



Middle School Grading Guidelines Overview for Teachers, Students, and Parents

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Middle School Grading Guidelines - Introduction and Purpose
<p>The Middle School Grading Guidelines are intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- promote research-based practices in grading- ensure fair, consistent and equitable practices across SUSD, and- provide students and families with the most meaningful information to reflect student's learning.
Shared Responsibilities to Ensure Students' Success
<p>To ensure the most meaningful and successful learning experiences for students – teachers, students, parents and administrators are encouraged to assume the following responsibilities.</p> <p>Teacher Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communicate and follow grading guidelines – assigning relevant and meaningful coursework/homework aligned to the academic standards and/or learning objectives of the class.- Provide clear directions, purpose and expectations of assignments.- Utilize a system for communicating coursework/homework expectations with students and parents.- Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students. <p>Student Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Manage time and organize coursework/homework (including due dates and materials).- Ask questions and clarify expectations to allow successful completion of homework assignments.- Submit quality assignments.- Utilize available resources to monitor progress. <p>Administrator Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communicate grading guidelines to all stakeholders and promote and monitor guidelines at the school. <p>Parent Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide a learning environment to promote learning and support a routine for completion of homework/coursework.- Maintain an open dialogue about your child's academic needs and celebrate their successes.- Regularly monitor your child's academic progress by reviewing grades in Synergy.- Foster a home environment that is conducive to school success.
Guidelines for Determining Grades (Please consult teachers' course syllabi for more information.)
<p>"Academic" grades are those recorded on report cards – representing a balance of students' work and reflecting students' learning and progress over time. Report cards are generated each quarter.</p> <p>Academic grades on report cards at the middle level are determined by the following values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Homework/Coursework</i>: Homework, classwork, progress checks, short quizzes and other checks for understanding represent 20-30% of students' grades.- <i>Assessments/Demonstrations of Learning</i>: Unit and course assessments, performance tasks, portfolios, presentations, projects, essays, products and other demonstrations of learning represent 70-80% of students'

grades.

Values/weights established in the Synergy Gradebook reflecting these guidelines include:

- Grades 6 and 7 Core Content Courses and all Special Areas (Grades 6-8):
 - Homework/Coursework = 30%
 - Assessments/Demonstrations of Learning = 70%
- Grade 8 Core Content Courses:
 - Homework/Coursework = 20%
 - Assessments/Demonstrations of Learning = 80%

Important: For students eligible under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504, accommodations per the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan will be implemented so that students have access to the general curriculum. In addition, students receiving special education services will be allowed to demonstrate mastery using alternative methods as indicated in the IEP.

“Conduct” grades are based on student behaviors. Conduct grades and attendance are reflected in the conduct area on the SUSD report card. Teachers are to provide a conduct grade of O, S, N, or U for each student at each quarter. Indicators of N and U require a comment(s) of explanation.

Indicators for conduct include:

- O – Outstanding
- S – Satisfactory
- N – Needs Improvement
- U – Unsatisfactory

Note: Academic grades and conduct grades are both indicators to determine honor rolls and principals’ lists. *To qualify for honor roll, students must earn at least a 3.5 grade point average with no conduct marks indicating a “U” and no more than one “N.” To qualify for principals’ lists, students must earn at least a 3.8 average with no conduct marks indicating a “U” and no more than one “N.” To qualify for NJHS, students must earn at least a 3.85 average.*

Guidelines for Homework/Coursework (Please consult teachers’ course syllabi for more information.)

Best Practice Rationale: Homework plays an important part in student learning when assigned and assessed appropriately. Homework is best viewed as primarily formative – providing students with opportunities to prepare for, practice, integrate, or extend their learning without consequence.

Generally, SUSD middle level students can plan to spend 10 minutes per day per content/special area - per grade level (i. e. 6th grade - 60 minutes) on relevant homework.

- Actual time required to complete assignments will vary with each students’ study habits, academic skills and selected course load.
- Independent reading assignments and projects may be in addition to these homework guidelines.

Guidelines for Late Work (Please consult teachers’ course syllabi for more information.)

Best Practice Rationale: Best practice research indicates that students are better prepared to approach mastery when they are expected to complete all required work. Thus, students are expected to complete all required work and will be given opportunities and support to do so.

- Late work is *best* reported/reflected in students’ conduct grades.
- To reinforce the expectation of students submitting quality work on time, any penalties for late work indicated as part of the “academic grade” will be fixed as opposed to escalating. Such penalties are not to exceed 10% of the original value of the assignment, after grading.

- Reasonable support systems to help students complete late or missing work will be designated and communicated by content or grade level teams.
- Recognizing the importance of progressions of learning, content or grade level teams can establish windows of opportunity for students to complete and submit late work. Teams may choose to not accept late work the last week of any marking period to allow teachers time to complete grading and report cards. Teachers/teams will communicate these timelines to students and parents in course syllabi.
- Assignments not completed/submitted within the timeframes established by content or grade level teams will be indicated as not submitted (NS) and will remain a zero.

Guidelines for Retakes/Redos (Please consult teachers' course syllabi for more information.)

Best Practice Rationale: Research indicates that high performing schools and teachers focus on students' growth and mastery and allow work and assessments to be redone. Redos and retakes are part of a system that increases academic rigor to prepare our students for the next grade level.

- Repetitive opportunities to measure mastery or similar knowledge and skills will be permitted at teacher discretion at the middle level. (Redos/Retakes can take different forms including alternative assessments or redoing existing assignments.)
- To promote fair and consistent opportunities for students, content or grade level teams will designate and communicate which assignments or assessments, representing the most important standards and outcomes of their course, will be allowed as redos/retakes.
- Where second chance opportunities are available to students for important assignments or assessments, students shall earn the highest mark received – less minor deductions that may be established by teams to encourage students to try their best on the first attempt. (Deductions are not to exceed 10% of the value of an assignment.)
- Students are expected to contact teacher(s) to schedule opportunities for redos/retakes.
- Recognizing the importance of progressions of learning, content or grade level teams can establish windows of opportunity for students to complete redos and retakes. Teams may choose to not allow retakes or redos during the last week of any marking period to allow teachers time to complete grading and report cards. Teachers/teams will communicate the timelines to students and parents in course syllabi.
- Reasonable support systems to help students complete redos/retakes will be designated and communicated by teachers and/or teams.

Guidelines for Extra Credit (Please consult teachers' course syllabi for more information.)

Best Practice Rationale: Extra credit opportunities that support student learning are appropriate ways to encourage meaningful extensions to increase academic achievement and enhance the learning of course standards.

- Students may be given opportunities to extend their learning and earn extra credit. Any opportunities for extra credit shall be made available to all students of a class/course. Such opportunities will be at the discretion of teachers/teams and clearly communicated to all stakeholders.
- Teachers are not required to offer extra credit in any given course.
- When offered, no more than 5% of the total academic grade can come from extra credit.

Semester Grade Clarification

Grading starts fresh each quarter for middle level coursework. Semester grades are an average of each quarter. (Students enrolled in high school/credit bearing courses during middle school will adhere to the SUSD High School Grading Guidelines.)