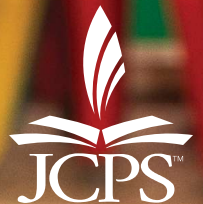


JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Assessing Learning and Grading Framework

Elementary School

2024-25



Jefferson County Public Schools

**Elementary School
Assessing Learning and
Grading Framework
2024-25**

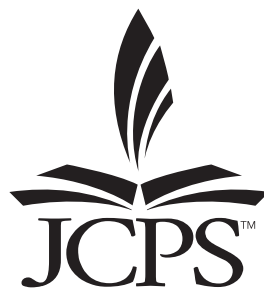


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Introduction

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 our current policy and practice to our Future State of learning and assessment. As the 2021 Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading (SPP&G) Committee work began, each of the level subcommittees realized that they envision a future that primarily values competencies and mastery of standards. To this end, the SPP&G handbooks are 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. This framework will be updated each year as the District takes additional steps toward that vision.

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, families, 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 families
- 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 experiences 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 Families?

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"> 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.

Parent Conferences (Board Policy 03.1332 and 0.8221)

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.

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

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.

Category of Academic Grades

Academic grades shall provide evidence of what students know and are able to do. Academic grades shall represent student learning and growth toward acquisition of grade-level or course-level academic standards and competencies. To that end, grading practices shall focus on standards and competencies—not on the completion of tasks or activities.

Student Mastery: Since mastery of grade-level standards and success skills is an end-of-year goal, academic grades assigned throughout the school year measure progress toward mastery. **Students shall have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery without penalty.**

Evidence and Artifacts

The artifacts used to provide evidence of student progress toward mastery shall depend on the academic standards and/or competencies being assessed. Some examples of appropriate artifacts include, but are not limited to, the following: Anecdotal notes, class assignments, demonstrations of learning, exit tickets, performance assessments, presentations, proficiency assessments, quizzes, writing samples, etc.

Rubrics and Success Criteria

Regardless of the artifacts used as evidence of student progress toward mastery, students shall understand the success criteria—what they must say, do, make, or write in order to demonstrate sufficient progress. The use of a criterion rubric with clear expectations provides success criteria.

Grading Practices to Advance Learning

The purpose of grading is to do the following:

- Monitor student progress toward mastery of grade-level or course-level standards and competencies
- Inform teaching to improve student learning
- Improve student ability to demonstrate, assess, and develop ownership of their learning
- Communicate student learning, growth, and achievement to students, families, and stakeholders

With these purposes in mind, teachers shall:

- Provide **descriptive feedback** designed to advance learning
- Provide **multiple opportunities** for students to demonstrate learning related to a specific skill or competency
- Provide **multiple ways** (different types of artifacts and/or assessments) for students to demonstrate learning
- Provide **equitable access** and opportunities for students to complete assignments and assessments
- Provide **optional** homework as an opportunity for practice, but not as evidence for a grade
- Use a designation of “incomplete” for missing assignments and shall **not** assign grades of zero

Evidence of student learning and growth is to be reported based on student work and/or performance that demonstrates progress toward and/or acquisition of standards and competencies (Success Skills) and thus reflects what the student has learned and/or is able to do. Teachers will also offer students descriptive feedback regarding student engagement with competencies (Success Skills) and standards, but student engagement is not included in the determination of a grade. Student learning and growth must be represented with a variety of sources and kinds of evidence/assignments.

- Participation should be noted in descriptive feedback only, and academic grades are not reduced as punishment for misconduct or inappropriate behaviors, including submitting late work or not having supplies.
- These behaviors should be reflected in the student’s conduct report.
- Teachers must ensure that all students have equitable access and opportunities to complete class and homework and provide support for students to overcome barriers.
- A copy of the teacher’s reporting procedures must be provided to students, parents/guardians, and the principal/designee.

Category of Academic Grades	Evidence/Assignments Toward Mastery Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
Student Mastery of Standards, Competencies, and Success Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall count for 100% of the total academic grade. 	Projects (e.g., project or problem-based), demonstrations of learning, authentic assessments, presentations, defenses, other evidence of learning toward mastery, or tests/proficiency assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one assignment can count for more than 20% of the entire Mastery category. Students should be afforded multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning and mastery, with some tasks and/or assignments able to be revised and resubmitted after feedback and/or practice to demonstrate mastery. 	

Conduct Reports

Conduct reports provide information regarding 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 their 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

Explanation of Learner Progress

This handbook is reviewed and approved annually by the Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE) and shall be used by schools for the assessment of individual student progress. Student progress for core subjects is reported using the following performance codes:

Primary Program (Kindergarten–Grade Three)

- O..... Outstanding—work consistently meets or exceeds grade-level expectations/standards.
- S..... Satisfactory—work meets grade-level expectations/standards.
- NI..... Needs Improvement—improvement is needed to meet grade-level expectations/standards.
- U/I..... Unsatisfactory/Incomplete—work does not meet grade-level expectations/standards or there is insufficient evidence to assess student progress.
- N/A..... Not Applicable—not taught this nine-week period

Intermediate Program (Grades Four and Five)

- A.....Consistently Meets or Exceeds Standards.....90–100%
- B.....Meets Standards80–89%
- C.....Approaching Standards.....70–79%
- D.....Below Standards60–69%
- U/I..... Substantially Below Standards/Insufficient EvidenceBelow 60%

Student progress for special areas is reported using the following performance codes:

Health and Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and Other Special Areas (Primary–Grade Five)

O Outstanding—work consistently meets or exceeds grade-level expectations/standards.

S Satisfactory—work meets grade-level expectations/standards.

NI Needs Improvement—improvement is needed to meet grade-level expectations/standards.

U/I Unsatisfactory—work does not meet grade-level expectations/standards or there is insufficient evidence to assess student progress.

N/A Not Applicable—not taught this nine-week period

*Incomplete Resolution Deadline—All incompletes must be updated/resolved to academic grades prior to the conclusion of the following grading period or if a student withdraws, whichever comes first. Incompletes are not allowable during the final grading period of the school year.

Explanation of Process Codes

Primary and Intermediate

4 Consistently and independently

3 Frequently

2 Sometimes

1 Rarely

Standards-Based Reporting

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

Letter Grade	Standards-Based Reporting Scale	Grading Scale	Performance Description
A	4	90–100	Consistently Meets or Exceeds Standards
B	3	80–89	Meets Standards
C	2	70–79	Approaching Standards
D	1	60–69	Below Standards
U/I	-	Below 60	Substantially Below Standards or Insufficient Evidence

Competency and Standards-Based Reporting

Philosophy

In order to maintain a collaborative relationship within a school's learning community, the following process should be followed when making significant changes to a school's report card in order to report progress on competencies and standards:

- 1) The principal shall form a report card committee with a representative membership, including school-based educators and parents/guardians.
- 2) The report card committee shall work with the District-based Assessing Learning and Grading Framework team and Teaching and Learning leaders to assess school values and utilize a competency and/or standards-based progress reporting system, parent and family communication plans, and other supporting structures.
- 3) The committee's decisions will be subject to the approval of District leadership, as applicable, and does not supersede JCBE Policies, administrative procedures, and reporting formats.

Procedure

Teachers are encouraged to use the Standards-Based Grading Scale and performance descriptors before converting to a percentage-based grading scale.

Communication with students and families concerning student progress is critical. Report card grades are determined and recorded at the end of weeks 9, 18, 27, and 36 of the school year. Grades are posted to students' transcripts so receiving schools can access data regarding students who enroll in a new school. The JCPS District-approved report card is distributed to students following every nine-week grading period. Explanatory comments shall accompany all below-standard grades on the report card. If a student is not making satisfactory progress, parents/guardians must be notified by phone or in writing by the teacher at least two weeks prior to the end of the grading period. Parent contact must be documented by the teacher. An intervention plan must also be developed and implemented to assist struggling students.

Concerns regarding a grade are to be directed to the teacher first. If the concern is not resolved, the parent/guardian shall request a meeting with the teacher and a counselor/assistant principal to discuss the concern. If the concern is not resolved at the meeting, a meeting with the principal is scheduled. The principal will review documentation and inform the parent/guardian of the decision regarding the appeal. This is the final step in the grade reporting appeal process. In cases that involve students with disabilities, the procedures mandated by federal and state law for students with disabilities shall be followed.

Once posted, a grade may be changed in collaboration and consultation between the teacher and a school administrator. The parent/guardian shall be notified of any grade change.

The Individual Education Program (IEP) for Exceptional Child Education (ECE) students and Program Services Plans (PSPs) for Multilingual Learners (MLs) may be considered in the appeal.

In addition to completing report cards, teachers collect, maintain, and analyze data to determine if a student with disabilities is making expected progress toward IEP goals using the IEP progress report. This progress report is sent to parents/guardians on the same report card schedule as specified by the District for all students.

Explanation of Academic Grades— Traditional Program Option

Reporting of student progress for students enrolled in the District's Traditional School Program may be based on the following key:

EP Excellent Progress

GP Good Progress

SP Satisfactory Progress

LP Little Progress

PB Progress Below Age-Appropriate Expectations

I Incomplete—an incomplete may be utilized if a student has not had ample opportunity to access and/or demonstrate learning of a competency, skill, and/or standard.*

For **grades four and five**, academic grades are based on a percentage score. An explanatory message to parents/guardians accompanies any grade below C.

A 90–100%

B 80–89%

C 70–79%

D 60–69%

U (Unsatisfactory) Below 60%

I Incomplete—an incomplete may be utilized if a student has not had ample opportunity to access and/or demonstrate learning of a competency, skill, and/or standard.*

Grades for conduct, work and study habits, and participation in special area classes (health and physical education [PE], visual and performing arts, and other special area classes in grades four and five) are designated as follows:

O Outstanding

S Satisfactory

NI Needs Improvement

U Unsatisfactory

I Incomplete—an incomplete may be utilized if a student has not had ample opportunity to access and/or demonstrate learning of a competency, skill, and/or standard.*

Students with an NI, D, or U report card grade in any core content area shall receive clarifying comments in Areas for Growth or other report card comment area.

Report card grades are to reflect Program Services Plan (PSP) 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.

*Incomplete Resolution **Deadline**—All incompletes must be updated/resolved to academic grades prior to the conclusion of the following grading period or if a student withdraws, whichever comes first. Incompletes are not allowable during the final grading period of the school year.

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. If the student is on track for a regular diploma, the ARC does not determine if the student will be retained. For students who are on Alternate Assessment or those who plan on staying enrolled until 21 years of age, please contact the school's Exceptional Child Education Implementation Coach for further information. 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 IEPs 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 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 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 Child Education at **(502) 485-3890**, VanHoose Education Center, 3332 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40218.

Additional Considerations and Requirements for Multilingual Learners

Teachers design, scaffold, 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.

JCPS believes in an asset-based approach to education. "As part of its asset-based belief system, WIDA uses the term 'multilingual learners' to describe all students who come in contact with and/or interact in languages in addition to English on a regular basis....in an effort to encourage the field to use terminology that is asset-based and inclusive." (WIDA, 2020, p. 11). JCPS believes this shift in terminology is important as well. The term *Multilingual Learner* (ML) will be used throughout this document; however, in some instances in this document, the term *English Learner* (EL) is used for policy purposes.

MLs receive instructional and assessment accommodations in the classroom to support access to grade-level standards. 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 Framework is to be used as a tool to support the integration of language and content. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors highlight examples of what MLs can do at each English proficiency level. It is a grade-specific resource designed to guide teachers in planning meaningful activities with MLs, including Newcomer MLs (MLs who are in their first calendar year or less of enrollment in a U.S. school **and** who scored less than 2.0 composite on the WIDA Screener or ACCESS for ELLs).

Federal guidance requires that MLs, including Newcomers, shall have equal access to high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential (joint guidance from the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education). This is achieved by providing grade-appropriate, rigorous, and standard-aligned instruction with differentiation and scaffolds.

Report card grades are to reflect PSP 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.

Additional Considerations for Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth

Consistent with JCPS Administrative Procedure 09.12 AP.25, 704 KAR 7:090 and KRS 156.160(p), to the extent feasible, the District shall support a homeless child or unaccompanied youth by awarding and accepting credit, including partial credit, for all coursework satisfactorily completed by a student while enrolled at another school.

Requesting and Sending Transfer Records

Upon enrollment of a student who has been identified as a homeless child or unaccompanied youth, as defined in Board Policy 09.12, the receiving school shall:

1. Request the student's entire education file from the sending school, including cumulative records, full or partial credits, special education records, homeless and foster care status, and immunization records. If these records are not received within the timeline set forth in this section, the receiving school shall follow up with the sending school to ensure their prompt submission;
2. Immediately notify the school homeless liaison and school counselor of the student's enrollment; and
3. Notify the student and the parent/guardian of the name, contact information, office location, and hours of the school homeless liaison.

A sending public school in Kentucky, upon receiving a request, shall provide all student records within the student data system maintained by the Kentucky Department of Education by the end of the working day on the day of receipt of the request. If a record provided to the new school is incomplete, the sending school shall provide the completed record within three (3) business days of the original request.

A sending non-public school or school in another state, upon receiving a request, shall be asked to provide a copy of the youth's entire education file within five (5) business days of receipt of the request to ensure appropriate placement and scheduling.

Student records shall not be withheld from the requesting school or school district because of any fees, fines, or books owed by the student or their caregiver.

Evaluation of Incoming Transfer Records

A student who is identified as a homeless child or youth as defined in Board Policy 09.12 shall be evaluated based on:

1. Available school records;
2. Information provided by the child or the adult enrolling them; and
3. The student's age.

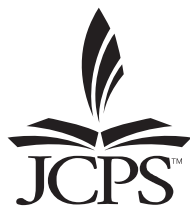
If records are unavailable, a student shall be immediately enrolled and placed in classes. The school principal may extend the evaluation timeline when appropriate and in the best interest of the student.

Participation in Nonacademic and Extracurricular Activities

Homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria shall have an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, including, but not limited to, extracurricular athletics, intramural athletics, and clubs.

Glossary

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
IEP	Individual Education Program
Intermediate Program	Grades four and five constitute the Intermediate Program.
Intervention	Implementation of strategies and services to students not performing at grade level
KAS	Kentucky Academic Standards
LEA	Local Education Agency—The term for a school district in federal law and regulation. JCPS is an LEA.
ML	Multilingual Learner
PSP	Program Services Plan
WIDA	World-class Instructional Design and Assessment
Primary Program	The part of elementary school in which students are enrolled from the time they begin Primary (formerly kindergarten) until they are ready to enter grade four



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