/2003, Vol. 22, Issue 24.

"It will never replace a parent-teacher conference. Certainly the computer doesn't know the child," said Connie Tuman-Rugg, the principal of Florida's Omni Middle School. Her school, with about 1,330 students, began using Edline three years ago, after Ms. Tuman-Rugg received complaints from parents who said it was hard for them to stay in touch with their children's multiple teachers."

--Education Week 2/26/2003, Vol. 22, Issue 24.