

# Grading Guidelines for Elementary Campuses



2026-2027

# NORTHWEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent of Schools

**Mark Foust, Ed.D.**

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

**Michael Griffin, Ed.D.**

Executive Director of Teaching and Learning

**Stephanie Espinosa, Ed.D.**

Executive Director of Elementary Education

**Kim Becan, M.Ed.**



# ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATION

**Beck Elementary**

Principal: Amanda Bunch

**Berkshire Elementary**

Principal: Shanel Jones

**Carter Elementary**

Principal: Britney Kerley

**Cox Elementary**

Principal: Hannah Garcia

**Curtis Elementary**

Principal: Jennifer Putman

**Daniel Elementary**

Principal: Sloan Heath

**Granger Elementary**

Principal: Michelle McAdams

**Haslet Elementary**

Principal: Donna Busby

**Hatfield Elementary**

Principal: Jim Mahler

**Hughes Elementary**

Principal: Nathan Roub

**Justin Elementary**

Principal: Sarah Thornell Ed.D.

**Lakeview Elementary**

Principal: Erika Oster

**Lance Thompson Elementary**

Principal: Amy Lawson

**Love Elementary**

Principal: Aaron McAdams

**Nance Elementary**

Principal: Lyndsie Smith

**Perrin Elementary**

Principal: Carrie Pierce

**Peterson Elementary**

Principal: Danielle Grimes

**Prairie View Elementary**

Principal: Amanda Bomar

**Roanoke Elementary**

Principal: Erin Appling

**Romer Elementary**

Principal: Kim Blackburn

**Schluter Elementary**

Principal: Donae Raymundo

**Sendera Ranch Elementary**

Principal: Kenni Dwyer

**Seven Hills Elementary**

Principal: Shari Jones

**Thompson Elementary**

Principal: Edwina West-Dukes

**Hicks Early Childhood Center**

Principal: Chrisa Oakley



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# OVERVIEW

Northwest ISD is one of the fastest-growing school districts in the state and attracts more than 1,100 new students each year. NISD spans 234 square miles and serves 14 communities in parts of three counties. The district operates three comprehensive high schools, an early college high school, nine middle schools, 24 elementary schools, an early childhood center, and a special programs center.

## OUR CORE BELIEFS

Kids come first.

Continuous learning is essential to prepare for college and career opportunities.

Each student's success is the shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and communities.

Learning is influenced by environment.

## OUR VISION

Northwest ISD empowers learners and leaders to positively impact the world.

## OUR MISSION

Northwest ISD, in collaboration with students, families, communities, and global partners, will engage in a culture of learning that prepares all students to confidently navigate their future.



# GRADING GUIDELINES

We believe that students will achieve success through personalized learning experiences. To cultivate the growth and achievement of every student, teachers will use various methods to monitor and assess student progress towards mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS).

- teacher observations based on specific criteria
- class discussions
- oral interviews
- projects
- demonstrations
- checklists
- textbook tests
- cooperative learning groups
- daily practices
- compositions
- homework
- book reviews / reports
- teacher-made tests
- research products



The above lists address strategies that may be used to monitor and assess progress. As this document will clarify, it is not required that grades be assigned every time progress is assessed and feedback is given. Grades shall not be recorded for universal screeners, diagnostic assessments/tools, reading levels, or MAP assessments.

***Note:*** This document reflects district and campus expectations. The Principal must approve any revisions or exceptions to these guidelines and notify the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Students' grades shall reflect mastery of District objectives. Teachers shall follow District-approved grading guidelines that have been designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the marking period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the Board determines that the grade was arbitrary, or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the District's grading guidelines. Board Policies EI (LEGAL/LOCAL), EIA (LEGAL/LOCAL), and EIE (LEGAL/LOCAL) Elementary Grading Guidelines and Secondary Grading Guidelines

# GRADING SCALE

## PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN

The indicators on the progress report should be marked using the codes below:

☐ = Skill not yet introduced

SD= Skill still developing

D= Skill developed

X= Experiencing difficulty

## GRADES 1 THROUGH 5

The grading system for Northwest Independent School District elementary schools is as follows (This scale applies to language arts, mathematics, science and social studies):

|        |    |                                                          |
|--------|----|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 100-90 | A  | Excellent Progress Towards Mastery                       |
| 89-80  | B  | Above Average Progress Towards Mastery                   |
| 79-70  | C  | Average Progress Towards Mastery                         |
| 69-0   | F  | Unsatisfactory Progress (Failing) Towards Mastery        |
|        | I  | Incomplete (do not use on withdrawal form) (see page 11) |
|        | NG | No grade (see page 11)                                   |

## OTHER AREAS OF STUDY

In grades 1-5, progress in work habits and social behavior is marked as follows:

**E** = Performs at excellent/above standard consistently

**S** = Performs at standard expectations consistently

**N** = Performs slightly below standard expectations, but with continuous progress

**U** = Performs consistently at beginning or below standard expectations



# ASSIGNMENT OF NINE WEEKS GRADES

The assigning of a grade in a particular content area should reflect a student's mastery of the skills and content of the course. Nine week's grades shall be assigned according to the following criteria.

## SUMMATIVE GRADES

**Sixty percent (60%)** of a grade shall be based on summative activities such as major projects, cumulative assignments and tests. Before a summative (major) grade is assigned, the teacher is to have adequately taught the concept and the student is to have had sufficient opportunity to master the concept being evaluated. This process includes using appropriate checks for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice before giving a summative assessment. Major or long-term projects should be closely monitored and assigned two or three formative grades at set intervals prior to the summative grade. If a project or assignment merits more than one summative grade (multiple grades), each grade should represent a different component of the project.



### Example:

Grade 1 Content      Grade 2 Format      Grade 3 Organization

Recording the same grade multiple times is not acceptable. This includes one teacher recording the same grade multiple times or more than one core teacher recording the same grade. Each time a grade is recorded, it is to apply to a specific component of a project. Initial assignment and discussion of long-term projects must include an explanation of the criteria that will be used for evaluating the assignment (rubric). Summative assessments shall be communicated to the students in advance.

## FORMATIVE GRADES

**Forty percent (40%)** of a grade shall be based on formative activities such as class work, daily assignments, quizzes and/or homework. These grades should be a balanced representation of the types of work completed during the course of the quarter.

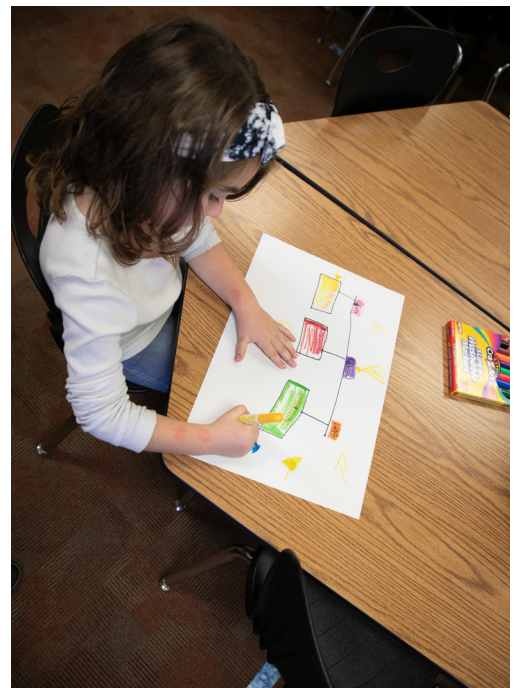
# CONTENT GRADING

During each quarter, the following grades shall be recorded in each of the specified content areas:

## LANGUAGE ARTS

At least 8 grades shall be recorded in Language Arts each quarter. Of these grades, at least 3 separate grades shall be summative in nature with at least 1 summative grade given every 3 weeks. There shall be at least 1 summative and 2 formatives for each progress reporting period (see chart on page 9). Exceptions to this would be (1) if there are less than 40 days in a nine-weeks marking period or (2) if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade. The Language Arts total grade shall be derived from grades from all areas of the Language Arts including, but not limited to, reading and composition, and language conventions. As with other content areas, 60% of the grade will be based on summative grades and 40% of the grade will be based on formative grades. In the summative grade category, a minimum of 1 composition grade shall be recorded. In order for a composition grade to be recorded, the grade should be based on parts or the whole writing rubric.

- Examples of compositions may be narrative, informational, opinion, and responses to literature. Language conventions (spelling and grammar) should be assessed in conjunction with compositions.
- Examples of reading activities may be summaries, responses to literature, written retellings, Curriculum Based Assessments, etc.



## MATH

At least 8 grades shall be recorded each quarter. Of these grades, at least 3 shall be summative in nature, with at least 1 summative grade given every 3 weeks. There shall be at least 1 summative and 2 formatives for each progress reporting period. Exceptions to this would be (1) if there are less than 40 days in a quarter or (2) if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade.

## **SCIENCE**

At least 8 grades shall be recorded in each of these content areas each quarter. Of these grades, at least 3 shall be summative in nature, with at least 1 summative grade given every 3 weeks. There shall be at least 1 summative and 2 formatives for each progress reporting period. Exceptions to this would be (1) if there are less than 40 days in a quarter or (2) if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade.

### **NUMBER OF SUMMATIVE GRADES IN LANGUAGE ARTS, MATH AND SCIENCE BASED ON DAYS IN A QUARTER.**

| <b><i>Quarter</i></b> | <b><i>Dates</i></b> | <b><i>Weeks /Days</i></b> | <b><i>Minimum # of Summatives per quarter</i></b> | <b><i>Minimum # of Formatives per quarter</i></b> | <b><i>Minimum # of Formatives per progress reporting period</i></b> | <b><i>Minimum # of Summatives per progress reporting period</i></b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                     | Aug 12 - Oct 8      | 8.2 / 41                  | 2                                                 | 6                                                 | 2                                                                   | 1                                                                   |
| 2                     | Oct 13 - Dec 18     | 8.4 / 42                  | 3                                                 | 5                                                 | 2                                                                   | 1                                                                   |
| 3                     | Jan 6 - Mar 12      | 8.8 / 44                  | 3                                                 | 5                                                 | 2                                                                   | 1                                                                   |
| 4                     | Mar 23 - May 21     | 8.4 / 42                  | 2                                                 | 6                                                 | 2                                                                   | 1                                                                   |

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

At least 6 grades shall be recorded each quarter. Of these grades, at least 2 should be recorded prior to Progress Reports and at least 2 grades should be recorded prior to the end of the quarter. All grades should be formative in nature. Exceptions to this would be in fourth and fifth grade where 1 summative grade may be recorded during the quarter.

## **ART, MUSIC, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

In Art, Music, and Physical Education classes, a minimum of 2 grades shall be recorded each quarter. At least 1 grade should be given every 4 1/2 weeks.

# GRADING CONDITIONS

**Because we believe** that kids come first and that continuous learning is essential, we will ensure that all students have multiple opportunities to show progress towards mastery of essential knowledge and skills.

**Formative assessments** should be evaluated in a timely manner and used as a method to provide students with specific feedback on their performance of the assigned tasks. **Homework** should only be assigned for reinforcement of skills and concepts taught in class with feedback provided.

Students should receive **feedback and an opportunity to reassess** if needed (see #1 and #2 in the italicized sections below). Therefore, projects or other major assignments should not have a due date of the last week of a quarter.

**Because we believe** that learning takes time and opportunities for mastery learning are critical to prepare students for moving into secondary:



## Summatives

1. *A teacher shall reteach and retest a class when 30% or more of that class has failed a summative assignment or examination. The teacher shall record the higher of the two grades earned for those students being retested. A similar or alternative assessment must occur within ten instructional days of the original assessment. The reassessment addresses the same learning goals or standards as the initial assessment but asks questions in a different way or uses an alternative format.*

## Summatives & Formatives

2. *When less than 30% of a class has failed any assignment or examination that is recorded for a grade, individual students must be provided the opportunity to make-up or redo the assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade. The teacher shall record the higher of the two grades earned for these students. Before any reassessment occurs, a student shall receive appropriate remediation. It is recommended that the teacher document the need for the student to redo the assignment and/or the original grade the student received on the assignment to keep parents adequately informed.*
3. *If a student scores higher on a summative assessment than s/he did on the formative assessment(s) designed to prepare for that summative, then the teacher shall drop the*

*lowest of the formative assessment grades associated with that summative assessment. Any determination to drop or keep a grade should reflect a student's progress toward the overall mastery of skills and concepts.*

Example:

Assignment Grade

Unit 1 Formative Assignment A 45 (drop this grade)

Unit 1 Formative Assignment B 65

Unit 1 Formative Assignment C 85

Unit 1 Summative 84

**Note:** Based on Senate Bill 2033 signed into law after the 81st Legislative Session, districts are restricted as to how minimum grades may be calculated under local grading policy.

**Grades** (and all portions of grades) **shall not be awarded** or reduced for any **non-academic activities such as compliance grades** (or points) for returning a report card, incomplete paper headings, etc.

A grade of **69** should be **recorded as a 70 for the nine weeks grade**. At their discretion, teachers have the ability to raise report card grades from a 79 to an 80, 89 to 90 when using established criteria. Teachers shall utilize the same campus-based/NISD criteria for all students when deciding to raise a grade.

**No grade (NG)** will be issued based on the following criteria: (1) non-attendance in class, (2) zero assignments turned in, (3) enrolling the last twenty days of the quarter without grades from the previous school, (4) withdrawing prior to the end of the quarter. (Note: If a student withdraws within the last 3 weeks of a quarter, has at least 7 grades [2 of which are summative in nature], a grade shall be given.)

Any designation of **Incomplete (I)** must be converted to a grade by the end of the following quarter.



# COMMUNICATION TIMELINES AND REVIEW OF MATERIALS

**Because we believe** that learning is influenced by environment, we know it is of utmost importance that students are given timely feedback on their progress. We also believe that each student's success is a shared responsibility. Therefore, timely communication with parents is critical to student success.

1. All student work (formative and summative) shall be assessed with feedback given. Work that is graded shall be returned and recorded in the District electronic grade book within 3 school days of the date received by the teacher. (See #2 in this section regarding an exception to this timeline.) It is not required that grades be assigned every time progress is assessed and feedback given.
2. Major or long term projects should be closely monitored and assigned two or three formative grades at set intervals prior to the summative grade.
3. Upon student/parent request, students shall have all graded tests (including test questions) returned for their personal records. Exceptions will be district, state, and nationally created assessments. The student and the parents may review district-created assessments at the parent's request.
4. After the second failing grade is assigned to a student in a quarter, the parents must be contacted. If the problem persists, a student-teacher-parent conference is required.
5. Ensure students with special education services have the sped case manager included in parent teacher conference or are aware of failing grades.



## LATE WORK

1. When an assignment is submitted after a deadline, a maximum penalty of 10 points per class meeting may be deducted from the grade with a maximum of 30 points deducted.
2. Teachers will use professional discretion in determining when such a deduction is inappropriate.

3. Late work will be accepted for a grade until the end of the school day on the Tuesday before the end of the quarter in which the assignment was made or until the teacher documents personal contact with a student's parents regarding a late assignment. (Once contact is made, students should be provided at least one additional day to submit the assignment.) Teachers may accept work beyond this timeline for purposes of providing feedback to the student, but any grade given will follow the procedures outlined in #1 (above). Note: If an assignment is due the last week of the quarter and extenuating circumstances prevent the assignment from being submitted on time, the teacher may assign a mark of incomplete (I) on the report card (see page 11). In such situations, the timelines described in #1 will be used. Exceptions to these guidelines may apply in cases regarding UIL eligibility. Refer to UIL rules for additional information.

## MAKE-UP WORK

**Because we believe** kids come first and continuous learning is essential to prepare for college and career opportunities:

1. All students shall be allowed to make up work when they are absent from class.
2. Students shall have a time equal to days absent from class plus one day to complete all missed assignments. Work not turned in during the allotted time will follow the guidelines for late work.
3. Under extenuating circumstances (long term illness, family emergencies, etc.), 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.
4. Make-up tests or quizzes should be administered at school, which may include before or after school hours to prevent the student from missing additional class time. Students who cannot take a make-up test or quiz before or after school must be given the opportunity to make up this work during the regular school day. Modifications of this procedure, which may require administrative approval, should be discussed with the appropriate administrator in a timely manner.
5. If work falls outside of allotted time, refer to Late Work guidelines.



# PROGRESS REPORTS AND PARENT CONFERENCES

**Because we believe** each student's success is the shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and communities, timely communication with parents is critical to student success.

1. Northwest ISD will utilize electronic report cards and progress reports through the Home Access Center (HAC) in grades 1-12. Electronic report cards and progress reports are designed to be convenient and easy for parents to access their student's grades, while supporting the district's efforts to reduce printing. Parents may request a printed copy of report cards and progress reports to be sent home with the student. Progress reports will be available before the fifth week of each quarter through the Home Access Center. (Note: During the first quarter, a progress report is not generated for kindergarten or first)
2. The time period after the progress report but before the report card is an important period to monitor a student's cumulative grade. At any time during this time period, if a student's grade falls below 70, the teacher shall initiate parent contact via email or phone call within five days from the time the grade falls below 70 in any content area. Contact should be documented and kept by the teacher. Follow-up communication with parents shall occur by the end of the eighth week of the quarter for any content area where a student continues to have a 70 average or below.

## REQUIRED ATTENDANCE FOR GRADING

1. New students shall be enrolled in NISD for at least 20 school days in order to receive report card grades for the quarter in which they enrolled.
2. The parents of students who do not receive report card grades are to have communication from the teacher (regarding the child's progress/transition to that point) in the form of a note, telephone call, or formal conference. The teacher shall keep a record of such communication.
3. For students who did not attend NISD schools all year, every effort should be made to obtain grades from the previous school(s) attended so that the final average will reflect the total year's performance. These shall be transcribed into the electronic grade book. In addition, attendance records should be obtained when possible to provide for a fully informed analysis of the student's performance.
4. For students who did not attend any school or for whom their attendance is not sufficient for grading, the grade should be reported as "NG" (page 11) and it should be noted with the comment code indicating: ***"Attendance not sufficient for grading"***.

# TRANSFER GRADES

Some transcripts from outside of Texas reflect an alpha grade and not a numeric grade. When this occurs, the registrar will transcribe the letter grade to a numeric grade as indicated below:

|        |       |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| A+ 100 | B+ 89 | C+ 79 | D+ 65 |
| A 95   | B 85  | C 75  | D 65  |
| A- 90  | B- 80 | C- 70 | D- 65 |
|        |       |       | F 65  |

An exception to this is if a transcript from an outside district records a 65 as passing. In this event a grade of 70 will be used.

# CONDUCT GRADES

Conduct grades reflect student behavior in all areas during a quarter. The following grade designations will be used.

- E (Excellent)
- S (Satisfactory)
- N (Needs Improvement)
- U (Unsatisfactory)

A “U” must not be given unless the teacher has contacted the parent AND discussed the conduct grade with a campus administrator.



# GRADE REPORTING

## GRADE REPORTING FOR GATES (GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES) STUDENTS

Once a semester, a GATES rubric will be prepared for parents regarding individual progress for identified gifted students. The progress is designed to be a supplement to regular feedback and grading students receive in the general education classroom.

The goals for the gifted program are listed for the parents in the end of year expectations documents. An evaluation of each child's progress toward end of year expectations, for each grade level, in each of the following identified areas: depth and complexity, research, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, quality of work, and communication will be shared in smaller rubrics during or at the completion of projects.

The teacher should indicate the level of progress which best describes the student's overall work during the assessed time, as it is aligned to the grade level end of year expectations. The teacher should also use a "comments" section to record appropriate comments specific to the student's work habits and/or effort.

## GRADE REPORTING FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

At the end of each quarter, an IEP progress report will be prepared for the parents regarding individual student progress on identified goals and objectives. The IEP progress report will be sent home in addition to the regular report card.

The goals and objectives are listed with an evaluation of the child's progress marked using the following descriptors:

- 1 - Not Introduced
- 2 - Introduced
- 3 - Progress
- 4 - Mastered

The teacher should indicate the level of progress for work during that quarter. The teacher shall also use the "Comments" column to record appropriate data and comments specific to the student's work.



# ART, MUSIC, AND P.E.:

**Art, music, and physical education grades** should only reflect a student’s progress on **curriculum goals. Behavior and conduct are not to be included** in the subject report card grade. Behavior and conduct for art, music, and physical education will be addressed through a citizenship portion of the report card.

Students will receive grades based on their progress on curriculum goals in each area. The grading scale is as follows:

- E - Exceeds Expectations
- M - Meets Expectations
- A - Approaches Expectations
- B - Below Expectations

# PROGRESS REPORT AND REPORT CARD TIMELINES 2026-2027

| Progress Reports |              | Report Cards |                          |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| End Date         | Go Home Date | End Date     | Go Home Date             |
| 09/11/2026       | 09/14/2026   | 10/08/2026   | 10/15/2026               |
| 11/06/2026       | 11/09/2026   | 12/18/2026   | 01/07/2027               |
| 02/05/2027       | 02/08/2027   | 03/12/2027   | 03/25/2027               |
| 04/16/2027       | 04/19/2027   | 05/21/2027   | No later than 06/01/2027 |

**Note:** Kindergarten and 1st Grade will not receive the first progress report.