



Cumberland Academy
Middle School
Home of the Knights

Grading Policy



GRADING

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty on assignments or tests shall be subject to disciplinary penalties and grade penalties. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating or copying the work of another student, providing your own work to another student for purposes of cheating and/or copying, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or other supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The Director of Schools or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects student achievement and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the average grade assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents.

Guidelines

Use the following procedures for grading:

- Students shall not record official grades.
- Numerical grades shall be used for grade reporting, record purposes.
- The principal or teacher shall keep the final examination papers on file for six weeks.
- Grades will be recorded in the grade book by the teacher at least once a week in order to maximize parent/guardian involvement and intervention opportunities.
- An “I” may be assigned to indicate the student’s inability to complete the work for a grading period due to extended absences. An incomplete grade of “I” shall be removed from the student’s record as soon as possible. In no instance should an incomplete remain beyond the end of the next grading period without approval of the principal.
- Grades shall not be changed following the end of a reporting period unless an error has been made. Grade change requests must be submitted on the appropriate forms and shall be subject to the principal’s approval.
- In physical education classes, grades 6-8, all grades should be based on student performance in relation to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The academic grade should not reflect discipline, lack of dressing out or lack of participation.
- Each classroom teacher has the responsibility of informing students regarding rules concerning all aspects of individual grading policies. Included would be each teacher’s policies regarding the acceptance of late work, make-up work, as well as the weighting assigned to different types of grades.

- Grade disputes, misunderstandings or miscommunications between the student, parents, and the classroom teacher should be settled as rapidly as possible. When feasible, any such misunderstanding should be settled within a ten-day working time frame. When an academic grading dispute occurs, the principal or his/her designee should be contacted.

Grading and Progress Monitoring of Special Education Students

The ARD Committee is responsible for making decisions surrounding grading practices for students with disabilities. ARD committees must base grading considerations and decisions on individual student needs. Day-to-day decisions by classroom teachers pertaining to grading should reflect the ARD committee's choices for accommodations, modifications, IEP goals, progress monitoring, and grading. ARD committees must ensure that accommodations and modifications included in the IEP are effective for the student. Accommodations and modifications should assist students in accessing and progressing in the general curriculum and in meeting his/her IEP goals. Their intent is not so that a student passes a class. (Freedman, 2008).

The ARD committee is also responsible for continuously reviewing and updating its decisions based on a student's progress and based on his/her present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). The ARD committee also ensures support and services are being faded, increased, and altered (when appropriate) to ensure progress in the least restrictive environment and aptly providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The least restrictive environment is inclusive of support and services, not simply a location where services are received.

Educators involved in the decision making process should react quickly to low grades that might indicate a student is struggling to access or make progress in the general education curriculum. When there is concern that the current supports and supplementary services are no longer effective for a student, an ARD committee meeting may need to take place. The ARD committee must revise the IEP as appropriate to address a student's lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general education curriculum.

The following charts differentiate the various roles that individuals and/or groups serve in the decision making process concerning grading students with disabilities. In addition, the charts can serve to clarify specific responsibilities of those individuals and the actual grading process.

10 Decision Making Responsibilities Related to Grading

- ARD Committee (Makes individualized decisions for each student) Administrator (Makes general decisions for a campus)
- Determines location, duration, and frequency of services that will allow a student to access and make progress in the general education curriculum.
- Determines who (what position: Special Educator, General Educator, Related Service Provider, Etc.) is responsible for implementing and measuring progress toward IEP goals.*
- Determines the accommodations, modifications, supports, and supplementary aids and services needed by each student with a disability to successfully be involved in and progress in the general curriculum while achieving the goals of the IEP.
- Determines “how often” and “how” the LEA will monitor and report the student’s progress towards IEP goals.
- Determines promotion/retention decisions.**
- Determines modified grading policy if appropriate. ***
- Determines any “campus” grading policies for all students
- Determines master schedule for campus, including assignments of teachers and support staff. Administrators would also determine the teacher of record for grading purposes.
- Determines how to implement the district’s grading policy.
- Determines how those implementing the IEP would document supports, including accommodations, modifications, and specially designed instruction.

*This determination is not a requirement, but ARD committees may find it helpful to include this information in a student’s IEP.

** ARD committees will make decisions pertaining to promotion and retention, serving also as the grade placement committee when a student fails, with the exception of determining if a student receives “course credit” for high school.

***If appropriate accommodations, modifications and specially designed instruction are in place for a student, there should be few instances when there would be a need to alter the student’s individual grading policy. When doing so, the ARD committee should be able to defend the reason and ensure that the committee made the decision based on individual student needs. **The ARD committee must also ensure that the grading policy a student’s teachers use is one that is also available to all students regardless of special education eligibility.**

More information on grading for students receiving services through special education can be found through TEA’s Grading and Progress Monitoring for Students with Disabilities.

Progress Monitoring of Students Enrolled In and/or Receiving Intervention Services

The following designations will be used in monitoring progress for students receiving intervention services on student report cards and progress reports

1. No Data (ND) – student is new to the program and has not been administered any assessment beyond the initial diagnostic or baseline assessment.
2. Minimal Progress (P1) – the student is making little to no progress. It is critical that the RTI team meet to discuss possible adjustments to the student's intervention plan to address his/her lack of progress.
3. Moderate Progress (P2) – the student is making progress at a moderate rate. While the student may be progressing, it is recommended that the student's RTI team, including the parent, meet to discuss possible strategies to increase the student's rate of growth to target progress.
4. Target Progress (P3) – student has progressed at the target rate to reach his/her next goal. This designation will be based on data obtained from formative assessments given repeatedly throughout the reporting period.
5. Exit and Monitor (EM) - The student has made such growth that supplemental support will be or has been discontinued. The RTI team will continue to monitor the student's progress to ensure success.

Homework

Home assignments are necessary to provide enough time for students to master subject matter and complete long-term projects. Homework should be purposeful, adjusted to the level of the individual child, and related to specific subject objectives. Assignments should provide practice on skills already taught or prepare students to begin a new topic or part of the course.

Sufficient explanation must be given so that students know what they are to do, understand how to do it, realize why they are doing it, and are motivated to complete the assignment. Assignment of homework should be reasonable with regard to regularity and time required. Homework must be evaluated in an appropriate manner by the teacher.

Special consideration should be given to the nature of home study assignments made immediately before holidays, major special events, or weekends. Homework should never be assigned as a disciplinary measure. If graded, homework other than major projects will be recorded as a daily grade.

Interim Reports (Progress Reports)

Interim progress reports shall possibly be issued for all students during the 3rd and 6th week of each grading period. Grades are to be indicated on progress reports in grades 6-8. Supplemental progress reports may be issued at the teacher's discretion. Teachers shall contact parents of students with failing grades. Cumberland Academy Middle School may have the ability to send progress reports electronically or allow parents to access progress reports electronically rather than send paper copies of the progress reports home.

Make-Up Work and Late Projects – Grading Penalties

A student will be allowed 1 calendar day for each day of absence to make up missed class work or assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to secure the assignments from the teacher and make up the work. The student should contact the teacher by email or in person to make arrangements to obtain the assignments on the day he or she returns to class. Assignments can also be found on each teacher's google classroom. Any extenuating circumstances or delay in completing the missed work must be approved by the principal.

Students shall be expected to make up assessments after absences. Students shall receive a zero for any assignment or test not made up within the allotted time. Teachers may assign a penalty to any project turned in after the due date in accordance with previously established guidelines approved by the principal. The grade for late work after an unexcused absence will be deducted 10 points each day the assignment is not turned in until the fifth day. After the fifth day, the student may receive a zero.

Parent Portal

Parents and students have the ability to view information that teachers enter in the grade book over the Internet. Changes or additions to student grades are available instantly for both parents and students. Teachers are expected to maintain the required number of grades complete with accurate due dates for viewing prior to each progress report / report card, and to communicate with parents about the weights for each type of grade entered. Teachers are expected to maintain a timely and accurate electronic grade book that is updated at least once a week. The login to Parent Portal is the same login used to complete online registration.

Progress Reporting (Report Cards)

Grade reports (report cards) shall be issued at the end of every Nine week grading period and shall be distributed by the teacher to the students at the time and manner arranged by the principal. Students should be enrolled at least 15 school days to receive a report card for a reporting period.

Cumberland Academy Middle School may have the ability to send report cards electronically or allow parents to access report cards electronically rather than send paper copies of the progress reports home.

Relation to Essential Knowledge and Skills

Cumberland Academy Middle School shall establish instructional objectives that relate to the essential knowledge and skill for grade-level subjects or courses. These objectives shall address the skills needed for successful performance in the next grade or next course in a sequence of courses. Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated district objectives. The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course.

Conduct Grades and Comments

Work Habits and conduct grades, based on classroom observation and judgment of teachers, carry no numerical significance. A student's academic grade average is based exclusively on scholastic achievement. The conduct grade is used to communicate the behavior, cooperation, promptness, and work/study habits of the student.

Conduct grades are reported as:

- Excellent - earns consistent praise/recognition for exemplary behavior.
- Satisfactory - conforms to school and class rules. Responds to occasional correction in a positive manner.
- Needs Improvement - requires consistent/repeated correction.
- Unsatisfactory - disrupts class, poor attitude, lacks respect for class or teachers.

If a student receives a Conduct Grade of N or U, the teacher must indicate the reason for the grade by utilizing comment codes on the report card.

Conduct traits are defined as follows and utilized when needing improvement of unsatisfactory behavior:

Personal Behavior:

Improvement needed in the following areas:

1. Exhibiting self-discipline
2. Following classroom rules
3. Working well with others
4. Accepting redirection and correction

5. Accepting responsibility for choices and actions
6. Controlling talking
7. Completing class assignments
8. Following oral or written directions Academic and study habits comments:
9. Student is exhibiting positive behaviors
10. Student is showing improvement
11. Attending tutorials will help the student
12. Requires instructional accommodation
13. Not working to his/her ability
14. Not organized with materials or assignments
15. Absences/tardies are affecting work
16. Parent conference is needed.

Grades and Eligibility for UIL Extracurricular Activities

Per TEC 33.081(c) students must maintain a grade of 70 or above in all classes in order to be able to participate in extracurricular activities. Students receiving a report card grade below “70” will remain ineligible for a minimum of three weeks, at which time the student regains eligibility if all progress report grades meet or exceed “70”.

Under TEC 33.081 (d-1) honors and advanced placement courses are not subject to the provisions of the “no pass, no play” rule. Students enrolled in such courses in Cumberland Academy must maintain a grade of at least “60” in that course, while also meeting the eligibility requirements of “no pass, no play” in all other courses. A student can regain eligibility once a progress report shows a grade of 60 or higher as well as a 70 or above in all other coursework. Under no circumstances will a student in Cumberland Academy be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities with a report card grade below 60 in advanced courses. This provision is not subject to appeal.

GRADE BOOK GUIDELINES

Accurate and up-to-date on-line grade books will be kept by each teacher and updated at least once a week. So that realistic grade averages may be obtained, the minimum number of grades in the grade book will be four daily grades and one assessment grade prior to the progress report. For each nine weeks grading period, there is a minimum requirement of 12 daily grades and three assessment grades. All grades shall reflect a measure of the student’s mastery of the state standards.

The electronic grade book for grades 6-8 in **ALL** subjects will have two categories for grades: daily grades and assessment grades. Examples of the types of grades suitable for each category include the following:

- Daily Grades: daily class work, worksheets, group work, book reports, spelling tests, homework, and formative assessments.
- Assessment Grades: district or campus assessments, performance indicators, summative assessments, and/or major project grades.

In grades 6-12, numerical scores shall be given to report progress to parents. When numeric scores are converted, the following scale is applicable:

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
Below 70	F

The purpose of grade reporting is to inform parents and students about mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Nine week grades of 70 or greater indicate that a student is meeting the required state and local passing standard. Any nine week grade below 70 indicates that a student is failing to master the state standard expectations (SE's). Teachers shall contact parents of students with failing grades. Any nine week grade earned that is less than 50 is suggested to be posted as a 50 with a plan for improvement in order to allow the student an opportunity to pass. If a teacher chooses to post a 50, the teacher must communicate to the parent the grade earned and develop a plan for improvement.

Grade Calculations School Report Cards

The Assessment and Daily Work categories will be weighted so that the average of the daily grades will comprise 60% of the nine weeks grade and the average of the assessment grades will comprise 40% of the nine weeks grade. Middle school courses taken for high school credit will follow the high school grading requirements in which daily grades will comprise 60% of the nine weeks grade and the average of the assessment grades will comprise 40% of the nine weeks grade. No single assignment may count for more than 25% of the overall average. Assessment grades lower than a 70% shall be retaught and reassessed, provided the student attends tutorials and retests outside the school day. The reassessment will be a different version of the same material.

Middle school report card grades are determined by averaging the grades in the grade book each nine weeks. To determine a semester average, the total of the two nine weeks' grades are totaled and divided by two. The final grade, calculated by adding the first and second semester grades and dividing by two (2), shall be used to award a passing score for middle school courses. The semester grade for a one semester course will stand as the final grade for that course. Semester exams for middle school courses are included in the nine weeks grade average.

Example of middle school semester and final grade calculation:

First Nine Weeks	95	
Second Nine Weeks	85	180 divided by 2 = 90
Third Nine Weeks	76	

Fourth Nine Weeks	82	158 divided by 2 = 79
First Semester	90	
Second Semester	77	
		167 divided by 2 = 83.500 = Final Grade of 84

The computer will calculate averages to three decimal places (thousandths). Decimals greater than .499 will be rounded up. Decimals beginning with .499 and less will be dropped.

RETEACHING AND TUTORIAL SERVICES

Reteaching

Reteaching is a sound instructional practice intended to ensure mastery of content. Reteaching occurs during the regularly allocated time for instruction in a particular subject or during tutorials scheduled for the subject area, and at such time as a student or students' mastery level falls below 70%. Following reteaching, concepts/skills may be retested/checked and recorded in the grade book. The assessment offered for retesting shall be significant enough to offer proof of mastery of course content objectives. Retesting may be done utilizing an alternative version of the originally administered assessment. In the event that a student fails following reteaching, the greater of the two grades is used. Students who fail when retested must be scheduled into tutorial sessions.

Tutorials

Cumberland Academy Middle School shall provide the opportunity for students to participate in tutorial programs aimed at improving a student's mastery of the state's standard expectations (SE's). Sessions may be of varying amounts of time to meet the needs of students. The program shall be targeted at students scoring below 70 or in jeopardy of scoring below 70 in a subject or course. A campus plan for implementing tutorials at each grade level shall be included in the Campus Plan of Action. All parents shall be notified of the availability of tutorial assistance. The classroom teacher is responsible for communicating with the parent regarding placement of a student in tutorials and providing follow-up information on the student's progress as well as recommendations for parental assistance and support. Each progress report and report card shall include the teacher's recommendation if a student needs to attend tutorials.