

# Dripping Springs

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DSISD Elementary Grading Guidelines

2023-2024

### Philosophy

Grading is the process by which a teacher assesses student learning and progress towards mastery of course objectives as aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Grading is part of the teaching and learning process. This process includes establishing clear learning goals along with evaluative criteria to guide student learning and educator understanding about the level of mastery students achieve. Grades are the feedback mechanisms educators use to provide timely feedback about a student's learning. Grades shall reflect the progress towards mastery of essential knowledge and skills. Additionally, the grading process should provide clear and consistent feedback to students to focus them to ultimately take responsibility for their own learning.

Grade reporting is the process by which the teacher communicates information to students and parents/guardians about student mastery of course content and skills. The formal reporting process includes checklists, report cards, and progress reports, and may also include a combination of anecdotal notes, emails, telephone conversations, and conferences, as appropriate, and are aligned to the TEKS. The purpose of grades is to provide timely feedback about a student's learning. Grades shall reflect the progress towards mastery of essential knowledge and skills. Grading shall not be based on non-academic criteria, such as discipline, attendance, or tardies. However, students engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and EIA (LOCAL).

The purpose of these grading guidelines is to present a consistent set of grading and reporting regulations. The regulations adhere to the requirements of the Texas Education Code (TEC), the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), and DSISD Board policies and regulations.

## **Guiding Principles**

Following are the guiding principles, which represent the elementary schools' philosophy on assigning grades to student work and reporting grades to students and parents.

- Parents and students will be informed of student progress through progress reports, report cards, and in Family Access on Skyward. Grade reports should be an accurate assessment of the student's progress and will be based on a minimum number of grades in each subject.
- Zeros may be recorded on interim reports. Every effort will be made to replace the zero with a grade which reflects the student's level of mastery.
- The PLC/teacher has the discretion to determine which assignment will be graded. Not all assignments need to be graded; it is the feedback provided to students that is meaningful and necessary.

## **Grading Overview**

Grades will reflect a student's progress in a well-balanced, TEKS-based curriculum. Lessons may consist of oral, written, and participatory activities that encompass higher-order thinking skills. The foundation curriculum includes English Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The enrichment includes Fine Arts, Health, Physical Education, and Technology Integration and, to the extent possible, Languages Other than English (LOTE). The teachers will differentiate instruction to support students' mastery of the required content.

At the beginning of the school year, or later in the school year as new students enroll, the teacher will inform students and parents/guardians of how grades will be determined in a particular class. Teachers will inform students in advance of the grading criteria or rubrics to be used in evaluating major assignments.

## **Determining Student Grades**

- The student's demonstration of mastery of the instructional expectations as aligned in the TEKS for grade-level subjects or courses shall be the major factor in determining the student's grade for a subject or course. EIA (LOCAL)
- No "blanket" grades are to be used. A blanket grade is giving every student in the class the same grade for an assignment without regard to individual achievement.
- Grades in the foundation curriculum will be sufficient in number and category, e.g. daily assignments, quizzes, and tests, to reflect an accurate measure of a student's progress and achievement.
- A student's academic grades will not be affected by non-academic behavior or adherence to procedural rules.
  - e.g. using the proper heading, using a certain color of ink, bringing certain supplies to class, or returning signed forms/papers. Behavior and adherence to classroom rules will be communicated by the teacher through phone calls, emails, and/or conferences.

- Student work should be graded and the grades recorded in a timely manner in order to provide feedback to students and parents. Teachers in grades 3-5 will have grades entered one week from the due date for daily work and two weeks from the due date for special projects and essays as determined by the teacher.
- Grades will be entered weekly and consist of one grade per week per subject in grades 3-5.
  - Some exceptions may apply in the event of a holiday or assessments.
- The skill based report cards in PK-2 reflect the student's individual growth and acquisition of grade level skills.
- 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 cheating or copying work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination is considered academic dishonesty.. 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. EIA (LOCAL)
- A student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance at least 90% of the days for each semester after the first date of enrollment in the District. A student, who is in attendance for at least 75%, but less than 90% of the days a class is offered, may be given credit if the student completes a plan approved by the principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirement of the class. FEC (LEGAL)

### **Missing Assignments**

If a student acquires multiple zeros during a grading period, the teacher will notify the parent/guardian and the student may be referred to the campus Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Team (MTSS). A collaborative discussion for next steps and a plan for student instruction and support will be created for success.

### **Incomplete Assignments**

If a student has incomplete work due to extenuating circumstances, such as prolonged illness, they can complete such work within two weeks of the close of the grading period. An "I" is assigned by the teacher to indicate incomplete student work due to extenuating circumstances, which should be made up within two weeks from the close of the grading period.. Extensions beyond the two-week period must be approved by the principal and will be considered on an individual basis. UIL rules specify that an "Incomplete" must be replaced with a passing grade within seven calendar days of the close of the grading period in order for the student to be eligible.

### **Late Assignments**

The student will be given two to five days to complete any late work, depending on the time needed to complete the assignment. The submission of late assignments should occur no more than three times within a grading period. If a student exceeds the late assignment limit, the teacher will communicate with parents/guardians.

### **Makeup Assignments**

- Students are required to do all work (assignments, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests) missed as a result of an absence. Even though a student is given the opportunity to make up work missed by excused absences, it is impossible for him/her to regain the full benefit of the regular class; therefore, **absences should occur only when absolutely necessary**. This should occur a minimal number of times within the grading period and if a regular occurrence, the teacher will communicate with parents/guardians.
- Make-up work for excused absences will be eligible for full credit.
- Extra time may be given at the teacher's discretion, and the teacher may exempt a student from some assignments if doing so will not negatively impact the student's ability to master the content or unfairly bias his/her grade.

### **Progress Reports**

**Pre-Kindergarten-2nd Grade:** Student progress will be provided to parent/guardian by the classroom teacher after the 4th week as a checkpoint during each nine week grading period. Student progress may be shared with parents at any other time as determined by the student's teacher.

**3rd–5th Grades:** Progress reports are issued electronically in Family Access via Skyward to all students at the end of the 3rd week during each nine week grading period.

Progress reports may be distributed at any other time as determined by the student's teacher.

### **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

Teachers are expected to conference with parents/guardians, especially those whose students are experiencing difficulties. Whenever a student is in jeopardy of failing or his/her behavior is unsatisfactory, the teacher will communicate directly with the parents/guardians and maintain ongoing dialogue. Teachers or parents/guardians may request conferences at any time. However, when a personal conference cannot be scheduled, a telephone conference or email may be used as an alternate form of communication.

**[CLICK HERE for the 2023-2024 Elementary Grading & Reporting Calendar](#)**

## Types/Categories of Grades 3-5

Student mastery of subject matter may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary, therefore, for all grades to have written paper work as their source. Nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every assignment produced. Although the teacher will monitor and provide feedback to students for any activity which they assign, the feedback does not always need to be in the form of a grade. All assignments (formative and summative) shall be recorded and weighted only once. Teachers will enter at least three summative grades each nine weeks, with at least two summative grades being entered in the gradebook by the end of the second interim grading period. There should be a minimum of nine grades per grading period for each content area.

## Weighting of Grades

**Formative= 30%**

**Summative= 70%**

**Practice= 0%**

## **FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE**

**Formative Assessment** - Assessment that is designed to provide direction for both students and teachers while a student is still learning the curriculum. For the students, this may mean reviewing, additional practice, or confirmation that they are ready to move forward. For teachers, it may mean changing instructional strategies or providing additional practice.. Formative assessments are a practice in the learning progression towards mastery on identified learning targets.

**Summative Assessments** - Assessments conducted when a student has had adequate instruction and practice to be responsible for mastery of material taught.

**Practice:** - Activities and assignments that show completion.

## **Promotion/Retention**

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. EIE (LEGAL) Furthermore, EIE (LOCAL) states that promotion, acceleration, and grade-level advancement shall be based on mastery of the grade level standards. The classroom teacher shall monitor and evaluate the progress of a student and shall exert every effort to ensure the student's progress.

### **Kindergarten – 2nd Grade**

70% mastery of the TEKS for independent performance, as indicated on the report card rubric.

### **Grades 3 - 5**

Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course level, grade-level standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) and a minimum grade of 70 in four content subjects: English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. EIE (LOCAL)

Students in grades 3-5 participate in STAAR assessment. All students who are not successful passing STAAR will be provided with accelerated instruction and tutorial opportunities to address gaps in mastery of TEKS.

## **Reteaching and Reassessment**

The District's goal is for every student to master all the TEKS specified for each grade level. 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.

**Reteaching** is the provision of additional instruction to students who fail to demonstrate mastery of an objective or set of objectives. Reteaching should employ instructional strategies different from the original instruction including, but not limited to: alternate homework assignments, peer teaching, small group or individual instruction, and tutoring.

**Reassessment** involves giving the student an additional opportunity to demonstrate his/her mastery of the TEKS objectives.

- Educators shall provide the opportunity for students to reassess for which the student received a failing grade. (EIA LOCAL). However, elementary campuses have committed to provide an opportunity for all students to reassess.
- Students will have 5 school days from the time the grade is communicated to reassess and students must attend a reteach session prior to reassessing. Teacher discretion will be used in the case of extenuating circumstances due to doctor's appointments, school related events, illness, etc.
- The reassessment will be different from the original assessment. It may include varied ways to demonstrate

mastery of the previous misconceptions such as another similar assessment, independent corrections, etc.

- Ideally, summative assessments will be scheduled prior to the last week of a term to allow for reteach and reassessment. If needed, summative assessments given in the last week of the term may be entered in the following nine-week term, to allow for reteach and reassessment.
- Reassessing is limited during a nine-week grading period.
- Once reteach and reassess opportunities are provided, the higher grade of the two grades will be recorded.

### **Homework (Practice)**

Research recommends ten minutes of practice per night per grade level (including all subject areas). Homework, when assigned, will be given using this research based guideline. Homework will be independent practice designed to help supplement the student's knowledge base of the content and to extend the student learning experience. Homework may include written work, studying, preparing for class and other activities related to classroom work, but assigned to be done at home.

- Homework should be directly related to classroom instruction, student needs, and structured to ensure high completion rates. Homework should not involve new learning that has not been taught.
- Students should have prior instruction in the concepts included in a homework assignment and directions for the assignment should have been previously explained.
- Homework should be evaluated in a timely manner so that prompt feedback can be provided to each student.
- Homework is not to be assigned as a disciplinary measure or be assigned as punishment.
- No assignments or homework/projects will be due on the first day following an extended holiday.
- Student responsibilities include understanding that they have a homework assignment(s) before leaving school; taking home all necessary materials to complete the assignment(s); and completing homework and returning it to the teacher on time.
- Parent responsibilities include encouraging good study habits by providing an appropriate environment conducive to studying and a set study time; providing necessary support and assisting the child in the return of the homework assignment(s) to the teacher on time.
- **Homework is not to be taken as a grade.**

### **Interventions and Acceleration**

An instructional plan shall be created for any student that is retained or accelerated (placed) in the next grade level as part of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). This plan will be shared through Frontline and provided to the student's teacher for the next school year.

The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process should continue to be used for screening and monitoring students who have been identified as non-responders to intervention. Data related to ongoing intervention will be used as the basis for decision making concerning referral for evaluation of a suspected disability.

### **Transfer of Grades**

When a student transfers grades for properly documented courses from an accredited school, the campus will assign weight to grades based on the categories and grade weight system used if similar or equivalent courses are offered to the same class of students.

When a student transfers from a non-accredited school, including home school, the campus will accept and/or assign grades through course verification provided by the parent, such as a portfolio, curriculum documents.

Alpha grades shall be recorded as follows. For all other conversions, registrars should consult the sending school district for the conversion scale.

A+= 100	A = 95	A- = 90
B+= 89	B = 85	B= 80
C+ = 79	C = 77	C-= 75
D+ = 74	D = 72	D- = 70
F= 69 or below		

Students enrolling in a DSISD school after the beginning of a grading period will receive reported grades that consist of the grades received from the sending school, proportionately to the time spent there. If grades are unavailable from the previous school, students will receive grades awarded by DSISD for the grading period only if they are in attendance at a DSISD school at least one-half of the grading period. If the period enrolled in a DSISD school is less than one-half of a grading period and the sending school records are unavailable, grades during the previous grading period will be averaged with those earned in the next grading period.



## Grading Symbols

### **Grading Symbols for Pre K - 2nd Grade All Areas & 3rd-5th Citizenship:**

EX	Exceeding expectations
ME	Meeting expectations
EM	Emerging expectations
shaded	Not yet assessed or was not assessed in that grading period (Academic Content Only)

### **Numeric Academic Grading Scale for Grades 3-5:**

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
F	69 and below- Failing
I	Incomplete

## Elementary Grading Quick Look Document for Parents & Teachers

Updated: July 19, 2023