

# Grading Guidelines

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## **Mission**

Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD provides a safe, secure and challenging learning environment, through the responsible use of all resources, to afford opportunities for all students to realize their individual potential and to become responsible and productive members of society.

## **Vision**

Prepare EVERY student to be a productive citizen.

## **Priorities:**

P1: High Achievement for all Students

P2: High-performing and Engaged Workforce

P3: Effective and Efficient District and Campus Operations

## **Core Competencies:**

With a commitment to district-wide Continuous Improvement, the Core Competencies at SCUC are: Students First; Valuing and Engaging our Workforce; Effective and Efficient Work Processes.

## **Board Policy**

### EIA (LEGAL) GRADING POLICY

The District shall adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year. The District grading policy:

1. Must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment;
2. May not require a classroom teacher to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard to the student's quality of work; and
3. May allow a student a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade. Education Code 28.0216

### EIA (LOCAL) GUIDELINES FOR GRADING

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents. In accordance with grading guidelines, a student shall be permitted a reasonable opportunity to redo an assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade.

## **Student Mastery of Learning**

The term *mastery* refers to the knowledge and skills necessary for students to be academically successful. Grades earned commonly reflect the degree to which students attain mastery in any given course. To determine the content on which mastery is based, teachers will rely on the state TEKS as reflected in the district aligned Pacing Calendars, Unit Maps and/or course guides.

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## GRADING POLICY 9 WEEK GRADING PERIOD

**2013-14**

<b>Grades 2nd-4<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number of Grades</b>
<b>Summative</b>	50%	3
<b>Formative</b>	50%	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>

<b>Grades 2nd-4th English Language Arts</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number of Grades</b>	
Spelling	25%		4
Grammar	25%		4
Writing	50%		5
<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>

<b>Grades 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Grades</b>
Summative	50%	3
Formative	50%	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>

- **Teachers have discretion on placement of grades in the Summative and Formative Category.**

### **District Benchmark Tests**

1. Benchmarks strive to provide data on TEKS mastery toward TAKS/STAAR preparation and to provide data needed to differentiate interventions that meet student needs.
2. Benchmark tests are designed to identify programmatic strengths and weaknesses.
3. Benchmark tests are scheduled on the district's Pacing Calendars.
4. Campuses will follow the district Assessment Guidelines/Manual.
5. Diagnostic benchmarks are STAAR-formatted for grades 3-8 and/or STAAR/EOC/TAKS-formatted as appropriate for grades 9-11.
6. Second grade students will take benchmark assessments in Reading and Math.
7. No curving of Benchmark Tests are allowed, but students may retake the exam for a maximum grade of 70.
8. District Benchmark Tests will not be released to students or parents/guardians.
9. Alternate sample questions may be provided upon parent request.
10. All Special Education students who take either the TAKS, TAKS-A (Accommodated), TAKS-M (Modified), STAAR or STAAR-M (Modified) will participate in benchmark testing as determined through the ARD committee.

## **Elementary/Intermediate**

Diagnostic tool – not for a grade

Communicate to students:

- Determines tutoring for low SE's
- Offer small group tutoring for weak areas
- Teacher tool so we can revise instruction

Use STAAR released phase-in scale, not “70%” to meet expectations in AWARE

Leave all Questions – taught or not

## **Jr. High/High School**

Take benchmark as a formative grade with untaught/unfinished units zero weighted and scale developed to align with current state passing standards by level in each content area (weights and scales to be developed at district level)

## **Grading Philosophy**

Effective teachers use grading as part of the process of learning. Using the TEKS as the foundation of the curriculum, they begin by targeting student expectations.

### **Teacher expectations:**

- Ensure student success by designing classroom instruction that embraces higher levels of learning using the 5E model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate)
- Improve student achievement with lessons that engage students in TEKS standards
- Set direction for student learning using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Aligned to Learning, Results Focused, Time Framed) goals and PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) cycles to drive student improvement
- Utilize a variety of formative and summative assessments in each grading period to assess student learning. Complete and effective grading calls for multiple assessment techniques, including performances, portfolios, projects, presentations, learning logs, journals, surveys, interviews, simulations and role-playing. Using many different instructional and evaluation strategies elicits more opportunities for student success and addresses multiple ways that students learn.
- Establish clear standards and criteria and apply those criteria consistently to student work
- Use rubrics to assess student work
- Provide opportunities for students to monitor and share their own learning through the use of data folders and student-led conferences
- Use results to make data-driven decisions regarding classroom instruction and to develop opportunities for re-teach and re-learn

### **Grading should help the teacher -**

1. Communicate progress to the student and parent/guardian on the mastery of the TEKS
2. Appraise the effectiveness of teaching strategies and modes of instruction
3. Evaluate strengths and needs of each student
4. Determine if credit will be awarded

### **Grading should help the student -**

1. Evaluate personal progress toward mastery of the TEKS
2. Recognize how work may be improved
3. Set personal learning goals
4. Predict future performance on classroom assignments and assessments

### **Grading should help the parents/guardians -**

1. Understand their child as a learner
2. Understand the student's mastery of the TEKS

3. Guide the student in making academic progress
4. Encourage the student to give maximum effort

### **Grading Overview**

1. Grading will be completed in a timely manner and updated in the district's grade reporting software the first workday of each week. Grades will be entered weekly throughout the nine weeks to provide opportunities for improvement prior to the end of grading periods. Assignment titles listed in electronic grade book should be descriptive of the assignment given.
2. Teachers will contact parents/guardians regarding progress of students' grades through progress reports.
3. No assignment can count more than once in a category within a nine weeks or semester.
4. Additional subdividing within a category is not permitted.
5. No "blanket" grades are to be issued for a grading period. A blanket grade is giving every student in the class the same grade for an assignment without regard to individual achievement.
6. In order to obtain a grade average for a particular grading period that is an accurate assessment of the student's achievement, a teacher may, but is not required, to employ one or more of the options below:
  - a. Canceling the lowest grade in a formative category before averaging if minimum number of grades is met
  - b. Assigning additional or optional academic assignments/projects evolving from the course objectives
7. Cooperative learning may be used as an instructional strategy in order to encourage academic achievement in a team context. The rubric or grading standards for a cooperative activity or project will be shared with the students in advance indicating how they will be graded for both individual and team academic achievement. Students should receive an individual grade and may also receive a team grade.
8. The responsibility for grading summative assignments belongs to the teacher.
9. 6th through 8th grade teachers of courses in Pre-AP English, Pre-AP Science, Pre-AP Social Studies, and Pre-AP Mathematics shall add five points to the grade of each student following calculation of the grade average for each reporting period.
10. Behavior and adherence to classroom procedures will be evaluated and noted under "citizenship" and/or the comments section of the report card for each subject.
11. A student's academic grades will not be affected by non-academic behavior or adherence to procedural rules. Examples include points being deducted for not using the proper heading, using a color of ink other than black or blue, or coming late to class. Grades must reflect student's relative mastery of assignments.
12. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students. Grades resulting from academic dishonesty may not be dropped or made up.
13. Parents will be encouraged to monitor student grades through the district's electronic portal.

### **Re-teaching and Re-testing**

The District's goal is for every student to master all the TEKS specified for each grade level at a minimum level of 70%. Each student will be provided instruction that allows for application and practice of the concepts and skills mandated in the TEKS and then assessed for mastery.

1. If the majority of the class fails to demonstrate mastery on an assessment, the teacher will re-teach the entire class and re-test with an alternate assessment during class time. The higher of the two grades will be recorded.
2. When individual students in a class fail to demonstrate mastery, the teacher will re-teach and re-test during or outside of class time. The grade on the re-test will be recorded as no higher than 70 if mastery is demonstrated. If mastery is not demonstrated, the higher grade will be recorded.
3. Re-teaching should employ instructional strategies different from the original instruction.
4. Re-testing may include but is not limited to the original assessment, oral examination, additional practice activities, an essay or paper, a report or presentation, test corrections, revision of a paper or project, formal test or quizzes.

5. Re-teaching/re-testing shall not exceed the end of the 9 week grading period.
6. Re-teaching/re-testing provisions do not apply to semester exams.
7. Teachers will provide established times for tutoring opportunities and post these times on teacher websites.

## **Homework Policy**

1. Rationale for Homework
  - a. Research reveals that homework, when carefully designed, implemented and evaluated, is an effective tool for improving understanding, enriching learning, encouraging personal connections and providing opportunities to pursue special interests.
  - b. Value-added homework assignments should be designed to help students master the content and extend student learning.
  - c. Homework is a means of teaching the necessary skills of independent study and learning outside the classroom without immediate teacher supervision. Homework includes assignments that the teacher expects all students to complete outside of class.
  - d. When a student demonstrates mastery of the TEKS on major assessments, homework alone should not be the cause of a failing grade. Formative assessments should be comprised of a variety of assessments, including but not limited to homework.
  - e. Homework may not be assigned as punishment.
  - f. Homework may not be assigned prior to or due on the day of a State, AP, or IB assessment.
2. Teacher Responsibilities
  - a. Ensuring that students understand and know how to complete assignments
  - b. Making sure appropriate resources and materials are available
  - c. Clarifying to parents/guardians, when appropriate, how they may help the student complete the homework
  - d. Reviewing and grading homework assignments to give students feedback on their learning
  - e. Avoiding homework/projects over extended holidays due on the first class upon returning
3. Student Responsibilities
  - a. Understanding the homework assignment(s) before leaving school and taking home all necessary materials to complete assignment(s)
  - b. Having a regular time to study that is compatible with family and/or after-school activities
  - c. Completing homework and turning it in on time
  - d. Planning and budgeting time for long-term projects
  - e. Completing all work missed because of absences or school activities
4. Parent/Guardian Suggestions
  - a. Discussing the district's homework policy with the student
  - b. Providing necessary assistance and encouraging good study habits
  - c. Communicating any concerns and questions regarding homework assignments to the student's teacher and providing notes for student absences
  - d. Encouraging the student to seek additional help, if needed, from the teacher
  - e. Providing an appropriate time and environment for study and learning
  - f. Checking the homework for accurate completion
  - g. Monitoring television, technology and outside activities to be sure the student has sufficient study time

## **Make-Up Work for Absences**

Students are required to make up assignments, homework, and assessments missed due to absences. Students are allowed two school days for every day of class missed. If students do not complete make-up work in the time allotted, the late work policy will apply.

1. Students will not be required to take a quiz or test on the day returning to class from an absence if the quiz or test was announced during the student's absence.
2. Make-up work and tests for all absences shall be of the same rigor, but not necessarily the same format, as the original activity, assignment or test.
3. Make-up tests or presentations may be scheduled before school, after school, during study hall or during the student's class period at the teacher's discretion to ensure that new and/or significant content is not missed.
4. Students should make prior arrangements with teachers for making up missed work when the absence can be anticipated, e.g. a dental appointment, court appearance or appointment, approved school-related activities, etc.

- After a prolonged absence, the teacher may exempt a student from some assignments if the teacher determines that doing so will not have a negative impact on the student's ability to master the content or unfairly bias his/her grade.

### **Late Work**

- Late work is defined as any assignment that is not submitted on the due date and class period with the exception of make-up work for absences or approved school activities. Alternative assignments may be given if the original assignment has been assessed and returned. Departments/Grade Levels will determine deductions for late work with administrative approval.
- Late assignments will be accepted within 5 school days, not to exceed the end of the 9 week grading period.
- Extenuating circumstances may occur that prevent the completion and turning in of assignments on the due date. It is the parent/guardian and/or student's responsibility to inform the teacher of any such circumstances so that an exception to the rule may or may not be granted. The teacher may grant exceptions based on these circumstances.

### **Grading In Special Programs**

- Any variations in District grading procedures should be related to the student's specific disability, which shall be determined by the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee and included in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Grades for students in special education will be based on performance that demonstrates progress toward mastery of the TEKS following the application of the ARD recommended accommodations and/or modifications intended to increase the potential for successful student learning.
- The level of instruction in the TEKS and content expectations should be articulated in a student's IEP, along with accommodations and/or modifications related to measuring mastery.

### **Transfer Grades**

Letter Grade	Equivalent Number Grade						
A+	98	B+	88	C+	78	D	70
A	95	B	85	C	75	F	69
A-	92	B-	82	C-	72		

Number	Letter	Equivalent Grade
4	E	95
3	S	85
2	N	75
1	U	65

### **Resources:**

- Guskey, T. (2009) *Practical Solutions for Serious Problems in Standards-Based Grading*  
 Guskey, T. (2009) *The Teacher as Assessment Leader*  
 Marzano, R. (2006) *Classroom Assessment & Grading that Works*  
 Stiggins, R., Arter, J., Chappuis, S., Chappuis, J. (2009) *Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it Right-Using it Well*  
 Wormeli, Rick (2006) *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*