



# Elementary Grading Guidelines

2025 - 2026

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), in partnership with the entire community, will empower every student to become a lifelong learner who is a responsible, productive, and engaged citizen within the global community.

## VISION STATEMENT

Every student is achieving at his or her maximum potential in an engaging, inspiring, and challenging learning environment.

## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

[Compass to 2030](#): Virginia Beach City Public Schools is committed to preparing every child to be future ready with the goal of eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps so that all students maximize their potential. Our approach centers around our Future-Ready Profile, i.e., the skills and attributes students will develop during their PK-12 experience. The five-year strategic framework includes five goals for the purpose of making a difference for every student, every day.

1. **Challenge and Support Each Student to Excel and be Future Ready** – Challenge and support each student to excel academically and gain the skills and attributes outlined in the VBCPS Future-Ready Profile to successfully navigate future pathways.
2. **Enhance Student Well-Being, Resilience, and Responsibility** – Provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that supports the well-being of students and strengthens the social-emotional skills they need to be resilient individuals and responsible leaders.
3. **Value and Invest in Staff** – Enhance and sustain a positive work culture and climate that values and invests in recruiting, supporting, and retaining a high-quality workforce exemplifying the division’s core values.
4. **Partner with Families and the Community to Support Students** – Cultivate mutually supportive partnerships among families, schools, and the community to support student achievement and wellbeing, enhance real-world learning, and broaden opportunities for career exploration and experience.
5. **Advance Organizational Excellence** – Pursue the effective and efficient use of division resources, operations, and processes to best meet the needs of students and staff.

## CORE VALUES

Virginia Beach City Public Schools is committed to creating a culture of growth and excellence for our students, staff, and community. We strive to make this culture evident to all by actively reflecting on and engaging in behaviors that demonstrate our core values.

### **We Put Students First:**

Student-Centered Decision Making – Choosing actions that, above all else, benefit and support student learning, growth, and safety.

*We ask ourselves: How am I putting student interests and needs first when making decisions?*

### **We seek Growth:**

Continuous Learning – Pursuing formal and informal learning opportunities to foster personal growth and improvement for all.

*We ask ourselves: In what ways am I making my learning a priority?*

### **We are Open to Change:**

Innovation – Encouraging new ideas or improved ways of teaching, learning, and working together to achieve our mission.

*We ask ourselves: How am I implementing new or improved ideas to benefit my work and the work of the school division?*

### **We Do Great Work Together:**

Collaboration – Working together and building partnerships that will benefit our students, division, and community.

*We ask ourselves: How and where am I working with others to improve my work and the work of the school division?*

### **We Value Differences:**

Respect – Fostering a trusting, open, ethical, honest, and inclusive environment where diversity of thought and individual contributions is prized.

*We ask ourselves: What am I doing to invite, recognize and esteem the perspectives of those around me?*

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## INTRODUCTION

This set of guidelines describes the procedures for determining student grades and reporting to parents/guardians on the progress of elementary students attending Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Its purpose is to ensure that the interpretation of policies and the application of procedures result in consistent grading and reporting practices across the school division. Teachers, principals, and other administrators should use this document as a reference to ensure compliance with established guidelines. The following information is accurate as of July 2025; however, it is subject to change to comply with federal, state, local laws, and updates to School Board policies and regulations. All current School Board policies and regulations can be accessed at [www.vbschools.com](http://www.vbschools.com).

## SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

The School Board policies and administrative regulations governing the administration of grading and reporting student progress are incorporated in the procedures and practices promulgated in this set of guidelines.

- Attendance - [School Board Policy 5-17](#) and [School Board Regulation 5-17.1](#)
- Homework – [School Board Policy 6-54](#) and [School Board Regulation 6-54.1](#)
- Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration - [School Board Policy 5-27](#) and [School Board Regulation 5-27.1](#)
- Reporting Student Progress – [School Board Policy 5-28](#) and [School Board Regulation 5-28.1](#)
- Student Evaluation and Grading – [School Board Policy 6-72](#) and [School Board Regulation 6-72.1](#)
- Student Scholastic Records – [School Board Policy 5-31](#) and School Board Regulations [5-31.1](#) and [5-31.2](#)
- Custody Students – [School Board Regulation 5-10.2](#)

## PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSES OF GRADING AND REPORTING

The Virginia Beach City Public School Division supports the belief that students and parents should be provided with periodic formal and informal reports reflective of grade-level academic performance. The school division's grading and reporting system aims to communicate how students are performing on the established curriculum. The primary vehicle for delivering this information to students in grades kindergarten through five and their parents is the Virginia Beach Elementary School Report Card. Beginning in first grade, progress reports are provided midway through the grading period for students performing below expected levels.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The Virginia Beach City Public School Division supports a balanced assessment system. Effective instruction is dependent on the use of ongoing formative assessment. Critical to instructional decision-making, accurate assessment information guides the teaching-learning process; teachers engage in daily, continuous assessment of student understanding and use this information to plan instruction to support students in achieving identified instructional objectives. Students who have not been successful on a graded assessment or assignment should

have the opportunity for additional instruction and reassessment. In addition, multiple data points should be used to determine a child's proficiency score or grade on the report card. Evaluation is the attachment of grades to independently completed student work that is representative of academic performance. Proficiency scores are assigned once instructional material (reflective of grade-level standards and objectives) has been taught and sufficiently practiced. Criteria used for grading are clearly articulated to students, and high-quality samples are offered as models. The standards-based grading system recognizes progress toward achieving established standards, even if additional instruction is required to demonstrate proficiency.

Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. Student work is compared to standards, not to other student work. Punitive grading practices such as lowering a child's score due to an assignment being late do not align with the division's elementary grading policy as proficiency scores should reflect a child's performance aligned to the Standards of Learning. The report card also includes criteria for reporting student performance related to citizenship, productivity, collaboration, and participation to ensure information and progress related to these important skills and work habits are reported to parents. Appropriate documentation should support all grades (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics).

Report card comments should be goal-specific, describe what/how/why of learning success, provide manageable suggestions for improvement, and be constructively written. They should provide an accurate depiction of student performance in relation to the standards.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK**

The Teaching and Learning Framework drives our efforts inside the classroom to best prepare and challenge students. This framework includes four beliefs: statements about our collective work as educators. The foundational pieces of effective instruction (planning, teaching, assessing, and responding) are featured within the framework, leading to a safe, effective learning environment for every student, every day – a concept that is always at the center of our work.

## **COMMUNICATING STUDENT PROGRESS TO PARENTS**

Effective communication between school and home is a contributing factor to academic success. A positive, productive teacher-parent relationship contributes to cooperative efforts toward a student's academic achievement. The following means of communication are used to keep parents informed of their children's progress:

### *PARENT/STUDENT COURSE GUIDES*

Early in the school year, [Parent/Student Course Guides](#) are available online for parents. These guides inform parents of the school's expectations, define what students will be learning, and identify the standards by which student progress will be assessed.

## *PROGRESS REPORTS*

Progress Reports are issued at the midpoint of each grading period for students performing below expected levels, in accordance with [School Board Regulation 5-28.1](#). Students performing below expected levels, including students with Individualized Education Programs, should receive a progress report. Kindergarten general education interim/midpoint progress reports are not required for the first quarter. Kindergarten students with disabilities who are not making progress on IEP goals will receive an interim/midpoint progress report on IEP goals.

Teachers will use the electronic grade book version of the Progress Report, which will be sent electronically to parents with an e-mail address in the Student Information System. Paper copies will be provided for parents without an e-mail address in the Student Information System.

Please see pages (10-12) for more information on IEP goal progress reporting.

## *REPORT CARDS*

Report cards shall be issued in accordance with the school calendar following the end of each grading period, approximately every nine weeks. The dates of issuance are established each year by the division superintendent and are published in each school's Student-Parent Handbook.

The purpose of the elementary school report cards is to formally communicate students' progress toward the grade-level instructional objectives and standards of learning taught during each of the four nine-week marking periods.

Parents are asked to return signed report cards for the first three grading periods to ensure that they have reviewed them. At the end of the year, a final report card copy should be placed in the student's cumulative folder ([School Board Policy 5-31](#)).

## *PARENT AND STUDENT PORTAL*

Parents should be encouraged to access important current school year information for their child's progress online through *Parent Portal* ([ParentVUE](#)). Training in the use of the Parent and Student Portal system should be provided to parents and students. Schools are expected to have clear and consistent teacher expectations for proficiency score entry and be able to communicate student performance in a timely manner. Teachers should update proficiency scores regularly.

## *CONFERENCES*

Conferences between parents and teachers are recommended. This personalized interaction promotes the involvement of both the home and the school, fosters a mutual understanding of the student's progress, clarifies the student's strengths and needs, and allows for exchanging information and ideas needed to strengthen and reinforce student performance. Conferences may be requested by parents or by teachers. **Teachers are encouraged to maintain conference reports.**

## *REPORTS TO NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS*

If the parents of a student are separated or divorced, both parents have the right to be informed of their child's progress in school unless forbidden by court order on file in the principal's office. To receive written reports and notification of conferences, a non-custodial parent is to submit a written request to the principal ([School Board Regulation 5-10.2](#)).

In questionable situations, the principal is to seek the advice of the senior executive director of elementary education or school division legal counsel.

## *STUDENT WORK SAMPLES AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION*

Throughout each grading period, teachers must share representative samples of student work. Communication with the home may include but is not limited to written notes, ParentVue, telephone calls, e-mails, newsletters, or a teacher-selected platform.

## *TEACHER COMMENTS*

Much thought should be given when creating report card comments. Teachers also have the opportunity to use pre-populated comments. Teachers should provide specific suggestions for student improvement which are goal-specific, describe the what/how/why of learning success, and provide manageable suggestions for improvement. Statement(s) included should be meaningful, positive, and accurate, yet tactful.

## **CODES FOR MARKING STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS GRADES K-5**

For the following report cards categories:

English Language Arts, Mathematics, \*Science and \*Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, Citizenship, Participation and Collaboration, Productivity, Art, Music, Chorus, and Strings. Kindergarten students will not receive grades for Art, Music, and Physical Education.

\*K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students do not receive separate grades for science and social studies. Information regarding the content taught is provided each quarter.

## *CODES/PROFICIENCY SCORES FOR MARKING IN GRADES K-5*

<b>AP</b>	<b>Advanced Proficient</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>DP</b>	<b>Developing Proficiency</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Novice</b>
<b>NE</b>	<b>Not Evaluated at this time</b>

**The AP – N proficiency scores/codes should not be equated to an A-E grading scale.** The purpose of the proficiency score is to report how well a student is achieving grade-level instructional objectives. It is essential that teachers and parents recognize that the students themselves are not being graded. Rather, the proficiency score represents the level of performance demonstrated by the student on specific objectives and expectations in a given

context and for a specified time. Additionally, assessment of intelligence and ability are not included in determining the codes or proficiency score.

An **AP** indicates a student grasps, applies, and extends key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student consistently demonstrates proficiency, the student should receive an **AP**.

A **P** indicates a student is meeting grade-level standards and expectations. The student, with limited errors, grasps and applies key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student regularly demonstrates proficiency, the student should receive a **P**.

A **DP** indicates a student is experiencing difficulty meeting grade-level standards and expectations. The student is beginning to grasp and apply key concepts, processes, and skills and requires additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. If a student receives extra support and is still making slow progress toward meeting grade-level expectations, the student should receive a **DP**.

An **N** indicates a student is not making expected progress toward proficiency. The student needs improvement in grasping and applying key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student is receiving extra support and help but is still not meeting grade-level expectations, the student should receive an **N**.

### **DETERMINING NINE-WEEK CODES AND PROFICIENCY SCORES K-5**

The nine-week codes and proficiency scores reflect student performance on identified grade-level instructional objectives. The following guidelines are offered to assist teachers in determining the proficiency rating to be used on the report cards for each grading period:

1. The proficiency scores earned reflect the student's achievement in relation to the standards, as indicated by the various assessments of student performance made during the grading period. The teacher should maintain these student work samples along with the progress report proficiency scores. The electronic grade books are subject to examinations as needed. Teachers are responsible for justifying the proficiency scores of any student when the need arises.
2. Frequent assessments of student performance should be made by the teacher to arrive at the nine-week proficiency scores. Formative assessments should be ongoing, and grades should be taken only after the materials have been sufficiently introduced and practiced. Frequent formative assessment provides valuable feedback to students. Formative assessments should be used to plan and revise proficiency ratings.
3. If teachers combine instructional time for the content areas to alternate instructional units in science and social studies, assessments would be made only during the time each unit is being taught. However, teachers must ensure that all subject areas are taught each grading period and that frequent assessments are made. Student performance for each subject area must be marked on the report card for each grading period.
4. The proficiency scores signify the definitions as stated on the elementary school report cards. They indicate the level of student performance in accordance with the definitions.

5. Homework should not be graded. However, in accordance with [School Board Regulation 6-54.1](#). “Students’ efforts will be reflected on the productivity section of the report card.”
6. In Standards Based-Grading, the student’s proficiency score is based on what they learned using a balanced assessment approach. If, for example, a student experiences difficulty with particular objectives early in the grading period or when initially introduced but subsequently achieves proficiency by the end of a marking period, the student’s report card will indicate a score of proficient because they have mastered the standard. Therefore, strict “averaging” of assessments does not accurately reflect a student’s progress and is not as appropriate practice in Standards-Based Grading.
7. Students’ work habits are recorded in the productivity portion of the report card.
8. Grades or symbols other than those specified on the report cards may not be used. *Plus* or *minus* symbols may not be used with Advanced Proficient, Proficient, Developing Proficiency, or Novice on the report card or on individual student work.
9. Parents should be informed if their child is not meeting proficiency before a report card is issued; therefore, codes DP and N in grades K-5 should not be used on the report cards unless the parent has been notified prior to issuance.
10. Several assessments given to students throughout the year provide valuable data; however, they are not used as grades. Examples include VALLSS and VKRP.
11. Digital resources such as Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) and Imagine Math performance scores shall not be used as a part of a student’s proficiency rating.
12. For students receiving accommodations as part of an IEP, English Learner or 504 plan:
  - a. Proficiency rating should be determined by assessing work produced while providing the student’s mandated accommodations.
  - b. Proficiency rating should not be lowered because a student receives accommodations. Accommodations such as shortened assignments, extended time, word banks, assignments at student’s reading level, graphic organizers, tests read aloud, chunking of work – are examples of allowable accommodations that should not influence grades earned.
  - c. The use of alternative authentic assessment methods is allowed and encouraged for students with disabilities.
13. If a student:
  - a. Has been in school ten days or less – no proficiency scores are issued.
  - b. Has been in school 11-22 days – attach an informal progress report to a regular report card (copy for student cumulative record).
  - c. Has been in school over 23 days – complete a regular report card (copy the report card for the cumulative record).

*For more information on the assessment and grading of students receiving special education services, please see the next section.*

## REPORTING PROGRESS AND GRADES FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

*(This section is approved by the Executive Director, Office of Programs for Exceptional Children, May 2023)*

### *IEP GOALS PROGRESS REPORTING*

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are required to include a statement of when periodic reports, noting the progress a student is making toward meeting the annual IEP goals, will be provided to the parent. State regulations and local policies/guidelines require that progress be reported at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of students without disabilities. Therefore, progress reports must be provided when quarterly report cards are issued, and at any other time interim progress reports are provided to students without disabilities. In addition, progress reports must be provided at any time there is a lack of expected progress toward the annual IEP goals and in the general curriculum, if appropriate.

Examples:

Only if those general education students performing below expected levels receive an interim/midpoint progress report, then students with disabilities also performing below expected levels will receive a general education interim/midpoint progress report and an interim/midpoint progress report on IEP goals.

When **ALL** general education students receive an interim/midpoint progress report, then **ALL** students with disabilities will receive a general education interim/midpoint progress report and an interim/midpoint progress report on IEP goals.

### *REPORT CARD USAGE AND GRADING PRACTICES*

1. **For students with disabilities who are taught the general education curriculum** – Progress is reported using the reporting system for all students at that grade/subject level. Through a collaborative process between the general education teacher and the special education teacher, students with disabilities are issued a report card and the IEP progress report on every IEP goal. When determining grades, if a student is receiving accommodations based on an IEP, grades should reflect actual grades earned with the provided accommodations. It is permissible for students to receive accommodations to access the assessments and content in order to demonstrate authentic learning or skill attainment. There should be no lowering of grades because a student receives accommodations.

**Example:** Jose is a fourth-grade student with a Specific Learning Disability who receives 65 minutes of special education services in the general education setting. Jose also has difficulty with organization. Jose's reading deficit is 6-9 months behind his peers. He uses a spell checker and receives additional time for his written assignments. Additionally, Jose has science and social studies tests read orally. With these accommodations, Jose fully participates in the reading and writing curriculum. **No asterisk is applied to this grade.**

2. **For students with disabilities who are taught modified general education standards/curriculum** – Students are issued a report card and the IEP progress report on every IEP goal. Students who receive instruction on modified general education standards/curriculum for a specific content area should receive an asterisk on their report card for that area.

- a. Students who are participating in a general education classroom may receive a grade in the general education subject with the use of an asterisk when they are working on modified general education standards/curriculum. The actual grade received is not lowered simply because the student is working below grade level or on a modified general education standards/curriculum. The use of the asterisk should be communicated to the parents.

**Example:** Alex is a fifth-grade student with an Intellectual Disability who is included in the general education classroom for science and social studies. He is responsible for a small portion of the content during each quarter. Alex is tested on a reduced number of questions based on **modified general education standards/curriculum**. An asterisk is applied because the curriculum is being modified.

- b. Students who are receiving instruction in a special education classroom and who may be receiving **modified general education standards/curriculum** for one or more content areas should receive an asterisk on the report card.

**Example:** Malik is a second-grade student with Autism. He receives special education services for all of language arts. His instruction in language arts is modified from the second grade reading and writing general education curriculum. Malik is enrolled in a special education class for Language Arts Reading and Language Arts Writing. An asterisk is applied because the curriculum is being modified.

**Example:** Jill is a third grader with 100 minutes of language arts instruction on her IEP, consisting of 60 in the general education classroom and 40 in the special education classroom. Jill has a Lexile of 150 (3rd grade Lexile level is 645-945). Jill's special education teacher is using specially designed instruction to meet her IEP goals and academic needs. Her teachers use grade level curriculum for her instruction and are assessed using grade level curriculum. At times, her assignments are adapted by presenting one question at a time, simplifying the wording of the question, and/or using her read aloud accommodation. An asterisk is not applied for reading because she continues to work on grade level material.

**Example:** Tom is a third grader with level 2 special education services. Twenty minutes of his special education services in the general education classroom and the rest are in the special education classroom. Tom has a Lexile of BR (3rd grade Lexile level is 645 - 945). Tom's special education teacher exposes him to third grade materials and standards; however, when she is designing his instruction, she is using curriculum from Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. His assignments are significantly modified by altering the learning target of the lesson. For example,

when planning to teach RL.1A - Identify thematic topics of stories and lessons learned, Tom is still working on the grade 1 strand of this standard which is to retell familiar stories sequentially and demonstrate an understanding of the story structure. His instruction for this has him using a field of three pictures, to help him verbally retell the story, and then he uses a word bank to create his written retelling. **An asterisk is applied for reading because significant modifications have been made to the general education curriculum.** The parents were informed of the use of the asterisk during an IEP meeting prior to using the report card.

3. **For students with significant cognitive deficits who receive instruction based on the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL).**

Students with more significant cognitive disabilities who are working on the attainment of individualized life and functional skills may receive only a partial report card. Students may not receive grades for content areas (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies). Students may receive grades for citizenship, participation and collaboration, and productivity. The asterisk may be used for any general education classes (art, music, and PE) that the student attends. Attendance and general comments are also included on the report card. The IEP progress report is the best method of communicating with parents on the progress toward individualized goals.

**Example:** Jane is a fourth-grade student with an Intellectual Disability. She is taught by the special education teacher for all four core subjects based on the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL). Jane is enrolled in special education math, reading/writing, science, and social studies. **No asterisk is applied because no grade is provided.**

## **REPORTING PROGRESS OF ENGLISH LEARNER (EL) STUDENTS GRADES K-5**

Evaluation of English learner students involves consideration of English language proficiency (ELP) levels as well as classroom performance. EL students are to be provided with scaffolded opportunities to participate in classroom activities. Instruction is to be differentiated based on the varying English language proficiency levels to assist the students in achieving academic success. Instructional tasks and assessments are to be modified and adapted, as necessary and appropriate, and the English Learner Team (ELT) is to determine appropriate testing accommodations and instructional classroom modifications a student may require for assessment and instruction on a daily, routine basis. Testing accommodations, SOL test exemptions for which the student may qualify, and instructional classroom modifications must be documented in the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) Plan by the ELT.

English learner students are no different than their English-speaking peers; they must be held accountable for their learning. High expectations are key to student performance, and the EL student is no different—it is essential that these students understand the need to put forth their best efforts and participate at some level in all classroom activities. As English language proficiency progresses, academic accountability in the classroom is expected to increase.

There are four English language proficiency levels, ranging from 1.0-4.0 (based on WIDA Screener scores) or 1.0-4.3 (based on WIDA ACCESS for ELLs scores). The WIDA Screener is used to initially identify English learners, and the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs is the annual English language proficiency assessment.

An English learner is considered English proficient when they take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment and earn an overall score of 4.4 or higher. Per federal guidelines, the academic progress of these students must be monitored, and they are entitled to accommodations on the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments for two years.

Students functioning at low levels of English language proficiency, especially in their first year attending U.S. schools, may have little to no English language skills; thus, it is unfair to evaluate them in the same manner as their native, English-speaking peers. The policy of the Office for Civil Rights states it is unfair to fail a student due to a second language barrier. After all, one is not able to fairly evaluate a student with limited English proficiency who is unable to comprehend the bulk of what is said in the English-speaking classroom and what is read in English.

For students at ELP levels 1.0-2.5, the English Learner Team is to determine whether a student is able to receive grades in each content/subject area, or if they will receive Not Evaluated (NE) instead. If a student is unable to be graded fairly due to lack of English proficiency, the ELT must document in the LIEP plan for which content/subject area(s) the student will receive NE. The student's teacher should still document the student's grades and track their progress. If, during the school year, a student shows progress in an area for which they are receiving NE, the ELT can meet and decide that the student may begin receiving grades. This decision must be documented in the LIEP plan.

Instruction is to be differentiated, and assignments are to be scaffolded, for all English learners so that they have access to the curriculum and can complete tasks with success. Classroom teachers may consult ESL teachers for assistance and instructional resources regarding appropriate modifications of assignments.

In the case where a student is not able to be evaluated on the report card in a content/subject area due to limited English proficiency (levels 1.0-2.5), they will not receive grades. Not Evaluated (NE) is to be recorded in Synergy Grade Book as the final grade on the report card. In the Comments section of the report card, Not Evaluated due to limited English proficiency is to be documented.

Students at ELP levels 2.6 and higher are to receive grades on the report card in all content/subject areas. Classroom teachers are to continue to differentiate and scaffold instruction as appropriate. Teachers may determine a need to modify some assignments and assessments and are to provide testing accommodations and instructional classroom modifications for students as documented by the English Learner Team in the students' LIEP plan.

English learners at all English language proficiency levels should be evaluated on the report card in the areas of collaboration, productivity, art, music, and physical education.

## REPORTING PROGRESS OF STUDENTS WITH SECTION 504 PLANS

*(This section is approved by the Director of Student Services, February 2024)*

The general education reporting procedures apply to students with Section 504 plans. Grades should be determined by accuracy and/or work produced while providing the student's mandated accommodations. A grade should not be lowered because a student receives accommodations. For detailed information, please refer to the [Section 504 Administrative Guidelines](#).

### BALANCED ASSESSMENTS

VBCPS uses multiple types of assessments to inform instruction and measure subject mastery and Future Ready profile. This balanced approach to assessment includes summative, formative, standardized, and performance assessments. One summative assessment or assignment should not be the only data point used to inform assigning a report card proficiency score.

### GRADING PROCEDURES

In the electronic grade book, proficiency scores are linked to objectives/standards; therefore, the score will be attached to an objective and, ultimately, a report card statement. This will give students and parents a clear picture of which objectives have been evaluated and how their child is performing related to each objective. It will also provide for consistency and commonality throughout the district. This also enables children and teachers to set goals to enhance performance if additional support to reach proficiency is still needed.

Proficiency ratings are entered into the electronic grade book as defined on the following chart:

<b>Levels of Proficiency</b>	<b>Definitions of Levels of Proficiency</b>
Advanced Proficient	The student grasps, applies, and extends key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student consistently demonstrates proficiency, the student should receive an <b>AP</b> .
Proficient	The student, with limited errors, grasps and applies key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student regularly demonstrates proficiency, the student should receive a <b>P</b> .
Developing Proficiency	The student is experiencing difficulty meeting grade-level standards and expectations. The student is beginning to grasp and apply key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student is receiving extra support and help but is still making slow progress toward meeting grade-level expectations, the student should receive a <b>DP</b> .
Novice	The student is not making expected progress toward proficiency. The student needs improvement in grasping and applying key concepts, processes, and skills. If a student is receiving extra support and help but is still not meeting grade level expectations, the student should receive an <b>N</b> .

Students should have regular opportunities to extend and apply learning in new contexts. Students earning an AP on a rubric should be able to demonstrate more than working problems or answering questions correctly. Teachers should consider the following questions when deciding to give an AP or equivalent top score on a rubric indicating:

1. Can the student complete the task correctly **consistently**?
2. Can the student complete the task **independently**?
3. Can the student grasp the big ideas and answer the essential questions?
4. Does the student utilize the 5 C's such as critical thinking, communication, technology, and analytical skills?
5. Does the student demonstrate "thinking outside the box" by using creative and original thinking?
6. Can the student analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information?
7. Can the student collaborate and demonstrate leadership skills by teaching others?
8. Can the student transfer his or her knowledge beyond the classroom to the workplace and life?

Burke, K. (2011). *From Standards to Rubrics in Six Steps*. Corwin Press: Three Oaks, CA.

Proficiency ratings are tied to standards. A report card proficiency score should be entered for each Standard of Learning taught during the marking period. Common assessments should be used to ensure consistent grading practices among teachers on a grade level and should align to the content specifications for the objectives being assessed.

If a student:

- has been in school ten days or less – no grades are issued.
- has been in school 11-22 days – attach an informal progress report to a regular report card (copy for student cumulative record).
- has been in school over 23 days – complete a regular report card (copy the report card for the cumulative record).

### **PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING A GRADE**

The teacher, as an agent of the School Board, has the responsibility for evaluating pupil progress and providing grades to represent scholastic achievement. If it becomes necessary to administratively correct grades of students which have been miscalculated and issued by teachers, the correction is made at or as near the source of error as possible. Any action taken to affect the changing of a grade shall be in compliance with school board policy concerning access, maintenance, and security of records. ([School Board Regulation 5-28.1](#))

If a parent or legal guardian questions a grade, the procedures listed below will be used:

1. The student and/or parent or legal guardian will request the teacher to review the grading process and computation.
2. Following the review, the teacher will decide if a grade change should be made and will inform the student and/or parent or legal guardian of the decision.
3. The student and/or parent or legal guardian may appeal the teacher's decision to the principal.
4. Upon appeal by the student and/or parent or legal guardian, the principal confers with the teacher to (a) review the grade change request and (b) determine if an error has been made. If an error has been made, the grade correction shall be made by the teacher or by the principal.
5. If the teacher is not available, the principal will review the grade change request and will inform the student and/or parent or legal guardian and the teacher of the decision.

### **PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS**

According to [School Board Policy 5-27](#), placement of students will be made based on an evaluation of the student's acquisition of basic skills and other evidence of growth as determined by the student's teacher and principal as evidenced by the following factors:

- SOL test scores at the end of grade three (3), four (4), and five (5)
- Special needs
- Academic performance
- Prior retentions
- Attendance
- Player size
- Reading level
- Work habits
- Intellectual ability
- Parental support
- Age
- School/family history

Each student should learn grade-level subject matter before promotion to the next grade. Each student shall take and be expected to achieve a passing score on the SOL tests for the student's respective grade. Schools shall use SOL test results as part of a multiple set of criteria for determining promotion in grades 3 through 8. ([School Board Policy 5-27](#) and [School Board Regulation 5-27.1](#)). Other factors may indicate that promotion standards are waived, and the student is placed in the next grade level. The recommendation for retention of a student is within the professional judgment of the teacher; the principal considers this recommendation along with all factors to make the final decision.

Kindergarten students shall be retained in kindergarten only after a conference with the parent or guardian and approval of the principal. In special cases, the school may refer kindergarten students to first grade during the school year. ([School Board Regulation 5-27.1](#)) Students in grades K-5 shall be promoted to the next grade level if they have successfully met or exceeded grade-level standards, objectives, and expectations as clearly indicated by the codes marked on the student's report card.

As soon as it becomes evident that a student is experiencing difficulty in achieving instructional objectives, teachers should confer with the parents. Parent conferences and academic interventions should be documented. The time frame for communication to parents is as follows:

Midpoint between grading periods (dates may vary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reports are sent home on designated dates for all students performing below expected levels, including students with Individualized Education Programs, grades K-5</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> grading periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers confer with parents of students experiencing difficulty</li> </ul>

**The possibility of retaining students should not be discussed with parents prior to the second grading period.** However, it is important to communicate that the student is not meeting grade-level expectations and to develop a plan to support academic growth. This should be done as soon as concerns for the student's performance are noted. The following timeframe for communicating to parents that the teacher is recommending retention should be used.

Midpoint of 2 <sup>nd</sup> grading period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers identify students who are not currently meeting promotion standards.</li> <li>The principal prepares a list of the students being considered for retention.</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> grading period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers schedule conferences with parents.</li> <li>At the conclusion of the third grading period, teachers should check the appropriate box on the report card indicating that the student is not meeting grade-level expectations or clearly articulate within the comments section of the report card that the student is struggling to meet grade-level expectations for promotions.</li> </ul>
4 <sup>th</sup> grading period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion decisions for students enrolling late in the school year are made using all available evidence and data received from the previous school.</li> </ul>
Last 15 days of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention decisions are made.</li> <li>Each case is discussed with the principal or designee for the final decision.</li> <li>A letter is sent from the principal to the parent of the student being retained. The letter must be received <b>prior to the last instructional day for students.</b></li> <li>Teacher/guidance counselors talk with students regarding retention.</li> </ul>

Retention will not be considered unless failure to meet the grade-level objectives/expectations is verified by the report card codes/grades earned by the student. A student shall not be retained more than once at any given grade level in grades K-5. When making decisions about retention, all factors should be considered. When retention is not in the best interest of the student, the student should be **placed** in the next grade level. If a decision to **waive** promotion standards is made by the principal and the student is to be placed in the next grade level, teachers should complete a waiver form. The form should be filed in the student's cumulative record folder ([School Board Policy 5-31](#)).

## ATTENDANCE

Click Link: [School Board Policy 5-17](#) and [School Board Regulation 5-17.1](#).

## HOMEWORK

Homework is defined as tasks assigned to students by teachers that are intended to be completed outside the regular classroom instruction and is designed to reinforce and extend classroom learning, prepare students for new information, and promote creative thinking and independent research. **It is not to be graded.** In certain circumstances, homework assignments may prepare students with the introduction of new information and may include reading assignments and projects. If homework is to be used successfully, teachers, students, parents, and administrators must assume certain responsibilities. ([School Board Policy 6-54](#) and [School Board Regulation 6-54.1](#))

### *TEACHERS*

1. Teachers will establish routines for assigning homework.
2. Teachers will collaborate with other teachers in the building to ensure that students do not have an inordinate number of major assignments due at the same time. The process for communicating between departments and within grade levels will be developed in each building. Technology should be considered for this process (e.g., an electronic bulletin board to post and check the major assignments given by teachers).
3. Teachers will use discretion in assigning homework. Assignments should be based on the needs of the class and/or student and may be of short or extended duration. Not all homework is written, and frequently the assignment may involve reading, review, or study of material and forms of independent research. Projects and long-range assignments should be given sufficiently in advance, with reasonable time to complete all tasks. Homework will be assigned Monday through Thursday. Daily written homework will not be assigned on weekends or holidays. **Teachers should be aware of the observance of religious holidays when assigning homework.**
4. Teachers will assign tasks that require the use of only those resources known to be available.
5. Teachers will provide clear directions to ensure that students understand all assignments.
6. Teachers should state clearly:
  - a. how the assignment is related to the topic under study

- b. the purpose of the assignment
  - c. how the assignment might best be carried out
  - d. what the students need to do to demonstrate that the assignment has been completed
  - e. due date of the assignment
  - f. when a resource other than a textbook is needed
7. For long-range assignments, the teacher will provide specific written directions for the student, including purpose, expectations, procedures to be used, and due dates.
8. Teachers will hold students accountable for homework assignments by reviewing and assessing those assignments with recognition given for completion and effort.  
**Students' efforts will be reflected in the Productivity section of their report cards.**
9. Teachers will provide feedback and return assignments in a timely manner. Daily practice and homework **shall not be graded**. Long-term assignments, such as book reports and projects, may be graded.

### *STUDENTS*

1. Students are responsible for recording homework assignments and directions as appropriate.
2. Students are expected to utilize good time management skills. They should schedule study time so that projects and long-term assignments are completed over a period of time.
3. Students are responsible for completing homework assignments by the established due dates.
4. Students are responsible for requesting additional help and/or clarification of instructions for completing assignments from the teacher.

### *PARENTS*

1. Parents are not expected to provide initial instruction on a homework topic or skill.
2. Parents are responsible for monitoring homework by checking to see that the student has recorded and completed the assignment.
3. Parents are responsible for obtaining missed assignments due to absence.
4. Parents should arrange for an appropriate learning environment in the home by:
  - a. Ensuring adequate study time
  - b. Providing an atmosphere free from disruptions
  - c. Supplying necessary materials such as paper, pencils, pens, dictionaries, and other materials. Parent/Student Course Information Guides are provided online for parents. These guides inform parents of the school's expectations, define what will be learned, and identify the standards by which students' progress will be assessed.

5. Parents should encourage their child to keep a list of assignments in their planner/notebook.
6. Parents should show a positive interest in homework and school. If problems arise, parents should contact the teacher at the school.

### *ADMINISTRATORS*

Administrators are responsible for communicating and monitoring the implementation of homework guidelines in their respective schools. These guidelines should be included in the faculty handbook. Administrators should refer to the *Elementary Grading and Reporting Student Progress* handbook. Administrators will ensure that homework policies are communicated to teachers.

### *TIME ALLOCATIONS*

Homework is an important part of the academic program at all grade levels, with assignments consisting of a mixture of mandatory and voluntary assignments. Homework time allocations are recommendations for core subject areas and are not meant to be minimum or maximum quotes. The suggested time allocations reflect the total time of homework assignments per night. The following are time allocations regarding the frequency and duration of mandatory assignments given Monday through Thursday:

1. Kindergarten – No specific time. Homework will include ongoing language and math experiences at home.
2. First Grade – approximately 20 minutes
3. Second Grade – approximately 30 minutes
4. Third grade – approximately 40 minutes
5. Fourth Grade – approximately 50 minutes
6. Fifth grade – approximately 60 minutes

It is important to note that some students may need more time and some less time to complete an assignment. Additionally, the complexity of an assignment may require additional time.

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Produced by the Department of School Leadership. For further information, please call (757) 263-1088.

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy**

Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, disability, marital status, age, genetic information or military status in its programs and activities, employment, or enrollment and provides equal access to the Boy or Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and regulations (including but not limited to, Policies 2-33, 4-4, 5-4, 5-7, 5-19, 5-20, 5-31, 5-44, 6-7, 6-33, 7-48, 7-49, 7-57 and Regulations 2-33.1, 4-4.1, 4-4.2, 4-4.3, 5-7.1, 5-44.1, 5-44-2, 7-11.1 and 7-57.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, enrollment, counseling services, physical education and athletic, vocational education, instructional materials, extracurricular activities, and employment.

Title IX Notice: Complaints or concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual harassment should be addressed to the Title IX Coordinator, Robin Reese, Ed.D., at the VBCPS Office of Student Leadership, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 200, Virginia Beach, VA 23452, (757) 263-2020, [Robin.Reese@vbschools.com](mailto:Robin.Reese@vbschools.com). Additional information regarding Virginia Beach City Public Schools' policies regarding discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment, as well as the procedures for filing a formal complaint and related grievance processes, can be found in School Board Policies 5-31, 5-44 and School Board Regulations 5-44.1, 5-44.2 (students), School Board Policy 4-4 and School Board Regulation 4-4.3 (employees) and on the School Division's website <https://www.vbschools.com/about/titleix>. Concerns about the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator/Executive Director of Student Support Services at (757) 263-1980, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 100, Virginia Beach, VA 23452, or the Section 504 Coordinator at the student's school. For students who are eligible or suspected of being eligible for special education or related services under IDEA, please contact the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children at (757) 263-2400, Plaza Annex/Family and Community Engagement Center, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 200, Virginia Beach, VA 23452.

The School Division is committed to providing educational environments that are free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Students, staff, parents/legal guardians who have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or bullying should contact the school administration at their school. Promptly reporting concerns will allow the school to take appropriate actions to investigate and resolve issues. School Board Policy 5-7 addresses non-discrimination and non-harassment, Policy 5-44 addresses sexual harassment, sexual violence and inappropriate sexual conduct. Policy 5-36 and its supporting regulations address other forms of harassment.

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