

Lexington County School District One

Grading Practices Guide for Middle and High School

Our Commitment

All Lexington One middle and high school grading and assessment practices will be used to support the learning process and to encourage the success of all students.

Purpose of Grades: The primary purpose of grades is to communicate with students and parents a student's level of progress related to the specific standards-based learning goals in a given course.

Assessment and Grading Philosophy

The primary purpose of grades is communication about achievement, with achievement being defined as performance measured against published standards-based learning goals.

Robert Marzano and John Hattie (2005) found that "The most important purpose for grades is to provide information or feedback to students and parents. The best referencing system for grading is content-specific learning goals, a criterion-referenced approach." Criterion-referenced grades are based on measuring a student against a level of performance, not measuring one student against another student. This means looking at how a student is performing today compared to how the student performed previously. Criterion-referenced means setting a defined target for students to hit, then measuring their progress according to how close they come to hitting the target. Using criterion-referenced grading contributes to consistency and fairness in grading. It also promotes growth for individual students instead of competition between students.

Rick Stiggins (2004), one of the nation's foremost authorities on assessment, asks the question, "How will we know when each child has mastered the essential knowledge and skills we have determined all students must acquire?" Stiggins asserts that if educators are to achieve "learning for all," they must use assessments in different ways. He contends that carefully developed assessments *for* learning, when done well, can inform teacher/team practice, help students assess and manage their own growth toward clearly articulated and relevant standards, and promote and encourage learning. He prescribes student-involved assessment *for* learning as a central element in any school. Stiggins calls for formative assessment to support learning in conjunction with periodic assessments *of* learning to ensure accountability. This, he states, will replace student anxiety and competition with strategies that encourage their confidence as learners.

Lexington One Assessment and Grading Practices

- Teachers provide clear achievement expectations to students.
- Grades reflect student academic achievement.
- Students and parents are provided information regarding grading practices as well as an explanation of how behavioral qualities related to success in the classroom will be communicated.
- Parents are informed regularly of their child's achievement and progress.
- PowerSchool is available to parents so they can access their child's grades and scores.
- Grades are assigned based on student performance according to preset standards, not on achievement compared to other students.
- Grading is not used for disciplinary purposes.
- Lexington One encourages students to maintain high standards of academic integrity and honesty as referenced in Lexington One's Academic Honor Code.
- The professional judgment of teachers should be respected.

Assessment

Assessment practices should support student learning, achievement and mastery of standards by connecting descriptive, timely, ongoing and consistent teacher feedback directly to standards.

Assessments are divided into two categories: formative and summative. Formative is considered "practice" and summative is considered the "end performance." Formative and summative assessments focus on **standards-based learning targets**.

Formative assessments are assessments *for* learning and have an important role to fulfill in identifying when a student is ready to undertake a summative assessment. The key principles of formative assessment are: (1) sharing the learning targets with students from the beginning of the learning; (2) making adjustments in teaching as a result of formative assessments; and (3) providing descriptive feedback to students from assessments. It is important that students complete each formative assessment to the best of their ability. In some cases, a teacher may withhold the administration of a summative assessment until such time as enough practice information is gathered through formative assessments. Since formative assessments are considered "practice," they are not heavily weighted in the grading system.

A summative assessment is a measure of a student’s ability to demonstrate the concepts, skills and knowledge embedded in standards-based learning targets. A summative assessment is an assessment of learning, and it is heavily weighted in the grading system.

Teachers, school leadership, and school district personnel will collaborate to determine how assessments are combined to calculate course grades. A customary practice is that major summative assessments make up 85% of the student’s grade in a particular course.

Assessment Examples	
Observations Quizzes Initial drafts Homework Responses to teacher questions Minor labs Practice assignments	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">15 Percent</div>
Tests Final drafts Projects Major labs Research papers Performance assessments Presentations	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">85 Percent</div>

Formative Assignments

- Provide rich, useful feedback to teachers and students.
- Enable both teachers and students to self-assess accurately and to self-correct their own performances increasingly over time.
- Occur during the process of learning or the development of a product.
- Align to the summative assessment in terms of skill, standard, rigor and format.
- Do not weigh heavily in a student’s grade, if included at all.

Homework

Homework plays a relevant and important part in student learning, and it is essential that students complete homework. Effective practice guidelines for homework accomplish the following:

- Directly relate to instructional objectives and concepts.
- Allow for practice of new skills and knowledge.
- Enrich and deepen students’ background knowledge.
- Provide an opportunity for students to receive timely and meaningful feedback.

Summative Assessments

- Are used to determine student mastery during or at the end of a unit of instruction.
- Are aligned to the course standards.
- Are aligned to previously administered formative assessments.

Reteaching

- May occur when a teacher or student determines that the student is not meeting learning targets.
- Supplements the original teaching strategy used.
- May take a different approach than the one initially used.
- Enhances the potential of the student to achieve the learning targets.
- May present the content in smaller increments.

Reassessment Opportunities

A reassessment is intended to provide an additional opportunity to demonstrate understanding and mastery of the learning.

A reassessment can be the following:

- an alternate form of the same assessment;
- a partial assessment limited to standards not mastered; or
- an assessment of the same standards but in a different format.

High school students will be provided an opportunity to attempt to improve one summative grade per nine weeks (on a block schedule) on assessments for which they have already scored above a mastery level (typically greater than 80%). In this circumstance, the “Choice” re-test practice is followed, and the student can replace the grade with the higher one earned.

Students will have an additional opportunity to demonstrate their growth and improve grades on summative assessments when the initial score is below minimal expectations for mastery (typically 80%). In this circumstance the “Recovery” re-test practice is followed, and the student can replace the grade with the higher grade earned, not to exceed 80. This practice applies to all college prep, honors, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced Placement courses in LCSD1. Dual credit courses will follow guidelines as dictated by the cooperating college, university or technical college.

- **Choice Re-Test Practice [Mastery previously demonstrated]**
 - Applies to in-class tests
 - One per Nine Weeks for Block courses
 - One per Semester for Year-Long courses
 - One per Nine Weeks at the Middle School level (four per year)
 - High School credit bearing courses at the middle school will follow high school guidelines
 - Prior to re-testing, students must complete the requirements established by the teacher. This preparation will not be a punitive measure, but an opportunity to re-learn material.
 - Teachers will alert students to the re-test expectations and requirements for a given assessment when the initial test is returned. Expected levels of mastery (if not 80%) should be clearly communicated before the administration of the assessment.
 - Re-tests should be at the same rigor level across a course (all Alg 2 re-tests should look the same for a given test).
 - The higher grade is entered into the gradebook (it is not an average of the 2 tests, nor is it partial credit for test corrections).
 - The student's first attempt will be logged as a comment that is attached to the re-test grade.

- **Recovery Re-Test Practice [Mastery was not demonstrated]**
 - Applies to in-class tests
 - One per assessment below mastery
 - Prior to re-testing students must complete the requirements established by the teacher. This preparation will not be a punitive measure, but an opportunity to re-learn material.
 - Teachers will alert students to the re-test policy and requirements for a given assessment when the initial test is returned. Expected levels of mastery (if not 80%) should be clearly communicated before the administration of the assessment.
 - Re-tests should be at the same rigor level across a course (all Alg 2 re-tests should look the same for a given test).
 - The higher grade (up to an 80) is entered into the gradebook (it is not an average of the 2 tests, it is not partial credit for test corrections and if a student makes a grade above 80 (such as a 92) an 80 is entered into PowerSchool).
 - The first attempt is logged as a comment that is attached to the re-test grade.

Extension Procedures

When a student has extenuating circumstances or returns to school after an extended absence, teachers use professional judgment to determine required assignments or assessments.

In the event that students do not meet a deadline for a summative assessment, the teacher and the student will follow the following guidelines for extensions:

Extension Opportunity

- Applies to projects, major writing assignments, major labs, presentations. This does not apply to the senior experience or capstone projects.

	1st Time Late	Additional Late Assignments
Extenuating Circumstances or Illness	Teacher and student agree on assignment requirements and revised due date. <u>No penalty for late work</u> Parent Contacted	
Assignment Not Complete By Due Date	Teacher and student agree on assignment requirements and revised due date. <u>No penalty for late work</u> Parent Contacted	Teacher and student agree on assignment requirements and revised due date. <u>Maximum grade received cannot exceed 80</u> Parent Contacted

Grading of Projects after extension

- If an extension is granted a grade of 1 will be entered into the gradebook as a placeholder until the assignment is turned in. **There will be no penalty for late work with the initial contract.** A comment of the agreed upon due date should be entered into the gradebook.
- If the assignment is not turned in by the revised due date the grade of 1 will be changed to a zero.
- If the summative assessment is submitted by the approved revised due date, no penalty for lateness should be reflected in the grade.

Teacher Professional Judgment

Assessment and grading require judicious and fair professional judgment. The teacher will seek to ensure that the grade each student receives is an accurate reflection of learning. In some cases, the teacher may withhold the administration of a summative assessment until such time that enough “practice” information is gathered through formative assessment.

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