



Grading Guidelines

As a district, we believe we should meet students at their instructional levels and move them to the next level through rigorous and challenging coursework aligned with each student's individual needs. Additionally, we want to communicate as clearly and often as possible about how each child is doing and our expectations for student success. Specifically, we believe students, teachers, and parents are partners in the learning process and everyone involved needs to understand where each student is performing academically and how to help them reach their individual goals. In this endeavor, we have developed a consistent district-wide grading practice to begin the shift to mastery-based assessment practices in order to provide more accurate information (grades) to parents and students about a student's knowledge/mastery of grade level content.

Assessment Definitions & Descriptions:

- **Check for Understanding (CFU)** - The instructional practice of continually assessing that students are learning what is being taught while it is being taught and/or at lesson completion. This practice could include verbal or written responses from the whole class, small groups of students, or individual students. While student work during this practice may be scored, this is not a graded practice. CFU is a monitoring instrument used by the teacher to assist with making instructional decisions.

Examples of Checking for Understanding methods include: turn and talk with quick share out, conferring, argue a point, illustrate learning/new knowledge, whiteboard responses, thumbs up/thumbs down with explanation, digital response systems, think-pair-share, verbal and written responses.

Examples of guiding questions for Checking for Understanding include:
How will you know that your students are learning during and/or immediately after instruction? How will you monitor the student responses to determine their levels of mastery and identify any specific misconceptions before moving to the next lesson? How will you prompt student thinking and provide individual feedback to students?

- **Formative Assessments** - These assessments are for students to practice and to inform instructional steps towards mastery of standards/skills. Students should receive timely, personalized, and descriptive feedback. This feedback allows students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and guide their thinking on

future assessments. Formative assessments take place prior to summative assessments and should be aligned to the summative assessments in terms of skill, standard, and rigor.

Examples of formative assessments could include observations, quizzes, initial drafts, student responses to class discussions, minor lab assignments, and other practice assignments to determine what each student has learned and to meet each child's learning needs through instruction by providing specific and constructive feedback to students.

- **Summative Assessments** - Summative assessments are used to determine student mastery of a set of standards and/or skills. These assessments are an “end performance” after a unit of instruction has been completed, are aligned to course standards, and aligned to previously administered formative assessments.

Examples of summative assessments could include tests, final drafts of writing assignments, projects, major lab assignments/tests, research papers, performance assessments, and presentations.

Grading Weights:

- **Checking for understanding** is an instructional practice that should continuously be used by teachers to drive instruction. While some of these activities may be scored, these activities do not count as a grade. Teachers can enter these assignments in PowerSchool, but they will not count toward a final grade. This allows parents to see it on the progress report, but it does not calculate in the final grade.
- **Formative assessments** will be administered multiple times each nine weeks in a variety of formats with no single assessment counting as the only formative grade. Collectively, formative assessments will be weighted at **40%** of the overall grade.
- **Summative assessments** will be administered multiple times each nine weeks in a variety of formats with no single assessment counting as the only summative grade. Collectively, summative assessments will be weighted at **60%** of the overall grade.

Grading Practices:

- Teachers will record the actual grade for an assignment/assessment in the gradebook. If the final grade for the quarter/semester/year reflects any grade lower than a 50, the teacher will then override that final grade to reflect a grade of 50. Prior to inputting grades, STCTC and STHS Teachers should [click here](#) for further guidance at the high school level.

- Teachers will notify students/parents about formative assignments that have not been completed (or completed on time). Teachers may place a zero in the gradebook to indicate that the assignment has not been completed, if not completed the zero will factor into the final grade. If a student is absent on the day of the formative assignment, according to board policy JH, teachers will permit students to make up work missed during an absence as long as the student makes appropriate arrangements with the teacher no later than the student's fifth (5) day back at school. The student must complete the work within ten (10) school days after his/her return to school. If the assignment is completed within 10 days after his/her return to school, the zero should be adjusted to the grade earned. Follow up actions by the teacher may include, but are not limited to, parent communication, working lunch, detention, removal from privileges or after school activities.
- Teachers use professional judgment when designing their assessments in order to effectively promote learning for each student and to determine if reassessment is most appropriate to accurately reflect the student's mastery of the learning objectives.
- Extra credit and group grades will not be given. Students will be given the opportunity to retake summative assessments after completing a qualifying assignment. For example, students may complete test corrections to remediate the material and then take a new assessment to show mastery. The teacher will record the higher of the two grades. Similar to the language for make-up work in board policy JH, teachers will permit students to retake summative assessments one time, after students complete a qualifying assignment, as long as the student makes appropriate arrangements with the teacher, no later than the fifth (5) day after the assignment has been returned with a grade or feedback. The student must complete the retake summative assessment within ten (10) school days after the assignment has been returned with a grade or feedback. In all grades, this request may come from a parent or at the discretion of the teacher. The teacher may choose to provide time beyond the ten days for retakes, as appropriate or necessary for the individual situation.
- Assigned homework should be a quality learning opportunity that prepares students for engaging learning experiences while at school or provides opportunities for students to practice necessary skills to reinforce learning. If homework is assigned to reinforce learning, it is a CFU activity, and not used to evaluate mastery of content. Therefore, any assigned homework will not receive a grade, yet teachers are encouraged to provide meaningful feedback, as appropriate to the assigned CFU activity. Teachers may place a zero in the CFU category of the gradebook to indicate that a homework assignment has not been completed, but this will not factor into the final grade. This process is simply used as a communication tool for parents, to help identify potential factors that impact overall grades. Follow up actions by the teacher may include, but are not

limited to, parent communication, working lunch, or opportunities to complete the homework during or after school hours.

- All CFUs, Formatives, and Summatives should reflect student learning and/or progress towards mastery of a standard/skill. Therefore, any scored assignment or assessment should not be solely based on participation and/or completion.

- Students should be provided multiple opportunities in a variety of formats to demonstrate mastery of a standard/skill. While the number and type of assessments vary by grade level and subject area, as well as by the students' progression in the class, there should be a combination of formative and summative, consisting of:
 - Elementary (K-5):
 - a minimum of 4 Science grades, 4 Social Studies grades, 8 ELA grades, and 8 Math grades per quarter.

 - Secondary (6-12):
 - a minimum of 4 formative assessments and 4 summative assessments per quarter

*ELA and Math grades should include a balance from multiple domains in the Standards.

- Teachers are expected to update their gradebooks at least once per week, not to exceed 5 days past an assignment due date. An exception will be made when a student is absent or quarantined and Policy JH has been applied for makeup work purposes.

- Grades should reflect mastery of current grade level standards. If a student is performing below grade level standards, parents should be informed and kept abreast, prior to the interim and/or report card distribution. Additionally, a report card comment should be used to indicate any instruction off grade level through small groups and differentiation to increase potential student gains. Teachers can create a custom comment to communicate off grade level instruction or use the following comment from the available list in PowerSchool.
 - Comment number 186 - Subject taught off grade level