



# Palacios Independent School District

## Grading Guidelines

### Revised August 2025

*The Palacios Independent School District is dedicated to keeping students first. Our students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to reach their full potential through staff who are effective, supportive, and committed to their ultimate benefit and our multi-cultural community.*

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## **Purpose**

Palacios Independent School District is committed to creating an environment where quality assessment and evaluation will occur with the intent of communicating and improving student learning. The Grading Guidelines are in place to evaluate student learning using similar criteria, consistently applied in all content areas and at all levels as is developmentally appropriate. Our goal as a learning organization is to ensure all students of PISD meet or exceed standards in every aspect of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. The consistency provided by these guidelines will ensure a systematic way of assessing and improving student learning outcomes in our schools.

## **PISD Beliefs**

- Student success is top priority.
- Each student brings value to the learning environment.
- A physically and psychologically safe environment enhances learning.
- Our students deserve teachers who are passionate about learning in every classroom every day.
- Learning is a shared responsibility that requires active involvement by students, staff, families, and the community.
- Continuous professional growth of faculty and staff is essential for student success.

## **Grading Philosophy**

Grades are a measure of achievement at a specific point in a student's development. This measure provides feedback to the student regarding mastery of the state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – TEKS). Palacios ISD believes the most effective form of assessment is one that is diagnostic and provides students feedback that leads to a deeper understanding and mastery of the tested standard.

All grading practices used by teachers will be communicated in writing and shared with students and parents prior to the school year or semester. All grading practices must fall within the parameters established in the Grading Guidelines and District policy.

## **Grading Scale**

Palacios ISD uses the following grading scale:

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 90% - 100% | A       |
| 80% - 89%  | B       |
| 75% - 79%  | C       |
| 70% - 74%  | D       |
| Below 70%  | Failing |

For information regarding the District's scaling and grade point averages calculation, see EIC (LOCAL).

## **Grading Framework**

### **Weight of Grades for Foundation Curriculum - EHAA (LEGAL)**

Palacios ISD promotes an increase of student responsibility for summative assessment\* throughout the learning years. Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten will have standards-based grading\* that correlates to the PISD curriculum and is reflected in the design of the report cards at those levels. All other teachers will follow the guidelines outlined below.

#### Elementary (PK - K)

- Standards-based grading

#### Elementary (1<sup>st</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup> grades)

- 80% formative\*
- 20% summative

#### Intermediate (3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades)

- 70% formative
- 30% summative

#### Junior High School (6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades)

- 60% formative
- 40% summative

High School – All courses taken for high school credit, regardless of when credit was earned, at least:

- 60% formative
- 40% summative

\*Definitions of the terms “formative assessment,” “summative assessment,” and “standards-based grading” may be found in the glossary.

## **Minimum Number of Grades**

### **PK-K**

- There is no established minimum number of grades for Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten.

### **Grades 1 -2**

- Math – minimum of 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- Reading - minimum of 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- ELA – minimum of 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)

- Spelling will count as 3 cumulative formative grades. For example, in a 9 week period, students will have 3 tests averaged together for 3 spelling grades. This grade is part of the ELA (Writing/Grammar/Spelling) grade.
- Social Studies – minimum of 5 grades (3 formative, 2 summative)
- Science – minimum of 5 grades (3 formative, 2 summative)
- Health, Art, Music, PE – These subjects will receive a letter grade of E, S, N, or U.
- E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory, N = Needs Improvement, U = Unsatisfactory

### **Grades 3 - 5**

- Math – minimum 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- ELA – minimum 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- Spelling will count as 3 cumulative formative grades. For example, in a 9 week period, students will have 3 tests averaged together for 3 spelling grades. This grade is part of the ELA (Writing/Grammar/Spelling) grade.
- Reading – minimum 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- Social Studies – minimum 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- Science - minimum 10 grades (8 formative, 2 summative)
- Health, Art, Music, PE – These subjects will receive a letter grade of E, S, N, or U.
- E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory, N = Needs Improvement, U = Unsatisfactory

### **Grades 6 – 12 (All classes including electives)**

- Teachers will have a minimum of 15 grades for each grading period.
- The minimum numbers of formative and summative grades will be determined by the campus and/or by the program in which the student is enrolled.  
There must be a minimum of 2 summative grades.

### **Communication of Student Achievement**

The communication of student achievement is based upon the following principles:

1. Individual achievement of clearly stated learning goals shall be the primary basis for academic grades and provide an accurate reflection of what each student knows and can do at that point in time. The effectiveness of the communication is determined by the accuracy, quality, and quantity of the information about the evidence of student learning.

2. Progress reporting and quarterly grades shall reflect student mastery of learning goals to that point in time.
3. Grading and reporting shall always be done in reference to specified learning goals, comparing a student's performance against a standard rather than against other students in the class.
4. All students' work shall be assessed and feedback given. Work that is graded and intended to be recorded shall follow guidance in number 5 below.
5. Grades shall be calculated in a manner that ensures the grade each student receives is a fair reflection of what he or she knows and has demonstrated, emphasizing the most recent summative assessment information.
6. Grades shall be posted online in the electronic gradebook as soon as possible but no later than 5 school days after the due date. Project/research papers shall be graded and returned within a reasonable amount of time depending on the assignment (maximum of 10 days).
7. Students have the right to review their tests. They do not have the right to take them from the room. All tests given shall be graded, returned, and recorded in the electronic gradebook within 3 school days of the date the test was administered. Adherence to this timeline will allow for timely and meaningful remediation. Tests with written essays can be extended to 5 school days with principal approval.
8. 33% of the grades that will be utilized for determining a student's report card grade must be posted prior to the 3 week progress report.

### **Assignment of Grades**

The assigning of a grade in a particular course should reflect a student's mastery of the skills and content of the course. Grades shall be assigned according to the following:

1. Grades shall be based on the mastery of the TEKS. Grades will not be awarded for any non-academic activities such as a compliance grade for bringing back a report card, supplies, behavior, etc.
2. All grade weights and minimums must be met.
3. Exceptions to the minimum number of grades must be approved by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.
4. An Incomplete (I) will be recorded based on the following criteria: (a) missing assignments in a grading period from an absence; (b) enrolling the last 15 days of a grading period without grades from the previous school; (c) non-attendance in class. Teachers are required to clear any Incompletes within 3 weeks of the next grading period of the semester. A request for extension can be made in writing to the campus principal.

5. Incompletes may be recorded for a period not to exceed 5 school days following the end of a semester.
6. Upon failing at any time within the grading period, the parents must be contacted by phone or email. All attempted calls to contacts must be documented in a log to be submitted to an administrator upon request.

### **Homework**

Homework will be evaluated in a timely manner (no more than 5 school days) and used as a method to provide students specific feedback on their performance of the assigned tasks. Homework can only be assigned after a concept has been taught. Further guidelines regarding homework and grading will be determined at the campus level and may be found in the campus procedure manual.

### **Make-Up Work**

All students shall be allowed to make-up work when they are absent from class. They shall have a time equal to days absent from class to complete all missed assignments. Under extenuating circumstances such as long-term illness or family emergencies, teachers may choose to give students more than one day for each day missed to make-up assignments. In situations where the assignments were given before the student was absent, a shorter time frame may be required at the teacher's discretion.

Make-up tests and quizzes may be administered during an alternate time (i.e. - before school, after school, during lunch) as determined by campus administration. The intent is to minimize loss of instructional time.

### **Late Work**

The procedures for late work will be established by the classroom teacher and communicated to students/parents during the first two weeks of instruction.

## Reteach/Retake Policy

It is the goal of every educator in Palacios Independent School District that every student reaches mastery of standards required by each course. A student may choose to redo an assignment or assessment on which they have scored below a 70%. See EIA (LOCAL).

“For re-teaching to be effective, however, teachers must use a different approach from the one they initially used, one that builds on previous activities but that focuses on the omissions or errors in student thinking that resulted from these activities.” (Marzano, 2010)

1. Students must be provided an opportunity for remediation.
2. Retakes may occur outside regular instructional time (i.e. – before school, after school, during lunch, during intervention time) as determined by campus administration. The intent is to minimize loss of instructional time.
3. The student has 3 school days from the day the assignment was recorded and returned to attend the remediation tutorial and retake the assessment. The teacher has discretion to extend this window.
4. The teacher will record the average of the 2 grades with a maximum score of 70%.
5. Students may be assigned an **alternate** assessment or assignment that covers the same standards as the original assignment or assessment.
6. When 50% or more of the class fails a unit test, the teacher will reteach and retest the class before moving on. The teacher will record the higher of the two grades earned for students being retested. Students who passed the assessment can opt out of the reassessment. If they choose to retest, the higher of the two tests will be recorded.
7. Students will have only one opportunity for each assignment or assessment they wish to retake.
8. Reteach and/or retake are not applicable for failing grades due to work being turned in late or assignments not being turned in at all.
9. AP and CTE Practicum courses incorporate TEKS, but expand significantly beyond them. Students who elect to participate in AP and CTE Practicum courses will understand the responsibility of taking a course with additional rigor. The reteach/retake guidelines will not apply to AP or CTE Practicum courses.

### **Progress Reports and Parent Conferences**

At every three-week interval progress reports are available to every student. Students who have consistent unsatisfactory performance in a foundation curriculum subject are to return a progress report signed by their parent/guardian (EIA LEGAL). This allows failing students or students at risk of failing sufficient time to improve their learning and gives parents information to help assist in improving the learning of the child.

### **Intervention/Tutorial/Extension**

All campuses will provide time that is intended to provide remediation, tutorials, extension, etc. The campus principal will ensure all students have the opportunity to attend these in a way that is appropriate to their needs. Any student failing or in danger of failing will be encouraged to attend. Parent contact is recommended to ensure student attendance.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an assignment. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or other supervising employee including the consideration of written materials, observation, or information from students. A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty may be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and discipline. For further information on this portion of the grading guidelines please refer to the campus procedure manual.

## Grading Glossary

### **Authentic Assessment**

Authentic assessment aims to evaluate students' abilities in 'real-world' contexts. In other words, students learn how to apply their skills to authentic tasks and projects. Authentic assessment does not encourage rote learning and passive test-taking. Instead, it focuses on students' analytical skills; ability to integrate what they learn; creativity; ability to work collaboratively; and written and oral expression skills. It values the learning process as much as the finished product. An authentic task or assessment is one in which students are allowed to analyze an authentic problem, are allowed adequate time to plan, to complete the work, to self-assess, to revise, and to consult with others prior to submission. Authentic assessments are judged by the same kinds of criteria (standards) which are used to judge adult performance on similar tasks. (teachervision.com)

### **Common Assessment**

Common assessment means student learning will be assessed using the same instrument or process and according to the same criteria. (DuFour). Common assessment may be either formative or summative.

### **Concept Assessment**

Concept tests are short, informal, targeted tests that are administered during class to help instructors gauge whether students understand key concepts. They can be used to both assess students' prior knowledge or targeted assessment utilized within the class to help instructors gauge whether students understand key concepts. The primary purpose of concept tests is to get a snapshot of the current understanding of the class, not of an individual student. As a result, concept tests are usually ungraded or very low-stakes. They are most valuable in large classes where it is difficult to assess student understanding in real time. (Carnegie Mellon University)

### **Curriculum-Based Assessment**

The term Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) simply means measurement that uses "direct observation and recording of a student's performance in the local curriculum as a basis for gathering information to make instructional decisions" (Deno, 1987, p. 41).

## **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support.

The general goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning while it's happening. What makes an assessment "formative" is not the design of a test, technique, or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used—i.e., to inform in-process teaching and learning modifications. (The Education Reform Glossary) Formative assessments are commonly contrasted with summative assessments.

## **Homework**

Homework shall be used to support, enrich, or reinforce topics covered in class and should satisfy at least one of the following objectives in an effort to support the learning cycle:

- To provide a drill that helps the student practice the basic skills of a subject.
- To give practice and extension of concepts learned in class.
- To extend learning beyond the material that can be covered in class.
- To develop effective study methods.
- To allow students to make up work after absences.
- To provide a means of re-teaching TEKS.

## **Performance Assessment**

A performance assessment is one which requires students to demonstrate that they have mastered specific skills and competencies by performing or producing something. Advocates of performance assessment call for assessments of the following kind: designing and carrying out experiments; writing essays which require students to rethink, to integrate, or to apply information; working with other students to accomplish tasks; demonstrating proficiency in using a piece of equipment or a technique; building models; developing, interpreting, and using maps; making collections; writing term papers, critiques, poems, or short stories; giving speeches; playing musical instruments; participating in oral examinations; developing portfolios; developing athletic skills or routines, etc. ([www.learner.org](http://www.learner.org))

**Project**

A piece of planned work or activity that is completed over a period of time and is intended to achieve a particular aim.

**Quiz**

A quiz is a type of assessment that is brief in scope, and is typically over material that has been recently covered. Quizzes may or may not be announced to the class ahead of time.

**Summative Assessment**

Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period—usually at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. In other words, formative assessments are for learning, while summative assessments are of learning. (Educational Reform Glossary)

**Standards-Based Grading**

With the utilization of standards-based grading, high standards are to be expected of every student. The curriculum must be aligned to the new standards. Students must be assessed periodically to determine how they are progressing in meeting the standards of what every student must know and be able to do at his/her level. A criterion is set up for standards of what every student or child is expected to know, and a score is set compared to benchmark event as opposed to a norm. Rubrics are utilized in communicating student progress. Responses to student benchmarks under standard-based grading typically appear as: emerging, progressing, and mastered.

**Unit test**

A unit test is a summative assessment over material that is organized around a main concept or topic.