



GRADING PROTOCOLS

for Elementary, Middle, & High Schools

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

10-Point Grading Scale

1a. Why has the grading scale changing to the 10-point scale?

MSCS updated its scale to align with a recent change in state law. 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 scale is a way to level the playing field for students who will soon apply for awards, scholarships, and other academic opportunities.

1b. What's the difference between the former scale and the new scale?

The former scale was seven-points, requiring a 93 for an (A) grade. Due to that scale, anything below a 70 was an (F). The new scale is 10-points, with a grade of 90 earning an (A). Anything below a 60 is now considered an (F).

2. Are 17 grades required for each subject area (ELA, Social Studies, Math, and Science)?

With the exception of first-grade science and social studies and non-tested subject areas for grades 1-5 (art, music, world languages, and P.E.), students in grades 1-12 must be provided an opportunity to earn at least 17 grades per subject area per nine-weeks (quarter) distributed among the following categories with the following weights.

Elementary:

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)

Middle:

Homework: 10%
(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: 40%
(min. of 4 grades)

High:

Homework: 10%
(min. of 4 grades)
Class Participation: 5%
(min. of 4 grades)
Classwork: 35%
(min. of 4 grades)
Projects/Portfolios/
Presentations: 10%
(min. of 1 grade)
Assessments: 40%
(min. of 4 grades)

With the exception of projects, portfolios, and presentations, two grades for each required category (totaling eight grades) must be earned and recorded by the interim of the nine-week period.

Retake/Re-dos:

3. What are the expectations for retake/re-do? Will students be allowed to retake every assignment or assessment?

A teacher will not be precluded from providing multiple opportunities for mastery for any student at his or her discretion or for any student who desires to retake/re-do assignments or assessments to improve a grade. However, provided opportunities must be in alignment with principal-approved guidelines including, but not limited to, the number of times a student can retake or re-do an assignment or assessment within a given nine-week period.

The objective in the protocol surrounding retake/re-do is to allow autonomy for principals to provide guidelines that work best for their school and to ensure that teachers have the power to provide retake/re-do opportunities for their students.

4. For graduating seniors, are the 17 district-required grades to be earned and recorded for the final nine-week period?

Yes. Students must be provided an opportunity to earn at least 17 grades per nine-weeks (quarter) in grades 1-12. This protocol does not exclude the final nine-week period for graduating seniors.

5. Are intervention teachers required to administer the 17 grades?

No. Intervention teachers do not administer grades. Therefore, intervention teachers are not required to give and record 17 grades.

6. Can a zero be given to a student if that is what the student has earned?

MCS does not have or authorize the use of grade floors; therefore, the grades a student earns are the grades that he or she receives. However, in an effort to give students more than one opportunity to achieve mastery and to recover a failing grade or grade of zero, the following options are available to students:

1. Grade Intervention (for elementary only; occurs within the nine-week period)
2. Retake/Re-do (for middle and high school; occurs within the nine-week period)
3. Grade-Repair (for middle and high school; occurs after a student receives a failing grade for the nine-week period. Students may receive up to a maximum grade of 70.)
4. Credit Recovery (for high school credits only; occurs after a student receives a failing grade on his/her transcript)



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For more information, please review the listed repair options within the protocols for the applicable grade band.

It is the responsibility of teachers to inform students and parents of students' grade repair options. If a student chooses not to take advantage of or participate in any of the repair options listed above, the failing grade(s) earned will stand.

Power School/PowerTeacher Pro:

7. Will PowerSchool automatically set up the percentages for each grading category? Will the percentages be calculated in as we input grades? If not, what is the easiest way to ensure that we are assigning the proper weight to each category and meeting the requirements?

PowerTeacher Pro has been set up with the appropriate categories for all teachers and appropriate weights for most teachers. Some teachers in schools which cross typical grade levels (e.g. K-8 schools) and teachers who teach courses outside the grade levels of their school (e.g. an 8th grade teacher teaching high school Algebra I) will need to make adjustments to the settings. PowerTeacher Pro is the only official gradebook for Memphis-Shelby County Schools; therefore, all recorded grades must be recorded in PowerTeacher Pro.

8. Where can I find a PowerSchool guide for sharing with parents how to see their child's grades?

Some basic instructions for logging into the PowerSchool parent portal are available at <http://www.scsk12.org/powerschool/>. Once logged in, a parent may click on the Grades and Attendance link to see the child's grades.

9. Can we get a step by step guide or training of all the features and how to use it?

The PowerTeacher Pro gradebook has online tutorials built into the Help menu of the gradebook. There are also many other helpful videos available on YouTube by searching "PowerTeacher Pro."

10. Will we have to manually adjust the grading percentages in PowerSchool or will they adjust themselves?

PowerTeacher Pro has been set up with the appropriate categories for all teachers and appropriate weights for most teachers. Some teachers in schools which cross typical grade levels (e.g. K-8 schools) and teachers who teach courses outside the grade levels of their school (e.g. an 8th grade teacher teaching high school Algebra I) will need to make adjustments to the settings. PowerTeacher Pro is the only official gradebook for MSCS; therefore, all recorded grades must be recorded in PowerTeacher Pro.



11. Can we delete all old categories in PowerTeacher? If so, how?

Instructions for deleting or inactivating old categories are included in the PowerTeacher Pro Grading – Category Weights document available on SharePoint here. We strongly recommend that teachers make the categories inactive rather than delete them. The old categories are still connected to grades from previous years.

Kindergarten Grades:

12. Regarding the math section of the kindergarten report card, is it possible to utilize a standards-based assessment instead of using the end-of-module assessments from Eureka?

The Grading Protocol for Elementary School does not apply to Pre-K or Kindergarten. However, as it currently stands within Memphis-Shelby County Schools, kindergarten students are assessed utilizing skills that are aligned with the Tennessee standards, as well as by utilizing assessment items from the District's math curriculum, Eureka.

Special Education:

13. Do special education teachers have to submit grades?

No. Every 4 ½ weeks, Special Education (SPED) teachers are responsible for completing and submitting progress reports for special education students based on the goals of the students' IEPs. The general education teacher is responsible for submitting the grades. In addition, special education students receiving instruction in general education are graded as other students unless the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) makes provisions for alternative grading procedures. The grading category requirements detailed within the protocols may be modified based on a student's IEP.

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

14. How will the new grading protocols give an accurate depiction of student abilities and/or possible unidentified disabilities?

The grading protocols are not designed to diagnose or identify students' abilities or disabilities. The grading protocols, aligned with Board policy, set forth district-wide standards for grading students in grades 1-12 and provide 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.



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Training:

15. Will training be offered on how to effectively create more assignments for the added categories and increased number of grades?

Each protocol defines the grading categories and are accompanied by a list of examples for each category. For additional guidance, school-based PLC coaches will be available to support individual school/teacher-based instructional needs to ensure full compliance with protocol.

First Grade:

16. Are first-grade teachers required to input 17 grades for science and social studies?

Letter grades “E”, “S”, “N”, or “U” will be assigned when grading 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 within the elementary grading protocol shall not apply to these subject areas. (Grading Protocol for Elementary School pp. 3)

Grading Categories:

17. How do we account for quizzes? They are not listed in the protocol and are important at high school level.

Quizzes are considered assessments, but may also be recorded as classwork, class participation, etc. at the teacher's discretion based on content and rigor.

18. For ELA, how do we make grades fit the new categories and still have them fit under reading, writing and grammar/spelling?

The final elementary report card indicates that a grade must be given for English Language Arts. Final grades are not administered for reading, writing, grammar, and spelling. Teachers should determine the types of assignments students must complete to equal up to the 17 grades in ELA.

19. Will the TNReady test be a part of students' year-end grade?

State assessments in math, English language arts, social studies, and science, as well as alternative assessments for students with special needs shall be administered to students in grades 3-5. The weight of the assessment on a student's final average in grades 3-5 shall be 0% based on the minimum requirement established under State Board of Education policy 2.102.



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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 a student's final average in grades 6-8 shall be 10% based on the minimum requirement established under State Board of Education policy 2.102.

For a course with an EOC examination, the weight of the assessment on a student's final average shall be 15% based on the minimum requirement established under State Board of Education policy 2.103.

20. Bellwork is required by a lot of schools. Can a category be added for that?

Within the protocols, bellwork is listed as an example of class participation.

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 time of absence.

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

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



Participation Grades:

21. How do teachers give grades for participation? How do we hold each student accountable? How do we provide students who are absent with a participation grade?

According to protocol, class participation is defined as opportunities where optimal student learning is characterized by students being actively engaged. Examples of class participation are listed on the previous page.

Note: If a student is absent, their participation grade will not be penalized for the time of absence. The participation grade for the time of absence must be omitted.

Grade-Floor

22. If students are unable to receive a 0 and they refuse to do the assignments, what grade should be inputted? Do we have a grade floor? Do we have a minimum grade that we should give a student to try to assist?

As stated in the protocols, MSCS 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. Memphis-Shelby County Schools does not have or authorize the use of grade floors.

Make-Up Work/Grade Repair

23. Do both parents and students need to sign for receipt of make-up work or can the students themselves sign at the high school level?

Once make-up work is obtained by student or parent(s), the student and/or parent(s) must sign-off that the work has been received. It should be the primary responsibility of students and/or parent(s) to obtain the provided make-up work and to complete it in the allotted time to receive full credit earned without point reduction.

24. With the pacing design of the district mandated curriculum, what support is the district offering teachers who have failing students that they must administer “grade repair” protocol to?

School-based PLC coaches will be available to support individual school/teacher-based instructional needs, including planning and strategy around grade repair for teachers who have at risk and/or failing students.



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in addition, teachers must consult with the school counselor (who operates as support, thought partners and a liaison) about potential grade-repair options for a student at risk of failing for the nine-week period as early as the release of progress reports. This collaborative effort is designed to assist the teacher with determining the most effective and efficient grade-repair and pacing options for a student at risk or students who have failed.

25. How will students and parents notify teachers of grade replacement requests? How will students be held responsible for missing work?

Students and/or parents may request make-up work and/or any other grade-repair option. Students and/or parents cannot request grade replacements.

However, it is the responsibility of teachers to provide students with make-up work in the event of excused or unexcused absences. Teachers' make-up rules/regulations must be included in principal-approved written communication to parents.

Teachers should create a system, designated areas in the classroom or a virtual platform for students and/or parents to retrieve make-up work. Once make-up work is obtained, the student and/or parents must sign-off that the work has been received. It should be the primary responsibility of students and/or parents to obtain the provided make-up work and to complete it in the allotted time to receive full credit earned without point reduction.

Allotted time:

- o In the event of an excused absence, students are expected to make-up work missed within a reasonable time (at least one or more days of make-up for each day of excused absence).
- o In the event of an unexcused absence (including short-term suspensions), one day of make-up shall be allowed for each day of unexcused absence (unless otherwise extended by the school or extended based on law or policy). Allotted time begins 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 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.).



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For grade-repair, it is also the responsibility of teachers to consult with the school counselor to pre-determine grade-repair options for students who are at risk of failing and/or who have failed for the nine-week period, excluding the final nine-week period of the school year. Counselors (or teachers, if agreed upon) will notify parents of the pre-determined grade-repair option for the student at risk of failing or student who has failed for the nine-week period. Protocol states:

- Proactive monitoring of students' grades and implementation of intervention strategies must be an ongoing practice throughout each nine-week period.
- The teacher must consult with the counselor about potential grade-repair options for a student at risk of failing for the nine-week period as early as the release of progress reports.
 - After a potential grade-repair option is determined, the counselor must immediately consult with the parent about the grade-repair option that will be provided for the student who is at risk of failing for the nine-week period and provide documentation at the conclusion of the consultation.
- Once a student receives a failing grade for the nine-week period, notification and documentation of the grade repair option predetermined by the teacher and counselor must be provided to the parent with the nine-week report card.
- The grade-repair option must go into effect at the start of the next nine-week period.

Specialty Classes/ Advanced Courses

26. How should performance-based classes (band, orchestra, choir) incorporate the new grading protocol? Will a different scale be provided for non-core curriculum classes?

For middle and high schools, the district-required grading categories, weights and minimum number of grades shall apply to non-core curriculum courses.

27. How does the protocol allow for IB/AP/DE courses that should mirror more strongly post-high school grading practices?

Advanced courses provide additional rigor and substantially exceed the academic standards approved by the State Board of Education. Advanced courses governed by an MOU, institution of higher learning, the Tennessee Department of Education,

and/or have additional requirements, must adhere to the requirements established under the program.



ZAP:

28. What is ZAP?

Zeros are Not Permitted

(ZAP)– ZAP is a grade-repair tool designed to provide an opportunity for grade improvement for students who have not been successful on assessments and/or assignments. This tool is designed to give students a second chance to show mastery, improve grades and to succeed. It is also designed to allow parents to become more involved in the educational process. A completed ZAP referral, inclusive of parent/guardian's signature, must be submitted back to the referring counselor or teacher. ZAP instruction can be held before, during, or after school, on Saturdays, and/or at the discretion of principals.

ZAP is one example of a grade repair strategy for students that may be used within re-do/re-take, make-up work, and/or grade repair.

Summer School

29. Under the middle school policy, if a student fails one class, he or she may go to summer school. What if the parent refuses to send or allow the student to go to summer school?

If a student who has failed a core class does not attend summer school and/or does not pass the class in summer school, the student will have to repeat the class or grade the following school year.

Miscellaneous

30. Is the new grading protocol now in effect?

The new 10-point grading scale takes effect in the 2022-2023 school year.

Principals and Teachers,

Thank you so much for your questions, feedback and patience. It is our mission to fully support you in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the expectations, requirements and systems surrounding grading set forth by the District to build a foundation for consistent grading practices from teacher to teacher and school to school within the district. Thank you for your support and for your heart to do this work for our students.

