

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 secondary school curriculum is the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as scheduled for instruction through District Pacing Guides 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 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* rating. 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 in a timely manner. Due to the nature and timing of semester exams, they are not eligible for grade repair.

Students who fail classwork or assessments completed and submitted on time will be given at least one (1) opportunity to redo the work. The student will have three (3) school days after receiving the failing grade to complete the retake of the assignment or test. At the discretion of the individual teacher, students may be given replacement assignments 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 for 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 only repair the average for one grading period in each semester. Students may accomplish re-teach and remediation through direct instruction, tutorial and/or independent study by agreement with the teacher or by completing the grading period remediation online. After failing a grading period, students must make a request for remediation assignment(s) within the first two weeks of the next grading period in order to 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.

Web-Based Instruction

Secondary students have the opportunity to complete select coursework online in order to earn course credit for initial instruction. Web-based coursework is generally self-paced and completed independently by the student in a lab setting within the school day and/or at home, and therefore qualifies as a correspondence course under EIC (LOCAL). If the web-based course is for high school graduation requirements, and not eligible for exemption as an advanced class as allowed by the TEA and UIL Academic Requirements, then grades for the course must be posted at the scheduled high school grading periods and, if failing, will have an impact on academic eligibility.

- Students taking web-based courses for initial instruction must earn a passing average for the course to appear on the transcript. The actual score will appear on the transcript, but the score will not calculate in GPA.
- The score reported to students for work completed in the District's web-based learning platform will reflect the student's *Actual Grade*. The *Actual Grade* considers the pace at which the student makes progress in course. Regardless of the start date for a course, the student will generally be afforded at least 80 class meetings to complete or recover a one-semester course and 27 class meetings to repair a single grading period. Student circumstances may require that a student finish in a much shorter time frame, however. Every course must have an end date identified, and students must complete work in a manner that matches percent work complete to the percent of time elapsed in

the course to date. For example, when the time allotted for the course is 50% complete, then at least 50% of the coursework must also be complete to avoid grade penalty.

- Courses requiring an EOC exam may be completed online only with prior approval of the Principal or designee. Students are still required to meet EOC exam requirements for graduation.

Credit Recovery

After traditional instruction, a student who has failed to earn credit for a semester or course may recover the credit by completing re-teach and remediation of the entire semester of course content online. Students may also re-take the semester or course in summer school or a subsequent year.

- Students who complete credit recovery of the semester with the same year and earn a passing grade of 70 or above will receive a grade of 70 on the transcript and credit for the semester. The 70 will calculate for GPA.
- When a student completes credit recovery of the semester or course after the school year ends, the course will appear twice on the transcript. The higher of the two grades will calculate for GPA.
- Students who recover courses required for graduation must also meet any additional state graduation requirements.

Student Success Initiative

The Commissioner of Education has waived the Student Success Initiative requirement for 8th grade students for the 2020-2021 school year.

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.

Promotion and Award of Credit

The award of credit for a course affirms that a student has satisfactorily met all state and local requirements, including Student Success Initiative requirements outlined above for Grade 8. 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 6-8:

Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based upon course level, grade-level standards (TEKS) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in each of the following areas: English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. **Students in grades 6-8 who fail more than two courses required for promotion cannot earn promotion in summer school.**

Grades 9-12:

Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives in a course shall be required for credit. Grade level advancement for students in grades 9-12 shall be earned by course credits for non-EOC and EOC courses. Students shall earn a full year of credit if the yearly average of the two semesters equals 70 or above on a scale of 100. If a student earns a passing grade for one semester but fails the other, and this produces an annual average less than 70, then credit shall be earned only for the passing semester.

The final course grade will be calculated as below:

$$\begin{array}{rcccccc} 1^{\text{st}} \text{ Semester} & & + & 2^{\text{nd}} \text{ Semester} & = & \text{Final Course Grade} \\ 50\% & & & 50\% & = & 100\% \end{array}$$

Credit earned toward state graduation requirements by a student in an accredited school district shall be transferable and accepted by any other school district in the state [19 TAC 74.26 (a) (1) (c)].

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)]

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, and a minimum of eight (8) grades per subject will be taken per grading period.** All daily work and tests shall be posted to the electronic gradebook within five (5) school days of the due date. Major projects and compositions shall be posted within seven (7) school days of the due date and must provide the student with the opportunity to remediate a failing grade as outlined in the *Grade Repair* section above. The first week of school, weeks of district-wide assessments, and state testing weeks are allowable exceptions to weekly posting requirements. Extensions other than for reasons described in this paragraph are allowable only with prior approval of the Principal or designee. See Computing Averages below for guidance specific to number of grades by type of assignments. **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.

Computing Averages

Grades 6-8:

Grading period averages shall be determined by averaging grades in two categories for each course in the electronic grade book. A minimum of two (2) graded assignments in each category per grading period must be recorded. Each assignment will count only once in a course. However, cross-curricular projects may be recorded by teachers in each participating course.

Categories and Percentages

70% Classwork (labs/quizzes/classwork/homework)

- 30% Assessments (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research)

Grades 9-12:

Grading period averages shall be determined by averaging grades in two categories for each course in the electronic grade book.

A minimum of two (2) graded assignments in each category per grading period must be entered. The teacher may double the weight of any assignment in the Classwork category. Assessments may not be weighted. Regardless of weight, each Classwork assignment counts as only one (1) graded assignment in the category.

Categories and Percentages

- **Regular and Pre-AP Classes**
 - 60% Classwork (labs/quizzes/classwork/homework)
 - 40% Assessments (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research)
- **Advanced Placement Classes**
 - 50% Classwork (labs/quizzes/classwork/homework)
 - 50% Assessments (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research)

Clarification: To accomplish both the minimum number of eight (8) grades and the distribution by category, a teacher in a regular class may record six (6) classwork grades and two (2) assessments in the grading period. Another teacher of a regular class may record 12 classwork grades and four (4) assessments. Both teachers would be in compliance with District guidelines.

With regard to dual enrollment courses, grades recorded by Abilene ISD teachers to the student's high school transcript must follow District guidelines.

SEMESTER EXAMS/PROJECTS

Semester exams/projects will be administered in all high school credit courses [EIA (LOCAL)] offered at middle school and high school campuses. The semester exam/project will count as 10% of the semester grade. Semester exams/projects will be given in the fall and spring.

Due to complications related to COVID-19, Abilene ISD has made the decision to discontinue the exemption policy for high school semester exams for the 2020-2021 school year. All students will be required to take final exams in December 2020 and in May 2021.

SEMESTER GRADE CALCULATION

Grades 6-8

A semester grade in Grades 6-8 shall be determined by adding the three grading period averages and dividing by three.

High school credit courses offered to middle school students include semester exams/projects, and the grade for these courses will be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} \text{Average of the three grading periods} & + & \text{Semester Exam} & = & \text{Semester Grade} & & \\ & & & & 90\% & 10\% & \\ & & & & 100\% & & \end{array}$$

Grades 9-12

Course semester averages will be used to calculate GPA and class rank. High school course semester grades are calculated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} \text{Average of the three grading periods} & + & \text{Semester Exam} & = & \text{Semester Grade} & & \\ & & & & 90\% & 10\% & \\ & & & & 100\% & & \end{array}$$

When a student opts to apply an eligible exam/project exemption as described in the previous section, the course semester grade will be calculated by adding the grading period averages and dividing by three.

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 due to student choice and not absence. Late assignments will receive a maximum penalty of thirty (30) points on a 100-point scale and will be

accepted up to three (3) days late. However, work submitted within three (3) days and that earns a passing score will earn a minimum score of 70. A zero will be recorded for work not turned in within three days of the due date. Extenuating circumstances will be individually addressed by the teacher.

Clarification: A student whose work is 87% correct and one day late must receive a grade between 70 and 87. The campus/teacher practice may be to deduct ten points for the single day late, and the assignment can be recorded as a 77. However, the score of 87 **cannot** be further reduced by the maximum penalty of 30 points to a 57.

Make-Up Work

Students shall be expected to make up assignments and tests after returning from an absence. Students shall 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 on time after an unexcused absence or an absence due to suspension.

Time Allowed

Students who are absent shall be allowed the opportunity to make up missed work 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. Any student who misses class due to a board-approved or school-approved activity known in advance is encouraged to request work before they leave and submit work in advance of the absence whenever possible. Extenuating circumstances will be individually addressed by the teacher, Principal or designee.

Length of Absence	Days Allowed to Submit Daily Work Missed
1-2 consecutive days	2 school days total
3-5 consecutive days	1 school day per day of absence
6+ consecutive days	5 school days from the date of return

COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES

Grade Reporting

The District shall report all grades to parents as numerical grades.

Required Communication

Teachers shall send written notice to parents of a student's performance in each class or subject per grading period [EIA (LOCAL)].

Parent Conference

Secondary teachers shall communicate regularly available conference times to parents/guardians of enrolled students. Conferences may be requested by the teacher or parent as needed.

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. A computer generated report card will be mailed to each student's home address at the conclusion of each grading period and should be returned within three (3) days bearing the parent's signature.
3. Documentation of timely teacher-parent contact(s) and instructional intervention(s) must be available when a student earns a grading period average lower than 70.

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)]