NCSD Guidance on Midterm and Final Exams for Secondary Schools

Guidance:
Our goal is to support academic rigor while providing flexibility for teachers to determine appropriate exam length and format. Below are expectations and parameters for the development, administration, and review of midterm and final exams in secondary schools, ensuring alignment to district standards and instructional best practices. All assessments must be standards-aligned.

Exam Length and Format:

- The length of midterm and final exams is determined by the teacher, based on the scope and depth of content covered.
- Teachers are strongly encouraged to include a written component to effectively assess student mastery of, while maintaining flexibility to utilize alternate assessment formats when appropriate for the subject matter and with administrative approval.
- Performance tasks or public speaking/presentation-based assessments are acceptable, provided they include a written portion and meet the following criteria:
    - A clear rubric must be approved by the administration.
    - A rubric and expectations must be made available to all students well in advance of the assignment.

Content Scope:

- **Midterm Exams:** Must assess student understanding of specific standards taught during the first semester. Exams must be standards-based and reflect instruction provided during that period.
- **Final Exams:** May assess content from the second semester or the entire academic year. Final exams must remain standards-based and reflect the cumulative learning experience.

Approval and Review Process:

- All midterm and final exams, including rubrics for alternative assessments, must be submitted for administrative review and approval prior to administration.
- Administration must look for:
    - Alignment to state standards.
    - Appropriateness of the assessment format and length.
    - Clarity of instructions and expectations.

Study Guides and Preparation:

- Teachers shall make study guides and/or review materials available to all students well in advance of the exam.
- Study guides must clearly outline the content and standards to be assessed, helping students focus their review and preparation.

Communication with Students:

- Students must be informed of exam expectations, formats, and grading criteria early enough to adequately prepare.
- For presentation-based assessments, teachers must share rubrics and any scoring guidelines at the start of the preparation period.

**5620R: Semester grades are calculated with the two quarter grades and final examination grade. The quarter grades are calculated at 40%Q, 40%Q, and 20% Semester Final Examination Grade.*

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