

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Assessing Learning and Grading Framework

High School

2021-22



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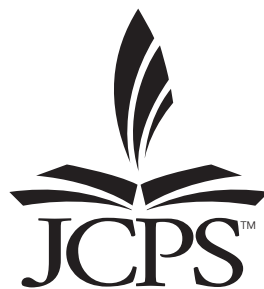


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Introduction

Assessing Learning and Grading Framework Purpose and Principles

The purpose of the *Assessing Learning and Grading Framework* for each level (elementary school, middle school, and high school) is to provide policies and procedures for how learning will be assessed, captured, and communicated. While the *Student Progression and Promotion Handbook* for each level provides policies and procedures for how learners progress through each level and are promoted, the *Framework* focuses on the guiding purposes, principles, and recommended practices for assessing learning and grading.

The *Assessing Learning and Grading Framework* is intended to build a bridge from the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Grading Guidance and our experiences during NTI to our Future State of learning and assessment. The NTI Grading Guidance was created by a broad-based committee of educators seeking to support learners in this new environment. A much stronger emphasis was placed on student progress and mastery, and many educators began to eliminate grades that were solely based on engagement and effort. As the 2021 Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading (SPP&G) Committee work began, each of the level sub-committees realized that they envision a future that primarily values competencies and mastery of standards. To this end, the SPP&G handbooks of the past have been divided into two documents, the *Student Progression and Promotion Handbook* and the *Assessing Learning and Grading Framework*. The *Framework* is focused on assessing learning and grading, with a look to the future, where we will examine and embrace competency-based (including standards-based) grading models.

Our Guiding Purposes for Assessing Learning and Grading:

- Monitoring student progress toward grade-/course-level, or above, standards and competencies
- Informing teaching to improve student learning
- Improving student ability to demonstrate, assess, and develop ownership of their learning
- Communicating the learning, growth, and achievements of learners to learners, parents, and stakeholders

Our Guiding Principles for Assessing Learning and Grading:

- Flexibility in meeting the needs of all learners
- Emphasis on learning, growth, and achievements
- Assessment that is learner-centered, authentic, and performance-based
- Grade reporting that is consistent, supports learning, and promotes communication amongst stakeholders
- Assessing progress and mastery will be done in a variety of ways that recognize the strengths and competencies of every learner.
- Communication of engagement will include descriptive feedback, and/or competency-based rubrics, that focus on standards and success skills.

Recommended Practices:

- Performance-based assessments that are learner-centered and authentic
- Descriptive feedback reflecting student engagement
- Student self-assessment and reflection
- Emphasis on progress and mastery
- Supporting and encouraging revisions without penalty
- Use of rubrics and criterion-based feedback
- Formative assessments to determine both learning and next steps in teaching
- Focus on what was learned, rather than how or when
- Timely communication to students and parents
- Elimination of “0” point grading due to the impact on overall grades

Key Terms

Learner-Centered Education

An approach to learning, teaching, and assessment in which the perspective, interests, needs, strengths, and agency of the learner are integral to the design of learning and assessment. This includes designing learning experiences and environments with every learner in mind and improving motivation, engagement, and ownership of their learning. Learners exercise voice and choice in their own learning and assessment and are partners in designing their learning journey. They actively grow competencies and mastery of knowledge and skills from academic disciplinary standards through a wide range of authentic, pedagogical approaches, including collaboration, discussion, group projects, and problem solving.

Competency-Based Learning

An approach to learning, teaching, and assessment where learners advance through demonstrated progress toward, and mastery of, key competencies (integrative and interdisciplinary knowledge, skills, and dispositions that can be found and applied within, but also between and beyond, academic disciplinary standards). Learners develop and hone these competencies—such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, and an academic or growth mindset (for example, our JCPs Success Skills)—over time and through applying them in real-world tasks, contexts, and/or with authentic purposes. This approach often includes a flexible pace, sequence, progression, and/or means in which learners can demonstrate they have reached key milestones along the path to demonstrating mastery of key competencies.

Standards-Based Learning and Grading

An approach to learning, teaching, assessment, and grading that is based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of academic disciplinary standards. Learning and progress are determined in comparison to these standards (concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do within an academic discipline). The criteria used to determine progress toward “meeting a standard” is defined in advance, often in a rubric, and teachers will evaluate learning progress and academic achievements in relation to these criteria. Grades for behaviors and work habits are important but are often reported separately from academic grades.

Authentic Performance Assessment

These are assessments in which learners demonstrate learning by applying their competency, knowledge, and skills by creating products and performances that relate to the enterprises of the real, professional, and civic world.

Educators and students will often use collaboratively developed purposes or goals, scoring guides, rubrics, and other methods to evaluate whether the performance or product demonstrates that students have learned to the expected standards. Authentic assessments not only are useful for determining what has been learned previously but also are themselves a meaningful learning experience. Some common authentic performance assessments include defense of learning, capstone and community-service projects, student-led portfolio conferences, exhibitions of learning, and many types of authentic writing.

What Does This Mean for Learners, Educators, and Parents?

It means moving away from a traditional grading system that:	It means moving toward a competencies-/standards-based assessment approach that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is primarily designed to communicate how learners do overall, when compared to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is designed to communicate the level of learning and/or progress made in relation to the criteria of many standards and competencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often does not communicate criteria for success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has clearly identified and publicly communicated criteria for success in standards and competencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converts learning to points/percentages on a 100 percent grading scale that does not explicitly communicate the learning and/or progress toward demonstrating standards and competencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly and transparently communicates learning and/or progress toward demonstrating competencies and standards via criterion-based rubrics.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes incomplete work and the use of zeros, which results in very low scores and emphasizes task completion more than accurately reflecting learning and/or progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly and consistently communicates the level of learning and/or progress in a few criterion-based categories, avoiding the masking and distorting effects of averaging and using zeros.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines and averages a variety of learning achievements with effort, engagement, behavior, and possibly late penalties and/or extra credit to determine a final composite grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports a variety of DISTINGUISHABLE learning achievements, which build into milestones along the path of progressing toward mastery, while describing learner engagement and/or behaviors separately.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes WHEN a task is completed/turned in without communicating WHAT learning or progress has occurred (with less flexibility in HOW learning/progress is demonstrated by the learner). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes WHAT learning or progress toward a standard/competency has been demonstrated (with more flexibility in HOW and WHEN the learning/progress is demonstrated by the learner).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceives of time as the constant and learning as the variable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceives of learning as the constant and time as the variable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses learners more on “What did I get?” and “How did I do compared to other students?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses learners more on “What did I learn?” and “What can I do?”

Board of Education Policies

Students With Disabilities (Board Policy 08.22)

In cases which involve students with disabilities, the procedures mandated by federal and state law for students with disabilities shall be followed.

Notification of Student Performance (Board Policy 08.221)

Parents/guardians shall be notified annually of the procedures used to evaluate the academic performance of students. If a student is exhibiting unsatisfactory performance or is experiencing changes in performance, parents/guardians must be notified in a timely manner prior to the distribution of the progress report or report card.

Student Conferences (Board Policy 08.221)

Teachers shall be available for conferences requested by students. Teachers may initiate such conferences without a student request when the need is evident.

Parents shall be encouraged to attend two (2) parent-teacher conferences annually.

Parent Conferences (Board Policy 03.1332 and 08.221)

Certified employees shall be available for conferences requested by parents. Reports to parents shall include provision for a parent or teacher request for a conference. Such conferences shall be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time to the extent possible. The Board shall endeavor to provide for parent-teacher conferences within the school calendar.

Homework (Board Policy 08.211)

Each school shall establish guidelines for out-of-school assignments. These guidelines shall encompass amounts and types of reasonable homework assignments by grade level.

Homework shall be assigned for the improvement of learning. Curriculum-related assignments shall not be used for disciplinary purposes. Assignments should have meaning for the student, should be clear and specific, and should be of an amount and type that may be accomplished in a reasonable period of time.

High School Grading and Transcripts

Explanation of Academic Grades

The following is approved by the Board and shall be used by schools for the assessment of individual student progress:

- | | | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| A | Above Standards | 90–100% |
| B | Meets Standards | 80–89% |
| C | Approaching Standards..... | 70–79% |
| D | Below Standards | 60–69% |
| U | Substantially Below Standards..... | Below 60% |
| I..... | (Incomplete) Incomplete work due to absence must be completed and the grade recorded within the following timeline: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fifteen school days following the end of the first-semester grading cycle (ten school days for first- or second-trimester cycles)• Before the first student day of the next school year following the second-semester/third-trimester grading cycle• If work is not completed in that time, the grade is recorded as a U. | |
| W | (Withdrawal) Students who withdraw from school and do not complete a course are assigned a W. | |

Standards-Based Grading

For schools using standards-based grading, the following conversion chart should be used to connect the standards-based grading scale to the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) grading scale:

Letter Grade	Standards-Based Grading Marks	Grading Scale	Performance Description
A	4	90–100	Above Standards
B	3	80–89	Meets Standards
C	2	70–79	Approaching Standards
D	1	60–69	Below Standards
U	-	Below 60	Substantially Below Standards

Categories of Academic Grades and Descriptive Feedback

Teachers will use a **balanced approach** by using two grading categories (Progression and Mastery) to determine grades for each credit-bearing term (semester/trimester/yearlong). Teachers will also offer students descriptive feedback regarding student engagement with standards and success skills. Academic grades are based on progression toward and mastery of standards and success skills and reflect what the student knows and is able to do. Each of the two categories must be represented in grades, and each category shall include a variety of evidence. Participation points are not attendance points, and academic grades are not reduced as punishment for misconduct.

Categories of Academic Grades (must include both)	Evidence/Assignments for Each Category (Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:)
Student Progression Toward Standards and Success Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall count for between 10% and 30% of the total academic grade 	Homework, problem solving, class assignments, quizzes, anecdotal records, projects, student self-assessment, demonstrations of learning, and/or other measures of student progress
Student Mastery of Standards and Success Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall count for between 70% and 90% of the total academic grade 	Tests/Proficiency assessments, performance assessments, projects (e.g., project or problem-based), demonstrations of learning, authentic assessments, presentations, defenses, and/or other measures of student mastery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers must use both categories listed above (Progression and Mastery) when setting up elements in their gradebook, Infinite Campus (IC), or other electronic gradebook. • No one assignment can count for more than one-third of an entire category (e.g., Progression and Mastery). 	

Descriptive Feedback	Examples of Evidence/Assignments (Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:)
Student Engagement With Standards and Success Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall be communicated through descriptive feedback 	Participation, group work, class discussion, journals/logs/notebooks, projects, teacher observation, student reflection, demonstrations of learning, and/or other measures of student interaction

Each teacher must supply a copy of their grading procedures/syllabi to the students, parents/guardians, and the principal/designee. The IC gradebook should also align with the *Assessing Learning and Grading Framework* and syllabus. Parents/Guardians may obtain information about grading procedures from their child, through online resources, at Open House, and during parent-teacher conferences.

It is recommended that teachers consider grading with a criterion 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 on giving ongoing, 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. Teachers should consider using an “Incomplete” indication if necessary.

Grade Point Average

A Grade Point Average (GPA) includes grades earned in all high school courses. GPAs are derived from quality points that are assigned to letter grades as listed below. A student's GPA is equal to the sum of the total quality points earned, divided by the total number of high school courses completed (attempted credits).

A...4 points **B**...3 points **C**...2 points **D**...1 point **U**...0 points

Weighted Grades: College Credit and Equivalent Courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP) from the College Board, International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) from Cambridge International Education, and Dual Credit will be weighted on a sliding 5.0 scale as follows:

Grade Quality Points

A...5.00 **B**...3.75 **C**...2.50 **D**...1.25 **U**...0

Both the weighted and the unweighted GPAs will appear on the official transcript. JCPS does not individually rank senior students in each school. Schools are encouraged to identify ranking by percentile for colleges and universities (e.g., top 10 percent). Any student earning a weighted cumulative high school GPA of 4.0 or greater qualifies for valedictorian.

Grade Reporting

The chart below describes what type of grades students earn by schedule type or course length for each of the six grade reports distributed districtwide. Progress grades are cumulative from the start of the term to the grading period reported. A final grade is a cumulative report of students' progress from the start of the term and represents credit earned, and a final grade appears on the Permanent Record (transcript).

Schedule or Course Type			
Grading Period	Trimester	Semester	Yearlong
1st 6 Weeks	Progress Grade	Progress Grade	Progress Grade
2nd 6 Weeks	Final Grade (0.5 Credit)	Progress Grade	Progress Grade
3rd 6 Weeks	Progress Grade	Final Grade (0.5 Credit)	Progress Grade
4th 6 Weeks	Final Grade (0.5 Credit)	Progress Grade	Progress Grade
5th 6 Weeks	Progress Grade	Progress Grade	Progress Grade
6th 6 Weeks	Final Grade (0.5 Credit)	Final Grade (0.5 Credit)	Final Grade (1 Credit)

- Courses at traditional high schools may follow different grading patterns. Please check the school handbook for details.
- Pursuant with the joint Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Dual Credit Policy, the postsecondary institution's grade reporting timeline will apply to dual-credit/enrollment courses and be used by the secondary school awarding credit. The instructor must detail the grade reporting timeline on the course syllabus. JCPS Dual Credit instructors on the high school campus must report progress grades as outlined above. This includes informing parents when students exhibit unsatisfactory performance.
- All teachers are required to inform parents when students exhibit unsatisfactory performance as described below:
 - If a student is exhibiting unsatisfactory performance or is experiencing changes in performance, parents/guardians must be notified by the teacher at least one week prior to the end of the six-week grading cycle. After notification, a verbal or written plan for improvement must be developed in cooperation with the teacher, the student, and the parent/guardian.
 - Attendance records or reports should include documentation of tardies to school and class.
 - Local schools may use additional reporting material to fit the needs of the community.

- If a parent/guardian wishes to appeal a grade, the principal will inform the parent/guardian of the appeal process, which is as follows: Concern about any grade should be directed to the student’s teacher first. If the concern is not resolved, a conference with a counselor/assistant principal is scheduled. If it is still not resolved, a conference with the principal is scheduled. The Program Services Plan and grading policies for English Learners (ELs) should be followed. See page 10 for additional considerations and requirements for ELs.
- Students with disabilities: Depending on the service-delivery model, academic progress, and social development, grades are assigned by the Exceptional Child Education (ECE) teacher, the Comprehensive Program (CP) teacher, or both, according to the following:
 - a. Grades are assigned by the CP teacher when classroom instruction is delivered in a CP classroom without ECE.
 - b. The ECE and CP teachers collaborate to assign grades when classroom instruction is delivered in a CP classroom with co-teaching models taught jointly by CP and ECE teachers.
 - c. Grades are assigned by the ECE teacher when classroom instruction is delivered in the ECE classroom.

Report card grades are to reflect these instructional and assessment accommodations without limiting the student from earning the highest grade in the content area. Students shall not receive grades of D or U on assignments solely based on their English proficiency level. A student could receive a D or U only if the student’s lack of performance on appropriately modified or accommodated work warrants such a grade.

Exceptional Child Education Program

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) does not address standards of promotion or retention for students with disabilities. Generally, IDEA does not require the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) to make the decision on promotion or retention. Determining if a student with disabilities will be promoted or retained shall be a collaborative process with the parent/guardian, school administrator, special education teacher, and others who are knowledgeable about the student’s educational needs and disability. A retention or promotion decision is not the same as placement decisions for IDEA purposes. Students with Individual Education Programs (IEP) are to receive the specially designed instruction and supplementary aids and services as described within the IEP. If a student with a disability is not making progress, the ARC may need to reconvene to determine if additional instruction or supports are needed. Students with disabilities are to be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Nothing in this handbook replaces or substitutes any student rights as guaranteed by IDEA or state law. Students with a disability will always be entitled to the rights and protections afforded to them by state and federal law.

For information regarding students with disabilities, including students in the referral process, please refer to the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) *Exceptional Child Education Procedures Manual* available on the JCPS website, 707 KAR 1:002 to 707 KAR 1:380, and Federal Regulation 34 F.R. Part 300.

Parents/Guardians may also request a copy of the above information by contacting their school’s administration or the Chief of Exceptional Childhood Education at VanHoose Education Center, 3332 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40218 or at **(502) 485-3890**.

Additional Considerations and Requirements for English Learners

Classroom teachers design and modify instruction, assignments, and tests based on students' English language proficiency levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking as determined by the English Language Proficiency Screener or Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) assessment.

ELs receive instructional and assessment accommodations in the classroom while being instructed with Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) on grade level. A student's Program Services Plan (PSP) outlines the instructional and assessment accommodations that must be implemented.

The World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards are to be used as a tool to provide greater access to KAS. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors highlight examples of what ELs can do at each English proficiency level. It is a grade-specific resource designed to guide teachers in planning meaningful activities with ELs, including Newcomer ELs (ELs who are in their first or second calendar year of enrollment in a U.S. school and who score below a 2.5 overall ACCESS score).

Federal guidance states that ELs, including Newcomers, are to be provided standards-aligned instruction that is "rigorous, grade-level appropriate, and provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds," including assessment and instructional accommodations.

Report card grades are to reflect these instructional and assessment accommodations without limiting the student from earning the highest grade in the content area. Students shall not receive grades of D or U on assignments solely based on their English proficiency level. A student could receive a D or U only if the student's

lack of performance on appropriately modified or accommodated work warrants such a grade.

Glossary

Advanced Placement—A nationally recognized, college-level curriculum developed and monitored by the College Board

Advance Program—A program designed to provide instruction for academically gifted and talented students

AICE—Advanced International Certificate of Education is awarded by Cambridge International Education for coursework completed and passing culminating exams.

ARC—Admissions and Release Committee

Assessment—The evaluation of progress and/or achievement made by an individual or group

Dual Credit—When a course, taken either on the high school or college campus, earns the student both high school and college credit simultaneously

Dual Enrollment—Any scenario when a student is enrolled at two institutions at the same time and may spend part of their day/week at each institution

ECE—Exceptional Child Education

EL—English Learner

ESL—English as a Second Language

ESS—Extended School Services

GPA—Grade point average

IB—International Baccalaureate—A nonprofit educational foundation that supports and monitors curricula and philosophies that help students develop the intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills to live, learn, and work in a rapidly globalizing world

IEP—Individual Education Program

ILP—Individual Learning Plan

Industry Certification—A designation earned by a person, typically by examination or performance, to ensure their qualification to perform a job or task

JCBE—Jefferson County Board of Education

JCPS—Jefferson County Public Schools

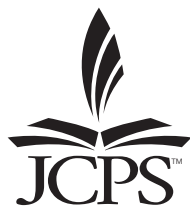
KAS—Kentucky Academic Standards

KDE—Kentucky Department of Education

KEES—Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship

PSP—Program Services Plan

SBDM—School-Based Decision Making



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