

Shelby County Board of Education

5015

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GRADING SYSTEM FOR GRADES 6-12

I. PURPOSE

To outline guidelines for grading in grades six through twelve.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to Memphis-Shelby County Schools students.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

The grading system for all 6-12 grades has been established in accordance with the Tennessee Uniform Grading System, State Board of Education High School Policy and other state laws, policies, and regulations concerning grading, and shall comply with the grade inclusion standards required by the State of Tennessee student assessment system which are outlined in the Administrative Rules and Regulations to this Policy. As such, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to detail, upon Board approval, the methodology used and the required weighting for incorporating students' End of Course (EOC) examination scores into final course grades and the required weighting for incorporating students' scores on the State of Tennessee student assessment system into course grades, which will be provided in the Administrative Rules and Regulations to this Policy.

Accordingly, Memphis-Shelby County Schools believes providing academic and conduct grades is important to ensure that students and parents receive regular information regarding a student's academic progress in order to facilitate learning and parent engagement. Academic grades are determined by students' mastery of content in each subject using varied assessment strategies. Conduct grades are based on expectations of students' behavior in promoting an environment conducive to learning. Regularly issued reports cards, combined with scheduled parent-teacher conferences, serve to promote a continuous process of communicating a student's progress.

GRADING LEGEND

Conduct Grades - In all schools, students' conduct is graded as excellent, satisfactory, needs improvement or unsatisfactory, and the initial letter "E", "S", "N", or "U" is used to report the

conduct grade. It is to be reported at each grading period on the report card with each subject grade. Conduct grades are based on behavior and shall not be deducted from scholastic grades. Similarly, academic performance may not form the basis for conduct grades.

Grading Scale - Grades in all courses/subjects, including art, music, and physical education, will be reported on report cards and transcript records using numerical values as indicated below:

A	90 -100
B	80 - 89
C	70 -79
D	60-69
F	Below 60

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Report cards provided to students receiving special education services shall comply with applicable federal/state laws and guidance and accompanying Administrative Rules and Regulations.

GRADING PROVISIONS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL)

Special provisions outlined in the Administrative Rules and Regulations to this Policy apply for students receiving services as English Learners.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Memphis-Shelby County Schools is responsible for informing students and parents/guardians about grading policies and regulations; students and parents/guardians are responsible for becoming knowledgeable with grading guidelines.
- B. Principals are responsible for ensuring that all teachers are provided current information pertaining to grading and assessment and for ensuring that grades and other reporting categories for student progress are documented accurately.
- C. Teachers are responsible for determining student grades and using the district identified gradebook to accurately report information for generating the report cards.
- D. The Office of Academics is responsible for implementation of this Policy and answering questions concerning the interpretation of this Policy.
- E. The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for administering this Policy.

Legal References:

1. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule§ 0520-1-3-.06
2. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule§ 0520-1-3-.05
3. T.C.A. 49-1-614
4. T.C.A. 49-1-617
5. T.C.A. 49-1-302
6. T.C.A. 49-2-203(b)(7)
7. Tennessee State Board of Education Uniform Grading Policy 3.301
8. T.C.A. 49-12-301
9. Tennessee State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103

Cross References:

1. 5005 Advanced Courses
2. Grading Protocol for Middle (Grades 6 -8)
3. Grading Protocol for High (Grades 9 -12)
4. 5007 Digital Learning

5015 Grading System for Grades 6-12

Administrative Rules and Regulations

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Special Education

Students receiving special education services who are enrolled in courses where grades and credits are awarded will receive a report card for those courses. In addition, a report card of progress (e.g., “IEP Progress Report”) shall be provided for all students receiving special education services based on progress towards goals stated in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

English Learners (EL)

Students receiving services as English Learners must be afforded modified instruction and evaluation that relates specifically to the student’s stage of English Language Development (ELD) as developed collaboratively between the EL and content area teachers and outlined within the individual learning plan (ILP). These processes will provide access to grade level content and skills. English Learners must be evaluated with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with state and local standards and that take into account the language acquisition stages and cultural backgrounds of the students.

The use of World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Model Performance Indicators (MPIs) and Can Do Descriptors located in curriculum documents, in conjunction with a student's identified level of English language proficiency, should guide the modification of instruction, alignment of assessments and grading procedures. During the early stages of ELD, grading for content-area courses must be focused more on the progress made/growth toward goal attainment than on direct comparisons to the achievement of native speakers.

Letter grades of “E”, “S”, “N”, or “U” may be used for beginning level EL students in middle school grades. The overall instructional program for EL students, including instruction, evaluation, and grading practices should ensure that EL students develop high levels of academic attainment in English and make progress towards meeting the same challenging academic content and achievement standards that all students are expected to meet.

The Chief Academic Office will advise schools regarding modifications when additional information is necessary or requested.

Grade Calculations

Student's grade calculations and the rounding methodology used for student's grades shall be consistent with the implementation guidance of the Tennessee State Board of Education Uniform Grading Policy (#3.301). Note: this section is not intended to address grade point average calculation, which is included in the regulations to Policy 6036 Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Report Cards and Interim Reports

Report cards are sent to parents at the end of each nine-week period. Parents must be notified within a report card period when a student is not doing acceptable work. At the midpoint of the nine weeks, parents will be notified of students' progress; all will receive an interim report. Parent-teacher conferences should be held for gaining parental support in an effort to improve student performance.

Nine Week Grades

Grades given at the end of each nine-week period shall include a sufficient number of grades taken to accurately reflect student progress. To ensure consistency in grading practices across the district, a protocol for grading students in grades six through twelve shall be developed. Such protocol at minimum shall define the (1) categories that students will be graded, (2) minimum number of grades required per category, and (3) percentage value assigned to each category. Fifty percent (50%) of the required grades as outlined in the protocol should be earned and recorded by the interim of the nine-week term. This gives the teachers the basis for the grades at the end of the grading period.

Semester Grades

- A. Semester Grades: 6-8 Provisions - Semester exams are not given in grades 6-8, except for high school level courses that are taken in eighth (8th) grade. Students who successfully complete any of the State Board-required high school credits as evidenced by a passing grade in the course prior to grade nine (9), shall receive the graduation credit for that coursework. Semester grades earned in high school courses will be recorded on the high school transcript. The grades earned will be included in the high school GPA.

For students in grades 6-8, scores on the State of Tennessee Student Assessment System shall comprise a percentage of a student's final spring (second) semester grade in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies. The weight of the assessment on the student's final average shall be based on the minimum requirement established under State Board of Education Policy 2.102.

However, if the District does not receive its students' scores at least five (5) instructional days before the end of the course, then the District may choose not to include its students' scores in the students' final grades in the subject areas of mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies.

- B. Semester Grades: 9-12 - Semester grades are determined by averaging the two quarter grades when no semester examination is given. When a semester examination is given, semester grades are determined by counting the two quarter grades as 85% and the semester examination as 15%.

The following provisions shall apply to school year 2020-2021:

- During the 2020-2021 school year, students in grades 9-12 shall be required to take semester examinations unless otherwise exempt from such examinations in accordance with guidance provided below (see section d. Exemption from Semester Exams). A participation grade shall be given to students who are present for and take the semester exam.
- Semester examination grades shall be used only if it will improve the student's semester average. Semester examination grades shall be excluded from calculation if it will lower the student's semester grade.
- The PowerTeacher Pro gradebook shall be used to calculate the final semester average (with and without the exam) to determine whether the grade will benefit the student.

- C. Advanced Courses (See also Policy 5005 Advanced Courses. *Note: this section is not intended to address grade point average calculation, which is included in the regulations to Policy 6036 Valedictorian and Salutatorian.*)

1. Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International, International Baccalaureate (IB), and College Level Exam Program (CLEP) Courses - AP, Cambridge International, IB courses, and CLEP courses shall include the addition of five (5) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who sit for the aligned culminating exam.* The two nine (9) week grades and the semester exam grade, with the points included, will be used to calculate the semester average.
2. Local and Statewide Dual Credit, Capstone Industry Credential-Aligned, and Dual Enrollment Courses - Local and statewide dual credit, capstone industry credential-aligned, and dual enrollment courses shall include the addition of four (4) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who pass the dual enrollment course or sit for the identified challenge/certification exam.* The two nine (9) week grades and the semester exam grade, with the points included, will be used to calculate the semester average.
3. Honors - Honors courses shall include the addition of three (3) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average. The two nine (9) week grades, and the semester exam grade, with the points included, will be used to calculate the semester average.

*The District may award the additional weighting to the grades of students who have completed an AP, Cambridge International, or IB course, or a course aligned with an Industry Credential or CLEP exam, prior to the student sitting for the culminating

exam. However, the additional percentage points will be removed if the student does not participate in the culminating exam by the end of the school year in which the course was completed.

- D. Exemption from Semester Exams - A student having a 90 or higher average for the two terms/quarters in a specific course and having three (3) or fewer excused absences in that same course will be exempted from the semester exam if the student desires. The minimum number of excused absences allowed under this provision may be adjusted by the principal in extenuating circumstances (e.g., long-term illness or hospitalization).

When a student is exempted from the examination, the semester average will be the average of the two term/quarter grades and any state-mandated exam as outlined above. ANY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE IN THE COURSE WILL DISQUALIFY THE STUDENT FROM ALL EXEMPTIONS. EXEMPTIONS APPLY ONLY TO TEACHER-MADE SEMESTER EXAMINATIONS. Twelfth (12th) grade students are eligible for exam exemption during both semesters. All other students in high school courses who meet the above requirements may be exempted for only the second semester exam.

Final Grades

The final grade in a semester long course is the semester grade. Final grades in a yearlong course with no end-of-course (EOC) examination are determined by averaging the two semester grades.

For a course with an EOC examination, the weight of the assessment on the student's final average shall be based on the minimum requirement established under State Board of Education Policy 2.103.

The Target Grade Method, which is one option suggested by the State, shall be the methodology used for incorporating students' EOC examination scores into final course grades.

With this method, the average raw test score in the district will be converted to an 80. The same conversion formula used to convert the average district EOC test score to an 80 will be used to determine converted scores for students scoring below and above the district EOC test average, with the maximum possible converted score being 100.

For a course with an EOC examination, if the District does not receive its students' EOC examination scores at least five (5) instructional days before the scheduled end of the course, then the District may choose not to include its students' EOC examination scores in the students' final average.

Grade Restrictions

A student's academic grade is solely intended to reflect the student's acquired knowledge, ability, and/or skills in the designated subject. Therefore, academic credit/points may not be awarded or deducted for any purpose that is not directly related to the student's academic performance. For example, academic credit/points may not be awarded as an incentive to participate or achieve a certain goal in a school fundraising event. Academic credit/points may not be deducted for failure to purchase certain brands or types of school supplies. A reasonable number of academic points may be deducted from a student's homework or academic assignment grade for failure to submit the homework or other assigned academic work on the date specified by the teacher. For excused and unexcused absences, students should receive full credit earned on the make-up work completed in the allotted time.

Awarding Units of Credit

Credits will be awarded in .5 increments upon successful completion of a semester. Additionally, a student will receive one full credit in the course if he/she receives a passing yearly/final grade in the course.

(Please note: If, through credit recovery, a student is seeking to recover credit for the first semester of a two (2)-semester course, the student may not receive the full credit for the course until they have enrolled in and passed the second semester of the course and taken any applicable End of Course examinations. A student does not need to take credit recovery if he/she has a passing yearly/final average even if first semester is failed.)

Summer Credit - Credits received for any first-attempt courses taken during the summer may count towards the course requirements during the subsequent school year. Any applicable End of Course examinations must be taken during the fall semester immediately following the summer course. Credit may not be given in a summer course with an associated End of Course examination (that is a first attempt at the credit) until the student takes the examination. Students taking remediation courses during the summer may receive credit immediately upon passing. Remediation courses are those courses previously attempted with a completed End of Course examination, as applicable.

Testing Information

Information about state and/or district mandated tests to be administered in the upcoming school year is available on the District's website at the following link <http://www.scsk12.org/assessment/> and includes the name of the test, the purpose and use of the test, the grade or class in which the test is to be administered, the tentative date or dates on which the test will be administered, how and when parents and students will be informed of the results of the test, and a statement that informs parents how they can access the items on the student's state-required summative standardized assessments and the student's answers (see also Tennessee Department of Education webpage <http://www.tennessee.gov/education/section/assessment/>). Additionally, test information shall be disseminated by placing the information in each school's student handbook, or other standard or

policy guidebook that contains the policies and procedures of the school and is distributed annually.

Makeup-work, Grade Repair, and Course/Credit Recovery

A. Make-up Work - Attendance should be necessary for passing grades. Students should make every effort and be afforded the opportunity to make up work missed due to excused and unexcused absences. In the event of an excused absence, students are expected to make up work missed within a reasonable time (e.g., at least one or more days of makeup for each day of excused absence). In the event of an unexcused absence¹ (including short-term suspensions), one day of makeup time shall be allowed for each day of unexcused absence, unless otherwise extended by the school or extended based on law or policy. Students and/or their parents should work with the teacher for assistance in making up work (e.g., obtaining make-up work/assignments, participating in available tutoring/requesting tutoring, etc.)

B. Grade Repair

1. *Grade Repair Requirements* - Grade repair shall be available for students who 1) need additional time to complete assignments or make up class work necessary to pass a subject due to absences or 2) have experienced special/extenuating circumstances that jeopardize their ability to remain on track to pass a subject during a nine-week grading period (e.g., death/serious illness in the family, displaced due to fire, etc.)

Additionally, grade repair shall be required for students who need to repair a failing grade (59 or below) during any of the first three (3) quarters of a yearlong course or the first quarter of a semester-long course. Students required to take grade repair must participate in a grade repair program up to the end of the nine-week period subsequent to receiving the failing grade. Students and/or their parents should work with the school and teacher for assistance with grade repair (e.g., participating in a classroom and/or school-wide grade repair program such as Zeros Aren't Permitted (ZAP); participating in online grade repair programs; obtaining make-up work/assignments, participating in available tutoring/requesting tutoring, etc.) Any grade adjustments resulting from grade repair efforts shall be accompanied by a justification indicating that a grade repair program was completed.

Students who qualify for grade repair based on any of the above reasons shall initially be given an Incomplete Grade (I). Incomplete grades are not to be left as nine-week grades indefinitely but shall be changed at the end of the nine-week repair or make-up period to reflect a maximum grade of 60 as supported by documentation.

¹ For absences due to long-term suspension (over 10 days)/expulsion, the program of making up work shall be in accordance with state law TCA 49-6-3402(b), which allows students to attend alternative schools to receive instruction as nearly as practicable with that of their home schools and requires that all course work completed and credits earned in the alternative schools be transferred to and recorded in the home school.

2. *Grade Repair Reporting* - For a yearlong course, an incomplete grade shall only be reported for one or more of the first three quarters. For the fourth quarter, the incomplete grade shall not be used; the documented grade shall be used to report student progress. For a semester-long course, an incomplete grade shall only be reported in the first quarter of the semester. The incomplete grade shall not be used for the last quarter of semester-long courses; the documented grade shall be used to report student progress.

Additionally, incomplete grades shall not be given as a final grade in any course.

- C. Course/Credit Recovery – For information regarding course/credit recovery, see Policy 5007 Digital Learning.

Grade Documentation, Recording, and Adjustment

- A. Documentation - Student grades are determined by the teacher in accordance with grading criteria and District policy/regulation/protocols. The grade given by the teacher must be supported by documentation. Additionally, the school and/or district shall maintain documentation of each student’s participation in and completion of interventions, independent study work, make-up work, grade repair, course/credit recovery, E-learning classes, correspondence courses, online courses, and other such courses/academic programs.
- B. Grade Recording - All student grades shall be recorded using only the official gradebook identified by the District (e.g., PowerTeacher Pro). Additionally, in order to preserve the confidentiality of student records and information, downloadable electronic gradebooks are not permitted.
- C. Adjustment - The principal or designee(s) has the responsibility and authority to modify grades given by teachers under his/her supervision when it has been determined that the original grades were based upon inaccurate, erroneous, or noncompliant data or the grade adjustment reflects the following:
 - Correction of inaccurate data
 - Compliance with appropriate grading practices; district policies/ regulations/standard operating procedures; or state or federal law (e.g., adjustments/modifications under academic program such as ESL, SPED, etc.)
 - Correction of errors (e.g., clerical/system errors, etc.)
 - Justified modifications reflecting student’s participation in and completion of interventions, independent study work, make-up work, grade repair, course/credit recovery, E-learning classes, correspondence courses, online courses, and other such courses/academic programs
 - Other justified reason approved by the principal or appropriate district-level administrator

All grade adjustments shall be accompanied by a written justification, inclusive of a student's participation in class, school, or district programs, interventions, and efforts to make-up work/assignments, repair grades, or recover credit/courses.

Monitoring and Enforcement

Monitoring - Principals and/or appropriate district-level administrators may monitor student grades to ensure appropriate grading practices exist and ensure that students are identified and referred to required interventions.

Enforcement - Failure to adhere to the provisions of the Grading Policy/regulations, including the grade recording provision, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.