

Academic Achievement

Criteria for Success

A student may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level [TEC 28.021 (1)]. Promotion and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum.* Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated District objectives. The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course [EIA (LOCAL)].

**The elementary school curriculum is the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as scheduled for instruction through District-Designated Curriculum Documents and supported through resources of the TEKS Resource System Year-At-A-Glance, Vertical Alignment Documents and Instructional Focus Documents.*

Standards for Mastery

Mastery shall be determined as follows:

1. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade [EIE (LOCAL)].
2. Mastery of the skills (TEKS) necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments that may either be incorporated into unit or final exams, or may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required [EIE (LOCAL)].

All grades shall be based on mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and reflect mastery of course TEKS that teachers have taught. Grades are not recorded for participation in extracurricular or motivational activities. For example: Accelerated Reader is an independent reading program not based on TEKS and not for direct instruction. It should be used as a motivational reading program, not for grades. Likewise, teachers shall not award or deny grades or bonus points for compliance with classroom procedures unrelated to the course TEKS, providing supplies, or parent involvement.

Noncompliance with established classroom procedures shall be reflected in a student's Work Habits grade. For example: Improper or incomplete headings should not result in grade penalties or point deductions. This is an issue with work habits or failure to follow directions, not an academic issue.

Grade Repair

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 [EIA (LOCAL)]. The goal of this procedure is to ensure students learn the appropriate skills. It is also important for students to be responsible for doing the work to the best of their ability and to submit assignments on time.

2021-2022 Grading Guidelines

Early Childhood & Elementary

When students earn failing scores on classwork or assessments completed on time, the teacher will initiate at least one (1) opportunity to redo the work. The student will have three (3) school days after the failed assignment is returned to the student to complete the retake of the assignment or test. At the discretion of the teacher, a student may be given a replacement assignment when retaking or redoing failed assignments/tests. The teacher will record a minimum score of 70 for a corrected or replaced assignment/test that results in a passing grade.

Extenuating circumstances will be addressed individually by the teacher. Teachers shall apply the grade repair policy consistently across all students in the class. Work turned in late due to student choice and not absence will not be granted the retake or redo opportunity.

Clarification: If a student makes 50 on an assignment and is reassessed and makes a passing score, the assignment will receive a minimum score of 70. If a student fails the reassessment, then the assignment will receive the higher of the two failing grades.

A student who fails a grading period may repair the grade by completing re-teach and/or remediation of the content. Students may accomplish re-teach and remediation through direct instruction, tutorial and/or independent study by agreement with the teacher. After a student fails a grading period, the teacher will initiate parent contact and remediation assignment(s) within the first two weeks of the next grading period in order that the student will have sufficient time to complete the assignment(s).

Students who successfully complete remediation assignment(s) for a grading period with a passing grade of 70 or above will receive a 70 on the report card for the grading period.

Learning Acceleration

Any student in grades 3-12 who did not pass a STAAR/EOC assessment in the spring or summer of 2021 is required to receive 30 hours of accelerated instruction outside of the foundation and enrichment curriculum instructional time (Texas HB 4545). This can include tutoring before, during, or after the school day. Additionally, students who did not pass a 3rd, 5th, or 8th grade STAAR Reading or STAAR Math assessment in the spring of 2021 will have an Accelerated Learning Committee that will devise an educational plan for accelerated instruction for that student.

Attendance

Unless credit is awarded by the attendance committee or regained in accordance with District policy, a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered [See FEC (LEGAL)].

Extra Credit

If offered, extra credit shall be awarded on the basis of an academic product that can be directly related to the curriculum for the course. Extra credit assignments must be equally available to all students enrolled in the same class. Extra credit shall not be given for providing classroom supplies or materials, or for any other non-academic work.

Homework

Homework includes all assignments designed to be completed entirely at home. Current research reveals “no clear-cut consensus on the benefits of homework at the early elementary levels” and very small positive effects on student achievement in cases where it has been measured (Marzano and Pickering, 2007). Still, advocates of homework at the elementary level argue homework can help young children “develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to students the idea that learning takes work at home as well as at school” (Cooper, 1989).

Multiple facets of student home life should be considered when assigning homework: availability of adult supervision and support with homework, amount of time dedicated to homework commensurate with the age of the student, and consideration of after school/home activities.

If assigned, homework should be purposeful, adjusted to the level of the individual child, and related to specific subject objectives. Assignments should provide practice or extension of skills already taught or prepare students to begin a new topic or part of the course. **Therefore, if a campus adopts a homework policy, the following guidelines shall be followed:**

- Sufficient explanation must be given so that students know what they are to do, understand how to do it, realize why they are doing it, and are motivated to complete the assignment.
- Homework must be evaluated and feedback to the student provided in an appropriate and timely manner by the teacher, **but it is not recommended that homework be recorded and placed as a grade in the grade book.**
- Homework assignments should be avoided immediately before holidays or major special events.
- Homework should never be assigned as a disciplinary measure.
- Homework for all subjects combined should not exceed the generally accepted standard of ten (10) minutes per night per year in school (e.g., Grade 1=10 minutes, Grade 4=40 minutes)
- Additional homework practice should be agreed upon between teacher and parent.

Promotion

The award of credit for a course affirms that a student has satisfactorily met all state and local requirements. Course credit shall be awarded according to this policy [19 TAC 74.26 (a)].

A course may be considered completed and credit may be awarded if the student has demonstrated achievement by meeting standard requirements of the course, including demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter, regardless of the time the student has received instruction in the course or the grade level at which proficiency is attained [19 TAC 74.26].

Grades PK-K: Prekindergarten and Kindergarten are special programs designed to enhance children’s school readiness and do not have promotion criteria. Periodic standards-based reports to families document student progress toward readiness for a successful Grade 1 experience.

Grade 1: Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an annual course average of 70 or higher on a scale of 100 based upon course level, grade-level standards (TEKS) in each of the following areas: English or Spanish language arts (reading, writing, word study) and mathematics.

Grades 2-5: Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an annual course average of 70 or higher on a scale of 100 based upon course level, grade-level standards (TEKS) in each of the following areas: English or Spanish language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

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 average grade assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents. [EIA (LOCAL)]

Computing Averages

Grading period averages shall be determined by averaging scores for assignments in each subject area. Classwork, assessments, projects, etc., carry equal weight at the elementary level.

Three components contribute to the averages for English language arts and reading and Spanish language arts and reading as follows:

- 50% Reading (such as comprehension, fluency, accuracy, expression)
- 25% Writing (such as composition, grammar, mechanics)
- 25% Word Study (such as phonics, vocabulary, spelling)

Database for Grades

For courses that report numerical averages, grades recorded in the electronic gradebook shall serve as the official basis for determining grades for each of the six grading periods and calculating each of the two semester averages.

Timely communication of student progress is key to quality family support. **A minimum of one grade shall be recorded per week per subject in the electronic gradebook, for a minimum of six (6) grades per subject per grading period.** All work shall be posted to the electronic gradebook within five (5) school days of the due date. Likewise, graded assignments should be returned to students at least weekly. The first week of school, weeks of district-wide assessments, and state testing weeks are allowable exceptions to weekly posting requirements. Any end of grading period requirements override the above timeline for posting of grades.

The teacher shall provide appropriate documentation as required by the administration for grades recorded. Grades recorded in the electronic gradebook and appropriate documentation shall be used to confer with students and parents about student progress. If the student earns a grade lower than 70 on a report card, documentation of teacher-parent contacts and instructional interventions provided for the student must be available.

Grade Calculations for Late Enrollment or Withdrawal

Semester grades for students enrolled for fewer than 15 days shall be computed by accepting the withdrawal grade(s) from the school that the student last attended, with the option of increasing, but not decreasing, the grade if the teacher determines that the student has made progress.

If the student is enrolled 15 days or more, the sending school's grade shall be averaged with those grades accumulated in the District to determine final grade averages.

Grade Penalties

Academic Dishonesty

Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to disciplinary penalties and grade penalties on assignments or tests. 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 other supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students [EIA (LOCAL)].

Late Work

An assignment is considered late if it is turned in after the due date. Late assignments due to student choice and not absence will receive a maximum penalty of 30 points and will be accepted for a grade until the end of the school day on the Tuesday before the end of the grading period in which the assignment was made or until the teacher documents written or verbal contact with a student's parent/guardian regarding a late assignment. Once contact is made, students should be provided at least one additional day to submit the assignment. Work not submitted by the deadline will be recorded as a zero.

Make-Up Work

Students shall be expected to make up assignments and tests after returning from an absence. Students may receive a zero for any assignment or test not made up within the allotted time. The District shall not impose a grade penalty for make-up work submitted timely after an unexcused absence or an absence due to suspension.

Time Allowed

Students who are absent for any reason shall be allowed the opportunity to make up missed daily work without penalty according to the schedule below. Long term projects such as research papers are not provided this extension. Projects must be turned in the day the student returns to class. Extenuating circumstances will be individually addressed by the teacher.

| Length of Absence | Days Allowed to Submit Daily Work Missed |
|-------------------|--|
| 1-3 days | 3 days total |
| 4-5 days | 1 day per day of absence |
| 6+ days | 5 days from the date of return |

COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES

Grade Reporting

Prekindergarten: Achievement or progress in prekindergarten shall be reported as S, N and I.

Kindergarten: Achievement in kindergarten shall be reported with ratings that indicate the student is meeting grade level expectations, progressing, experiencing difficulties or exceeding grade level expectations as communicated through the standards on the report card.

Grade 1: Achievement for students in Grade 1 shall be reported to parents as numerical grades for English or Spanish language arts and mathematics. E, S, L and U shall be used for reporting student progress in all other areas.

Grades 2-5: Achievement for students in Grades 2-5 shall be reported to parents as numerical grades for English or Spanish language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. E, S, L and U shall be used for reporting student progress in all other areas.

Required Communication

Teachers shall send written notice to parents of a student's performance in each class or subject per grading period [EIA (LOCAL)]. Exception: Prekindergarten and Kindergarten for first grading period as detailed under Parent Conferences below.

Parent Conferences

Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 teachers will provide information to parents/guardians through a parent conference during the first grading period of the academic year. Report cards will be sent home with students beginning with the second grading period. Teachers shall document all conferences.

Progress Reports

The District will continue the distribution of electronically-generated progress reports for Grades 1-12. These are to be sent home to the parents of students who are borderline passing (70-74) and/or failing (below 70). Reports will be sent by the Wednesday following the first three weeks of each grading period (Abilene ISD Administration Policy).

Report Cards

1. Grading Period averages as well as individual course grades taken during each grading period are available for viewing at all times in the TEAMS Mobile app.
2. Kindergarten and Grade 1 - Report cards will be sent home with each student beginning with the second grading period.
3. Grades 2 through 5 – A computer generated report card will be sent home with each student at the conclusion of each grading period and it should be returned bearing the parent's signature.
4. If a grading period average lower than 70 appears on a report card, documentation of teacher-parent contacts and instructional interventions provided for the student must be available.

SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Students with Disabilities

Promotion standards and appropriate and acceleration options, as established by the individual education program (IEP) or grade-level classification of students eligible for special education shall be determined by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee [EIE (LOCAL)]. Also, the ARD committee shall determine the type of state assessment to be administered [EIA (LOCAL)].

Students with Dyslexia

In measuring the academic achievement or proficiency of a student who is dyslexic, the student's potential for achievement or proficiency in the area must be considered [TEC 28.021 (b); See policies EIE (LEGAL) and EHB, EKB, and FB].

English Language Learners

In assessing students of limited English proficiency for mastery of the TEKS, the District shall be flexible in determining methods to allow the students to demonstrate knowledge or competency independent of their English skills in the following ways:

1. Assessment in the primary language
2. Assessment using ESL methodologies
3. Assessment with multiple varied instruments [EIE (LOCAL)]

FACULTY TRAINING

Principals are responsible for providing training to all staff involved in evaluating students on their campus concerning:

- District grading policies
- District promotion/retention policies
- Consistent application of the district and campus policies by all involved staff

Policies that govern student grading (passing/failing) and student promotion/retention requirements must be included in the student handbook and/or letters to parents.

Student handbooks must be filed by the third Friday of September each year in the Elementary and Secondary Education office. This information must also be shared with students and parents during the first grading period.

Teachers should work closely with principals on any grading and/or promotion and retention problems or concerns that may apply to students in special education, bilingual, ESL, etc.

References

Cooper, H. (1989). Synthesis of research on homework. *Educational Leadership*, 47(3), 85–91.

[Marzano, R. and Pickering, D. \(2007\). The Case For and Against Homework. *Educational Leadership*, 64\(6\), 74-79](#)