

**NORTHWEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT AND  
GRADING OF STUDENTS: GRADING GUIDELINES  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

As students progress toward mastery of the skills and concepts of the Northwest Independent School District’s curriculum, teachers should use various indicators to monitor and assess this progress. Indicators may include any or all of the following:

- teacher observations based on specific criteria
- class discussions
- oral interviews
- projects
- demonstrations
- checklists
- textbook tests
- cooperative learning groups
- daily practices
- compositions
- homework
- book reviews / reports
- teacher-made tests
- research products

The above lists address strategies that may be used to monitor and assess progress. As this document will clarify, it is not required that grades be assigned every time progress is assessed and feedback given.

***NOTE:*** *This document reflects district and campus expectations. The Principal must approve any revisions or exceptions to these guidelines and notify the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Students’ grades shall reflect mastery of District objectives. Teachers shall follow District-approved grading guidelines that have been designed to reflect each student’s academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the Board determines that the grade was arbitrary, or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the District’s grading guidelines. Board Policies EI (LEGAL/LOCAL), EIA (LEGAL/LOCAL), and EIE (LEGAL/LOCAL) Elementary Grading Guidelines and Secondary Grading Guidelines.*

**GRADING SCALE**

**Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten**

The indicators on the progress report should be marked using the codes below:

- ☐ = Skill not yet introduced
- SD = Skill Still Developing
- D = Skill Developed
- X = Experiencing Difficulty

**Grades 1 through 5**

The grading system for Northwest Independent School District elementary schools is as follows (This scale applies to language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies):

100 - 90	A	Excellent Progress
89 – 80	B	Above Average Progress
79 – 70	C	Average Progress
69 – 0	F	Unsatisfactory Progress (Failing)
	I	Incomplete ( <b>do not use on withdrawal form</b> )
	NG	No grade (See section – “Assignment of Six Weeks Grades”)

In all grades, including kindergarten, other areas of study such as art, music, physical education, work habits and social behavior, student progress is marked as follows:

- E = Performs at excellent/above standard consistently
- S = Performs at standard expectations consistently
- N = Performs slightly below standard expectations, but with continuous progress
- U = Performs consistently at beginning or below standard expectation

**ASSIGNMENT OF SIX WEEKS GRADES**

The assigning of a grade in a particular content area should reflect a student’s mastery of the skills and content of the course. Six weeks’ grades shall be assigned according to the following criteria:

1. Sixty percent (60%) of a grade shall be based on summative activities such as major projects, cumulative assignments and tests. Before a summative (major) grade is assigned, the teacher is to have adequately taught the concept and the student is to have had sufficient opportunity to master the concept being evaluated. This process includes using appropriate checks for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice before giving a summative assessment. Major or long-term projects should be closely monitored and assigned two or three formative grades at set intervals prior to the summative grade. If a project or assignment merits more than one summative grade (multiple grades), each grade should represent a different component of the project.

Example:

Grade 1 Content	Grade 2 Format	Grade 3 Organization
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Recording the same grade multiple times is not acceptable. This includes one teacher recording the same grade multiple times or more than one core teacher recording the same grade. Each time a grade is recorded, it is to apply to a specific component of a project. Initial assignment and discussion of long term projects must include an explanation of the criteria that will be used for evaluating the assignment (rubric). Summative assessments shall be communicated to the students in advance.

2. Forty percent (40%) of a grade shall be based on formative activities such as class work, daily assignments, quizzes and/or homework. These grades should be a balanced representation of the types of work completed during the course of the six-weeks grading period.
3. During each six weeks grading period, the following grades shall be recorded in each of the specified content areas:
  - a. **Language Arts:** At least eight (8) grades shall be recorded in Language Arts. Of these grades, at least three (3) separate grades shall be summative in nature with at least one (1) summative grade given every two (2) weeks. Exceptions to this would be (1) if there are less than 29 days in a six-weeks grading period (see below) or (2) if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade (see #3 in the italicized section below). The Language Arts total grade shall be derived from grades from all areas of the Language Arts including, but not limited to, reading, composition, and spelling (note: weekly spelling grades shall be combined into one (1) formative grade for the six weeks). As with other content areas, 60% of the grade will be based on summative grades and 40% of the grade will be based on formative grades. In the summative grade category, a minimum of one (1) composition grade shall be recorded. In order for a composition grade to be recorded, a student shall have completed a paper at least through the revision process.
    - o Examples of papers may be compositions, essays, and responses to literature.
    - o Examples of composition and spelling activities that may be considered formative are spelling dictation tests, quizzes, *Thinking Maps* for writing strategies, classwork, and daily participation
    - o Examples of reading activities that may be considered summative include summaries, responses to literature, written retellings, etc.
    - o Examples of formative grades include usage of anchor charts, quizzes, *Thinking Maps* for reading strategies, etc.
  - b. **Math:** At least eight (8) grades shall be recorded each six weeks. Of these grades, at least three (3) shall be summative in nature, with at least one (1) summative grade given every two (2) weeks. Exceptions to this would be (1) if there are less than 29 days in a six-weeks grading period (see below) or (2) if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade (see #3 in the italicized section below).

Number of Summative Grades in Language Arts and Math Based on Days in a Six-Weeks Grading Period:

<u>Marking Period</u>	<u># of Days</u>	<u># of Summatives</u>
1st	24	2
2nd	24	2
3rd	30	3
4th	28	2
5th	33	3
6th	34	3

- c. **Science:** At least six (6) grades shall be recorded in each of these content areas each six weeks. Of these grades, at least two (2) shall be summative in nature, with at least one (1) summative grade given every three (3) weeks. Exceptions to this would be if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade (see #3 in the italicized section below).
  - d. **Social Studies:** At least four (4) grades shall be recorded each six weeks. Of these grades, at least two (2) should be recorded prior to Progress Reports and at least two (2) grades should be recorded prior to the end of the six weeks marking period. All grades should be formative in nature. Exceptions to this would be in fourth and fifth grade where one (1) summative grade may be recorded during the six weeks.
  - e. In **Art, Music,** and **Physical Education** classes, a minimum of three (3) grades shall be recorded. At least one grade should be given every two (2) weeks.
4. Formative assessments should be evaluated in a timely manner and used as a method to provide students with specific feedback on their performance of the assigned tasks. Homework should only be assigned for reinforcement of skills and concepts taught in class with feedback provided.
  5. Students should receive feedback and an opportunity to reassess if needed (see #1 and #2 in the italicized section below). Therefore, projects or other major assignments should not have a due date of the last week of a marking period.
  6. Grades (and all portions of grades) **shall not** be awarded or reduced for any non-academic activities such as compliance grades (or points) for returning a report card, incomplete paper headings, etc.
  7. A grade of 69 should be recorded as a 70 for the six weeks grade. At their discretion, teachers have the ability to raise report card grades from a 79 to 80, 89 to 90 when using established criteria. Teachers shall utilize the same criteria for all students when deciding to raise a grade.
  8. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.
  9. No grade (NG) will be issued based on the following criteria: (1) non-attendance in class, (2) zero assignments turned in, (3) enrolling the last fifteen days of the grading period without grades from the previous school, (4) withdrawing prior to the end of the grading period. (Note: If a student withdraws within the last two [2] weeks of a grading period, has at least five [5] grades [two of which are summative in nature], a grade shall be given.)
  10. Any designation of Incomplete (I) must be converted to a grade by the end of the following six weeks.
  11. Art, music, and physical education grades should only reflect a student's progress on curriculum goals. Behavior and conduct are not to be included in the subject report card grade. Behavior and conduct for art, music, and physical education will be addressed through a citizenship portion of the report card for each of these areas.

**Note: Based on Senate Bill 2033 signed into law after the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session, districts are restricted as to how minimum grades may be calculated under local grading policy. As a result, the following practice shall be used.**

1. ***A teacher shall reteach and retest a class when 30% or more of that class has failed a summative assignment or examination. The teacher shall record the higher of the two grades earned for those students being retested. Reassessment must occur within ten instructional days of the original assessment.***
2. ***When less than 30% of a class has failed any assignment or examination that is recorded for a grade, individual students must be provided the opportunity to make-up or redo the assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade. The teacher shall record the average of the two grades earned for these students. Before any reassessment occurs, a student shall receive appropriate remediation. It is recommended that the teacher document the need for the student to redo the assignment and/or the original grade the student received on the assignment to keep parents adequately informed.***
3. ***If a student scores higher on a summative assessment than s/he did on the formative assessment(s) designed to prepare for that summative, then the teacher shall drop the lowest of the formative assessment grades associated with that summative assessment. Any determination to drop or keep a grade should reflect a student's progress toward the overall mastery of skills and concepts.***

#### **COMMUNICATION TIMELINES and REVIEW OF MATERIALS**

1. All student work shall be assessed and feedback given. Work that is graded shall be returned and recorded in the District electronic grade book within three (3) school days of the date received by the teacher. (See #2 in this section regarding an exception to this timeline.)
  2. Projects/papers shall be graded and returned within the same grading period that they are completed and submitted to the teacher.
  3. Students shall have the right to review their tests. All tests given shall be graded, returned, and recorded within
- Northwest ISD Elementary Grading Guidelines

three (3) school days of the date the test was administered.

4. Upon student/parent request, students shall have all graded tests (including test questions) returned for their personal records. Exceptions will be district, state, and nationally created assessments. The student and the parents may review district-created assessments at the parent's request.
5. After the second grade of "0" is assigned to a student in a grading period, the parents must be contacted. If the Problem persists, a student-teacher-parent conference is required.

### **LATE WORK**

1. When an assignment is submitted after a deadline, a maximum penalty of ten (10) points per class meeting may be deducted from the grade with a maximum of 30 points deducted.
2. Teachers will use professional discretion in determining when such a deduction is inappropriate.
3. Late work will be accepted for a grade until the end of the school day on the Tuesday before the end of the grading period in which the assignment was made or until the teacher documents personal contact with a student's parents regarding a late assignment. (Once contact is made, students should be provided at least one additional day to submit the assignment.) Teachers may accept work beyond this timeline for purposes of providing feedback to the student but any grade given will follow the procedures outlined in #1 (above). Note: If an assignment is due the last week of the grading period and extenuating circumstances prevent the assignment from being submitted on time, the teacher may assign a mark of incomplete (I) on the report card. In such situations, the timelines described in #1 will be used. Exceptions to these guidelines may apply in cases regarding UIL eligibility. Refer to UIL rules for additional information.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

1. All students shall be allowed to make up work when they are absent from class.
2. Students shall have a time equal to days absent from class plus one day to complete all missed assignments.
3. Under extenuating circumstances such as long-term illness or family emergencies, teachers may choose to give students more than one day for each day missed to make-up assignments. In situations where the assignments were given before the student was absent, a shorter time frame may be required at the teacher's discretion.
4. Make-up tests or quizzes should be administered at school, which may include before or after school hours to prevent the student from missing additional class time. Students who cannot take a make-up test or quiz before or after school must be given the opportunity to make up this work during the regular school day. Modifications of this procedure, which may require administrative approval, should be discussed with the appropriate administrator in a timely manner.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS and PARENT CONFERENCES**

1. Northwest ISD will utilize electronic report cards and progress reports through the *Home Access Center (HAC)* in grades 1-12. Electronic report cards and progress reports are designed to be convenient and easy for parents to access their student's grades, while supporting the district's efforts to reduce printing. Parents may request a printed copy of report cards and progress reports to be sent home with the student. Progress reports will be available after the third week of each grading period through the *Home Access Center*. (Note: During the first six weeks, progress reports are not generated for kindergarten and first grade students.)
2. The time period after the progress report but before the report card is an important period to monitor a student's cumulative grade. At any time during this time period, if a student's grade falls below 75, the teacher shall initiate parent contact within two days from the time the grade falls below 75 in any content area. Contact should be documented and kept by the teacher. Follow-up communication with parents shall occur by the end of the fifth week of the six-weeks grading period for any content area where a student continues to have a 75 average or below.

### **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)**

The RtI process is designed to accelerate student learning based on individual student needs. Interventions shall be provided if:

- the student's grade average is passing but their performance in mathematics or reading/language arts is below expectations for the child's current grade level;
- the student's grade average is failing.

Parents shall be notified of the need for interventions. Documentation of such communication along with interventions implemented should be kept by the teacher.

**PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND AWARD OF CREDIT**

**Curriculum Mastery**

Promotion and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum. Expectations and standards for promotion shall be established for each grade level, content area, and course and shall be coordinated with compensatory/accelerated services. [See EHBC]

**Standards for Mastery**

Mastery shall be determined as follows:

1. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be used to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.
2. Mastery of the skills necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments that may either be incorporated into unit or final exams or may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required.

**Grades 1-3:**

In grades 1–3, 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 (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts and mathematics.

**Grades 4-5:**

In grades 4–5, 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 (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Special education students will be evaluated for success according to the achievement of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and mastery expectations.

**REQUIRED ATTENDANCE FOR GRADING**

1. New students shall be enrolled in NISD for at least fifteen (15) school days in order to receive report card grades for the grading period in which they enrolled.
2. The parents of students who do not receive report card grades are to have communication from the teacher (regarding the child’s progress/transition to that point) in the form of a note, telephone call, or formal conference. The teacher shall keep a record of such communication.
3. For students who did not attend NISD schools all year, every effort should be made to obtain grades from the previous school(s) attended so that the final average will reflect the total year's performance. These shall be transcribed into the electronic grade book. In addition, attendance records should be obtained when possible to provide for a fully informed analysis of the student’s performance.
4. For students who did not attend any school or for whom their attendance is not sufficient for grading, the grade should be reported as “NG” and it should be noted with the comment code indicating: "Attendance not sufficient for grading".

**TRANSFER GRADES**

Some transcripts from outside of Texas reflect an alpha grade and not a numeric grade. When this occurs, the registrar will transcribe the letter grade to a numeric grade as indicated below:

<b>A+</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>65</b>
						<b>F</b>	<b>65</b>

An exception to this is if a transcript from an outside district records a 65 as passing. In this event a grade of 70 will be used.

**CONDUCT GRADES**

Conduct grades reflect student behavior during a six-week period. The following grade designations will be used.

- E (Excellent)
- S (Satisfactory)
- N (Needs Improvement)
- U (Unsatisfactory)

A “U” must not be given unless the teacher has contacted the parent AND discussed the conduct grade with a campus administrator.

**GRADE REPORTING**

**Grade Reporting for GATES (Gifted and Talented Educational Services) Students**

At the end of each six weeks, a GATES progress report will be prepared for parents regarding individual student progress for identified gifted students. The progress report is designed to be a supplement and should be included in the regular report.

The goals for the gifted program are listed for the parents. An evaluation of each child’s progress is marked indicating his/her progress in each of the identified areas using the following descriptors:

- Advanced Progress = Progress in GATES activities exceeds expectations
- Competent Progress = Learning is up to expectations
- Developing Progress = Additional practice or maturation is needed for expectations to be met
- Beginning Progress = Initial stage of the learning

The teacher should indicate the level of progress which best describes the student’s overall work during the grading period. The teacher should also use the “Comments” column to record appropriate comments specific to the student’s work habits and/or attitude.

See GATES PROGRESS REPORT for actual contents of reporting areas.

**Grade Reporting for students receiving Special Education Services**

At the end of each six weeks, an IEP progress report will be prepared for the parents regarding individual student progress on identified goals and objectives. The IEP progress report will be sent home in addition to the regular report.

The goals and objectives are listed with an evaluation of the child’s progress marked using the following descriptors:

- 1-Not Introduced
- 2-Introduced
- 3- Progress
- 4-Mastered

The teacher should indicate the level of progress for work during that grading period. The teacher shall also use the “Comments” column to record appropriate data and comments specific to the students work.

**Progress Report & Report Card Timelines 2017-2018**

<b><u>Progress Reports</u></b>		<b><u>Report Cards</u></b>	
<b>End Date</b>	<b>Go Home Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Go Home Date</b>
9/15/17	9/18/17	9/29/17	10/5/17
10/20/17	10/23/17	11/4/17	11/9/17
12/1/17	12/4/17	12/22/17	1/11/18
1/26/18	1/29/18	2/16/18	2/22/18
3/9/18	3/19/18	4/13/18	4/19/18
5/4/18	5/7/18	6/1/18	6/1/18