



Cherokee County  
School District

# K-12 Grading Guidance

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## Academic Ownership Belief Statements

The Cherokee County School District is committed to elevating the individual capacity of all students. Through cultivating a rigorous and relevant standard-based learning environment, the importance of deadlines is balanced with the need to support students as they achieve their maximum potential and develop a sense of academic ownership.

### Best Practices for Grading and Reporting

1. Include varied opportunities for students to provide evidence of learning, mastery of standards, and application of skills.
2. Ensure equitable opportunities for students through objective, clear grading criteria that reflects mastery of standards rather than compliance.
3. Provide relevant, timely feedback that supports growth and self-reflection for all students.
4. Clearly communicate student progress towards mastery of learning goals.
5. Support opportunities for teachers and schools to reflect, evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices, and reteach or extend as needed.

### Best Practices for Elevating Academic Ownership

#### Teachers:

- Clearly communicate learning targets and success criteria aligned to standards.
- Include relevant and timely feedback that students can use for self-evaluation of their learning progress.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery.
- Provide standards-based remediation and extension.

#### Students:

- Actively refer to and use the provided learning targets and success criteria to guide work and self-monitor.
- Reflect on feedback to evaluate individual progress and take an active role in elevating their learning.
- Utilize multiple learning opportunities to demonstrate understanding and mastery of the standards.
- Engage in remediation activities, when needed, and seek out extension opportunities to deepen their understanding of learning objectives.

*If concerns about a grade arise, please communicate with your child's teacher.*

## Grading Common Language

**Classwork:** Purposeful, guided application of content used to monitor student understanding and provide timely feedback. Typically completed in a single class segment, classwork is a brief practice to facilitate student learning.

**Homework:** Homework is a purposeful extension of classwork, designed to build knowledge or practice skills. It allows brief practice of what has been learned in class and does not introduce new skills.

**Formative Assessment:** Teachers can determine which formative assessments, both formal and informal, to use to identify which teaching strategies to adjust to improve student progress toward mastering standards. They identify areas where students require remediation or extension, allowing for lesson adjustments and better academic support. Formative assessment may be graded or ungraded and could include classwork, homework, quizzes, etc. Formative assessments typically fall prior to the end of a unit and prior to the summative assessment. *Ungraded formative activities are highly encouraged to determine student mastery.*

**Summative Assessment:** A formal measure used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period—typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. Summative assessments help schools evaluate academic progress, identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, and target plans for continuous growth.

**Quiz:** A short, often graded, *formative* assessment designed to evaluate individual knowledge of information recently introduced and practiced. Quizzes are typically used as brief checkpoints to provide feedback to students and teachers regarding mastery of standards.

**Test:** A *summative*, culminating measure to assess overall mastery of standards. Tests typically take place at the end of a unit of learning and are used to help students and teachers determine evidence that learning targets have been met.

**Lab:** A *formative*, hands-on experience utilizing a real-world application of standards. Labs allow students to demonstrate skills related to content and can take place in any subject area.

**Project:** An individual or collaborative activity utilizing a real-world application to assess mastery of standards. Learning targets are measured using a rubric, and feedback is provided to help students improve performance.

**Rubric:** An assessment tool used to communicate and measure progress toward a consistent definition of proficiency as it relates to a learning goal and success criteria.

Decisions on which category to place a grade are based on the purpose of the assignment, the amount of learning required prior to completing the assignment, the level of cognitive demand required in the assignment and determination within a PLC. Additionally, consider the following terms when determining the category placement of a grade:

- Independent Practice – formative; students practice alone and receive feedback on learning progress.
- Collaborative Practice – formative; students practice together and receive feedback on learning progress.
- Independent Assessment – formative or summative; students work alone and receive feedback for continued growth.
- Collaborative Assessment – formative or summative; students work together and receive feedback for continued growth.
- Summative Assessment – summative; exam, culminating project/task or other task that assesses multiple standards intertwined; students work independently or collaboratively and receive feedback on mastery of standards.

## Grading Guidelines

**Total Points in Categories Grading:** All grading categories will use a “total points in categories” calculation. This means that individual assignment grades will be weighted within a category based on the point value assigned by the teacher. Regardless of how many assignments are in a category and how they are weighted, the category would still count as a set percentage of a student’s overall grade. Individual PLCs should determine a common point weighting for assignments/tasks.

**Example A:** In the Graded Formative category, a teacher grades homework out of 10 points and quizzes out of 50 points. This means one quiz grade equals five homework grades. Point weighting in Graded Formative only impacts other grades in Graded Formative.

**Example B:** In the Summative category, a teacher grades tests out of 100 points, projects out of 200 points, and presentations out of 300 points. This means one project equals two tests and one presentation equals three tests. Point weighting in Summative only impacts other grades in Summative.

**Make-Up Work:** CCSD School Board [Policy JBD](#) outlines expectations for make-up work when a student is absent (excused absence). The student and parent/guardian, in conjunction with the teacher, are responsible for arranging to complete missing assignments due to absence(s). Make-up work is to be completed in a timeframe such that the student has the number of excused days absent, plus one additional day after resuming attendance, to complete assignments. For example, a student with one excused absence would have two days to complete make up work, a student with two excused absences would have three days to complete make up work, and so on. Some work, by its very nature, may be impossible to make up and may necessitate alternative assignments.

**Late/Missing Work:** The core business of teaching, learning, and achievement happens in the classroom. Teachers use formative assignments and assessments to plan and inform instruction. Therefore, students must demonstrate academic ownership by turning assignments in on time to support their learning, receive timely constructive feedback, and earn full credit. Establishing healthy work timelines for late or missing work supports a positive and productive learning environment and builds workplace-ready skills. In CCSD, students are to submit all graded formative assignments prior to the date of the corresponding summative assessment\*.

*\*For units of study that extend across quarterly grading periods, late or missing assignments must be submitted prior to the end of the grading term.*

### Grades 4-5

For Elementary School students, assignments turned in beyond the submission deadline, as clearly defined by the teacher, will be accepted until the date of the corresponding summative assessment for a maximum score of 90%. If concerns about a grade arise, please communicate with the teacher.

The Following Criteria Will Be Used In Elementary School When Late Work Is Submitted	
Excused Absence	No penalty will be imposed for an excused absence if work is submitted according to guidance in CCSD BOE Policy JBD.
1 or more days late	Maximum credit allowed is 90%
Once the unit has concluded and/or the summative assessment has been administered, student late work will no longer be accepted for a grade.	

### Grades 6-12

For Middle and High School students, assignments turned in beyond the submission deadline, as clearly defined by the teacher, will be accepted for at least three days with a maximum score as noted in the chart below. If concerns about a grade arise, please communicate with the teacher.

The Following Criteria Will Be Used In Middle and High School When Late Work Is Submitted	
Excused Absence	No penalty will be imposed for an excused absence if work is submitted according to guidance in CCSD BOE Policy JBD.
1 day late	Maximum credit allowed is 90%
2 days late	Maximum credit allowed is 80%
3 or more days late	Maximum credit allowed is 70%
Once the unit has concluded and/or the summative assessment has been administered, student late work will no longer be accepted for a grade.	

**Grades of Zero:** Students should receive a grade of 0 only when they demonstrate zero evidence of learning or mastery of standards. For work not submitted or completed, the following grade codes should be used according to the chart below:

Grade/Code	What It Means
EX	Excused, assignment does not need to be completed.
0	Student turned in the assignment and demonstrated no evidence of learning or mastery of standards OR student did not turn in the assignment prior to the end of the unit and/or summative assessment.
.1	Student was present but did not submit the assignment. Therefore, it is considered late but can still be turned in for a grade prior to the date of the corresponding summative assessment*.
.2	The assignment is incomplete and cannot be graded as is. Therefore, it needs to be completed and resubmitted prior to the date of the corresponding summative assessment*.
.3	Student was absent and will receive full credit when the assignment is turned in.

\*For units of study that extend across quarterly grading periods, late or missing assignments must be submitted prior to the end of the grading term.

**Homework:** CCSD School Board [Policy IHB](#) outlines homework expectations. All CCSD students, parents and staff should familiarize themselves with this policy. Furthermore, when rigor needs to increase, as is the case in advanced/honors level courses, teachers should refer to the Rigor/Relevance Framework and Rigor Rubric within the Instructional Framework.

**Remediation:** Standards define *what* a student must master, not *when*. Therefore, students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of a learning target as long as it is prior to the corresponding summative assessment. Good remediation of content includes re-teaching, additional practice, and reassessment. This process may take place during scheduled class time, other planned instructional time during the school day, or before/after school. The process of remediation may or may not affect classroom grades and may look different among elementary, middle, and high school settings.

**Enrichment and Extra Credit:** Teachers should not assign or collect standalone extra credit assignments. Enrichment activities should be used as a tool for differentiation and align to teaching and learning standards. Such activities must have an appropriate level of rigor and purpose. Also, all students should be able to participate in enrichment activities.

**Final Exams and Exemption:** Final exams are included in the Summative Assessment grading category, not as a standalone category. Only students at the high school level are



permitted to exempt a final exam. Exam exemption for high school students in a course can occur when at least one of the following conditions is met:

- Student takes an EOC Milestone assessment for the course
  - Counts only in the EOC semester
- Student takes an AP exam for the course
  - Counts only in the AP exam semester

**Grades for Students Transferring into CCSD:** When students transfer with grades from another school or district in the middle of a grading term, those grades should be considered as part of the student’s CCSD course grade. Acknowledging that there are many different transfer situations, the final determination of how transfer grades are incorporated is at the discretion of the Principal or designee.

## Elementary School, Kindergarten

**Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) 2.0:** As Georgia Department of Education outlines, GKIDS 2.0 is a progression-based formative assessment, integrated into classroom work that is aligned to CCSD’s Teaching and Learning standards. GKIDS 2.0 is organized around big ideas and learning progressions.

A big idea describes the integration of concepts and skills from the kindergarten standards that are most important for success in first grade. A learning progression shows where the student is in the learning continuum of content and reasoning development regarding the big idea from the standard.

Learning progressions provide the big picture of what is to be learned across the year, relate increased reasoning of standards within the grade and across grades, and support instructional planning.

Kindergarten grading reflected on report cards utilizes the GKIDS chart below to inform parents about their child’s learning progression for each standard.

GKIDS 2.0 Performance Levels	
Not Yet Demonstrating	★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Beginning	★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Emerging	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆
Developing	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Demonstrating	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Exceeding	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(NYA: Not Yet Assessed)

## Elementary School, Grades 1-3

**CCSD Standards-Based Report Cards:** To elevate the individual capacity of all students through cultivating a rigorous and relevant standards-based learning environment, CCSD has customized K-12 Teaching and Learning Standards aligned with state and local expectations to elevate academic excellence and achievement. The Standards-Based report card is used in Grades 1-3 and is intended to provide feedback that accurately reflects a student's instructional progress by measuring what skills, concepts, and knowledge the student has mastered. The rate of mastery will vary from child to child, depending upon individual development.

Standards-Based student reporting provides parents with detailed information about a child's progress in the following areas:

English Language Arts	Mathematics
Science	Social Studies
Behaviors that Support School Success	Gifted Class (if applicable)

The academic progress on each of the CCSD Teaching and Learning Standards is reported using the following:

3	Performance consistently meets or exceeds standard, and student consistently produces quality work (grade level expectation by the end of the year).
2	Performance is approaching standard, and students apply learned skills with some teacher support.
1	Performance is below standard, and students need additional support and frequent reteaching.
	Not Assessed this quarter

## Grades 4-5 Core Subjects

English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies

Common Categories & Minimum Number of Assignments for All Levels

Categories	Minimum # of assignments
Graded Formative	1 per week
Summative	3 per quarter

## Grades 6-8 Core Subjects

English Lit/Comp, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies

Common Categories, Percentages & Minimum Number of Assignments for All Levels

Categories	Percentage	Minimum # of assignments
Graded Formative	60%	1 per week
Summative	40%	3 per quarter

## High School Core Subjects

English Lit/Comp, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies

Common Categories, Percentages & Minimum Number of Assignments for All Levels

Categories	Percentage	Minimum # assignments
Graded Formative	40%	1 per week
Summative	60%	4 per semester

## High School Grades Impacted by Georgia Milestones

Students will take a Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) test in second semester upon completion of the following courses:

ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American Literature</li> <li>Honors American Literature</li> <li>AP English Language <i>(if taken in lieu of American Lit)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Algebra</li> <li>Honors Algebra</li> <li>Enhanced Algebra</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biology</li> <li>Honors Biology</li> <li>AP Biology <i>(if taken in lieu Biology)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United States History</li> <li>Honors United States History</li> </ul>

CCSD requires that the Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) test score will determine 20% of the second semester grade for these courses; the student's classroom grades will determine the remaining 80% of the second semester grade. The formula below is used to calculate the second semester grade including the EOC:

$$\text{Grade on Coursework (.8)} + \text{Milestones EOC Grade (.2)} = \text{Final Second Semester Grade}$$