

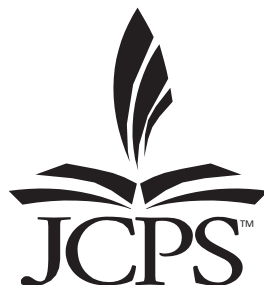
Jefferson County Public Schools

Middle School

Assessing Learning and

Grading Framework

2021-2022



Contents

Introduction	2
Board of Education Policies	5
Promotion and Retention (Board Policy 08.22)	5
Certificate and Transfers (Board Policy 08.22)	5
Diplomas (Board Policy 08.22)	5
Students with Disabilities (Board Policy 08.221)	5
Student Conferences (Board Policy 08.221)	5
Parent Conferences (Board Policy 03.1332 and 08.221)	5
Homework (Board Policy 08.211)	5
Notification of Student Performance (08.221)	
Graduation Requirements (Board Policy 08.113)	5
Performance-Based Credits (Board Policy 08.113)	6
Graduation Exercises (Board Policy 08.113)	6
Other Provisions (Board Policy 08.113)	6
Early Graduation Certificate (Board Policy 08.113)	7
Education Goals	7
Procedures for Middle School	8
Philosophy	8
Practices	8
Elements of Academic Grades	8
Explanation of Academic Grades	9
Conduct Grades	9
Grade Reporting	10
Exceptional Child Education Program	10
Additional Considerations and Requirements for English Learners	11
Progression Within Middle School	11
Student Support and Assistance	12
Transition Centers	12
Common Digital Learning Platform	12
Assessment Benchmarks and Promotion to High School	13
Courses Offered in Middle School for High School Credit	13
Early Graduation From High School	14
Procedure for Appeal of Retention Decisions in Middle School	15
Transitional Promotion	15
Individual Learning Plan	15
Transfer of Students—Grade Reporting	15
Evaluation of Non-JCPS Transcripts	16
Evaluation of Non-JCPS Transcripts for Advance Program Placement	16
Transition	16
Glossary	17
Midyear Status Notification	19

Introduction

Assessing Learning & Grading Framework Purpose and Principles

The purpose of the JCPS Assessing Learning & 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 JCPS 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 2021-2022 Assessing Learning & Grading Framework is intended to build a bridge from the 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 & 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 & 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

- Monitor student progress toward grade/course level, or above, standards and competencies
- Inform teaching to improve student learning
- Improve student ability to demonstrate, assess and develop ownership of their learning
- Communicate 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, 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, 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 is 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

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 are not only useful for determining what has been learned previously, they 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?

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>It means moving away from . . . a traditional grading system that</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>It means moving towards . . . a competencies/standards-based assessment approach that</u></p>
<p><u>is primarily designed to communicate how learners do overall, when compared to each other.</u></p>	<p><u>is designed to communicate the level of learning and/or progress made in relation to the criteria of many standards and competencies.</u></p>
<p><u>often does not communicate criteria for success.</u></p>	<p><u>has clearly identified and publicly communicated criteria for success in standards and competencies.</u></p>
<p><u>converts learning to points/percentages on a 100% grading scale that does not explicitly communicate the learning and/or progress toward demonstrating standards and competencies.</u></p>	<p><u>clearly and transparently communicates learning and/or progress toward demonstrating competencies and standards via criterion-based rubrics.</u></p>
<p><u>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.</u></p>	<p><u>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.”</u></p>
<p><u>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.</u></p>	<p><u>reports a variety of distinguishable learning achievements, that build into milestones along the path of progressing toward mastery, while describing learner engagement and/or behaviors separately.</u></p>
<p><u>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).</u></p>	<p><u>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).</u></p>
<p><u>conceives of time as the constant and learning as the variable.</u></p>	<p><u>conceives of learning as the constant and time as the variable.</u></p>
<p><u>focuses learners more on “what did I get” and “how did I do compared to other students?”</u></p>	<p><u>focuses learners more on “what did I learn” and “what can I do?”</u></p>

Board of Education Policies

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.

Parent Conferences (Board Policy 03.1332 and 08.221)

Certified employees shall be available for conferences requested by parents. Reports to parents shall include a 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.

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

Homework (Board Policy 08.211)

~~The Board of Education shall approve the assignment of homework as an aid to the program of instruction when such assignments are clear and definite and originate in classroom activities. Homework assignments shall be evaluated by the teacher.~~

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.

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.

Categories Elements of Academic Grades

Teachers will use a **balanced approach** by using ~~three two~~-grading categories ((~~Engagement~~, Progression, and Mastery) to determine grades for each course. Teachers will also offer students descriptive feedback regarding student engagement with standards and success skills. Academic grades are based on standards and reflect what the student knows and is able to do. Each of the ~~three two~~ categories must be represented, and each category shall include a variety of evidence/assignments. Participation points are not attendance points, and academic grades are not reduced as punishment for misconduct or inappropriate behaviors.

Categories of Academic Grades (must include both all three)	Evidence/Assignments for Each Category (Examples include, but are not limited to, the following.)
<p>Student Engagement With Standards and Success Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall count for no more than 20% of the total academic grade 	<p>Participation, group work, class discussion, journals/ logs/notebooks, projects, teacher observation, student reflection, demonstrations of learning, defenses, and/or other evidence of student interaction</p>
<p>Student Progression Toward Standards and Success Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall count for <u>between 10% and no more than 30%</u> of the total academic grade. 	<p>Homework, problem solving, class assignments, quizzes, anecdotal records, projects, student self-assessment, demonstrations of learning, defenses, and/or other evidence of student progress</p>
<p>Student Mastery of Standards and Success Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall count for <u>between no more than 70% and 90%</u> of the total academic grade. 	<p>Tests/Proficiency assessments, projects (e.g., project or problem-based), performance assessments, demonstrations of learning, authentic assessments, presentations/ defenses, or other evidence of student mastery</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers must use both all three categories listed above when setting up their gradebook, Infinite Campus, or other electronic gradebook. • No one assignment can count for more than one-third of an entire category (Engagement, Progression, and Mastery). 	

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

Each teacher must supply a copy of his or her grading procedures/syllabi to the students, parents/guardians, and the principal/designee. The Infinite Campus gradebook should also align with the [Assessment of Learning and Grading Framework SPP&G Handbook](#) 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 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. Consider using an “incomplete” indication if necessary.

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 two weeks of the end of the grading period or final grade unless the student is enrolled in Extended School Services (ESS). If the student has not completed the work within that time period, the student's grade is recorded as a U.

Final grades are determined by averaging the quality point equivalents of the six grading period grades during the school year. Decimals of 0.5 or greater are rounded up to the nearest whole number. Decimals of less than 0.5 are rounded down. Quality point equivalents are as follows:

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

Additionally, for each yearlong course, students must pass a minimum of four of six grading periods (no more than two U's). For all courses of a shorter duration, the final grade is determined by averaging the quality point average of each grading period. A final examination grade may be used only to increase a student's final grade. Permanent records include final grades and attendance for the year.

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 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

Conduct Grades

Conduct grades represent the extent to which the student does the following:

- Shows self-control and self-discipline
- Respects the rights and feelings of others
- Accepts responsibility for his or her own actions
- Cooperates in group activities

Conduct is not a component of the academic grade. Teacher judgment of student conduct in individual classrooms is indicated according to the following scale:

S—Satisfactory **NI**—Needs Improvement **U**—Unsatisfactory

Grade Reporting

Report card grades are determined at the end of each six-week grading period. Grades should be posted to the transcript within two weeks of the grade report distribution.

Each six-week grade represents a report of all work completed during that grading period. If a student is exhibiting unsatisfactory performance or is experiencing a decline in performance, the teacher must notify parents/guardians by phone or in writing at least ~~two weeks~~ one week prior to the end of the grading period. Any of the following may be used for this purpose:

- Phone Log
- School-Designed Progress Report
- Student Summary Report (Infinite Campus)
- JCPS MS (Middle School) Progress Grade Report (Infinite Campus)

After notification of a deficiency, the teacher must develop an acceleration plan in collaboration with the student and parent/guardian.

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.

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, the 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 ~~framework handbook~~ replaces or substitutes any student rights as guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (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 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.

[707 KAR 1:290 Free Appropriate Public Education \(FAPE\)](#)

~~Free Appropriate Public Education. (1) AN LEA shall make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to all children with disabilities aged three (3) to twenty-one (21) residing within its district's boundaries who have not received a high school diploma, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) school days in a school year. FAPE shall be provided to each child with a disability even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course and is advancing from grade to grade based on the child's unique needs and not on the child's disability. An LEA shall not be required to provide FAPE to a student eighteen (18) years old or older, who is placed in an adult correctional facility if, in the educational placement prior to placement in the correctional facility, the student was not identified as a child with a disability and did not have an IEP.~~

[707 KAR 1:002–707 KAR 1:380](#)

- ~~• 707 KAR 1:002 Definitions~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:270 Kentucky special education mentor program~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:290 Free Appropriate Public Education~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:300 Child find, evaluation, and reevaluation~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:310 Determination of eligibility~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:320 Individual Education Program~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:340 Procedural safeguards/complaints~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:350 Placement decisions~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:360 Confidentiality of information~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:370 Children with disabilities in private schools~~
- ~~• 707 KAR 1:380 Monitoring and recovery of funds~~

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. ([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 the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) assessment.

English Learners (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.

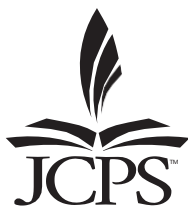
The World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards are to be used as a tool to provide greater access to the [Kentucky Academic Standards \(KAS\)](#). The WIDA Can Do Descriptors highlight examples of what ELs can do at each English proficiency level. It 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 United States 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

Advance Program	A program designed to provide instruction for academically talented students
ARC	Admissions and Release Committee
Assessment	The evaluation of progress and/or achievement made by an individual or group
ECE	Exceptional Child Education
EL	English Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESS	Extended School Services
IEP	Individual Education Program
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
KEES	Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship
KERA	Kentucky Education Reform Act—1990 legislation enacted to restructure schools in the Commonwealth of Kentucky
MTSS	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
PSP	Program Services Plan
SBDM	School-Based Decision Making



www.jefferson.kyschools.us

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer Offering Equal Educational Opportunities