

SKIDMORE-TYNAN ISD

ELEMENTARY GRADING AND REPORTING GUIDELINES



Skidmore-Tynan Independent School District
Skidmore, Texas

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FOREWARD

Grading is the process by which a teacher assesses each student's learning and progress toward mastery of course objectives as aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The grading of student work is a critical component of the teaching and learning process. This process must include establishing clear learning goals and setting standards and evaluative criteria which guide student learning. Additionally, the grading process should provide clear and consistent feedback to students, which motivates them to focus on and ultimately take responsibility for their own learning.

Reporting is the process through which the teacher communicates information to students and parents/guardians about student mastery of content and skills in the given course or subject. While the reporting process includes the dissemination of report cards and progress reports, it may also require other forms of communication such as emails, telephone conversations and/or conferences where parents and students meet individually with the teacher.

Most importantly, the teaching and learning process within the District's schools will promote and encourage a thorough understanding of a rigorous and aligned District curriculum and at all times focus on these four essential questions:

1. What knowledge and skills should each student acquire from the instruction provided?
2. How will the school know if each student has mastered the intended outcomes?
3. How will the school respond when a student has difficulty in mastering the standards?
4. What learning experiences does the school provide to those students who have already mastered the standards?

The purpose of this manual is to provide a consistent set of grading and reporting regulations for Skidmore-Tynan ISD. The regulations adhere to the Texas Education Code (TEC), the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and Skidmore-Tynan ISD Board policies and regulations.

This manual

- Describes the District's grading system which all teachers will implement;
- encourages a better understanding of grading, reporting and promotion by teachers, parents/guardians and students; and
- fosters consistency in grading and reporting student achievement and in promotion and retention practices across the District

GRADING PHILOSOPHY

Teachers who are effective in the classroom use grading as part of the intricate and complex process of learning. Using the curriculum for the State of Texas, TEKS serve as the foundation and teachers begin the teaching and learning process by thoughtfully considering what the students already know and what they need to learn.

Teachers

- construct assignments and tests that will both teach and assess students' learning;
- establish fair, clear standards and criteria and apply those criteria consistently to student work;
- use previously disclosed rubrics when assessing the students' skills;
- offer feedback to their students in the form of comments and grades;
- provide meaningful opportunities within the classroom setting for their students to assess their own work; and
- apply what they learn from the grading process to improve their teaching.

Standards-based tests and quizzes yielding numerical grades represent only one aspect of evaluating student learning. Complete grading calls for multiple assessment techniques, such as performances, portfolios, projects, presentations, learning logs, journals, surveys, interviews, simulations and role playing. Using many different evaluation strategies will elicit more opportunities for student success.

As lifelong learners, students must be prepared for college and the workforce. The teacher will create and sustain a learning environment by basing grades on the student's knowledge and skills as demonstrated by a wide variety of assessments.

In compliance with Texas Education Code §28.0216, grading in STISD:

1. Must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment
2. May not require a classroom teacher to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard for a student's quality of work
3. Will allow a student a reasonable opportunity to makeup or re-do a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade.

In addition, grading should help the teacher

1. Communicate progress to the student and parent/guardian on the mastery of the TEKS
2. Appraise the effectiveness of teaching strategies and modes of instruction
3. Evaluate strengths and needs of each student

4. Determine if credit will be awarded

Grading should help the parents/guardians

1. Understand their child as a learner
2. Become knowledgeable about the student's mastery of the TEKS
3. Guide the student in making academic progress, and
4. Encourage the student to give maximum performance in academic areas.

Grading should help the student

1. Evaluate and see personal progress on mastery of the TEKS
2. Recognize how work may be improved
3. Set his/her goals for future learning

STUDENT MASTERY OF LEARNING

As used in these regulations, the term mastery refers to the knowledge and skills necessary for students to be academically successful. Grades earned commonly reflect the degree to which students attain mastery in any given course. Further, student mastery implies foundational understanding necessary in developing skills and processes on a continuum from simple to complex.

To determine the content on which mastery is based, teachers will rely on the TEKS as reflected in District-authorized scope and sequences, curriculum guides and/or advanced course curricula. This mastery will be supported by research-based instructional practices, available technology, community resources and state-adopted textbooks. Pulling from this vast range of resources, the teacher will create lessons that reflect the TEKS being targeted and include assessment strategies appropriate for the learning of all students.

Effective teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to determine mastery of content and skills being taught. Assessments may include, but are not limited to, student performances and projects, teacher observations of developmental skills, work samples, oral interviews and written assignments.

Recording mastery at one point in time does not guarantee lifelong mastery, nor does it relieve teachers of the responsibility of reviewing content as part of ongoing instruction.

STATE ASSESSMENTS

The Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) or Tejas LEE are assessments for grades K-2, developed to provide teachers with a means of determining students' progress as readers.

The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is designed to measure the degree to which a student has learned and is able to apply the defined knowledge and skills at each tested grade level. A major component of the STAAR assessment program is the grade advancement requirement, which ties performance on STAAR to grade advancement in grades 5 and 8.

Every STAAR test is directly aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and is administered at the following grade levels:

Grade	Test Administration
3 (English and Spanish)	Mathematics and Reading
4 (English and Spanish)	Writing, Mathematics, and Reading
5 (English and Spanish)	Mathematics, Reading, and Science

STAAR includes alternative forms of assessment for students served by special education who meet the eligibility requirements as identified through the Admission Review Dismissal (ARD) committee. In addition, students served through Section 504 will receive accommodations that are used on a regular basis for instruction and/or assessment and are identified in the student's Section 504 plan. Students receiving Dyslexia Services will receive the accommodations used on a regular basis for instruction and assessment that have been identified through their Individual Education Plan (IEP), their Section 504 plan or their Dyslexia plan.

All English Language Learners (ELL), including parent denials, must participate in the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). Each student must be rated in listening, speaking and writing. Students in K-1 must also be rated in reading. Students in grades 2-12 must participate in TELPAS reading.

GRADING OVERVIEW

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

I. DETERMINING STUDENT GRADES

- A. Student mastery of the instructional objectives, as aligned in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for grade-level subjects or courses, shall be the major factor in determining the student's grade for a subject or course. [Board Policy EIA (LOCAL)]
- B. The checklist for Kindergarten and report card for grades 1-5 reflect the student's individual growth and acquisition of the grade level TEKS. The evaluation of student knowledge and skills may not be appropriate in the initial stages of instruction and learning. Teachers may base a student's grade on defined progress toward mastery during the grading period, rather than on a cumulative average. It is recommended that each campus reach consensus on when to assess student mastery.
- C. Grades in the foundation curriculum will be sufficient in number and category (daily assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.) to reflect an accurate measure of a student's progress and level of achievement. A minimum of eighteen grades will be recorded per nine weeks.
- D. For the foundation curriculum, no single grade will count more than 20% of the nine weeks average or the semester average.
- E. For the foundation curriculum, no "blanket" grades are to be issued for a grading period. A blanket grade occurs when each student in the class receives the same grade for an assignment without regard to individual achievement.
- F. In order to obtain a grade average for a particular grading period that is a fair assessment of the student's achievement, when appropriate a teacher may employ one or more of the options listed below.
- Canceling the lowest grade in a category before averaging
 - Allowing students the opportunity to do additional or optional assignments/projects evolving from the learning objectives
 - Providing special opportunities for a student to respond orally
 - Including participation grades when appropriate to the learning objective
- G. The final numerical grade will be recorded in the student's permanent cumulative records for grades 1-5. [Board Policy EIA (Local)].
- H. Cooperative learning structures may be used as an instructional strategy in order to encourage academic achievement within a team context. The rubric or grading standards for a cooperative activity or project will be shared with the students in advance, indicating whether students will be graded for individual academic achievement, team academic achievement, or both.

- I. The responsibility for grading belongs with the teacher. While peer review (peer editing and marking) can be a valuable learning activity, students will not grade test, quizzes or other major assignments. Peer marking of homework and/or other assignments is acceptable, but the teacher must review the work before assigning the final grade. Confidentiality requirements provide that students must not have access to the grades of other students.
- J. Grades that are identifiable by individual students must not be posted or announced publicly by teachers or students.
- K. A student's academic grades will not be affected by non-academic behavior or adherence to procedural rules, e.g. using the proper heading or using a certain color of ink or bringing certain supplies to class or being tardy. Behavior and adherence to classroom rules will be evaluated under "Conduct Codes" on the report card for each subject.
- L. A student shall not be given credit for a class unless he/she is in attendance at 90% of the days the class is offered. [Board Policy FEC-(LEGAL)]
 - 1. Extenuating circumstances may be appealed to the attendance review committee.
 - 2. Absences due to suspensions shall not be counted against the minimum attendance policy as prescribed by law.
 - 3. If a student is suspended, the student will be allowed to make up the work when the student returns to school.
- M. 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 dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism and unauthorized communication between students during an examination or outside of class with students who have not yet tested or turned in work. 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, on a preponderance of the evidence standard, taking into consideration written materials, observation or information from students [Board Policy EIA (LOCAL)].

II. GRADING IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS

A. Special Education Programs

1. For students receiving special education services, any variation in District grading procedures should be related to the student's specific disability, which shall be determined by the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee and included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
2. Grades for students in special education will be based on performance that demonstrates progress toward mastery of the TEKS following the application of the ARD recommended accommodations and/or modifications.
3. The level of instruction in the TEKS and content expectations should be clearly articulated in a student's IEP, along with accommodations and/or modifications related to measuring mastery. The information is critical for teachers to develop appropriate classroom evaluations and to make decisions regarding statewide assessments.
4. The report card may not contain statements of accommodations and/or modifications provided to students. Such accommodations are intended to provide access for students with disabilities and to level the playing field so that they can compete with students without disabilities. The student's grade is reported on the report card in the same way as grades are reported for all students.
5. 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.
6. In addition to the report card, all students in special education receive a nine weeks progress report that describes their progress on specific IEP goals and/or objectives. This report is completed by special education staff with input as appropriate from general education teachers.

B. Students in special education who have significant cognitive impairments and who are served through specialized support classes, resource classes and classes in general education are graded through teacher observations of progress and collection of data supporting IEP objectives. (Students included in the grading guidelines are either assessed using STAAR-A or STAAR-Alt).

1. Federal and state laws pertaining to the education of students in special education address the following points.
 - a. All students will have access to the content standards (TEKS) appropriate to their grade level.

- b. Students with significant cognitive disabilities may access the grade level standards using the TEA-developed Vertical Alignment Document and Essence Statement for all grade levels and subjects.
 - c. The student's level of independence in completing tasks and the degree to which a student can generalize skills to a variety of settings is a required aspect of the STAAR-Alt system.
- 2. When the ARD committee determines that a student with a significant cognitive disability cannot attain mastery of the grade level TEKS, even with accommodations and modifications, it will be appropriate for the committee to measure the student's progress using the Student's individual IEP Goals and Objectives, rather than letter or number grades. This will be done in two formats:
 - a. Format I – Progress on individual goals and objectives will be reported individually for each student using the IEP progress report process each nine weeks.
 - b. Format II – Progress on goals and objectives that are linked to the grade level standards will be reported on the report card. Both progress reporting formats should be discussed with parents at the annual ARD meeting.
- 3. The degree of independence and areas for generalization will also be addressed in this manner. This format will serve to align instruction for these students with the grade level TEKS and will also provide teachers with more documentation for the STAAR-Alt system.

C. Students Identified for Section 504 and Dyslexia Programs

- 1. Students identified for dyslexia programs and who are served through special education will be graded under the guidelines described in Section A.
- 2. Students identified for dyslexia programs and who are served through Section 504 will be graded as are all other general education students with appropriate accommodations identified through their individual dyslexia plans.

D. English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs

- 1. English Language Learners (ELL) students should not have failing grades based only on their inability to speak English.

2. ELL students are not exempt from grades. In order for ELL students to meet grade-level learning expectations across the foundation and the enrichment curriculum, all instruction delivered in English must be linguistically accommodated. The accommodations must be commensurate with the student's level of English language proficiency.
3. A campus Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) representative must review teacher documentation for routinely utilized accommodations at least once during each grading period.
4. The LPAC must make recommendations for additional appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations if necessary.
5. All ELL students participating in the ELL program must receive grades based on grade level expectations and English Language Proficiency Standards. Teachers should consider the content being assessed, the linguistic accommodations checklist, and the appropriate proficiency level descriptors.

III. TRANSFERRING NUMBER GRADES FOR STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM OUT-OF-DISTRICT

For transfer students, grades accepted shall be based on the intent of the sending school. Numerical grades earned from an accredited school shall be accepted. Alpha grades shall be recorded as follows: [Board Policy EIC (LOCAL)]

A+/E+ = 98	B+/S+ = 88	C+ = 79	D+/N+ = 74	F/U = 60
A/E = 95	B/S = 85	C = 77	D/N = 72	
A-/E- = 91	B-/S- = 81	C- = 75	D-/N- = 70	

For all other conversions, counselors should consult sending school district for conversion scale. If a student transfers during a nine-week grading period, the grade average for each transfer course will be counted proportionate to the number of weeks in the grading period that the grade covers.

IV. GRADING SYMBOLS AND CODES

Kindergarten Symbols

Symbol	S-T ISD Standards	Clarifying Statement
E	Excellent	The student has mastered the knowledge and skills necessary for independent performance at the highest level.
S	Satisfactory	The student has demonstrated mastery of the knowledge and skills, but needs additional practice for consistency and independent performance.
N	Needs Improvement	The student has demonstrated ability, but has not shown consistency or independent performance.
U	Unsatisfactory	The concept or skills have been taught. The student has not shown sufficient evidence of necessary knowledge and skills.
Shaded Gray	Not evaluated	The concept or skill has not been evaluated this grading period.

A. Independent Reading Level Codes for Guided Reading

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Kinder | J. Second Grade |
| B. Kinder | K. Second Grade |
| C. Kinder/First Grade | L. Second Grade |
| D. Kinder/First Grade | M. Second Grade/Third Grade |
| E. First Grade | N. Third Grade |
| F. First Grade | O. Third Grade |
| G. First Grade | P. Third Grade |
| H. First Grade | Q. Third Grade/Fourth Grade |
| I. First Grade/Second Grade | R. Fourth Grade |

B. Alpha and numeric grade equivalents for Grades 1-5.

A	Grades from 90 to 100
B	Grades from 80 to 89
C	Grades from 75 to 79
D	Grades from 70 to 74
F	Grades 69 and below
NG	No Grade if the student has not been enrolled in school for a sufficient length of time or other extenuating circumstances

C. Grading Codes for Computers

E	Indicates that achievement is Excellent
S	Indicates that achievement is Satisfactory
N	Indicates that achievement Needs Improvement
U	Indicates that achievement is Unsatisfactory

D. Comment Codes for conduct: The conduct grade is an evaluation of the student's behavior and attitude for a nine-week period of time and is based on a systematic discipline plan. Although academic grades may not be altered due to conduct, it remains significant to academic achievement.

E	Indicates the student's behavior is Excellent
S	Indicates the student's behavior is Satisfactory
N	Indicates the student's behavior Needs Improvement
U	Indicates the student's behavior is Unsatisfactory

V. Work Habits/Social Behaviors - Teacher comment codes are placed on the report cards for use as appropriate.

Comment Codes:

- A =Achievement is outstanding
- B =Effort is commendable
- C =Attitude is positive
- D =Participation is exceptional
- E =Shown improvement
- G =Tutoring recommended
- H =Conference requested
- # = Working below grade level

Your Student Needs Improvement In:

- I = Listening attentively
- J = Using time wisely
- K =Following directions
- L =Showing consistent effort
- M =Working independently
- N =Practicing neatness
- O =Bringing proper materials
- P = Keeping desk/materials in order
- Q =Completing assignments on time

R = Returning homework on time
S = Participating in class
T = Respecting authority
U =Respecting rights/opinions of others
V =Accepting responsibility for actions
W =Exercising self-control
X =Talking excessively
Y =Taking care of school property

Note: The letter “F” was purposely left off this list so as to not confuse the letter with failing.

VI. RE-TEACHING, RE-TESTING AND RE-ASSESSMENT

The District's goal is for every student to master all of the TEKS specific to each grade level and the STAAR and STAAR End of Course (EOC) exams. 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. If a student does not demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills as specified in the TEKS and necessary for future learning, re-teaching and re-testing (or re-assessment) should be provided for the student.

For the purpose of consistency and equity, the District will have a re-teach and re-test plan that is appropriate for student mastery. Campuses will ensure that teachers at each grade level in junior high school and in each course in high school follow the District's re-teach/re-test procedure. It is the responsibility of all teachers to consistently monitor student progress and to implement re-teaching and re-testing for all, most, or some of the students. Teachers will base their decisions to re-teach and re-test on whether the curriculum provides sufficient future opportunities for most students to master a concept or skill.

- A. Teachers will monitor and identify students who need re-teaching.
- B. Teachers will provide re-teaching when necessary allowing students a reasonable opportunity to make-up or re-do a class assignment or assessment for which the student received a failing grade.
- C. A maximum grade of 70% will be recorded when re-doing, re-testing and/or re-assessing for a failed grade.
- D. Re-teaching should employ instructional strategies different from the original instruction.
- E. Re-teaching, re-testing and/or re-assessment may include, but is not limited to oral examination, additional practice activities, an essay or paper, a report or presentation, test corrections, revision of a paper or project, or a formal test.

- F. If 50% or more of the students in a class fail to demonstrate mastery of TEKS on a summative assessment, the teacher will provide an opportunity for re-teaching and re-testing during class time. All students in the class will be given the opportunity for re-teach and re-test. The higher of the two grades will be recorded in the grade book.
- G. If fewer than 50% of all students in a class fail to demonstrate mastery of TEKS on a summative assessment, the teachers will provide re-teaching and re-testing during or outside of class time. The grade on the re-assessment will be recorded as no higher than 70 if mastery is demonstrated. If mastery is not demonstrated, the higher grade will be recorded.

VI. HOMEWORK POLICY

A. Rationale for Homework

1. Homework is an effective tool is an effective tool for improving understanding, enriching learning, encouraging personal connections, and providing opportunities to pursue special interests.
2. Homework may be guided or independent practice designed to help the student master the content and to extend student learning, and may include written work, reading, studying, preparing for class and/or assessments and other activities related to classroom work.
3. In elementary, homework should include reading every night.
4. Homework assignments should be reviewed regularly to give students feedback on their learning.
5. Homework is one means of teaching the necessary skills of independent study and learning outside the classroom without immediate teacher supervision. Homework includes assignments that the teacher expects all students to complete outside of class. By contrast, class work includes assignments that the teacher expects the majority of students to complete during the class period.
6. Teachers have the discretion to allow extended time for some students to complete class work when additional time is needed. If the majority of students completed the work in class, the work taken home will be graded as class work and not homework.
7. Long-term, extended assignments, such as science fair projects and research papers, although requiring work to be completed outside the classroom, will be considered part of the extended assignment and not homework.
8. The campus will set grade level guidelines for the length of time required for homework.
9. Assigning homework/projects over extended holidays within the school year that are due on the first class upon returning will be avoided.
10. Students should complete homework with minimal parental help.
11. Homework will count no more than 20% of the grade for any grading period as determined by campus guidelines.
12. When a student demonstrates mastery of the TEKS on major assessments, homework alone will not be the cause of a failing grade [Board Policy EIA (LOCAL)].
13. Homework is not to be assigned as punishment.

B. Teacher Responsibilities

1. Ensuring that students clearly understand and know how to complete assignments successfully.
2. Defining the work to be completed at home and making sure appropriate resources and materials are readily available.
3. Giving instructions to parents/guardians, when appropriate, and explaining how they may partner in helping the student complete the homework.
4. Considering homework as one part of the total learning process by monitoring, collecting and providing meaningful feedback to students.
5. Reviewing and grading homework assignments regularly to give students feedback on their learning.
6. Informing students of homework assignments missed because of an absence or substituting another activity for the missed assignment so that there are no gaps in the student's learning.
7. Avoid assigning homework/projects over extended holidays within the school year that are due on the first class upon returning from the holiday.

C. Student Responsibilities

1. Understanding the homework assignment(s) before leaving school.
2. Taking home all necessary materials to complete assignment(s).
3. Having an organized means of keeping and carrying homework to and from school.
4. Arranging for a place at home to work and creating a regular time to study.
5. Scheduling time for homework that is compatible with family and/or after-school activities.
6. Completing homework with minimal parental help.
7. Completing homework assignment(s) as carefully and as neatly as class work.
8. Completing homework and turning it in on time.
9. Understanding the need to budget time for long-term projects.
10. Completing all work missed because of absences or school activities.

D. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Reading and discussing the District's homework policy with the student and encouraging good study habits.
2. Providing the necessary assistance, a positive, supportive attitude and encouraging the development of good study habits.
3. Communicating any concerns and questions regarding homework assignments to the student's teacher.
4. Encouraging the student to seek additional help, if needed, from the teacher.
5. Providing an appropriate time and environment for study and learning; checking the homework for completion and showing an active interest in the work assigned.
6. Monitoring television, technology and outside activities to be sure the student has sufficient study time.

VII. MAKE-UP WORK FOR ABSENCES

According to Board Policy, students are required to make up assignments,

homework, projects, quizzes and tests missed due to absences.

The District distinguishes absences as excused and unexcused. Make up work for excused absences will be eligible for full credit. Teachers will provide the assignments missed to the students and inform students of the time allotted for completed make-up assignments, homework, projects, quizzes and tests.

- A. For excused extended absences, make-up assignments shall be made available to students after two consecutive days of absence.
- B. Students shall be permitted to take classroom assessments administered in any class missed because of absence.
- C. Students will not be required to take a quiz or test on the day returning to class from an absence if the quiz or test was announced during the student's absence.
- D. After their return to class, teachers are required to make arrangements with the student within two class days to take a test/quiz if the test/quiz was announced during the student's absence.
- E. Make-up work and tests for all absences should be of the same rigor, but not necessarily the same format, as the original activity, assignment or test.
- F. The teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject requirements.
- G. Students will have one day to complete make-up work for each day of absence, with exceptions made due to severe or prolonged illness. Students shall receive up to a 20% deduction from the total grade earned for any assignment or assessment not made up within the allotted time.
- H. After a prolonged absence, the teacher has the right to exempt a student from some assignments if the teacher determines that doing so will not have a negative impact on the student's ability to master the content or unfairly bias his/her grade.
- I. The teacher shall not impose a grade penalty for make-up work after an absence because of suspension.
- J. For unexcused absences, a 20% deduction from the total grade earned shall be taken on makeup work.
- K. At the teacher's discretion, make-up tests or presentations may be scheduled before school, after school, during learning academy or during the student's class period to ensure that new and/or significant content is not missed.
- L. Students should make prior arrangements with teachers for making up missed work when the absence can be anticipated, e.g. a dental appointment, medical appointment, court appearance, and other approved school-related activities.

VIII. LATE WORK

- A. Late work is defined as any assignment that is not submitted on the due date and/or time, with the exception of make-up work due to excused absences.
- B. Each grade level will develop consistent practices for assigning a late work penalty.
- C. Teachers may deduct up to 20% from the total grade earned as a late penalty for any assignment turned in after the due date in accordance with District published regulations disseminated to students.
- D. Late assignments will be accepted until the material has been assessed summatively.
- E. Extensive late work will be reflected using the comment codes section of the report card.
- F. Failing grades due to the application of a late work penalty will not constitute the need for re-teaching.
- G. Extenuating circumstances may occur that prevent the completion and/or submission of assignments on the due date. It is the parent/guardian and/or student's responsibility to inform the teacher and/or the appropriate administrator of any such circumstances. The teacher and/or the appropriate administrator shall have the authority to render a final decision on the granting of any exceptions.

IX. BENCHMARK TESTS

- A. Benchmark tests are designed to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, determine instructional effectiveness, guide instructional decisions and identify programmatic strengths and weaknesses. According to rule, benchmarking shall be used on a limited basis, providing the majority of class time for instruction.
- B. Benchmarks are STAAR-formatted for grades 2-5 and strive to provide current data on the mastery of grade level TEKS. Benchmarks also provide timely data necessary to determine the level and type of differentiated interventions designed to meet student needs.
- C. Scope and sequence and/or assessment benchmarks for which instruction has been provided may be used in calculating student grades.
- D. All Special Education students who participate in the STAAR assessment program will be included in benchmark testing as determined through the ARD committee.

- E. All English Language Learners will receive testing accommodations that are used on a regular basis as identified by the LPAC committee.
- F. Dyslexia and Section 504 students will receive accommodations that are used on a regular basis as identified in their Section 504 plan.
- G. Feedback from benchmark tests should be shared with students and parents/guardians on campus in order to debrief the activity and the learning.

X. REPORTING GRADES

A. Assignments

1. The electronic grade book is the legal repository and is an accurate record of each student's work and achievement; it is electronically archived at the District level.
2. To inform parents/guardians and students, due dates for major assignments, assessments and projects will be posted prior to the due date.
3. In order to maintain current information for parents/guardians, teachers are directed to grade and post assignments within seven (7) calendar days from the due date.

B. Grading and the Recording of Grades

1. Teachers will verify and edit student grades prior to the exporting of grades so that the student's accurate average is printed on the progress report or report card.
2. Teachers will also verify and edit grades in the District's grading system (Gradebook).
3. After report cards have been printed, grade changes must be documented and entered by the school administrators.
4. Teachers will update "Incomplete" grades within three weeks after the end of the grading period.
5. Grades in the District's grading system override grades in the electronic grade book when paper documentation is in the student's cumulative folder.

C. Parent Portal

1. The Parent Portal contains data extracted from the District's electronic grading program and allows parents/guardians to view recorded grades for the student at any time during the school year.
2. Teachers will update grades in the electronic grade book so that parents/guardians have an accurate understanding of the student's progress in each class.
3. In order to maintain current information for parents/guardians, teachers in grades 1-5 are directed to grade and post assignments within seven (7) calendar days from the due date.

D. Progress Reports

1. Progress reports are sent home to parents/guardians approximately one week after the third week of each grading period.
2. A parent signature is required on the progress report and shall be sent back to the student's teacher to acknowledge receipt of the report. If the signed report is not returned for a student who is failing or at-risk of failing, the teacher should contact the parent/guardian.
3. When a student's behavior is unsatisfactory and/or the student is in jeopardy of failing, the teacher will communicate directly with the parents/guardians and maintain ongoing dialogue and documentation of the communication that has taken place.
Teachers will utilize the "Comments" feature of the progress report as an additional communication tool. Distribution dates of progress reports are announced in campus publications, parent emails, grade-level weekly newsletters, and on the District's website.

E. Checklist (K) and Report Cards (1st-5th)

1. Checklists or report cards will be sent to parents/guardians at the end of every nine -week grading period. The progress of kindergarten students will be documented on a checklist format, while the progress of first through fifth grade students will be documented on a report card.
2. The checklist and report card cover six general areas: academic progress, conduct, social behaviors, work habits, attendance and notification of grade placement for the next school year.
3. A parent signature is required on the checklist or report card to ascertain receipt of the report and shall be sent back to the student's teacher. If the signed report is not returned for a student who is failing or at-risk of failing, the teacher should contact the parent/guardian.
4. Report cards indicate academic progress, the student's level of reading instruction (K-3rd), conduct symbol, comments about social behaviors, and work habits and attendance.
5. When a student's behavior is unsatisfactory and/or the student is in jeopardy of failing, the teacher will communicate directly with the parents/guardians and maintain ongoing dialogue and documentation of the communications.
6. Teachers will utilize the "Comments" feature of the report card as an additional communication tool.
7. Distribution dates of report cards are announced in District publications and posted on the District's website.

XI. PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

A. Board Policy EIE (LEGAL) states the following:

Grades 1–5: 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. In grades 1–5, 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 (TEKS) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts and mathematics.

In determining promotion, the District shall consider the following:

1. Recommendation of the student's teacher;
2. Student's grade in each subject or course;
3. Student's score on an assessment instrument administered under TEC 39.0233(a), (b), or (l); and
4. Any other necessary academic information, as determined by the District.

B. The classroom teacher shall monitor and evaluate the progress of a student and shall exert every effort to ensure the student's progress.

D. For kindergarten, first and second grade students, when there is the rare occasion a student has demonstrated mastery of the curriculum based on the checklist or grades earned, and the parents/guardians request that their child be retained, the parent/guardian must submit a written request to the campus principal containing a detailed explanation of the basis for the requested retention. A Grade Placement Committee (GPC) comprised of the parent/guardian, teacher and principal will review the requested retention, along with all available relevant information concerning the student, and make a recommendation. The GPC recommendation must be unanimous in order for retention to occur. If the GPC is not unanimous, the principal will have final authority for the decision to promote or retain the student.

E. In addition to state minimum attendance requirements, the following District guidelines should be considered in making the determination of retention or promotion for Kindergarten and Grade 5

1. Grade K

Students are promoted from Kindergarten to 1st grade based on assessments including, but not limited to:

- Skills Checklist (70% mastery of the knowledge and skills recommended for independent performance)
- If a teacher recommends retention, and if the parent does not agree with retention, the parent must sign the parent/guardian request to promote student from kindergarten to first grade form. A signed form allows the student to be promoted to 1st grade, and a copy of the form will be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

2. Additional Requirements at Grade 5:

Students in grade 5 must meet Grade Advancement Testing requirements in order to be promoted to grade 6. Under this initiative, students are required to pass the Grade 5 STAAR reading and mathematics tests to be promoted to the sixth grade.

F. The campus principal has the final authority regarding student promotion and retention.

VI. ACCELERATED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

A. Grade Retention and Accelerated Instruction

1. Accelerated instruction promotes student success by:
 1. Providing frequent reinforcement and review
 2. Implementing the support at the time the need is identified
 3. Allowing the student to progress systematically through content
 4. Offering a variation in instructional approach.
2. The Response to Intervention (RtI) 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 a referral for evaluation of a suspected disability.
3. According to the Texas Education Code, Sections 28.0212 and 29.081, accelerated instruction is mandated for all students who do not perform satisfactorily on any section of the STAAR exams.

B. Student Success Initiative (SSI) Grade Advancement

1. Student Success Initiative (SSI) Grade Advancement ensures that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. Under this initiative, students are required to pass the Grade 5 STAAR reading and mathematics tests to be promoted to the sixth grade. Students in grade 5 have three opportunities to pass these tests. If a student does not pass the required tests, s/he will be given additional instructional support after each testing opportunity. Accelerated instruction must continue until the student has demonstrated proficiency on these grade advancement tests. Promotion/retention will be based on student mastery of the grade 5 Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. If a student is placed in 6th grade, the receiving principal and counselor of the receiving school should receive a copy of the student's accelerated instructional plan.
2. As specified by the Student Success Initiative (SSI) Grade Advancement requirements, a student may advance to 6th grade only by passing these tests or by the unanimous decision of his or her Grade Placement Committee (GPC) made up of the student's principal, teacher and parent.

The GPC must unanimously agree that the student is likely to successfully perform at the next grade level.

VII. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- A. The parent/teacher conference is a valuable source of information for both the parent/guardian and the teacher. The conference provides the opportunity for parents/guardians and the teacher to become better acquainted and to combine efforts in the interest of the student. The conference also allows the student to understand that the school and the home are working together for his/her benefit.
- B. Teachers are expected to conference with parents/guardians, especially those whose students are experiencing difficulties.
- C. Whenever a student's behavior is unsatisfactory and/or the student is in jeopardy of failing, the teacher will communicate directly with the parents/guardians and maintain ongoing dialogue and documentation of the communication.
- D. 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.
- E. The conference should occur for a specific time period and in a place that will assure privacy.
- F. When a parent/guardian requests a conference, the teacher should be given at least 24 hours advance notice.
- G. Teacher web pages are communication tools for parents/guardians, teachers should maintain a current web page with all appropriate information.
- H. Informational meetings for parents/guardians and students may be scheduled when appropriate for program orientation and review.