San José Unified School District

SJUSD UNIFORM GRADING AND REPORTING SYSTEM
2026-2027

This document establishes grading and reporting practices in order to reach the following goals:

- Ensure that grades are based on student achievement, knowledge, and skill proficiency demonstrated in the classroom and are separated from work habits.
- Promote ongoing formative feedback to students and practices that encourage student engagement in learning.
- Provide parents and students ongoing, credible, and useful feedback that conveys the expectations and achievement of identified standards of knowledge included in the curriculum.
- Ensure that grading policies are transparent and easy to follow and to the extent possible, consistent within content areas.

The Governing Board believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians understand performance expectations and identifying the student's areas of strength and those areas needing improvement. Parents/guardians and students have the right to receive course grades that represent an accurate evaluation of the student's academic performance, support a growth mindset, and give all students an opportunity to succeed by counteracting institutional biases.

A teacher shall base grades solely on the quality of the student's academic work and mastery of course content based on district standards. Students shall have the opportunity to demonstrate this mastery through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, tests, projects, portfolios, and/or class discussions as appropriate. Other elements that are not a direct measure of knowledge and understanding of course content, such as attendance, effort, student conduct, and work habits, shall not be factored into the academic grade but may be reported separately.

Teachers shall evaluate a student's work in relation to standards which apply to all students at that grade level, not in relation to the work of other students in one particular class. The Superintendent or designee shall establish and regularly evaluate a uniform grading system that shall be applied in all courses and grade levels, and principals and teachers shall ensure that student grades conform to this system. Teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians how student academic performance will be evaluated in the classroom. A description of the SJUSD uniform grading system shall be available on the school and district website. (SJUSD Policy 5121)

Communication:

Effective communication is essential to create strong school-home partnerships and to increase parental involvement that supports student learning. School staff use a variety of strategies to make communication with parents as informative and interactive as possible. As students progress in age and grade level, there is an increased responsibility for each student to actively communicate with parents and teachers regarding academic progress or concerns. Every communication exchange is an opportunity for the school and teachers to promote parent partnerships and support student learning and achievement.

Yearly Continuous Improvement Process

- Review of student and implementation data with a teacher subcommittee.
- Parent and student input at the site level.
- Document update in spring and dissemination prior to the start of the school year.

GRADES TK-5

A standards-based report card lists the most important standards students should learn in each subject at their particular grade level. Instead of traditional letter grades, students receive a mark indicating how well they have mastered the required standards.

- TK: “O” (Observed), “D” (Developing), or “NY” (Skill Not Yet Observed); based on the California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF).
- Grades K-3: “1” (Below Grade Level Standard), “2” (Approaching Grade Level Standard), and “3” (At or Exceeds Grade Level Standard)
- Grades 4-5: “1” (Below Grade Level Standard), “2” (Approaching Grade Level Standard), “3” (At Grade Level Standard), and “4” (Exceeds Grade Level Standard); 5th grade teachers have the option of using letter grades for the final report card.

Standards-based grading focuses on the student’s achievement relevant to grade level standards at each grading period rather than how quickly students learned or how many times it took them to master the standards. Our standards-based report card reflects the student’s current proficiency level based on end-of-year standards expectations as measured by classwork and assessments. The report card also provides feedback on the student’s study and social skills separate from content mastery.

Report Cards

Report Card grades are based on end-of-year expectations and document progress toward that goal. A score of “2” indicates that the student is making progress on taught standards while a grade of “1” indicates the student is significantly below grade level on taught standards. A “3” is earned when a child achieves end-of-year mastery for that standard regardless of the time of year. A checkbox has been added to each domain to indicate whether a child is making adequate progress.

SJUSD does not base a grade on a discrete skill. While teachers should factor in some components of district assessments, these are not used as the report card grade, nor should any other single assessment be used in this way. It is important for the grade to reflect what a child can do at the time of the grade, not an average of grades over time.

Teachers conference with the parent/guardian of every student at the first grading period. For the second grading period, teachers conference with parents/guardians of students who are working below grade level, not working to their full potential, or with any parent/guardian who requests a conference.

The SJUSD Elementary Report Card is available in English and Spanish. Report Card grades are entered into Infinite Campus for all students enrolled, printed prior to the close of the window and given to parents at the conference or sent home with students at the end of the conference window if no conference was held.

Reports Card for English Learners (EL): Upon entering the student’s name in Infinite Campus, the EL report card template will be displayed for students designated as English Learners. In addition to the content areas to be graded for all students, teachers provide grades for English Learner Proficiency Goals for reading, writing and oral language (speaking and listening) to indicate progress toward reclassification.

GRADES 6-12

Within the first two weeks of school, teachers will upload into CANVAS a course syllabus using the SJUSD syllabus template that will communicate departmental policies to students and parents.

- Weighting of tests and assignments
- Retake or revision policy
- Late and make up work policy
- Amount of time students and parents may expect to see posted grades in Infinite Campus following an assignment deadline or assessment (e.g., two weeks)
- Summary of what the students will be expected to know and be able to do at the end of the course
- Rubric if participation grade is given

Ongoing Access to Grades

The Infinite Campus (IC) Parent Portal provides parent and guardian access to their child's student information, including attendance, class schedules, gradebook, and assessment history. IC is the official gradebook in SJUSD and teachers who have grades in Canvas are expected to sync with IC so that the official grade book is accurate. There are several options to achieve the above expectations:

Option 1: Turn on the nightly sync button so grades from Canvas are passed back to IC nightly.
Option 2: Input grades manually in Canvas and IC each time an assignment or assessment is graded.
Option 3: Input grades into IC each time an assignment or assessment is graded.

In order to access IC, parents login using the username and temporary password sent to the email address provided when the student was registered to attend SJUSD. Parents can receive support to access the Parent Portal by going to sjusd.org.

Parents can also see assignments and grades by becoming an Observer in their child's Canvas account. Directions to access Canvas can be found on sjusd.org.

The Family Engagement Office works collaboratively with site staff to train parents to use the Parent Portal and encourage regular communication with teachers.

Progress Notices, Conferences and Report Cards

Progress reports can be found in IC and are emailed, texted or messaged using ParentSquare two times a semester at six-week intervals to communicate student academic achievement to date, based on curriculum objectives. The semester report card is also found in IC and is emailed, texted, or messaged using ParentSquare once the semester grades close. A report card grade will be a letter grade that will correlate to a percentage or rubric scale unless the course is designated as pass/fail in the SJUSD course catalog.

Teachers of students in Grades 6-12 are encouraged to have personal contacts or conferences with parents/guardians, upon request, regarding the student progress.

Notification to parents/guardians of students in danger of failing (receiving a grade mark of -, D, or F) is required no later than three weeks prior to the end of the semester. Middle and high school teachers use a report card comment on Progress Report 2 and 4 to notify families a student is in danger of failing that course. (SJUSD Regulation 5121)

Grading Scales for Homework, Assignments and Assessments

Grade marks may be determined using the percentage or rubric scale below.

Grade	Percentages	or	Grade	Rubric
A	100-90%		A	4
B	89-80%		B	3
C	79-70%		C	2
D	69-60%		D	1
F	59-50%		F	0

Traditional grading scales that use a 0-59% range for the letter grade “F” make the “F” six times more powerful than other grades. Changing the percentages so that the “F” is 50-59% makes the “F” equal to the power of the other letter grades.

Teachers can choose to use the percentage scale with nothing being noted below 50% for assignments and homework or they can use the rubric scale.

Since assessments are a demonstration of student mastery rather than a practice opportunity, teachers may record a grade below 50% if that is a correct reflection of the student’s proficiency. See section “Additional Opportunities to Demonstrate Proficiency” for more information.

Other Report Card Marks

Incomplete (I): While a student should receive a grade whenever possible, there are times when an Incomplete (I) grade is appropriate. Teachers may assign incompletes for a semester grade when a student is unable to complete an assignment that is a major component of the semester grade. If a student receives an Incomplete, it is expected that the student and teacher work together to create a plan to complete missing assignments or assessments. If the grades are not made up within six weeks of the end of a grading period, the teacher will convert the “I” to a letter grade that accounts for the missing assignments and assessments. If the Incomplete occurs at the end of the second semester, the student will not receive a grade until the beginning of the following school year.

Pass/Fail (+/-): Classes defined as "Pass/Fail" award credit for the course work, but no grade points are given and the grade mark and credits are not calculated into the students' GPA. Students earning a grade mark of "+" receive credit for their course work. Students earning a grade mark of "-" do not receive credit for their course work. Pass/Fail can only be used in a course that is designated as Pass/Fail in the SJUSD Course Cat

Comments

Progress Report and Report Card comments are used to communicate study habits, behaviors, organization skills and source of grade or educational setting.

1 Excellent conduct and attitude
2 Acceptable conduct and attitude
3 Classroom conduct and attitude need improvement
4 Unsatisfactory classroom conduct and attitude
5 Preparation shows a high degree of responsibility
6 Preparation is at acceptable level of achievement
7 Preparation is not up to apparent ability
8 Preparation is not up to apparent ability
9 Absences and tardies have affected class work Assignments are incomplete or unsatisfactory
10 Student is in a course with below grade level content.
11 Student is in danger of failing. Please contact your student’s teacher for a conference.
12 Grade was provided by Home Hospital or Home Instruction teacher.

Process for Contesting Grades

A grade assigned by the teacher shall not be changed by the Board or the Superintendent except as provided by law, Board policy, or administrative regulation. (Education Code 49066)

When a student grade is challenged, the teacher who gave the grade shall be given an opportunity to state the reasons for which the grade was given. Insofar as practicable, the teacher shall be included in all discussions related to any grade change. In the absence of clerical or mechanical error, fraud, bad faith or incompetency, the student's grade as determined by the teacher shall be final. (Education Code 49066)

Within 30 days of receiving a request to change a grade, the Superintendent or designee shall meet with the parent/guardian and with the employee (if still employed). The Superintendent shall then sustain or deny the allegations. (Education Code 49070, SJUSD Policy 5125.3)

See SJUSD Parent/Student Handbook for additional information about the complaint process.

Grading Design

It may be difficult to have consistency across departments because the teaching and learning looks different for different content areas. However, it is important to have consistency within a department to provide clear and transparent grading policies. Teachers will work collaboratively with their department to develop a grading design for determining progress and final grades. All grades entered into the gradebook will relate directly to standards and reflect a student's mastery of content or skills.

Teachers may choose either a 5-point rubric scale or the percentage grading scale referenced above. Teachers within a department will be consistent in their choice. Grades may be calculated using a weighted category or a total point system.

Departments will set the grading design so that no one assignment or assessment counts for more than 20 percent of the final grade. This will ensure that no one assignment has a disproportionate impact on the student's grade.

Any adjustments to grading design for course-alikes within a department (e.g., Dance within the Visual and Performing Arts Department) should be consistent with the department philosophy and approved by the principal. This only applies to course-alikes, not individual classes.

Teachers separate achievement grades from work habits to show learning versus responsible behavior. Teachers will communicate student's attendance, effort, attitude, or other behaviors to parents/guardians through report card comments or other means that do not include grades.

Guidance for teachers related to the separation of achievement and work habits:

- Homework for practice or preparation for instruction may account for no more than 25 percent of a progress or final grade.
    - Homework is an assigned learning activity students can do independently; has a clear purpose, supports enhanced learning, and allows students to practice previously taught skills and use acquired knowledge. (SJUSD Policy 6154)
- Class participation may be included in a student's grade when based on the quality of a student response and not the quantity of responses. If a department includes class participation in a student's grade, guidelines for how that grade will be determined must be included in the course syllabus. See the "Participation Rubric Example" at the end of this document.
- Students will not be given extra credit or grades for activities such as bringing in classroom materials, providing parent/guardian signatures, participating in fundraising/charitable events, completing NWEA, or participating in non-curricular activities.

Grading Assignments and Assessments

Students should experience frequent and ongoing assessment and feedback throughout each grading period on the quality of work as it relates to the course objectives. Each category except for finals should have at least one assignment for each progress period.

- Assignments are teaching and learning opportunities that ask the student to think and learn about ideas, topics, events, and questions.
- Assessments evaluate, measure, document academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition or educational needs.

All teachers are given weekly professional time for their professional responsibilities, among which is record keeping for their students, including attendance, grades, and assessment results. (SJTA CBA 9123) This ensures frequent and timely communication to parents about student progress so that parents can support student learning. If a parent has concerns about student progress, the first communication should be to the teacher. (SJUSD Policy 6171)

Additional Opportunities to Demonstrate Proficiency

Assessments demonstrate a student's understanding of the content taught.

- A score of less than 70 percent on an assessment indicates that a student is missing key knowledge and that reteaching or other learning experiences are needed.
- A student who scores less than 70 percent on a major assessment must be given at least one new opportunity to demonstrate proficiency and complete corrective action that the department has developed. If the opportunity to reassess is only available to students who score below 70 percent, then the eligible student's highest score up to 70 percent should be entered into the gradebook.
- Departments may extend the opportunity to all students in the class at their discretion. If the opportunity is open to all students, then the student's highest score should be entered into the gradebook
- Departments will determine guidelines for reassessment and communicate them through each course syllabus.
- The reassessment may take the form of a retake, completion of test corrections, revision of work, or another similar opportunity.

Grades and Academic Honesty

Students, families, staff, and administrators shall be responsible for creating and maintaining a positive school climate that encourages honesty. Students found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty including prohibited use of technology and/or the use of artificial intelligence shall be subject to district and school-site discipline rules (SJUSD Policy 5131.9). Teachers are encouraged to require the student to redo the assignments so that they can assess the student's skill but are not required to include the grade in the gradebook.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted to document student learning and the grade will be included in the grade book. Departments must set reasonable guidelines for accepting late work to encourage work completion by their students.

The school will develop a support system to ensure that major assignments are completed in a timely manner. Assignments or assessments completed more than two weeks after the due date will not serve to inform the teacher or student of progress toward mastery of course content. The school will develop and implement methods to ensure that students complete assignments in order to provide the teacher with information that informs instruction. School staff will collaborate to develop supports for this purpose; those supports may look different at different schools.

Below are possible ways to support students to understand or complete assignments. The list is not exhaustive.

- Provide 15-30 minutes of class time each week to complete missing assignments or get help on concepts a student doesn't understand.
- Counselors and administrators review grades monthly and schedule meetings with students to complete missing assignments.
- Assign students with missing assignments to a mandatory tutorial if the school has a tutorial period built into the schedule.
- Assign students to attend homework center.
- Open classroom or media center 30 minutes prior to the start of the day to provide support.

A student with excessive missing assignments may need other or additional supports as determined by the school site.

Departments may choose to apply a penalty when work is turned in after the due date. The grade entered should be marked "Late." If a student has been given multiple opportunities to complete assignments and has not done so, the missing assignment should be designated as an "M" in Canvas, which will record as 50% in Infinite Campus.

Make-Up Work

Whenever a student misses an assignment or assessment due to an excused absence or unexcused absence, the student shall be considered for full credit for subsequent satisfactory completion of the assignment or assessment. (SJUSD Policy 6154) Departments will determine guidelines for a reasonable timeline to submit make-up work and communicate them through each course syllabus. Students will not be able to make up semester final examinations due to unexcused absences.

When a parent/guardian of a student who has been suspended for two or more school days requests homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned, the student's teacher shall provide and grade such homework. If not graded before the end of the academic term, the homework shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class. (Education Code 48913.5)

The teacher of any class from which a student is suspended may require the student to complete any assignments and assessments missed during the suspension. (Education Code 48913)

Progress and Final Grades:

All grades will reflect the teacher's professional judgement of student achievement. Teachers are responsible for maintaining accurate and timely records and justifying their grades whenever the need exists.

Final Exams:

A final examination or appropriate culminating activity may be given at the end of the semester and must be based on the standards. The grade for the final examination or activity may count for a maximum of 20% of the final course grade. A makeup final examination or activity is permitted only in the case of a student whose absence is excused. Final semester exams are not eligible for retakes.

SJUSD students in special education receive the same district curriculum and assessments as the general education students, with the exception of students that receive alternative curriculum as indicated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students receiving special education are required to have any accommodations recommended by the IEP team outlined in the IEP documents (Form 4 and 6a). General education teachers are a part of the IEP team and must confer regularly with the special education case managers regarding the progress of their students. Special education case managers must make available a copy of the student's IEP (IEP at a Glance – RE14) for all teachers (general education and other special education teachers who teach the student) to follow and to be available for questions and concerns. Any modifications and/or accommodations are required to be part of the day-to-day instructional program and assessments as identified in the IEP as required under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504.

SJUSD has an expectation that grading is determined by the student's performance in the core curriculum. Grades are driven by the student's level of proficiency for each subject based on the academic standards and the district adopted curriculum. Grades need to take into account modifications listed in a student's IEP as they relate to the components of the grading policies. Each student's accommodations and modifications are listed in the student's IEP. All teachers must confer with a student's case manager or site administrator if they have any questions about implementing the accommodations and/or modifications outlined in a student's IEP.

In addition to the report card, all students in special education receive a periodic progress report that describes their progress on specific IEP goals and/or benchmarks. This report is completed by special education staff with input as appropriate from general education teachers.

Grading expectations by program and classes are described below.

Elementary Resource Support Program

There are currently no grades given for the Specialized Academic Instruction provided in elementary resource programs. Students that are placed in the resource program or are speech/language only will follow the general education grading guidelines.

Specialized Academic Instruction Classes – Elementary

A standards-based report card lists the most important standards students should learn in each subject at their particular grade level. Students are graded using the same marks as indicated in the elementary section above.

Standards-based grading focuses on the student's achievement relevant to each standard at the point of each grading period, rather than how quickly they learned or how many times it took them to master the standards. Our standards-based report card reflects the student's:

- Current proficiency level on end-of-year standards expectations.
- Work in relation to the standards applied to all students at the grade level.
- Demonstration of study and social skills.
- Progress on annual IEP goals.

Specialized Academic Instruction in Non-Core Classes (Guided Studies, Social Skills, Social Cognition, etc.)

Pass/Fail based on two factors:

- Attendance
- Participation
    - Class participation may be included in a student's grade when based on the quality of a student response and not the quantity of responses. Guidelines for how that grade will be determined must be included in the course syllabus. See "Participation Rubric Example" at the end of this document.

Specialized Academic Instruction in Core Academic Classes (ELA, Mathematics, Science, etc.) – Diploma

Students in core academic Specialized Academic Instruction classes will be graded using the same adopted district grading policy weights and percentages as their general education peers, but with appropriate modifications as defined in their IEPs. Special education teachers are required to update the annual goal progress report or annotated goals in concert with the general education report card periods.

Specialized Academic Instruction in Core Academic Classes (ELA, Mathematics, Science, etc.) – Certificate of Completion

A minimum of 60% of the grade will reflect culminating tasks that demonstrate understanding of the modified content standards (assessments, essays, labs, projects, quizzes, etc.). A maximum of 40% of the grade will be based on participation, classwork, and homework as defined above. Class participation may be included in a student's grade when based on the quality of a student response and not the quantity of responses. Guidelines for how that grade will be determined must be included in the course syllabus. See "Participation Rubric Example" at the end of this document.

Students with a graduation plan of Certificate of Completion outlined in their IEP who are enrolled in Specialized Academic Instruction classes shall receive grades based on alternative curriculum. The alternate courses do not meet district diploma/graduation requirements. Students with this graduation plan who complete their 4 years of high school will then transition to a post-secondary program, and at age 22 the student will age out of district services and receive a certificate of completion.

Students with a graduation plan of Certificate of Completion outlined in their IEP who are enrolled in general education classes as part of their IEP will be graded using the adopted district grading policy weights and percentages for that class, but with appropriate modifications per their IEPs. Special education teachers are required to update the annual goal progress report or annotated goals in concert with the general education report card periods.

Accommodations

An accommodation is a change to HOW a student meets expectations (i.e., leveling the field for our students to access the education). An accommodation does not fundamentally alter or lower the standards or expectations of the course. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- How information is presented,
- How students are expected to respond to or show mastery of information,
- The setting in which students receive instruction,
- When and with how much time students are expected to complete assignments,
- Supports and aids a student uses to access information.

Modification

A modification is a change to WHAT students are to meet (i.e., changing the field on which students are playing). A modification fundamentally alters or lowers the standards or expectations of the course. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Alternate curriculum that does not align to common core standards, or
- Modification of common core standards.

Students receiving special education services shall not receive a failing grade if all the legal accommodations or modifications as outlined in their IEP documents have not been provided.

Suggested Participation Rubric

	4-Exemplary (90-100%)	3-Proficient (80-89%)	2-Developing (70-79%)	1-Unacceptable (≤69%)
Quality of Comments	Comments always insightful and constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions and specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions.	Comments mostly insightful and constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion and personal taste, e.g., "I love it", "I hate it", "It's bad" etc.
Listening Skills	Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks, i.e., student hears what others say and contributes to the dialogue.	Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect and build on others' remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from teacher of focus of comment.	Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc.
Class Discussion/Peer Interaction/Pair Work	Consistently, actively supports, engages, listens and responds to peers. Takes a leading role. Participates in a meaningful way in class discussions.	Makes an effort to interact with peers daily but does not take a leading role. Some active participation in class discussions.	Some effort to interact with peers but does not take a leading role. Minimal participation in class discussions.	Limited or no interaction with peers and rarely participates in class discussions and/or does not stay on task.
Contributes in a Meaningful Way	Comments often advance the level and depth of classroom dialogue; elicits the contributions of others.	Relevant comments are based on assigned material; elicits the contributions of others.	Some relevant comments are based on assignments.	Class comments lack relevance.

Syllabus:

COURSE TITLE
YEAR
SCHOOL
TEACHER

Course Description from SJUSD Course Catalog (Including Credit to be Earned)

Course Objectives:

- X
- Y
- Z

Instructional Resources Used in This Course: (Must be items provided by the school)

- Textbook
- Novel
- Etc.

Teacher Contact Information

- Email, school phone number, website, etc.
- Canvas

Sequence of Units

Absences/Make-up Work:

Whenever a student misses an assignment or assessment due to an excused absence or unexcused absence, the student shall be given full credit for subsequent satisfactory completion of the assignment or assessment. (SJUSD Policy 6154)

When a parent/guardian of a student who has been suspended for two or more school days requests homework assignments or assessments that the student would otherwise have been assigned, the student's teacher shall provide and grade such homework. If not graded before the end of the academic term, the homework, assignment or assessment shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class. (Education Code 48913.5)

Assignments missing for other reasons must be turned in and will be graded (***explain department policy***).

The following percentages will be used to determine grades:

Overall grading scale:
A 100-90%
B 89-80 %
C 79-70 %
D 69-60 %
F 59-0 %

Within the overall grading scale, assignments are graded following the assignment grading scale:

Grade	Percentages	or	Grade	Rubric
A	100-90%		A	4
B	89-80%		B	3
C	79-70%		C	2
D	69-60%		D	1
F	59-50%		F	0

Grading Categories:
% Test/Quizzes
% Homework/Notebook
% Class Discussion (See Rubric)

The grading structure will not be changed unless approved by the principal and communicated to students and parents. Student grades will not decrease because of any change in grading structure.

Academic Honesty:
The Governing Board believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians understand performance expectations and identifying the student's areas of strength and those areas needing improvement. Work submitted that is not based on the student's skills or knowledge cannot be used to assess a student's knowledge and will not be accepted as part of the grade. ***Add department policy here.***

Developing a Positive Learning Climate:

Describe classroom rules and procedures here.

Addendum I for Secondary

From Policy to Practice: Assessment Design and Retake Best Practices

Intention of This Document: This document is intended to be used as a thinking tool while planning assessments and while designing retake practices within the context of the Uniform Grading and Reporting System. This document supports translating *policy* (Policy and Regulation 5121) into concrete *instructional practices.* While the title of the document indicates a focus on assessment, the larger emphasis is on the relationship between assessment and instruction. Please note too that this document is intended to be used with summative assessments.

What This Document is Not: This document is not a revision or addendum to the Uniform Grading and Reporting System nor is it in contradiction with any aspect of that document as written and adopted.

Intended Outcomes: The Big Picture
This section defines the big picture outcomes intended to be achieved with effective retake practices.

- Student mastery is the focus and ultimate goal that should lead the assessment design and retake practices. Grades on retakes accurately reflect mastery (no caps or contingencies).
- All practices should promote student ownership and foster intrinsic motivation. All practices are anchored in establishing relevance for the larger course goals and alignment between all learning experiences.
- Clear, guided instruction addressing misconceptions and learning gaps happens between the original assessment and the retake. The retake should take place within two weeks of the original assessment to support maximum relevance. The process should include considerations for small group instruction and teacher feedback is provided during class to guide students toward mastery.
- All students do a retake or an extended learning activity in class to support a positive culture around assessment and to naturally manage logistics and possible stigmas associated with retakes.
- Student reflection should have a place within the retake practices to support students internalizing skills and concepts for the sake of transferring them to other courses and contexts.

Practices for Achieving the Intended Outcomes: Below are some practices that align to the intended outcomes that are described above.

Practices for Corrective Actions

- Timely reteaching/corrective feedback is provided.
- Corrective instruction should be aligned to the misconceptions surfaced in the original assessment results.
- Rubric scoring plus individual conferences can provide clarity and guidance for corrective actions.
- Mini lessons are provided that address misconceptions identified within assessment results.

Practices for Assessments and Retakes
All retakes should be of parallel rigor to the original assessment (not lower or higher) and should distill the tasks that the student(s) still need to complete to show mastery. Some options for doing this could be:

- Assess the same concepts and skills but reword or revise the questions/task.
- Consider if the retake could be done in a different form. For example, if the original was written, would

• Intentional and highly structured small group instruction is provided to address levels of misconceptions. • Data is gathered and used to guide the corrective action process. • Instruction is clearly and definitively altered based on initial test results. • Reteaching is informed by results (taught in a new way).	structuring the retake as an oral assessment serve a purpose? • Offer possible options to show mastery such as: -A project with a real life application -Create a study guide -Create a portfolio -Create a ppt (google slides) -Create a video • Provide a mini (distilled) version of the assessment that specifically addresses the skills/concepts that need to be reassessed. • Include student reflection as part of the retake process. Some reflective questions that could support student learning are: 1. What was challenging for me about the original assessment? Why was it challenging? 2. What do I need to learn-either ideas or skills-in order to be able to do better on the assessment? 3. What support do I need in order to learn what I need to know for the assessment/retake? 4. **After the Retake:** What did I do well on the retake? How do I know I did well on this part? What do I still need to work on to improve? How does what the assessment asked me to do connect to other things I have learned in this class? How does what the assessment asked me to do connect to other classes?

Addendum II for Secondary

From Policy to Practice:
Guidelines for the Instruction & Assessment of Newcomers in Content Area Classes

In SJUSD, we use the term Newcomers to refer to students identified as English learners who have been in the US for three or fewer years. Our Newcomers take English Language Development (ELD) classes to focus on learning English. This protected time every day is essential to developing our Newcomers ability to read, write, speak, and listen in English. For the rest of their daily schedule, Newcomers are in general education classes. Federal and state law make it clear that English Learners are to receive access to and support with the general instructional program, which includes "courses required for graduation and college admission."

This resource was developed to provide guidance for teachers of Newcomers in content area classrooms. It outlines recommended instructional and assessment practices to support Newcomers that are aligned to the SJUSD Instructional Framework and Uniform Grading Policy (UGP).

Guiding Principles

This resource was developed around these key principles about English learner instruction.

- ***English learners learn the language <u>while</u> they learn new concepts and skills.*** Language learning does not happen in a silo but within the context of engaging content area learning. Content area lessons provide the rich skills/concepts for students to grapple with, which provides a key opportunity for English learners to show what they have learned in English.

- ***Scaffolds will look different based on the students' English language proficiency.*** Scaffolding can introduce ideas in an accessible way and provide support needed to express ideas, thus giving students both the support needed and an intellectual push. Scaffolds/supports may also look different depending on the English learner's English language proficiency. Newcomers will require substantial support, but, as students grow in their English language development, language scaffolds can be adapted or taken away.

- ***Instruction and assessment practices should not penalize Newcomers for language they do not yet have.*** In addition to the cognitive load of learning a new concept, Newcomers also grapple with the amount of mental effort and cognitive capacity required to process, understand, and produce English. Teachers can reduce this 'linguistic load' for Newcomers by providing multiple ways to access content-area lessons and offering alternate ways for students to demonstrate their learning.

- ***Newcomers bring prior knowledge and experiences that can help support their learning in content area classes.*** Many of our Newcomers, especially at high school, have had prior coursework in many of our content areas in their home country. In addition, using their primary language to process new learning can support Newcomers. Providing opportunities for Newcomers to activate their current knowledge recognizes their prior schooling and learning that they can bring forward in this new context. By recognizing their primary language as a tool that Newcomers can use to unlock English, teachers can help Newcomers develop both their English and their content understanding.

Defining Newcomers' Skills & Growth

Since the term Newcomers can refer to students at any point in their first three years of English learning in SJUSD, it is essential that we identify their English proficiency level and current course. This will allow teachers to better tailor scaffolds for these students that will support English development and content access. **All teachers see the Newcomers enrolled in their courses by logging onto Ellevation (via Clever) and clicking on the "Newcomer" tile on your dashboard.**

Below are some key descriptors of appropriate scaffolds and expectations for students in these different Newcomer courses.

ELD Classes	*General Description of Students In This Course*	*Student Language Skills and Growth*
Beginner (ELD 1-2)	● *Just very recently arrived in the US (roughly less than one year of learning English)* ● *Often understand more than what they are able to convey* ● *Using their primary language to unlock English can be very powerful and empowering*	● *Rely on learned phrases and words to communicate in English* ● *Will need substantial scaffolding to learn new things at school and interact in social situations* ● *Emerging English proficiency: The more they practice and learn more English vocabulary and forms, the more they grow in basic English communication skills in social and academic contexts*
Intermediate (ELD 3-4)	● *Has had at least one year of English learning in the US* ● *Can use English to meet immediate communication needs but often are not able to use English to learn or communicate on academic topics in a variety of content areas* ● *Need the push and support to continue to expand their English language production*	● *Can refashion learned phrases/ sentences/structures to meet communication and learning needs* ● *Need substantial to moderate help to use English to communicate in less familiar school topics or social situations* ● *Emerging to Expanding language proficiency: Explicit instruction and consistent practice in academic language will enable them to use English in more linguistically and cognitively demanding situations*
Advanced (ELD 5-6)	● *In their third year of English learning in the US.* ● *Have moderately to well-developed oral (listening & speaking) and written (reading & writing) English skills* ● *Can use English to learn new things in school and interact in social situations*	● *May need moderate to light support to adapt use of English in a variety of tasks and contexts (especially unfamiliar ones)* ● *Learns to communicate effectively on a wide range of topics to meet academic demands in a variety of disciplines* ● *Expanding and Bridging language proficiency: With instructional support, students develop the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills that will serve them well in grade-level classes (after ELD)*

The above descriptors are offered as a general starting point. In truth, Newcomers bring diverse linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds. Some arrive with strong formal schooling experiences (sometimes in English); others may have experienced interrupted or limited formal education. All teachers have access to Ellevation, where

teachers can find Newcomer's most recent ELPAC data, how long they have been in the US, and any academic classroom interventions provided to the student. High school teachers can also look at the students' transcript in IC. **We recommend working with your site ELD teacher, API, registrar, and/or Family Liaison to learn about your students' academic histories and analyze any available data for your student.** What language skills do they already have? You can use this to plan for scaffolds that meet their English language needs and support their growth.

Newcomers will initially require substantial support, but, as students grow in their English language development, language scaffolds need to be adapted or taken away. For example, while it is appropriate to provide a shortened text with many cognates or defined words for Beginners, doing so for an Advanced ELD student would not be appropriate for that student's language development. While it takes 5-7 years for English learners to acquire English at an academic level, our goal is that at the end of their time in ELD, our students will be able to engage and participate meaningfully in academic content in all classes. The rest of this guide will seek to outline instructional and assessment practices that will support the range of Newcomers in our classes.

Guidelines for the Instruction of Newcomers in Content Area Classes

Newcomers deserve meaningful engagement with grade-level texts, tasks, and concepts.

- Instruction should **not reduce cognitive demand**.
- Language should be **scaffolded — not simplified**.
- Supports should preserve access to **rigorous, grade-level content**.

The role of translation and primary language in content area classes

A student's primary language should be used as a tool to unlock English. Outside of native Spanish Language Classes, the target language is academic English. We want students to use their primary language to elevate and develop their academic English, not replace it.

Translation by itself does not directly lead to academic language development in English. It is important to use our students' primary language strategically during instruction to develop academic language in English AND provide access to content. Some ways to use the primary language strategically during instruction are:

- **Identify cognates in a given text or have students identify cognates they recognize.** This gives students a sense of what the English text may be about just from words they already know.
- **Connect word parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots) to similar parts/words in your students' primary language.** Doing so connects what students know to unfamiliar English word parts, which can then in turn help them figure out unfamiliar English words in the future.
- **Discuss/process a given task in their primary language with a primary language peer.** Students can then help each other to transfer their ideas into English.
- **Choose the most important parts of the text for students to engage with and provide tools for students to access the text** (for example including cognates or definitions for key vocabulary,

providing images or visuals to support comprehension). This provides multiple points of access to the text and lightens the linguistic load for the student. **It is better for students to engage with the most important parts of an English text in this way rather than to read the entire text translated.**

Instructional Practices to Support Newcomers

Instruction should intentionally provide students access to content in English while also developing academic English. **Newcomers should not be penalized for English language skills they do not yet have.** The teacher instructional practices outlined below engage students in content area learning while supporting Newcomers in processing information in English and formulating a response using English language resources they have.

Teacher Instructional Practices	What Students Are Doing & Producing
Maintain grade-level rigor while scaffolding language	Engaging with grade-level texts and tasks using language supports
Integrate content and language objectives	Learning content while developing academic English
Model academic language in English that students need to use	Use modeled sentence frames and academic vocabulary in speaking and writing
Provide strategic scaffolds to support access to texts	Reading complex text with supports; annotating; using vocabulary tools
Create opportunities for students to process in primary language and prompt students to respond in English	Processing ideas in primary language with peers and transferring understanding to English
Highlight cognates and cross-linguistic connections	Bridging ideas from primary language to English, using academic language
Design multiple opportunities for structured academic discussions	Participating in partner/collaborative conversations using academic English sentence patterns and vocab to negotiate meaning

Guidelines for the Assessment of Newcomers in Content Area Classes

Equitable assessments for Newcomers must measure content understanding and skill mastery while accounting for language development.

- Assessments should **assess grade-level skills and concepts that Newcomers engaged with during instruction.**

- **Assessments that provide accessible options for expression will assess what Newcomers know *without* penalizing them for language skills they do not yet have.**

- To lighten the linguistic load for Newcomers, teachers can adapt existing assessments to provide supports and alternate ways for Newcomers to demonstrate learning.

Planning for Equitable Assessment Aligned to Course/Grade Level Standards:

- **Step 1: Clarify exactly what you are assessing:**
    - (WHAT) What is the skills/concept (content) you are assessing?
        - What is the clear criteria for success that you will be assessing with?

- **Step 2: Clarify the language demands of your assessment.**
    - (HOW) What are students expected to produce to demonstrate their learning?
        - What receptive and expressive language will the students need to successfully engage with the assessment?

- **Step 3: Once you have a clear assessment goal, how can we provide newcomers with options for expression that are aligned to the skills/concepts of the grade level task? How can we lighten the linguistic load through our assessment design?**
    - *Consider adapting the assessment design of your current assessment:*
        - Simplify language of directions
        - Use alternate question formats
        - Incorporate visual supports
        - Provide language supports (such as sentence frames or word banks)
        - Separating the assessment into smaller chunks

    - *Consider providing an alternative assessment for the same skills/concepts;*
        - Reduce amount of writing (1 paragraph vs. 5 paragraphs)
        - Provide other ways for students to show what they know (graphic organizer, label a diagram, oral responses, etc.)

If Newcomers are able to meaningfully engage with the content and practice language expectations during instruction, they should be able to demonstrate their learning through an accessible grade-level aligned assessment. Students then have earned the score they get on this assessment.

What follows are some examples of what an equitable assessment might look like for secondary content area classes. *(These will be developed with secondary content area teachers in the 2026-27 school year.)*