

Stephenville Independent School District

Grading Guidelines

District Grading Guidelines

Approved July 17, 2000

Revised:

July 16, 2001; July 21, 2003; May 16, 2005; July, 2010; January 25, 2012

I. General Grading Guidelines

- a. Guidelines for classroom grading procedures shall be clearly communicated to students on the first day of class and to parents at the beginning of the school year. All classroom grading procedures must be consistent with district grading policies and guidelines. Applicable parts of district grading policies and guidelines shall be distributed in staff and student handbooks and other appropriate publications.
- b. Incomplete report card grades should be assigned only when assignments have not been completed that are essential to the determination of mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills covered during the six weeks or when records have not been obtained from the previous school. A student receiving an incomplete for a grading period has 7 school days following the end of the previous reporting period to convert the incomplete grade to an earned grade. In unusual cases when the student has missed a large quantity of work, the time may be extended, but only with written permission of the principal. In all cases the teacher must communicate to the student the nature of outstanding work and the time limitation for completing the work. If the missing work is not completed, then the student will receive a grade based upon the total work that had been assigned for the grading period.
- c. No report card grades assigned for a grading period shall be changed unless 1) an error was made in the calculation process, or 2) grading policies/guidelines were found to have not been followed in the assigning of grades. Such grade changes shall be approved by the principal prior to the change being made.
- d. If a student has an incomplete at the end of the school year, the teacher shall leave directions with the principal/counselor for completing and evaluating the student's work.
- e. Make-Up Work: Normally, students shall be given one day for each day missed due to an absence in order to turn in make-up work; extension of timeline is at the discretion of the teacher. Students shall receive credit for satisfactory make-up work after an absence if completed within the prescribed time; however, a zero may be given for any assignment or test not made up within the allotted time.

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Tests shall be made up within the prescribed timeline and at a specific time designated by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility, upon return from an absence, to see the teacher and request all make-up work assigned while he/she was absent. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements prior to extracurricular activities with his/her teachers regarding make-up work. At Henderson Junior High, suspended students are assigned to Student Alternative Classroom (SAC) upon returning to school. All make-up work will be completed while in SAC for 100% credit.

Also, teachers may assign additional work to ensure that students, who have been absent, have sufficient opportunity to master the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills to meet subject course requirements. The assignments shall be based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and may provide greater depth of subject matter than routine make-up work.

- f. Homework: Homework may be assigned on a regular basis. Homework should be used primarily to extend and practice concepts and skills learned in class, although advanced reading for class discussion and other similar pre-class preparation is a legitimate function of homework. Further, certain TEKS, such as but not limited to written compositions, may require extensive homework.
- g. Late Work: When students are in attendance and fail to turn in assignments at the prescribed time, teachers may assess grade penalties for work turned in late.
- h. Cheating: Students will be given a zero for work on which they cheated.
- i. In School Suspension/Student Alternative Classroom (ISS/SAC): All work assigned a student in ISS/SAC is to be completed prior to being dismissed from ISS/SAC and any work not completed may be graded as a zero unless other considerations have been given by an ARD committee for a specific special education student.
- j. Disciplinary Purposes: Teachers shall not use grades for disciplinary purposes other than as permitted by District policy regarding cheating.
- k. Guidelines for Grades: Per Local Board Policy EIA, these guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned.

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1. Student on Campus: If a student is on campus but not in class, he/she is to be counted present if any of the following apply:
 - i. School-sponsored activity with documentation
 - ii. Nurse's office with documentation
 - iii. Administration offices with documentation

Any student who falls in the category listed above will not be given a zero and will have the same make-up opportunity as if he/she were absent.

II. Grade Books

Teachers shall record and maintain grades in the electronic grading program adopted by the district. Additionally, accurate, up-to-date paper copies of grade books shall be maintained by each teacher. Paper copies of grade books and data shall be turned into the principal at the end of each school year as back-up documentation for student grades issued on report cards. The grade books shall be neat and orderly, and the following information shall be recorded in the grade books:

- a. A sufficient number of recorded grades for each student for each grading period as to justify the grade assigned. (Note: In grades 1-6 at least 8 grades of different assignments must be recorded. In grades 7-12 at least 8 daily grades and 2 major grades of different assignments must be recorded.)
- b. Notation at the column heading indicating quiz, exam, daily, homework, laboratory experiments, and special project grades, as well as any other type of grade that needs identification.
- c. Indication of grades taken at the conclusion of reteaching, and indication of grades earned for retesting.
- d. An explanation of how each six-week grade was calculated.
- e. Final grades shall be in ink.

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III. Six-Week Averages

The six-week grade shall reflect student performance work from a variety of instructional tasks: projects, classroom activities, homework, and tests (daily, weekly, unit, etc.). The grade for the six-week period shall be derived by combining daily work and major grade components.

- a. **Daily Work:** A sufficient number of grades shall be taken. (Note: participation grades may be included in the daily work component.)
- b. **Major Grades:** Major grades shall include tests (chapter, unit, etc.), special projects, and other assessments. Any deviations from the major grades policy must have prior approval by the campus principal. (Note: Grades 7-12 shall include at least 2 major grades from various assignments.)

Also, any classroom activity that by its very nature is considered to be a major component of the instruction (for example, science laboratory experiments, major written compositions, major presentations, etc.) may be designated by the teacher as a major grade. The ability to do designate special classroom activities as major grades should not be abused by designating regular classroom activities as major grades. In the case of an on-going, long-term project, such as a research paper, multiple grades that may be taken from the steps within the project would be considered daily grades, while the completed project would be a major grade. However, the 8 different grades stipulation still applies. (Example: Teacher takes 8 grades, one of which is a major research paper that counts 4 times. Teacher would then have 8 grades recorded plus the research paper grade times 4.)

No fewer than two grades may be used to calculate the major grade component for the six weeks grade. In grades 7-12, of those grades, at least one must be a chapter/unit length test or six weeks examination. Deadlines on extended major project/research papers will be maintained according to prior notification by the teacher.

- c. **Six Weeks Grade Calculation:** Six weeks grades shall be determined according to the guidelines listed as follows:

Elementary, Grades 1-6: More weight may be given to mastery tests, major projects, and other similar type assessments than is given to daily work in determining the six week grade.

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Junior High, Grades 7-8: A six weeks examination is not required; the daily work component shall account for no more than three-fourths of the grade; the major grade component shall account for no less than one-fourth of the grade.

High School, Grades 9-12: Six week examinations are not required; the daily work component shall account for no more than three-fourth of the six week grade; the major grade component shall account for no less than one fourth of the six week grade. If given, six week exam will be comprehensive. Long term projects may be considered as six week test grades subject to the approval of the principal. Teachers must maintain documentation to support project evaluation.

IV. Semester Grade Averages

The semester grade shall be calculated as follows:

PreK/Kindergarten: Six week, mastery/non-mastery checklist of skill attainment sent home.

Grades 1-6: Semester grade shall be the average of the three six-week grades.

Grades 7-8: Semester grade shall be calculated according to the following formula:

6/7th = each six-weeks grade would be counted twice

1/7th = semester exam would be counted once

Any course for High School credit given at Junior High will follow the High School grading policy.

Grades 9-12: Beginning in the spring of 2012, course grade for all classes shall be calculated according to the following formula:

1st six weeks: 23.4%

2nd six weeks: 23.3%

3rd six weeks: 23.3%

Semester Exam: 30.0%

Semester average: Based on percentages above

4th six weeks: 23.4%

5th six weeks: 23.3%

6th six weeks: 23.3%

Semester Exam/STAAR* 30%

Semester average: Based on 4th, 5th, and 6th six weeks as well as the 2nd semester exam or STAAR exam.

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Final Grade = 1st semester average + 2nd semester average / 2

*Students who take a STAAR exam for a given academic course will not take a semester exam for that subject during the 2nd semester.

The highest grade recorded for a six weeks, semester, or final average will be 100.

V. Mastery Level

- a. Mastery of a subject or course is demonstrated through performance on the TEKS for the subject or course. Mastery of TEKS is indicated by a grade of the equivalent of 70 or above. The acceptable level of mastery of TEKS in a course or subject is that level which is determined to be necessary for success at the next level or in the next course.
- b. When it is reflected in the IEP, alternative achievement standards may be provided for identified disabled students, and the documentation of mastery and grades assigned may be based upon modifications to the TEKS. Otherwise, the TEKS must be used as the basis for awarding of a grade and certifying of mastery of TEKS.
- c. Achievement in the TEKS shall be measured by a variety of assessments: observation of product or process, evaluation of product or process demonstrated in written or oral assignments or tests or teacher validation based on cumulative interaction with the learner. The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course.
- d. Students, who, through no fault of his/her own, are not enrolled for an entire grading period, semester, or course, shall be provided opportunities to earn credit for the semester or course or a grade for the grading period. Teachers shall take into consideration the student's particular circumstances in determining appropriate opportunities, which shall include, but not be limited to 1) testing, 2) tutorial sessions, and 3) individualized work.

VI. Modifications in Materials, Methods, and Pace

- a. Throughout the teaching cycle, especially during reteaching, teachers are asked to make modifications in the materials they use, vary the methods employed to teach concepts and to adjust the pace of instruction to accommodate the learning styles and needs of students. Such modifications have been proven by research as a means to ensure that students reach the appropriate level of mastery of the TEKS.

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- b. The necessity of these modifications should not be interpreted as to require adjustments in the TEKS, or to lower the academic standards of a course or subject; the standards should stay the same, but the process used to achieve the standards can and should vary.
- c. The primary focus of the teacher is “teaching for learning for all students.” Accordingly, every available resource should be used to bring about the learning, but the level of learning should not be compromised. Students should not be tested over material not previously covered in class for grade calculation.

VII. Reteaching

Teachers will offer instruction to students of every learning style and to promote feelings of success and accomplishment at every level of achievement. We will teach our children to channel efforts in constructive direction that enhances self-discipline. Though students must be held accountable for his/her actions, there are special circumstances when mastery is not achieved by individual students. It is under these special circumstances that teachers will make every reasonable effort to reteach and retest to ensure mastery.

As teachers monitor students’ progress and check for understanding as a part of their daily teaching, they will reteach as needed through one or more of the following strategies: different worksheets other than those used in the original lesson, alternate homework assignments, peer teaching, individual reteaching in small groups, games, flash cards, multimedia, tutoring, and manipulative. Students who make below 70, daily chapter/unit assignments will be retaught as appropriate. The major test, which culminates that unit of instruction, will provide the second opportunity for these students to demonstrate mastery of previously non-mastered concepts.

- a. Prior to the administration of a major test, teachers will involve students in activities that are assessments of both group and individual mastery. The assessment may consist of oral checks, written exercises, or other classroom activities.
- b. The prevailing instructional philosophy of the Stephenville ISD is to 1) teach the objectives, 2) teach students the way they learn, and 3) teach students until they learn.

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- c. When students have been unable to demonstrate mastery of the TEKS, the teacher will reteach. Reteaching shall be incorporated as a regular part of the instructional planning cycle. During reteaching, the teacher may use different teaching strategies and materials than were used in the original teaching. Reteaching should be an attempt to match the instructional method and pace with the student's learning styles and skill levels. Points given for test corrections may be another form of reteaching.
- d. Once the reteaching has taken place, the teacher must keep some form of documentation, and grades taken at the conclusion of reteaching should be so indicated in the grade book.
- e. Students who have failed to master the TEKS during a grading period must be given additional opportunities to do so. The grade for the grading period, however, is a measure of the level of mastery for that grading period and will not be changed when mastery of the TEKS occurs at a later time.

VIII. Retesting

- a. Although retesting is a vital component of reteaching, it deserves special attention in order to ensure clarity in understanding of and consistency in application of the policy. Retesting and reteaching are based upon the principle that whether students learn is more important than when students learn.
- b. Retesting Guidelines

General (all grades): The test given as a retest shall be as close as possible to the same difficulty level and cover the same concepts as the first test, but the structure of the test and question format may vary at the teacher's discretion.

Teachers may prescribe a reasonable amount of work that must be completed prior to the student being able to take the retest: attend a tutoring session, complete a review sheet, etc. The teacher may require a student to take a retest and to the related extra work if he/she believes that the student likely will not take the retest on his/her own.

Elementary (grades 1-6): Reteaching and retesting shall be integral to elementary instruction. The use of retesting – when, why, where, number of opportunities, grade earned, etc. – shall be at the discretion of the teacher so long as it is an integral part of the instructional process and is consistent by grade level/subject area/campus.

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Junior High and High School Guidelines (grades 7-12): Retesting shall be limited to one retest for each test failed. Retests will be available to all students if initiated by the student. No retests will be given for six-week tests or for semester examinations. Retesting shall be conducted at a time designated by the teacher, either in the regular class period, before or after school, or at any other reasonable time prescribed by the teacher. Unless otherwise approved by the teacher, retesting shall be completed within 7 calendar days.

Teachers must select one of the following options to be used during a semester period consistent by grade level/subject level/campus.

1. Record the grade that is the higher of the two.
2. Average the two test grades together.
3. Remove the original grade from the grade average and replace it with the retake grade of 70 or below.

If the majority of the students tested (50% or higher) do not make a 70 or higher on a major test, the teacher will conclude that either the test construction was faulty or an error in judgment concerning the students' readiness was made. In such cases, the teacher will reteach and retest.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to fully prepare student for semester exams so this situation does not occur. Any unusual circumstances contrary to this must be cleared through the building principal.

Teachers have the option of not reteaching or retesting any student who tries to take unfair advantage of the policy by:

1. Cheating
2. Refusing to complete and turn in classwork or homework assignments designed to prepare the students for either test;
3. Creating a disturbance that results in an office referral during reteaching or retesting; or
4. Habitually failing major tests on the first try and not taking advantage of reteaching opportunities, student-teacher conferences, and/or parent-teacher conferences in order to catch up with the class.

When students receive major grades for products that result from a full process (i.e. writing research papers, lab practical, and projects), it is not necessary to reteach and retest. If the process is followed carefully, instances of grades below 70 will be rare.

High School AP and Dual Credit Courses:

Students enrolled in AP and/or dual credit courses are not eligible for the retest option.

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Recording Retest Grades: Retesting efforts will be recorded in the grade book and will be designated as such by the teacher.

EOC Retakes:

If a student retakes an EOC assessment, the District will include the retake score as 15 percent of the final course grade only if the retake score allows a student to gain credit for the course. After a student earns credit for the course, subsequent retakes will not be included in the calculation of the final course grade.

IX. Special Populations

Special Education

- a. Students in special education will receive instruction based on the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will address appropriate TEKS or functional living skills and will determine the need for modification of levels and timelines for mastery. When no modification of the TEKS is necessary, the special education student will be instructed in the mainstream with the same level of mastery required for other students unless otherwise indicated by ARD.
- b. Individual teachers are not empowered to modify TEKS or change mastery level; only the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARD) makes this decision.
- c. Grades for mainstream Special Education students shall be assigned according to ARD committee decision.
- d. Conferences with parents of Special Education student must be held if:
 - i. A student is failing but is still expected to meet the goals and objectives by the ARD timeline, or
 - ii. A student is not expected to meet the IEP goals with the designated timeline developed by the ARD committee then the diagnostician must be notified to set up an ARD to conduct the parent conference within the ARD.

X. Reporting of Grades, Academic Progress to Students and Parents

a. Progress Reports

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, a notice of progress shall be provided to the parent or guardian of a student whose grade average in any class is lower than 70 or whose grade is borderline.

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Progress reports shall be issued no later than four days after the end of the progress report period. A copy will be filed in the office.

If a student to who no progress report was issued at the end of the first three weeks earns a failing grade for the six weeks, then reasonable efforts on the part of the teacher shall be made to inform the parent prior to the issuing of the report card.

b. Report Cards

Report cards shall be issued to students the week following the close of each six weeks. At the end of the sixth six-week, report cards are available to be picked up by the students the week after school is concluded or may be mailed if a student provides a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope.

c. Parent-Teacher Conferences

If the student is not maintaining passing grades or achieving the expected level of performance, a teacher shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent.

XI. U.I.L. Eligibility

Students enrolled in Level II courses at Stephenville High School will not be eligible for UIL activities if they earn a grade below 60 in any six week reporting period in those courses.

XII. Awarding of Credit (High School)

The following procedure shall be implemented for awarding High School credit. The 2nd semester grade for linking purposes may be no lower than 60 to receive full credit in a subject.

An example is listed below:

1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	Credit
68	72	1
72	68	1
59	81	1
81	59	½

Beginning in 2011-12, when required by state law, a student's score on the initial end-of-course (EOC) assessment shall count for 15 percent of the student's final grade for the course as reported on the student's transcript. For grade calculation, see Section 4, page 5.