

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 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, which will be provided in the administrative rules and regulations to this policy.

Accordingly, Shelby County Schools believes providing academic and conduct grades is important to ensure that students and parents receive regular information regarding a students' 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	93-100
B	85-92
C	75-84
D	70-74
F	Below 70

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students receiving special education services in Functional Skills Programs [Adaptive Functional Skills (AFS) and Functional Skills (FS)] will receive a “Report Card of Progress” based on progress towards goals stated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in inclusion courses where grades and/or credits are awarded will receive a report card for those courses.

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 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.

E. The Chief Academic Office is responsible for implementation of this policy and answering questions concerning the interpretation of this policy.

G. 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. TCA 49-1-614
4. TCA 49-1-617
5. TCA 49-1-302
6. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)
7. Uniform Grading Policy 3.301 – TN State
8. Title 49, Chapter 12, Part 3 - Part Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Cross References:

1. 5005 Advanced Courses

5015 Grading System for Grades 6-12

Special Education

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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) and provides 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. During the early stages of ELD, grading for content-area courses must be focused more on the progress made than on direct comparisons to the achievement of native speakers.

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.

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 will be determined by the average of daily work, oral and written assignments, projects, and tests. A minimum of twelve (12) grades for the nine-week period should be recorded for each subject. Fifty percent (50%) of the twelve grades 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. The teacher will assess all student assignments and weigh the value of grades given for various assignments within the nine-week term in computing the term grade. This procedure will enable the teacher to allow for individual student differences in the grading process. Homework assignments are of value in affording students needed practice, and such assignments should be made within practicable limits.

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 a high school course will earn high school elective credit, unless state or federal guidance provides otherwise (e.g., Early High School Graduation Program under the Move on When Ready Act., etc.). 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.

Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, for students in grades 6-8, scores on the State of Tennessee Student Assessment System shall comprise 15% of the student's final spring (second) semester grade in mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies.

However, if the District does not receive its students' scores at least five (5) instructional days before the end of the school year, 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 80% and the semester examination as 20%.

- c. Advanced Courses (See also policy 5005 Advanced Courses.)
 1. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Courses - In all Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses/advanced courses comparable to Advanced Placement courses at the secondary level five (5) points shall be added to each quarter numerical grade and each semester exam grade. The two 9 week grades and the semester exam grade, with the points included, will be used to calculate the semester average.
 2. Statewide Dual Credit Courses - In all statewide dual credit courses at the secondary level four (4) points shall be added to each quarter numerical grade and each semester exam grade. The two 9 week grades and the semester exam grade, with the points included, will be used to calculate the semester average.
 3. Honors and National Industry Certification Courses - In all grades for Honors courses, National Industry Certification courses, and advanced courses comparable to Honors courses at the secondary level, three (3) points shall be added to each quarter numerical grade, and each semester exam grade. The two 9 week grades, and the semester exam grade, with the points included, will be used to calculate the semester average.

- 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 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, final grades are determined by considering the course grade and the EOC examination according to the following.

- a) The weight of the EOC examination on the student's final average shall be ten percent (10%) in the 2016-2017 school year.
- b) The weight of the EOC examination on the student's final average shall be fifteen percent (15%) in the 2017-2018 school year.
- c) The weight of the EOC examination on the student's final average shall be determined by the Superintendent in accordance with policy 5015 from a range of no less than fifteen (15%) and no more than twenty-five (25%) in the 2018-2019 school year and thereafter.

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, which is a middle "C". 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' course average.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Tennessee State Board of Education Policy (2.103), students with disabilities failing to earn a yearly grade of 70 in a course that has an end-of-course test and whose disability adversely affects performance in that test will be allowed, through an approved process, to add to their end-of-course assessment scores by demonstrating the state identified core knowledge and skills contained within that course through an alternative performance-based assessment. The necessity for an alternative performance-based assessment must be determined through the student's individualized education plan (IEP). The alternative performance-based assessment will be evaluated using a state approved rubric.

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.

Additional Grading Consideration

Students who meet only the minimum requirements should be given minimum passing grades. No student should fail for the semester or year if the only failing grade is that of the semester examination, provided the student has made an honest effort on the examination.

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 grade in the course.

(Please note: In instances when a student is seeking to recover the first semester of a course with an EOC examination, the student may not receive the full credit for the course until he/she has enrolled in and passed the second semester of the course and taken any applicable EOC examinations. A student does not need to take credit recovery if he/she has a passing yearly average even if first semester is failed.)

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 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. 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 Recovery, and Course/Credit Recovery

- a. Make-up Work - Regular 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 Recovery

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.

1. *Grade Recovery Requirements* - Grade recovery 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 recovery shall be required for students who need to recover a failing grade (69 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 recovery must participate in a grade recovery 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 recovery (e.g., participating in a classroom and/or school wide grade recovery program such as Zeros Aren't Permitted (ZAP); participating in online grade recovery programs; obtaining make-up work/assignments, participating in available tutoring/requesting tutoring, etc.) Any grade adjustments resulting from grade recovery efforts shall be accompanied by a justification indicating that a grade recovery program was completed.

Students who qualify for grade recovery based on the 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 recovery or make-up period to reflect the actual academic grade supported by documentation.

2. *Grade Recovery 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 Online Courses and Online Course/Credit Recovery.

Grade Documentation, Recording, and Adjustment

- a. **Documentation** - Student grades are determined by the teacher in accordance with grading criteria and district policy/regulation. 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 recovery, 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., the SCS identified electronic gradebook). 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 recovery, 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 justification, inclusive of a student's participation in class, school, or district programs, interventions, and efforts to make-up work/assignments, recover 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.