

La Porte Independent School District

Grading Guidance For Students with Disabilities



**Special Programs
Adopted: 2011
Updated: September 2019**

**La Porte Independent School District
Special Programs**

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Introduction

La Porte Independent School District is committed to the development and implementation of grading procedures that result in equitable, accountable and effective grading practices for all students. The district also recognizes the need for additional guidance regarding grading practices for students with disabilities, as consideration must be given to disability-related needs in determining appropriate grading options.

This document was created to provide guidance to teachers and parents in effective grading practices for students with disabilities resulting in grades that are data-driven, fair, and true measures of progress.

The contents of this document, as well as the grading practices described, were developed by the district steering committee that was formed for the specific purpose of developing guidelines for grading practices for students with disabilities. The committee membership was made up of administrators, instructional coordinators and special educators representing students with disabilities of all ages, abilities and instructional arrangements. Drafts of the grading rubrics were piloted with general and special educators and feedback was utilized in the revision of the materials.

The district is committed to the consistent implementation, review and monitoring of these grading practices, and will continue to make revisions and improvements as warranted. We believe that these practices will result in grades, which will reflect and communicate to students, parents, and teachers, real measures of student learning.

If you have any questions with regard to the information in this document, please call Special Programs at 281-604-7032.

District Grading Policies

School Board Policies

School boards establish the direction and structure of their school districts by adopting policies through the authority granted by state legislatures. School board policies have the force of law equal to statutes or ordinances. Policies establish directions for the district; they set the goals, assign authority, and establish controls that make school governance and management possible. Policies are the means by which educators are accountable to the public.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
GRADING/PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS

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GRADING POLICY

A district shall adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year. A district grading policy:

1. Must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment;
2. May not require a classroom teacher to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard to the student's quality of work; and
3. May allow a student a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade.

Education Code 28.0216

FINALITY OF GRADE

An examination or course grade issued by a classroom teacher is final and may not be changed unless the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with a district grading policy applicable to the grade, as determined by the board.

A determination by the board is not subject to appeal.

This subsection does not prohibit an appeal related to a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities under Education Code 33.081.

Education Code 28.0214

STUDENT ELECTION
CLERKS

A student who is appointed as a student election clerk under Election Code 32.0511, or as a student early voting clerk under Election Code 83.012, may apply the time served toward:

1. A requirement for a school project at the discretion of the teacher who assigned the project; or
2. A service requirement for participation in an advanced academic course program at the discretion of the program sponsor or a school-sponsored extracurricular activity at the discretion of the school sponsor.

Education Code 33.092

PROGRESS REPORTS

A board shall adopt a policy that:

1. Provides for a conference between parents and teachers;
2. Requires a district, at least once every 12 weeks, to give written notice to a parent of a student's performance in each class or subject; and

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
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3. Requires a district, at least once every three weeks, or during the fourth week of each nine-week grading period, to give written notice to a parent if a student's performance in a foundation curriculum subject [see EHAA] is consistently unsatisfactory, as determined by a district.

The notice required by items 2 and 3 must provide for the signature of the student's parent and must be returned to the district.

A district that uses an electronic platform for communicating student grade and performance information to parents may permit a parent to sign a required notice electronically, so long as the district retains a record verifying the parent's acknowledgment of the required notice. A district that accepts electronic signatures must offer parents the option to provide a handwritten signature.

"Parent" includes a guardian, conservator, or other person having lawful control of a student.

EXCEPTIONS

These requirements do not apply to a student who:

1. Is 18 or older and living in a different residence than the student's parents;
2. Is married; or
3. Has had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

Education Code 28.022

NOTICE OF
PERFORMANCE
RATING

The first written notice of a student's performance that a district gives during a school year under Education Code 28.022(a)(2) [see PROGRESS REPORTS, item 2, above] must include a statement of whether the campus at which the student is enrolled has been awarded a distinction designation under Education Code Chapter 39, Subchapter G or has been identified as an unacceptable campus under Education Code Chapter 39, Subchapter E and an explanation of the information's significance. [See AIB] *Education Code 39.361*

NOTICE OF
STUDENT
PERFORMANCE

The district shall provide a record of the comparisons of student performance made under Education Code 39.034 and provided to the district under Education Code 39.302 in a written notice to the student's parent or other person standing in parental relationship.

For a student who failed to perform satisfactorily as determined under either performance standard under Education Code 39.0241 on an assessment instrument administered under Education Code 39.023(a), (c), or (l), the district shall include in the notice specific information relating to access to educational resources at the appropriate

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assessment instrument content level, including assessment instrument questions and answers released under Education Code 39.023(e).

Education Code 39.303

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
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EIA
(LOCAL)

RELATION TO ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	<p>The District shall establish instructional objectives that relate to the essential knowledge and skills for grade-level subjects or courses. These objectives shall address the skills needed for successful performance in the next grade or next course in a sequence of courses.</p> <p>Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that each student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated District objectives.</p>
GUIDELINES FOR GRADING	<p>The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents.</p> <p>The District shall permit a student who meets the criteria detailed in the grading guidelines a reasonable opportunity to redo an assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade.</p>
PROGRESS REPORTING	<p>The District shall issue grade reports/report cards every six weeks (secondary level) and every nine weeks (elementary level) on a form approved by the Superintendent or designee. Performance shall be measured in accordance with this policy and the standards established in EIE.</p>
WEEKLY REPORTS	<p>Weekly progress reports shall be issued for all students with a grade of 74 or lower in all core subject areas.</p>
INTERIM REPORTS	<p>Interim progress reports shall be issued after the third week of each grading period for secondary students and after the fourth week of each grading period for elementary students.</p>
CONFERENCES	<p>Teachers shall provide an opportunity for a conference with parents once a semester. In addition to conferences scheduled on the campus calendar, conferences may be requested by a teacher or parent as needed.</p>
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY	<p>A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.</p>

Local District Procedures

The board of directors of each school district shall retain and exercise the general powers, authority, and duties expressed and implied in law with respect to the administration of a school district and regulation of actions and activities of the associated student bodies of the district.

The LPISD *Instructional Grading and Reporting Procedures* are developed in accordance with current practices and policies, as well as the Texas Education Code (TEC).

This document also provides guidance for the issuance of grades and report cards for all students, including students with disabilities. In LPISD students with disabilities receive instruction in a variety of settings as determined by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. Each student with a disability must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that is properly developed, implemented and maintained in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate to meet the student's educational needs. Students with disabilities will be graded in accordance with LPISD grading policies unless otherwise determined by an ARD committee. Determination of curriculum accommodations and /or modifications and any recommended alternative grading options will be discussed at each ARD.

For additional information regarding accommodations and modifications of curriculum, see the [Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process](#) posted on the district website under Departments, Special Programs. Additionally, the Texas Education Agency and the Education Service Center, Region 20 has published guidance in [Grading and Progress Monitoring for Students with Disabilities, A Resource for Teachers](#).

The LPISD has developed grading guidance documents to support ARD decision-making for students who are on accommodated, modified or alternate curriculums. These documents can also be found on the district website under Departments, Special Programs in the [Grading Guidance for Students with Disabilities](#) folder.

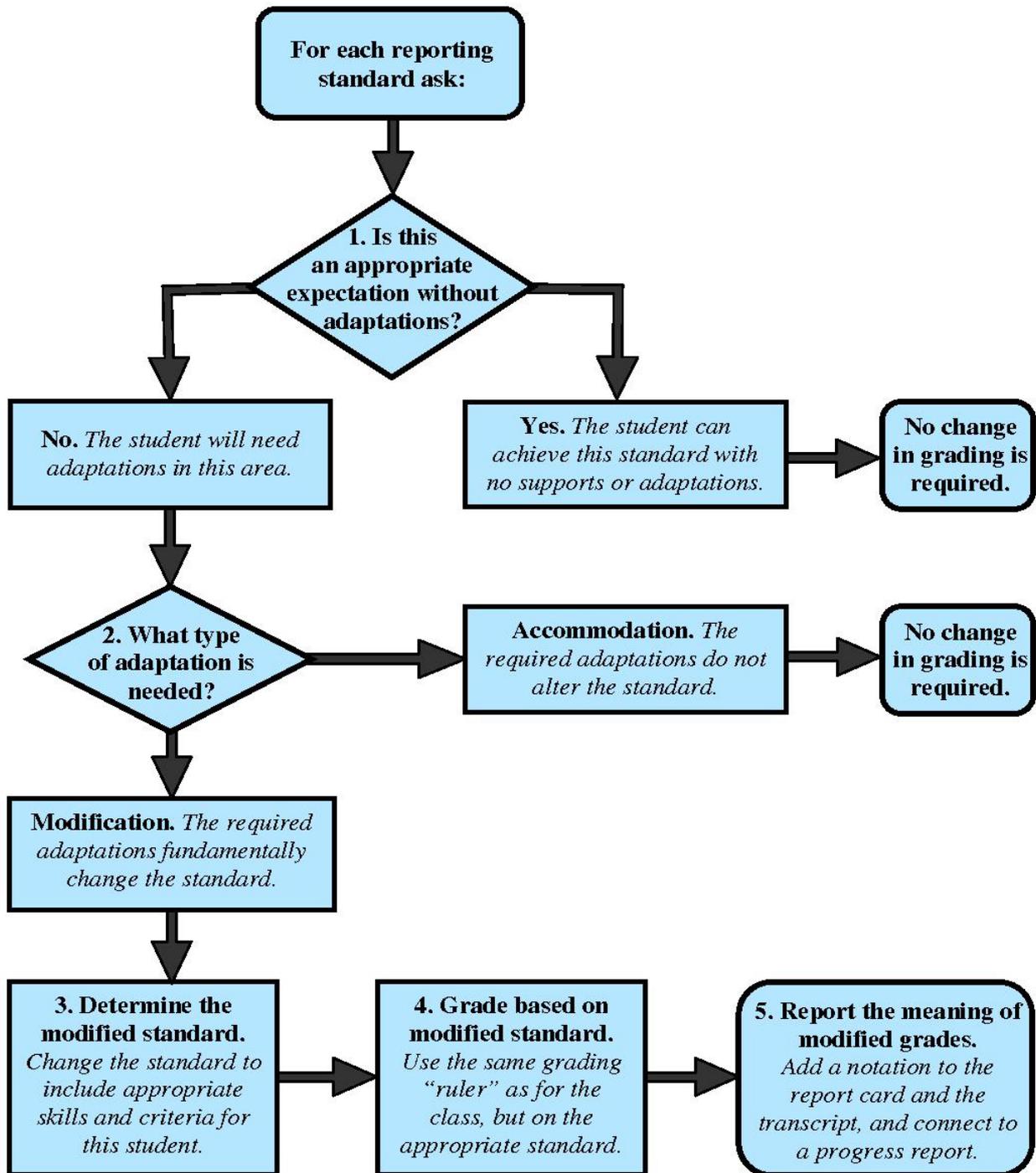
Decision-Making Guidance

Flowchart Model for Grading Exceptional Learners

The following flowchart is a visual model for determining standards-based grading and reporting. It can be used by ARD committees to assist in making appropriate decisions with regards to grading and how to document those decisions in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This flowchart was adapted from an article written by Jung and Guskey (2007) and was reprinted with permission.

A Model for Grading Exceptional Learners



Source: Adapted from Jung, L. A., & Guskey, T. R. (2007). Standards-based grading and reporting: A model for special education. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(2), 48–53. Copyright 2007 by the Council for Exceptional Children. Reprinted with permission.

Decision-Making Guide

Students with disabilities will be graded in accordance with La Porte ISD grading policies unless otherwise determined by an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee that it is necessary to adopt an alternate system in response to the student's individual disability-related needs.

This guidance document is designed to assist the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee in determining the appropriate grading options for a student with disabilities and how to document that decision in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). This decision-making analysis should be used for each content area graded.

The ARD Committee must document their decisions about grading in the student's IEP. This documentation can be reflected within the goals and/or on the Accommodations page of the IEP paperwork as well as in the deliberations. The explanation needs to be written in such a way that it is clear to the teachers what they are supposed to do and will not be interpreted in different ways.

Decision-Making Guide for Determining Grades

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Students with disabilities will be graded in accordance with La Porte ISD grading policies unless otherwise determined by an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee that it is necessary to adopt an alternate system in response to the student's individual disability related needs. This decision-making analysis should be used for each content area graded.

IF:				THEN:	
Curriculum Expectations	Accommodations/ Modifications	Instructional Setting	State Assessment	Grading Options	ARD Documentation
TEKS	With or Without Accommodations	General Education and/or Special Education	STAAR with or without designated supports STAAR Online with or without designated supports	1. District policies, or 2. District policies with grading accommodations*	1. Accommodations page of IEP 2. Accommodations page of IEP reflects rationale
TEKS Modified	Accommodations and Content Modifications of Curriculum	General Education and/or Special Education	STAAR with or without designated supports STAAR Online with or without designated supports	2. District policies with grading accommodations*, and/or 3. Alternate grading system**	2. Accommodations page of IEP reflects rationale 3. Accommodations page of IEP reflects rationale
TEKS Essence	Pre-requisite skills of curriculum content, and/or independent living skills	General Education and/or Special Education	STAAR Alternate 2	3. Alternate grading system** 4. Progress noted through IEP goals and objectives in lieu of report card***	3. Accommodations page of IEP reflects rationale 4. Accommodations page of IEP reflects rationale

- Grading accommodations may be needed when performance criteria of course content is not substantially changed. (Examples: *CBA's do not count as test grade, grades determined from work completed in class, provide opportunity to correct tests to 70%, etc.*)

** Alternate grading systems may be needed when performance criteria of course content is substantially changed. (Examples: *rubrics, data collection sheets, etc.*)

*** ARD committee determines that the IEP progress report is most appropriate measure of academic progress and student will not receive report card. This option is not available for students in high school. (Example: *self-contained students taking STAAR Alternate 2: No Authentic Academic Response*)

NOTE: IEP progress reports shall be completed on students with disabilities concurrent with the issuance of report cards. La Porte ISD *Grading Guidance for Grading Students with Disabilities* provides further assistance in selection of grading options and ARD Committee documentation.

Grading Options

Guidance on Selection of Grading Accommodations

Students with disabilities will be graded in accordance with La Porte ISD grading policies unless otherwise determined by an ARD committee (grading option 1 from the district *ARD Decision-Making Guide for Determining Grades*). Any variation to the district guidelines must be documented in the IEP and based on the student's disability-related needs.

Grading accommodations (grading option 2 from the district *ARD Decision-Making Guide for Determining Grades*) may be needed for some students with disabilities who are responsible for mastery of the grade level state standards (TEKS) and taking the same grade level state assessment as students without disabilities. Grading accommodations do not substantially change the performance criteria of the course content.

The guidance document is a tool for the ARD committee to use in determining appropriate types of grading accommodations for specific disability-related needs. It also gives guidance on how to clearly document the accommodation in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The documentation needs to be written in a clear and concise manner so it is easily understood how to implement the accommodation. The examples in the guidance document are not an exhaustive list, but to be used as a resource. It is the responsibility of the ARD committee to determine the necessary accommodations on a student-by-student basis because of specific disability-related needs of the student.

Guidance on Selection of Grading Accommodations*
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Students with disabilities will be graded in accordance with La Porte ISD grading policies unless otherwise determined by an ARD committee. Any variation to the district guidelines must be documented in the IEP and based on the student’s disability-related needs.

Grading accommodations do not substantially change the performance criteria of the course content. Examples of grading accommodations are outlined below. **This is not intended as an exhaustive list.**

Rationale for Grading Accommodation (refer to FIE)	Type of Grading Accommodation	Examples of ARD Documentation
TESTS:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficits in long-term retrieval • Deficits in attending for long periods of time • Deficits in acquiring basic knowledge • Deficits in specific academic skills (i.e., LD in reading comprehension, math calculation) • Significant test anxiety • Deficits in cognitive processing speed 	Major Tests	Limit number of major test grades required to ___ per grading period
		Drop lowest test grade per grading period
		Test items on exams of reduced length will count same as corresponding test items on original exam
		Will be exempt from final/semester tests
		No exemption from final grade, but final exam will be ___% of average
		Finals will be weighted ___% of final grade
		Projects or alternate assignments in lieu of major tests. Grade will count same percentage as test grade
		Additional points will be given for corrections on missed test items
		Student’s major tests will not include essay questions
	Points will not be deducted for spelling, punctuation or capitalization errors when not focus of exam	
	Quizzes	Quizzes will count as daily grade
		No more than 2 quizzes per week
		Opportunity to correct tests/quizzes to ___%. Test corrections will count as retest per district guidelines.
Benchmarks	Benchmarks not required as major test grade	

HOMEWORK/DAILY WORK		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficits in attention and concentration • Deficits in cognitive processing • Deficits in abilities to initiate and complete tasks • Deficits in specific academic skills (i.e., LD in reading comprehension, math calculation) • Deficits in abilities to organize materials 	Assignments	<p>Minimum of ____ homework/daily grades per week</p> <p>Grades determined from work completed in class</p> <p>Projects or alternate assignments in lieu of major written assignments. Grade will count same percentage as test grade</p> <p>No penalty to grade for classroom _notebook check; _warm up activity</p> <p>Drop lowest _daily; _homework grade per grading period</p> <p>____% of Lab grade will be based on participation and following of all safety rules</p> <p>Labs will count same as daily grade</p> <p>Grade will not be reduced for late work up to ____ days</p>

Alternate Grading Option Rubrics

Although the vast majority of students with disabilities will be able to be graded in accordance with the district grading policies, with or without specific grading accommodations, there may be those students who are in need of an alternate grading system in order to meaningfully communicate progress to students and parents. Rubrics are a type of alternate grading system that can be used with students who have significant disability-related needs and are receiving instruction in alternate achievement standards (option 3 on the district *ARD Decision-Making Guide for Determining Grades*).

Grading rubrics support and evaluate student learning, as well as, make teacher expectations clear. Rubrics clearly communicate to students and parent the expectations for student performance.

Rubrics can be used for determining grades on individual assignments, projects, weekly assessments of student performance, and/or determining of report card grades for campus reporting periods as determined most appropriate by the ARD committee. The decision to use a rubric must be documents in the IEP and a copy of the rubric must be included in the IEP paperwork.

The rubrics on the following pages are rubrics that would be appropriate for students who are responsible for pre-requisite skills aligned to the TEKS.

Rubric 1 may be more suitable for those students receiving instruction in resource, co-teach or general education classes, who are responsible for acquisition of academic skills and participation in the classroom at a modified level.

Rubric 2 is geared for those students who receive the majority of their instruction in a self-contained setting and who go into the general education setting for socialization purposes. Other rubrics may be developed to assess the performance of individual students with the guidance of the district special education leadership team.

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Rubric 1: Grading Rubric for Participation and Acquisition of Academic Skills

This rubric may be used with students who are on a pre-requisite skills level and participate in resource, co-teach or general education classes and are responsible for at least part of the content in that class, and should be consistent with the student's individual abilities.

Criterion	4	3	2	1
Content	Demonstrates understanding by explaining concept to another 76-100% of time	Demonstrates understanding by correctly responding to questions or completing tasks 51-75% of time	Demonstrates understanding by correctly responding to questions or completing tasks 26-50% of time	Struggles to understand content, attempts task or correctly responds to questions 0-25% of time
Effort	Makes a very good, consistent effort, produces a high quality project, assignments consistently completed on time	Good effort, generally completes projects with care, assignments completed mostly on time	Inconsistent effort, partially or barely adequate completion of projects, assignments frequently late	Very little effort, poor and unfinished projects, assignments almost always late
Contribution	Takes ownership of actions and works to help others stay on task. Works well in group, encourages and supports peers, frequently offers ideas and asks questions	Works with group members to complete task with occasional prompts, cooperates with group and can stay on task without supervision, occasionally offers ideas and asks questions	Will tolerate sitting in a group but rarely contributes, requires frequent supervision and prompts in group setting, rarely offers ideas and asks questions	Distracts the group and impedes group progress, needs consistent support and supervision, ideas offered are off topic and/or inappropriate
Attitude	Enthusiastic about the class, consistently shows respect for peers and teacher, complies with teacher requests without arguing	Enthusiastic about aspects of the class they enjoy, generally shows respect for peers and teacher, complies with teacher requests with minimal protest	Not negative about class but seldom shows enthusiasm, inconsistently shows respect for peers and teacher, greatly protests or refuses teacher request	Negative attitude toward the class, disrespectful to peers and teacher, almost always refuses teacher requests
Peer Interaction	Offers ideas and asks questions appropriately; does not distract others	With reminders, offers ideas and asks questions appropriately; does not distract others	With assistance, offers ideas and asks questions appropriately; does not distract others	Does not offer ideas or ask questions appropriately, distracts others
Total				

Comments:

Raw Score: _____/20
Converted % Score: _____%

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Rubric 2: Grading Rubric for Students on Alternate Curriculum

This rubric may be used with students who are on a pre-requisite skills curriculum in the life skills setting, and/or for students whose IEP recommends general education for socialization purposes, and should be consistent with the student’s individual abilities.

Criterion	4	3	2	1
Effort	Consistent effort in class and on assignments	Moderate effort in class and on assignments	Inconsistent effort in class and on assignments	Very little to no effort in class and on assignments
Attitude	Consistent display of respect towards peers and teachers; consistent display of positive attitude towards class	Generally displays respect towards peers and teachers; occasionally demonstrates a negative attitude towards class	Consistently displays disrespect towards peers and teachers; consistently demonstrates a negative attitude towards class	Continuously disrespectful to peers and teachers; continuously negative towards class
Attentiveness	Consistently on task and very focused	Mostly on task and often focused	Regularly on task and generally focused	Often not on task due to inconsistent focus
Meeting New Situations	Demonstrates self-control and actively participates in new situations	Displays some anxiety, but demonstrates self-control when attempting new situations	Displays fear, but will try to demonstrate self-control when attempting new situations	Displays little to no self-control and resists new situations
Respecting Rights and Property	Respectful of other’s property and rights; respectful of the personal space of others	Is generally careful with others’ property; acknowledges the personal space of others	Inadvertently damages or destroys others’ property; generally does not notice the personal space of others.	Intentionally damages or destroys others’ property; often intrudes on personal space of others
Total				

Comments:

Raw Score: _____/20
Converted % Score: _____%

Conversion Chart

The conversion chart is to be used in conjunction with the selected rubric for the determination of the student's grade for assignment, project or report card, as determined by the ARD committee. The conversion chart is to be copied on the back of the rubric selected for the individual student. Explanation needs to be given to the parents and ARD committee members on how to convert the raw score from the rubric to the grade that will be recorded.

If the ARD Committee determines that the student's grades will be based on an alternative grading system (rubric), then it will be documented on the Instructional Accommodations/Supports page of the ARD Document under "Individualized grading based on student's Present Levels of Educational Performance". See Sample ARD Documentation on how to note this within the ARD. The student's Teacher of Record will use appropriate rubric for the student depending on whether or not the student will be accountable for the academic content or how much of the content the student will be responsible for. The teacher will use the rubric to determine the student's raw score for the activity. The conversion chart will then be used to convert the raw score to percentage grade, which will be entered into the grade book.

For example, if the student's raw score is a 14 on a math assignment or activity, when using a 20 point rubric, then the converted score will be an 84.4%, which would be entered in the grade book in the same manner as for students not on an altered grading system.

**Conversion Chart
(Converting Raw Scores to Percentages)**

Student Raw Score	Maximum Raw Score
20	100.0
19	97.4
18	94.8
17	92.2
16	89.6
15	87.0
14	84.4
13	81.8
12	79.2
11	76.6
10	74.0
9	71.4
8	68.8
7	66.2
6	63.6
5	61.0
4	58.4
3	55.8
2	53.2
1	50.6

Adapted from Fairfax County Public Schools