



GRADING PROTOCOL FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES 1-5)

PREFACE

In accordance with Board policy, Memphis Shelby County Schools' (MSCS) grading system for elementary schools adheres to the Tennessee Uniform Grading System, other state laws and regulations concerning grading, and grade inclusion standards required by the State of Tennessee student assessment system. Academic grades are determined by students' mastery of content in each subject using varied assessment strategies.

The District believes that providing academic grades is important to ensure that students and parents receive information regularly about student academic progress to facilitate learning and parent engagement. This grading protocol, aligned with Board policy, sets forth district-wide standards for grading students in grades 1-5 and provides a foundation for consistent grading practices from teacher to teacher and school to school within the district. Additionally, this protocol is intended to support, not duplicate, policy requirements and should be reviewed in conjunction with policy 5014 - Grading System for Grades Pre-K-5 to ensure compliance with Board policy.

In carrying out the requirements of this protocol, MSCS school teachers and principals are reminded that a district-wide moratorium on the use of grade floors was established in 2017 and remains in effect to date.

Note: This grading protocol does not apply to pre-K and kindergarten.

DISTRICT REQUIRED GRADING CATEGORIES & WEIGHTS (PER NINE WEEKS)

The District believes that a sufficient number of grades should be earned and recorded to accurately reflect a student's progress. Students in grades 1-5 must be provided an opportunity to earn **at least 17 grades per nine-weeks (quarter)** distributed among the following categories with the following weights. With the exception of projects, portfolios, and presentations, two grades for each required category (totaling eight grades) must be earned and record by the interim of the nine-week period.

Homework: 5% (min. of 4 grades)
 Class Participation: 5% (min. of 4 grades)
 Classwork: 40% (min. of 4 grades)
 Projects/Portfolios/Presentations: 5% (min. of 1 grade)
 Assessments: 45% (min. of 4 grades)

MSCS Grading Scale	
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59-0

District required grading categories and weights will be preset by the district in the PowerTeacher Pro gradebook. PowerTeacher Pro is the only official gradebook for the Memphis Shelby County Schools District; therefore, all recorded grades must be recorded in PowerTeacher Pro. In addition, a printed backup copy of the gradebook must be maintained per quarter.

First-Grade Science and Social Studies and Non-tested Subject Areas for Grades 1-5

Letter grades “E”, “S”, “N”, or “U” will be assigned when grading the following subject areas: first-grade science and social studies and non-tested subjects for grades 1-5 (art, music, world languages, and P.E.).

The district-required grading categories and weights listed in this protocol shall not apply to these subject areas.

Special Education and English Learners

Special education students receiving instruction in general education are graded as other students unless the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) makes provision for alternative grading procedures. The grading category requirements detailed in this protocol may be modified based on a student's IEP.

Students receiving services as English Learners must have an opportunity for modified instruction and evaluation that relates specifically to a student's stage of English Language Development (ELD) and provides access to grade level content and skills. The grading category requirements detailed in this protocol may be modified based on a student's Individualized Learning Plan (ILP).

Should this protocol contradict any requirements of a student's IEP or ILP, the plan shall govern.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers will: (1) consistently implement common grade-level or department grading procedures in compliance with this protocol, (2) clearly communicate the common grading procedures to parents and students in writing under the direction of the principal and mastery criteria for projects or other assignments that are used to evaluate multiple concepts using tools such as rubrics or criteria charts, and (3) record grades in the PowerTeacher Pro gradebook.

Principals will: (1) ensure compliance with Board policies and regulations related to grading, (2) develop procedures to communicate the school grading practices, (3) monitor teacher gradebooks and ensure that grading protocols are followed, and (4) report student learning progress to all parents, school instructional staff, and others as deemed appropriate in compliance with law.

Homework (5% – min. of 4 grades)

Homework should include assignments used to reinforce and support mastery of learning and engage parents in the learning process. When appropriate and possible, homework should be differentiated for students based on their mastery of the objectives. For non-graded assignments that are sent home for completion, comments that offer insight on students' progress and mastery should be provided when deemed appropriate. Homework should be based only on content standards previously taught and assigned.

Examples of homework include, but are not limited to:

- Readings based on content curricula
- Written assignments
- Practice to reinforce classroom learning

Class Participation (5% - min. of 4 grades)

Class participation includes opportunities where optimal student learning is characterized by students being actively engaged.

Note: If a student is absent, the participation grade must be omitted for the first time of absence.

Examples of class participation include, but are not limited to:

- Students ask clarifying questions
- Students explain what mastery looks like to other students
- Accountable talk with their peers as appropriate
- Activities, tasks, or discussions that build on a solid foundation of knowledge
- Students generate their own questions
- Students cite relevant evidence
- Think, pair, share
- Fist-to-five
- Exit tickets
- Bell work

Classwork (40% - min. of 4 grades)

Refers to a student's formative demonstration of ability based on the assignments administered during the school day.

Classwork should be rigorous and standards-based and should document cumulative mastery of content area concepts.

Examples of classwork include, but are not limited to:

- Reading/Annotations
- Written assignments
- Modules included in the curricula
- Oral presentations

Examples of Performance-Based Classwork include:

- Skills demonstrations
- Performance, exhibitions, and demonstrations

Portfolios/Projects/Presentations (5% - min. of 1 grade)

A culminating project, portfolio, or presentation is an activity or final product that challenges students to demonstrate their academic knowledge in an experiential and summative manner.

Examples of portfolios, projects, or presentations include, but are not limited to:

- Research papers/essays
- Extended lab reports
- Monologues/Dialogues
- PowerPoint presentations

Detailed Examples of Projects/Presentations Include:**Elementary ELA Project Example**

ELA Curriculum Map

3rd grade Performance Task

Module 1

1st nine weeks

In Unit 3, students focus on what it means to be a proficient and independent reader. They continue to read literature about characters who are motivated to learn to read and overcome struggles to do so. Students assess their challenges as readers and identify strategies to overcome those challenges. This unit includes a heavy emphasis on building reading fluency. Students write a reading contract in the form of a three-paragraph informative essay, in which they describe two of their learning challenges and some strategies to overcome those challenges. As part of the final performance task, they make an eye-catching reading strategies bookmark to help them remember those strategies as they read independently throughout the rest of the year. This task centers on CCSS ELA Standards W.3.4 and W.3.5.

Elementary Math Project Example

Math Curriculum Map

5th grade Performance Task

Standard - 5.OA.A.1 - (Order of Operations).

1st nine weeks

Bowling for Numbers

The purpose of this activity is to help students think flexibly about numbers and operations and to record multiple operations using proper notation.

Students eager to knock down all of the pins quickly develop patterns in their expressions.

They may re-use parts of an expression, perhaps changing just the final operation; for example, if the dice showed 1, 2, 5, 5, they might write:

$$(2+1)+(5\div 5)=4$$

$$(2+1)-(5\div 5)=2$$

$$(2+1)\times(5\div 5)=3$$

Or they might change one of the internal operations:

$$(2+1)\times(5\div 5)=3$$

$$(2-1)\times(5\div 5)=1$$

$$(2\times 1)\times(5\div 5)=2$$

Similar-but-different expressions like these emphasize the importance of parentheses and the flexibility they give us in creating expressions with very specific meanings.

Materials:

- 4 dice per team
- Recording sheet
- Two-minute timer for each turn

Action:

- Have students work in groups of 2-4. Introduce the game with an example, and then have them play independently. Discussion of "challenging rolls" afterwards can be productive.
- Students roll the 4 dice to generate their seed numbers. They then use those 4 numbers to create as many numbers as they can (1-10). Scoring is done as in bowling; numbered "pins" are "knocked down" by creating an expression equal to the number.
- The game can be structured in two different ways to assure that students are checking each other's expressions and verifying that they are written as intended:
 - a. During a student's turn, have them record just the expressions (not the intended result), and then pass the set to another student (a judge). That judge then computes each expression as written and records which pins were knocked down.
 - b. Have the students play in teams. Each team tries to achieve a "strike" (knocking down all of the pins, which is almost always possible). Striving for the strike encourages students to brainstorm strategies for the "difficult" numbers, which leads them to discuss parts of each expression they have created already.

Assessments (45% – min. of 4 grades)

Assessments refer to a student's culminating, independent demonstration of mastery of one or more competencies.

Examples of assessments include, but are not limited to:

- Tests
- Essays
- Project evaluations
- Performance-based assessments

Note: Teachers should use a variety of assessment methods.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work occurs **during a nine-week period**.

- 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 make up for each day of excused absence).
 - In the event of an unexcused absence (including short-term suspensions), one day of makeup shall be allowed for each day of unexcused absence (unless otherwise extended by the school or extended based on law or policy), **beginning the day after the student's return to class**. For example, if a student misses Thursday and Friday of a week and returns to school on Monday, the student has Tuesday and Wednesday to complete make-up work, and the work is due on Thursday.
- Students and/or parents should work with teachers for assistance in completing make-up work (e.g., obtaining make-up work/assignments, requesting tutoring, participating in available tutoring, etc.).
- Assessments should be made up under the supervision of the classroom teacher or a designee.
- Teachers must provide the make-up work and determine the grade during a nine-week period.
- For excused and unexcused absences, students should receive **full credit earned** on make-up work completed in the allotted time.
- No Report Card Change of Data form is required if all work is done and graded prior to report cards being issued.
- Teachers' make-up rules/regulations must be included in principal-approved written communication to parents.

GRADE INTERVENTION

Grade Intervention focuses on principal-approved classroom and/or school level strategies and interventions. Grade Intervention must occur **during the nine-week period**.

Grade Intervention shall be available for students who: (1) need additional time to complete assignments necessary to pass a subject due to absences, (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.), or (3) demonstrate academic difficulty and/or are at risk of failing.

Monitoring of students' grades must be an ongoing practice throughout each nine-week period.

Once a student has been identified as having difficulty and/or in danger of failing, the teacher must notify the parent and intervene to reduce or eliminate low academic performance/failure.

The teacher and counselor will consult about grade-intervention options to best address a student's learning challenge. Notification and documentation of the grade-intervention option(s) determined by the teacher must be provided to the parent no later than the release of progress reports.

Examples of grade-intervention options include, but are not limited to:

- Zeros are Not Permitted (ZAP)
- i-Ready
- RTI
- Correctives and test re-takes and/or assignment re-dos
- Tutoring