

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

2020-21 Second Semester Pandemic Grading Procedures Plan

CMS Vision

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provides all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life.

Mission

The mission of CMS is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school.

Strategic Plan 2024: What Matters Most

Strategy 1: Focus on what matters most- content, teachers and students in our instructional core

- *Content - level of complexity of the **content** students are asked to learn*
- *Teacher - knowledge and skill of the **teacher***
- *Student - how **students** participate in their own education*

Guiding Principles of Effective Grading Practices

Evaluating student progress and grading that progress are essential components of the educational process (CMS Board Policy IKA). The purpose of assessment is to provide teachers, students, parents and other individuals who support students' learning with feedback on the extent of individual student mastery. This allows adults to be strategic in designing future instruction to meet students' individual needs; it allows students to take ownership over their academic performance and it ensures parents stay informed so they can be partners in the education process.

Achieving the goals of *Strategic Plan 2024: What Matters Most*, instructional leaders and teachers will embrace a shift in thinking and implementing effective, standards-based grading practices. Standards-based grading practices will increase student achievement, reduce course failures and improve the academic environment. At any given time, students, teachers and parents can use a student's grades to clearly understand the extent to which students are on track to mastering the knowledge and skills needed to pass the course and move closer to high school graduation. There will be alignment between course grades from teachers and scores on assessments. Grades will provide specific feedback on the knowledge and skills students need to practice more in order to improve their academic performance. Students who do not initially demonstrate mastery on standards-based assessments can receive additional support and can show their ongoing growth through retests. This ensures students are held accountable to mastering the content by the end of the grade.

The objective of these practices is not to give students unearned grades, but to create an environment in which students earn higher grades because they put forth more effort, improve through teacher feedback and complete work at a higher level of quality.

(Research from Douglas Reeves, *Elements of Grading*, 2011)

2020-21 School Year Challenges

“Education leaders need to remember that some students go home to safe, two-parent homes, filled with books and technology, often supplemented with tutors. Others go home to challenges in housing, food insecurity, medical care, and family support. In some of these homes, success in school might be a lower priority. A commitment to equity means both groups of students have equal access to support, and that success in school doesn't depend upon the conditions of the

home—in particular, that a student can achieve academic distinction based on the work they accomplish during the school day.” (Douglas Reeves, *Grading During the Pandemic: A Conversation*)

Since March 2020, traditional schooling has been interrupted for CMS students. Until November 2020, the majority of students experienced remote learning. The pandemic has brought a variety of challenges that have potentially impacted students’ level of achievement, including issues with connectivity, loss of instructional time due to illness, child care, stress, fewer social interactions, and reduced access to instructional resources. While teachers have worked to provide high quality, standards-aligned instruction, outside variables may have negatively impacted students and their ability to excel in the educational program this year. To help mitigate some of these factors and provide students more opportunities to show their level of achievement, the following grading procedures plan is being implemented for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

Effective Grading Practices:

1. Teachers

- a. shall prioritize teaching essential standards,
- b. ensure that grades reflect students’ level of mastery of content standards,
- c. shall record grades in PowerSchool within ten school days of the assignment’s due date,
- d. shall not use grades in a punitive manner for behavior or extra credit awarded for non-academic tasks, attendance, or other core expectations,
- e. shall not enter a grade lower than 50 into PowerSchool (the grade of 50 indicates the student is struggling in content, but allows the student to recover if achievement improves),
- f. shall implement the following guidelines related to formal assessments:
 - i. Assessments should be standards-based and measure students’ level of mastery on specific learning objectives,
 - ii. Additional instruction/practice will be provided for students who do not achieve initial mastery (80%),
 - iii. Following additional instruction/practice, *new opportunities* shall be provided to measure student mastery and the new assessment grade will be recorded. (Completing test corrections is considered additional practice, but does not constitute a new opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content). Students may earn up to an 80% on the new assessment.

2. Assignments

- a. Please review the guidance regarding attendance in a remote learning, where applicable ([Remote and In-Person Learning Attendance Guidance](#)).
- b. Teachers shall provide students with additional opportunities to submit assignments beyond Canvas uploads (i.e. picture, text, phone call, email, hard copy, upload to Canvas, Google doc).
- c. Late work and make-up work must be accepted by all teachers. For the remainder of the 2020-21 school year, the following guidelines will be followed:
 - i. A student who misses homework or other assignments or due dates because of absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be allowed to make up the work. Arrangements for completing the work should be made within five school days of the student’s return to school. Arrangements should include a schedule for completion of the work. For middle and high school students, the student must initiate contact with the teacher.
In all circumstances, homework and other assignments should be accepted within the quarter, even when turned in after the designated due date. Credit for late work shall be awarded according to the following guidelines:
 1. If the student was present in class, in accordance with the [Remote and In-Person Learning Attendance Guidance](#) on the due date, the student will have a 5-day grace period before awarding less credit. A maximum of 5 points may be deducted for assignments submitted after the grace period;
 2. If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an excused absence,

full credit must be given for the completed work;

3. If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an unexcused absence, the student will have a 5-day grace period before awarding less credit. A maximum of 5 points may be deducted for assignments submitted after the grace period.
 - d. Graded assignments should be aligned with content standards. Giving students extra credit or grades for activities such as bringing in canned goods, classroom materials, parent signatures or participating in non-curricular activities are not acceptable grading strategies.
 - e. Projects should not place an undue burden on students/families with limited access to technology and/or financial resources.
3. Students with a 504 plan, Individualized Education Program (IEP) or who are identified as English Learners (ELs) should receive accommodations on assignments and assessments to allow them to engage in on-grade level content. **Teachers should assess student work based on these accommodated assignments and assessments and not compared to their peers or other norm referenced standards.** While students with accommodations can receive below grade level marks, these marks should be based on the students' performance with specified accommodations. Additionally, if a student with accommodations is failing, the 504, IEP or EL team should reconvene to review and amend the plan as needed.

Percentage Breakdown:

<u>Classwork/Informal Assessments/Homework</u>	<u>Formal Assessments</u>
<p>Classwork must include a variety of assignments such as warm-ups, notebook checks, quizzes, group work, in-class tasks, class participation, etc. Class participation rubrics must be approved by the principal/designee. Minimum of 1 informal grade per week.</p> <p>ES: 40% MS: 35% HS: 30%</p>	<p>Formal assessments must include a variety of assignments such as tests, comprehensive writing assignments, projects, etc. that allow students to demonstrate mastery of a standard(s). A minimum of 4 formal assessments per quarter shall be included in the final grade. Project rubrics must be approved by the principal/designee.</p> <p>ES: 60% MS: 65% HS: 70%</p>
<p><i>The principal will be responsible for developing a process of approving and monitoring teachers' gradebooks. The process shall ensure an appropriate number of informal are assigned to calculate a grade that accurately represents mastery of content objectives.</i></p>	

Grading Students with Disabilities

What is the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team required to do if a student with a disability is failing a grade or course?

The IEP team is **required** to convene in order to review and, if necessary, to revise a student's IEP whenever a student is failing a subject(s) or class(es) to address any lack of expected progress in the general curriculum. This allows parents and students to be apprised of any difficulties the student may be experiencing in the general education classroom and/or special education program. New or additional interventions or strategies may be implemented to improve student performance. Special Education services, including accommodations and related services, may need to be reviewed by the IEP team.

Do federal or state laws provide guidance on how to grade students with special needs?

Federal and state special education regulations are largely silent on the topic of assigning a grade. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has a Board of Education policy that addresses grading of all students. This policy outlines appropriate grading policies and grading scales for schools. Teachers and/or Service Providers must provide accommodations or modifications found on a student's IEP. Although students with disabilities have required accommodations and modifications, Teachers and/or Service Providers cannot provide an accommodation or modification that is in violation of Board policy (i.e., using a different grading scale or using a different type of grade). Teachers should maintain written documentation to support grades earned for all students.

What role should a student's score(s) on the EOG/EOC assessment(s) play in their final grade?

Report cards represent an opportunity to evaluate students across three areas: the work they produce, the process through which they complete their work and the effort they put into their assignments. Standardized testing generally measures the amount of course or academic content retained or produced and so it is in many ways incomplete. It is quite likely that the student is learning more than is measured solely by the EOG/EOC assessment(s). The IEP Progress Report provides a place to communicate this fact to parents and students.

When students with disabilities are in a co-taught class, who is responsible for assigning their grades? Who is accountable for their performance on high stakes tests?

The general education teacher is the teacher of record for the entire class. Both teachers share responsibility for all the students in their co-taught class and should collaborate on all areas of instruction and grading.

How do teachers document on the PowerSchool Report Card that a student's work is modified?

Report cards should have no indication that a child may be receiving Exceptional Children services. Teachers should use the IEP progress report to document academic and behavior specific information, which may include attachments of data collection and/or work samples that inform a parent of student progress. They should also continue to maintain ongoing communication with the family regarding strengths and needs of the student.

Grading English Learners (ELs)

Teachers will maintain high expectations based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for English Learners (EL) to demonstrate language growth and mastery of grade-level standards. Teachers must amplify instruction, assignments, and informal assessments based on students' English language proficiency levels in reading, writing, listening and speaking. These levels are determined by the WIDA W-APT/ Screener or ACCESS test. Teachers must support English Learners with arranging a schedule for completion of missing homework and/or assignments to overcome a language/culture barrier as opposed to the student initiating. Formal assessments, which should include a variety of assessments, shall be administered without amplifications. Students not achieving mastery (80%) on an initial formal assessment shall be provided a new opportunity with appropriate amplifications.

Report card grades should reflect student performance with appropriate instructional and language supports in place. Students should not be limited from earning the highest grade in the content area. A student may receive below grade level marks if the instructional supports, language supports, and accommodations specified in the English Learner (EL) plan have been implemented and the student either makes no attempt or has not shown progress toward proficiency. Students should not receive grades of "D", "F", or other failing grades on assignments solely based on limited English proficiency. School-based EL Committees shall meet to review and amend EL Plans for struggling students.

EL teachers must be involved in grading/promotion/retention decisions for ELs.

The Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) mandates that no state shall deny equal education opportunity to any individual, "by the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program."

Students who are identified as English Learners (ELs) should receive accommodations on assignments and assessments to allow them to engage in on-grade level content. Teachers should assess student work based on these accommodated assignments and assessments and not compared to their peers or other norm-referenced standards.

While students with accommodations can receive below grade level marks, these marks should be based on the students' performance with specified accommodations. Additionally, if a student with accommodations is failing, the EL Committees should reconvene to review and amend the plan as needed.

For additional guidance:

- [Grading English Learners FAQ Document](#)
- [Grading Considerations for English Learners \(ELs\) in Remote and In-Person Learning](#)
- [P.A.C.E. Framework](#)
- [EL Services Canvas Page](#)

Additional Resources:

- [US Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents](#)
- [What Legal Obligations Do Schools Have To English Language Learners \(ELLs\)?](#)
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/index.html>