

# Assessment and Grading Recommendations and Guidance

(For Non-Traditional Instruction During the COVID-19 Crisis)

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed many changes, challenges, and uncertainties to our educational model. Please keep in mind the importance of being flexible and learner-centered, grading with grace, and using professional judgement.

## Guiding Purposes of Assessment and Grading

- Inform teaching and improve learning
- Communicate the learning, growth, and achievements of learners to learners, parents, and stakeholders

## Guiding Principles of Assessment and Grading

- Flexibility
- Reporting accurately reflects learning, growth, and achievement
- Reporting shall be fair, consistent, support learning, and promote communication amongst stakeholders
- Assessing with descriptive and/or competency based rubrics (includes standards and/or success skills)
- Equity: Assessing and grading in a variety of ways that recognize the strengths, competencies, and progress of every learner

## Grading Categories

Because there are more unknown variables present in the NTI instructional model, ***consider decreasing the emphasis on grading “student engagement”***, which may be difficult to assess fairly in remote instructional settings. To do this, teachers should change the weight of the categories in Infinite Campus as shown in the table below (Important note: if weights are changed, they will remain that way for the remainder of the 20-21 school year):

Categories of Academic Grades	Evidence/Assignments for Each Category (Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
Student Engagement With Standards and Success Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shall be communicated through descriptive feedback</li></ul>	Participation, group work, class discussion, journals/logs/notebooks, rubrics, projects, teacher observation, student reflection, demonstrations of learning, defenses, and/or other evidence of student interaction and engagement
Student Progress Toward Standards and Success Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shall count for 50% of the total academic grade</li></ul>	Homework, problem solving, class assignments, quizzes, anecdotal records, rubrics, projects, student self-assessment, demonstrations of learning, defenses, and/or other evidence of student progress
Student Mastery of Standards and Success Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shall count for 50% of the total academic grade</li></ul>	Tests/proficiency assessments, projects (e.g. project or problem-based), performance assessments, rubrics, demonstrations of learning, authentic assessments, presentations/defenses, and/or other evidence of student mastery.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers must use both categories listed above (Progress and Mastery) when setting up their gradebook, Infinite Campus, or other electronic gradebook.</li><li>• No one assignment can count for more than one-third of an entire category (Progress and Mastery).</li><li>• Engagement should be communicated to students and parents through comments or descriptive feedback.</li></ul>	

## Grading Continuum

Due to the nature of teaching via non-traditional instruction, consider grading with a ***critierion rubric*** that reflects the progression of a skill or competency, rather than completion of a task. The focus should be on providing meaningful work rooted in standards, and giving on-going, descriptive feedback that allows students to continue to improve rather than focusing on assigning a grade. These guidelines are designed to support everyone in taking steps toward a more mastery, standards-based approach. Standards Based Grading Marks and Performance Descriptions are encouraged instead of or before converting to a percentage-based grading scale. The use of “***zeros***” for missing work is discouraged, as it does not reflect learning or growth. Consider using an “incomplete” indication if necessary. While we can control the instructional environment at school, we cannot control the instructional environment within a learner’s home.

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The charts below reflect both mastery based grading (green) and conventional grading (white). When looking at the charts below, consider the quality of the student work, performance, or product. When communicating feedback to the student, begin in the “Performance Description” column. If there is a need to communicate feedback via a percentage or letter grade, translate using the conventional grading scale as needed.

## Standards-based Grading

Performance Description	Standards Based Grading Marks	Letter Grade
Above Standards	4	A
Meets Standards	3	B
Approaching Standards	2	C
Below Standards	1	D
Substantially Below Standards	–	U

## Conventional Grading Scale

Performance Description	Grading Scale	Letter Grade
Above Standards	90-100	A
Meets Standards	80-89	B
Approaching Standards	70-79	C
Below Standards	60-69	D
Substantially Below Standards	Below 60	U
Incomplete		I

## Emphasis on Flexibility

The nature of non-traditional, anytime-anywhere learning is flexible and learner-centered. Consider designing learning and assessment with much flexibility for learners to access, engage with, and demonstrate mastery of content and skills. While there is some attention to timeliness, readiness to show competency should be accommodated.

## Consistent Practices for Grading and Feedback

- As per JCPS/JCTA contract, employees shall be required to enter assignments with grades no more than once every three (3) weeks. Teachers shall not be required to enter a specific number of grades per grading period but may be required to enter all grades that will be part of a student’s final grade once every three (3) weeks with the exception of teachers who see students less frequently such as Special Area teachers who do not have graded work for students during a three (3) week period. Multiple assignments may be combined for grade entry purposes but all entered work must be clearly identifiable. However, at least one grading mark entry per week is encouraged (in the progress category)
- Learners have access to descriptive feedback from peers and educators throughout learning process
- Learners have multiple opportunities to revise assignments when possible
- Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning when possible
- Learners have agency in how they demonstrate learning
- Assignments and reported progress are rooted in standards, competencies, and Success Skills

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- Reporting is based on learner's progress, growth, and achievement rather than completion of tasks or mathematical averages over time
- Multiple and varied sources should be used as evidence of learning

## **Helpful Links and Articles**

[Elementary Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading Handbook](#), esp. see pp. 7-8

[Middle Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading Handbook](#), esp. see pp. 8-9

[High School Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading Handbook](#), esp. see pp. 15-16

*Formative Assessment and Descriptive Feedback for Learning and Grading*

[Courageous Conversation: Formative Assessment and Grading](#) - Andrew Miller

[Descriptive Grading Helps All Students Reach Proficiency](#) - EL Education

[Should Formative Assessments Be Graded?](#) - Liana Heitin

*Grading Related to Competency, Proficiency, and Standards*

[Grading Smarter, Not Harder, Ch.1 Grading](#) - Myron Dueck

[Making the Grade: What Benefits Students](#) - Thomas Guskey

[Proficiency-Based Grading](#) - Howard Johnston

[What Do I Need to Know about Competency-Based Grading](#) - Carla Evans

*Relationship between Rubrics and Grading*

[Deep Dive: The Case for the Single Point Rubric](#) - Riina Hirsch

[How to Turn Rubric Scores into Grades](#) - Jennifer Gonzales

[Meet the Single Point Rubric](#) - Jennifer Gonzales

[Rubrics](#) - Edutopia

[The Single Point Mastery Rubric](#) - Joy Nolan

[Developing High Quality Rubrics for Performance Based Assessments](#) - SCALE (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity)

*Use of Zeros in Grading*

[0 Alternatives](#) - Thomas Guskey

[Solving the Problem of Zeros in Grading](#) - Thomas Guskey

[Zero Influence - Zero Gained](#) - Tom Schimmer

<http://tguskey.com/assessments-and-grading-in-the-midst-of-a-pandemic/>

<http://tguskey.com/when-school-is-back-in-session-where-will-we-begin/>

<http://tguskey.com/why-should-we-allow-students-to-retake-assessments/>