

Grading Guidelines

Waco Charter School Grading and Instructional Guidelines

2020-2021

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Overview

The Waco Charter School Grading and Instructional Guidelines provide a school-wide framework for grading and instructional practices that reflects expectations for grading, planning, and instruction.

Grading Philosophy and Practices

We believe monitoring the academic progress of each student, coupled with meaningful and timely feedback to students and parents, is essential to fostering academic success.

We believe in an instructional approach based upon student growth as well as mastery learning, which allows multiple opportunities to demonstrate progress towards mastery of the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).

We strive to communicate a fair and accurate indication of student mastery.

- Grading practices should be used to promote learning and academic growth.
- Grading should never be used as a punishment or to measure conduct or compliance.
- Grading should help the teacher to communicate progress towards mastery of the standards or established goals to the student and parent/guardian.
- Grading should help the parent/guardian increase understanding of student mastery of standards or established goals and gain a deeper understanding of the child as a learner.
- Grading should help the student to set his/her goals for future learning, evaluate and track personal progress towards mastery of the standards or established goals, and recognize opportunities for growth and improvement.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering information (evidence) that accurately reflects how well a student is progressing towards mastery of the identified learning targets, standards, or established goals. Assessment data serves to guide teachers in adapting instructional approaches to better meet students' needs. The overall effectiveness of programs and classroom practices can also be evaluated through the assessment process.

Formative assessments should happen early and often in order to provide students the feedback they need, so they can progress towards mastery. Students should be given varied opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills; therefore, some formative assessments are utilized to guide instruction and not used as grades.

Summative assessments are cumulative in nature and summarize current individual student mastery of the TEKS or established goals after a period of student practice or work. Summative grades may include major tests or performance tasks (i.e., essay, oral report, lab practical, or project). A key component of summative assessment is teacher-provided feedback that guides students' efforts toward improved performance.

Students must receive timely and meaningful feedback on all assessments.

Assigning of Grades

- **Grades must reflect the degree to which the student has mastered the essential knowledge and skills.**
- The assigning of a grade in a particular course shall reflect individual student mastery of the skills and concepts of the course.
- Summative grades may include major tests or performance tasks. Prior to assigning a summative grade, the teacher is to have adequately taught the concepts to be assessed, and the student is to have had sufficient opportunities to master the concepts before being evaluated. This process includes using appropriate checks for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice prior to a summative assessment.
- Formative grades may include daily work or practice, homework, quizzes, or checks for understanding. These grades should provide a balanced representation of the types of work completed during the course of the grading cycle. Students will be provided multiple formative assessments prior to summative assessment.
- Grade points shall not be awarded or reduced for any non-academic activities (i.e., returning a report card, an incomplete paper heading, bringing or possessing supplies, or attending a school-sponsored event).
- Pass/Fail is not to be used for any assignment or grading period.

Grading Scales for Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

In Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, grading is based on mastery of the TEKS as demonstrated through skills assessed/observed by the teacher and individual student work. Mastery of specific skills will be recorded on report cards for individual standards in the core content areas of math, English language arts and reading, science, and social studies.

The Pre-K reporting categories are as follows:

Category	Description
A	All of the time
M	Most of the time
S	Some of the time
N	Not Yet

The Kindergarten reporting categories are as follows:

Category	Description
+	Mastery
I	Introduced
BLANK	Not Introduced

Grading Scales for Grades 1-5

The grading scale for content area courses in first-fifth grade will be numerically based on the following 100-point scale:

Grade	Letter Equivalent	Description
90-100	A	Outstanding progress and mastery of TEKS
80-89	B	Above average progress and mastery of TEKS
70-79	C	Average progress and understanding of TEKS
Below 70	F	Below average progress and limited understanding of TEKS
	I	Incomplete

Grade Weights for Report Card Calculation

Grade Level	Formative Assessments (Daily Work)	Summative Assessments
Pre-K & Kindergarten	Please See Standards Based Grading & Reporting Chart on Page 4	
1-5	50%	50%

Minimum Grades per Grading Cycle

Grade Level	Formative Assessments (Daily Work)	Summative Assessments
K-5	Two per content, per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five per Grading Cycle – Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Math, and Science
18 daily grades per nine weeks. 5 test grades per 9 weeks		

**Notes: Spelling grades may not count for more than 20% of your overall writing average.*

Reteach, Redos, and Retakes

For reteaching to be effective, teachers must use a different approach from the one they initially used, one that builds on previous activities and focuses on the omissions or errors in student thinking that resulted from these activities (Adapted from Marzano, 2010).

- Correction of the original assignment is not considered reteaching.
- Reteaching should employ different strategies than the original teaching method.
- Working through the Professional Learning Community (PLC), teachers work collaboratively to determine strategies for reteach by answering PLC Question Three, “What will we do if students have not learned the content or skill?”

The opportunity to redo/retest is a one-time offering per **summative assessment**, on which the student earned a 69% or below. The higher of the two grades will be recorded in the grade book for a maximum grade of a 70%. Reassessment must occur within ten instructional days of the original assessment.

- Opportunities for reteach will be provided prior to retest. The extent of tutorials or reteach opportunities is determined by the teacher.

- If 40% (four out of every ten students) of a class fails a summative assessment, it is evident that the class has not reached sufficient mastery of the TEKS; therefore, whole class reteach/reassessment is educationally appropriate and required.
- The assessment may be of an alternative variety from the original assessment as long as it assesses the same TEKS at the same level of cognition as the original assessment.

The teacher team may allow a student a reasonable opportunity to redo a **formative assessment** for which the student received a 69% or below.

- Alternative opportunities to show mastery may include assignment corrections or an alternative but comparable task.
- The teacher team will determine the appropriate timeline for redo, based upon the assignment length or complexity.
- The student, at teacher discretion, may be required to attend tutorials prior to the alternative opportunity. Exact number of tutorials or reteach opportunities is determined by teacher team.

Extra Credit

Extra credit shall be awarded on the basis of an academic product that can be directly related to the Waco Charter School curriculum objectives. Extra credit assignments should apply equally to all students enrolled in the same level content course for that campus. **Extra credit shall not be given for students providing classroom supplies or materials or awarded for any other non-academic work.**

Recording Multiple Grades

An assignment or project may generate multiple grades if it assesses student mastery of different TEKS or established goals. The score may also count for more than one content area. For example, an essay written in science may receive one score for the quality of writing and a different score for accuracy of science content.

Missing or Late Assignments

Late assignments will be assessed a 20-point penalty per day.

Homework

The purpose of homework is to improve student learning and provide opportunities for extending learning time beyond the school day by providing practice, developing proper study habits, and fostering positive attitudes towards schoolwork beyond the classroom.

Homework should be reasonable in terms of student time and available resources.

Absences

Students shall be expected to make up assignments and tests after absences. Students will have two days for each day absent to make-up work (i.e., absent 2 days, they have 4 days to make-up the work). A student shall be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a

satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher.

A teacher may give an alternate assignment in place of missed assignments that cannot be re-created. The assignment should reflect mastery of the content missed. Under extenuating circumstances, such as long-term illness or family emergencies, a teacher may give additional time or reduce the length or number of assignments.

Assignments or tests not made up within the allotted time will be subject to campus Late Work Policy.

Academic Dishonesty

Honesty and integrity are essential elements of our core values at Waco Charter School; therefore, academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another individual, 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. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade and disciplinary penalties. Students found to have engaged in these behaviors will still be required to demonstrate mastery of the content and skills.

District Communication of Progress & Mastery

The district shall report progress for all students during each grading period. Each student will receive a computer-generated report card at the end of each grading cycle.

Communication between Teachers and Parents/Guardians

All teachers will communicate with parents regarding student progress in a timely manner. Teachers and/or parents/guardians may request a conference at any time.

As a general guideline, graded work should be up to date in the electronic grade book within five school days of the assignment being turned in by the student. The day an assignment is turned in is day zero. **Grades must be updated a minimum once a week.**

In first-fifth grades, if a progress report contains a failing average, the teacher will make direct contact with a parent by email, phone, or conference. A teacher or campus administrator may require any student who has not yet demonstrated mastery or is in danger of failing to attend tutorial sessions. Attendance for assigned tutorial sessions is mandatory.

Special Programs

Special Education

Grading for all students, including those with disabilities, should follow District grading procedures.

Students should receive grades based upon student progress in the content of instruction and their response to instruction. Any variation in District grading procedures should be related to the student's specific disability, determined by the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee, and included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The ARD committee may make decisions concerning the assignments for which a student will receive grades and the specific weight applied but cannot alter the grading scale/system established by the District.

The level of TEKS instruction and content expectations must be clearly articulated in a student's IEP, along with accommodations and/or modifications related to measuring mastery. This information is critical for teachers to develop appropriate classroom evaluations and make decisions regarding statewide assessments.

All students receiving special education services in an academic area must have corresponding annual goals, based upon the content standards for the grade-level in which the student is enrolled. The reporting of progress toward IEP goals is distinctly different than the issuing of grades for a course. A student's progress or mastery toward his/her IEP goals is never the basis for his/her grades, e.g., mastery of an IEP goal does not automatically constitute passing a course.

A classroom teacher must assign grades that reflect the student's relative mastery of an assignment. Effort, attendance, work habits, and participation are precursors to learning yet are not directly related to the demonstration of mastery of an assignment, nor do they give a clear picture of the student's academic learning. Without these

Alternative or modified grading is not within the discretion of the classroom teacher.

As determined by the ARD committee, student work can be assessed by the special education teacher, the general education teacher, and/or a combination of both teachers, but must be recorded by the teacher of record.

"The District must provide students with disabilities report cards that are as informative and effective as the report cards provided to students without disabilities" (Section 504 and Title II). Grades for students with disabilities are reported on the report card in the same way as grades are reported for all students. In addition to the report card, progress on individual goals and objectives will be individually reported for each student according to the District's grade reporting timeline. This is a legal requirement.

504 and Dyslexia Programs

The Special Education Department also serves students identified under Section 504 and those receiving support for Dyslexia. For information on grading policies for students receiving support for Dyslexia, see the Special Education section of this handbook (above). Curriculum for students receiving 504 services may not be modified.

Students Receiving Additional Services

Some students require additional services during the school day. When a child is pulled from the

general education classroom, they shall not be penalized for work missed. A child shall not be required to complete lessons or activities completed while they were receiving additional services such as, Dyslexia, GT, special education, counseling, etc. Teachers must ensure that students are exposed to any missed content and that they have ample opportunities to complete assignments and master the standards and learning objectives.

REMOTE LEARNING

Student's whose parents choose remote learning to begin the school year, or if at any point during the 2020-2021 the entire campus is forced to go to remote learning, student progress will be monitored and tracked through the Learning Management System Schoology through daily assignments, activities, interactions with the teacher and other markers. Student work will be graded on the same scale as in person work presented previously on page 3-5.

Students must be engaged each day to be counted as present. Students who are not engaged daily will be counted as absent. Engaged means they are logging into the LMS, interacting with the teacher, and completing one assignment per subject per day.

Students must have a passing grade at the end of the 9-week grading period to continue doing remote learning for the second 9-week grading period. A parent conference will be held with any student who fails to determine if remote learning will continue for failing students.

Lesson Design with the PLC Questions in Mind

Waco Charter School is a Professional Learning Community in which teacher teams meet consistently to ensure that all students learn at high levels. The following questions are used to guide teachers through collaborative planning, lesson design, assessment, reteach and/or extension, and lesson reflection.

Question One: What do we want students to learn?

- Does my planning reflect what students need to know, learn, and be able to do to demonstrate mastery of the TEKS?
- Have I created an alignment between the tasks/assessments I have planned and the cognitive level of what I want students to know and be able to do?

Question Two: How will we know if students have learned it?

- Have I regularly encouraged students to assess their own work and others' work in terms of the standards set?
- Have I provided clear and compelling standards prior to demonstrations of learning (i.e., a rubric describing performances, products, projects, and exhibitions)?
- Do I routinely hold assessment conferences with individual students or small groups of students where the qualities of student products are assessed?
- Do I routinely use assessment primarily as a tool to promote student success and only secondarily as a means to justify the distribution of rewards and grades?

Question Three: What will we do if students have not learned the content or skill?

- What differentiated teaching strategies for learning have I provided so each student can experience success?
- When students do not succeed, do I work directly with them to diagnose the causes of failure as a strategy to identify and correct the situations (missing learning)?

Question Four: What will we do if students already know the content or skill or learn it quickly?

- What differentiated teaching strategies for learning have I provided so each student can experience success?
- When students do succeed, do I work directly with them to extend or enrich their learning?

Waco Charter School Grading and Instructional Guidelines Teacher and Administrator Acknowledgment Form

The Waco Charter School Grading and Instructional Guidelines are intended to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of grading and reporting practices across grade levels. The goal is to provide teachers with direction to ensure all students are treated in an equitable manner when it comes to reporting academic performance. The guidelines within this document are subject to change. Should any changes occur, all teachers and administrators will be made aware of the changes and expected to follow the newest guidelines.

I understand that I should consult my principal/AP should I have questions regarding the Waco Charter School Grading and Instructional Guidelines. My signature indicates that I understand that it is my professional responsibility to read and comply with policies, procedures, and guidelines included in this WCS Grading and Instructional Guidelines as well as any communicated changes that are approved during the school year. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL. This document will reside in the employee personnel file.

Teacher or Administrator Signature Date

Printed Name of Teacher or Administrator