

EAST FORT WORTH MONTESSORI ACADEMY

GRADING GUIDELINES

East Fort Worth Montessori Academy teachers use various indicators to measure student progress and mastery of required skills. Below is a non-exhaustive list of indicators that may be used to monitor and assess progress:

Daily practices and assignments	Montessori Assessments
Class discussions	Oral presentations/ interviews with the teacher
Projects	Student-Led Conferences
Presentations	Compositions
Formative and Summative Assessments	Teacher-made tests
Textbook tests	Research projects
Small Group Lessons	Teacher observations based on specific criteria
Cooperative learning groups	Homework

The primary purposes of grading are to communicate achievement, provide feedback for improvement, and motivate students.

This document reflects district and campus expectations. The district administrative office must approve any revisions or exceptions to the grading guidelines. Test or course grades issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless it is determined that the grade was arbitrary, contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading guidelines.

Grading Scale

Grade Level	**Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten**	**Grades 1st - 5th**	**Art, music, physical education, health, and technology,**	**CONDUCT GRADES :** Conduct grades reflect student behavior during nine weeks.
Achievement or progress shall be reported-	N.I - Not Introduced S.D - Still Developing N.I - Needs Improvement S.D - Developed	100-90 A Excellent progress 89-80 B Great progress 79-70 C Good progress 69-60 D Satisfactory improvement (Critical conferences with parents) 59-0 F Needs Improvement	A Excellent progress B Good progress C Satisfactory progress D Needs improvement (Critical conferences with parents) F Unsatisfactory progress	E (Effort) P (Participation) NP (No Participation) (Critical conferences with parents) D (Disruptive) "U" UNSATISFACTORY must not be given unless the teacher has contacted the parent AND discussed the conduct grade with a campus administrator.

Achievement or progress shall be reported as:

- No grade entered
- A blank space (No grade entered) will appear on a student's report card for **(1)** non-attendance in class, **(2)** no assignments submitted **(3)** enrolling the last 15 days of the grading period without grades from the previous school **(4)** withdrawing before the end of the grading period (if a student withdraws within the last two weeks of the grading period, has at least 8 assignments [two of which are test grades], a grade shall be given).
- Any blank space (no grade entered) must be changed to a numeric grade by the end of the following six weeks.

TRANSFER GRADES

Some transcripts from outside Texas reflect an alpha grade, not a numeric one. When this occurs, the alpha grade will be transcribed to the 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 - if a transcript from another district records a 65 as passing. In this event, a grade of 70 will be used.
- Transfer students in 2nd—5th grade accepted through the lottery will be given a placement assessment before being assigned to a grade level.

Guidelines for Including Effort and Other Non-Achievement Factors in Grades

Non-Academic Factor: Effort

- Criteria: Timeliness of homework submission, engagement in class activities, persistence in tackling challenging tasks.

- Rubric:
    - Excellent (4): Always submit homework on time, actively engage in class activities, show persistence, and ask for help when needed.
    - Good (3): Usually submits homework on time, often engage in class activities, and shows some persistence.
    - Satisfactory (2): Sometimes submits homework on time, occasionally engages in-class activities, and shows limited persistence.
    - Needs Improvement (1): Rarely submits homework on time, seldom engages in-class activities, and requires more persistence.

Non-Academic Factor: Participation

- Criteria: Contributions to class discussions, cooperation in group work, attentiveness during lessons.
- Rubric:
    - Excellent (4): Frequently contributes to discussions, always cooperative in group work, consistently attentive.
    - Good (3): Regularly contribute to discussions, usually cooperative in group work, mostly attentive.
    - Satisfactory (2): Occasionally contributes to discussions, sometimes cooperative in group work, occasionally inattentive.
    - Needs Improvement (1): Rarely contributes to discussions, seldom cooperative in group work, often inattentive.

Addressing Grade Inflation and "Pulling for Students"

Maintaining High Standards While Supporting Student Motivation

This approach ensures that grades accurately reflect student achievement while encouraging students to strive for excellence and growth. Maintaining transparency, consistency, and a focus on holistic student development will create an educational environment where high standards are upheld and student motivation is nurtured.

Grade inflation, the practice of awarding higher academic grades than students deserve, and "pulling for students," where teachers may boost grades out of sympathy or desire to motivate, can undermine the integrity of academic assessments. This is how we can achieve the balance:

1. Clear and Rigorous Standards:
Maintain high academic standards.

2. Transparent Grading Policies:
All grading is transparent and understandable.

3. Professional Development for Teachers:
Teachers will be taught during PLC to develop the skills to grade accurately and fairly.

4. Balanced Assessment Approach:
Use a variety of assessment methods to gauge student understanding and skills.

5. Addressing Non-Academic Factors:
Recognize effort, participation, and improvement without compromising academic standards.

6. Encouraging Growth Mindset:
Foster a growth mindset among students, emphasizing learning and improvement over grades. Promote the value of effort, resilience, and continuous improvement through classroom culture. Recognize and celebrate student growth and effort in ways other than grades, such as positive feedback and classroom culture celebrations.

7**. Parental Involvement and Communication:**
Conference and engage parents in understanding and supporting the grading policy by holding informational sessions for parents to explain grading criteria and the importance of maintaining high standards. Regularly update parents on their child's progress, highlighting both academic achievements and areas for growth.

Assignment of Nine Weeks Grades

Grades should reflect the student's academic achievement. Each teacher's grade book should contain: (Nine weeks' grades shall be assigned according to the following criteria):

1. Sixty percent (60%) of a grade shall be based on summative activities such as individual and group projects completed at school, cumulative assignments, assessments, and independent work. Before a summative grade is assigned, the teacher should have adequately taught the concept, and the student should have sufficient opportunity to master the evaluated concept. This process includes using appropriate checks for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice before giving a summative assessment. Long-term projects should be closely monitored, and two or three formative grades should be assigned before the summative grade. If a project or assignment merits more than one summative grade (multiple grades), each grade should represent a different project component. Recording the same grade numerous times is not acceptable.

The initial assignment and discussion of long-term projects must include an explanation of the criteria used to evaluate the assignment (rubric). Summative assessments shall be communicated to the students in advance.

2. 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 nine-week grading period. (**Assignments at E.F.W.M.A** are Novel Studies reading assignments, vocabulary, Latin roots, spelling, and sight words, which should be discussed and assessed in class the following day. Fact practices through the Math Platform and rote memorization of formulas.

3. During each nine weeks grading period, the following grades shall be recorded in English Language Arts, Reading, Math, Social Studies and Science:

- At least six **(6) grades** shall be recorded every nine weeks. Of these grades, at least three (3) shall be summative, with at least one (1) summative grade given every three (3) weeks. Exceptions to this will be **(1)** if there are less than 45 days in a nine-week grading period or **(2)** if a formative assessment grade(s) was dropped due to a higher summative grade (see #3 in the italicized section below)

4. Formative assessments should be evaluated in **small groups** to give students specific feedback on their performance on the assigned tasks. Homework should follow the EFWMA-established expectations.

5. Students should receive feedback and an opportunity to reassess because expanding the learner's potential means 100% will learn to master and make growth. (see #1 and #2 in the italicized section below). NO PROJECTS OR MAJOR ASSIGNMENT should be due in the last week of a marking period.

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

7. A grade of 69 should be recorded as a 70 for the nine-week grade. At their discretion, teachers can raise report card grades from 79 to 80 or 89 to 90.

8. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.

9. No grade (NG) will be issued based on the following criteria: (1) non-attendance in class, (2) No, none, or zero assignments submitted, (3) enrolling the last fifteen days of the grading period without grades from the previous school, (4) withdrawing prior to the end of the grading period. (Note: If a student withdraws within the last two [2] weeks of a grading period and has at least five [5] grades [two of which are summative in nature], a grade shall be given.)

10. Any Incomplete (I) designation must be converted to a grade by the end of the following nine weeks.

11. Art, music, and physical education grades should only reflect a student's mastery of TEKS standards for the course. Behavior and conduct for art, music, and physical education will be addressed through a citizenship portion of the report card for each area. In due diligence, teachers must follow the SEL teacher's de-escalation and self-regulation techniques or Leader In Me Techniques.

12. The teacher should contact the parents or guardians of a student who earned 70% or below.

13. Progress reports should be sent home every 4 weeks via the parent portal

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. As a result, the following practice shall be used.

1. A teacher shall reteach and retest a class when 40% or more of that class failed a summative assignment or examination. The teacher shall record the higher grades earned for those students being retested. ***Reassessment must occur within ten instructional days of the original assessment.***

2. When less than 40% of a class has failed any assignment or examination recorded for a grade, individual students must be allowed to make up or redo the assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade. ***The teacher shall record the average of the two grades earned for these students.*** *Before any reassessment occurs, a student shall receive appropriate tutoring. 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 mastery of skills and concepts.

E.F.W.M.A wants to ensure that grading practices for ESL, GT, and SPED students are fair, consistent, and reflective of each student's unique abilities and progress. The guidance below supports an inclusive learning environment where all students can achieve their full potential.

Guidance for Grading Special Populations

1. English as a Second Language (ESL) Students

Objective: Ensure fair and accurate assessment of ESL students' progress, acknowledging their unique language learning needs.

Guidelines:

- Differentiated Instruction: Adapt assessments to match the student's current English proficiency levels. This may include simplifying language, providing additional visual aids, or allowing oral responses.
- Progress-Based Grading: Focus on students' language acquisition and content understanding growth. Use formative assessments to measure incremental progress.
- Language Support: Provide access to bilingual dictionaries, glossaries, or translation services during assessments.
- Alternative Assessments: Use alternative assessment methods, such as portfolios, projects, or presentations, to allow students to demonstrate their understanding in various ways.
- Collaboration: Work with ESL specialists to develop appropriate assessment strategies and accommodations.

2. Gifted and Talented (GT) Students

Objective: Challenge GT students appropriately and recognize their advanced abilities and achievements.

Guidelines:

- Advanced Assessments: Provide opportunities for GT students to engage in more complex and in-depth assessments that match their advanced learning levels.
- Enrichment Activities: Incorporate enrichment activities and projects that allow GT students to explore topics in greater depth.
- Flexible Grouping: Allow GT students to work in flexible groups that promote peer learning and challenge.

- Performance-Based Assessment: Utilize performance-based assessments, such as research projects, presentations, and experiments, to allow GT students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Feedback and Goals: Provide detailed feedback and set individual goals to encourage continuous growth and development.

3. Students with Disabilities (SPED)

Objective: Provide equitable and individualized grading practices that accommodate students' specific needs and reflect their progress toward individualized education program (IEP) goals.

Guidelines:

- IEP Alignment: Ensure that grading practices align with the goals and objectives outlined in each student's IEP. Include accommodation and modifications as specified.
- Progress Monitoring: Use ongoing progress monitoring to assess student growth and achievement relative to their IEP goals.
- Modified Assessments: Adapt assessments to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This may include extended time, alternative formats, or the use of assistive technology.
- Functional Performance: Consider students' functional performance and progress in areas beyond academics, such as social skills, behavior, and daily living skills.
- Collaborative Approach: Work closely with special education teachers, therapists, and other support staff to develop appropriate grading practices and accommodations.
- Clear Communication: Maintain clear communication with parents and guardians about grading criteria, accommodations, and student progress.

COMMUNICATION TIMELINES and REVIEW OF MATERIALS

1. All student work shall be assessed, and feedback given. Work that is graded shall be returned and recorded in the district's electronic grade book **within four (4) school days** of the date received by the teacher. (See #2 in this section regarding an exception to this timeline.)

2. All Projects/papers should be presented in class, and students should be taught to give feedback and follow a rubric to assess the presenter. Grades shall be uploaded within three weeks of the grading period.

3. After submitting the final grade, teachers must review the student's test. All tests given shall be graded, returned, and recorded within (4) four school days of the date the test was administered.

4. Upon student/parent request, students shall have access to review all graded tests. Exceptions will be district, state, and nationally created assessments. During a conference, a parent may review district-created assessments at the parent's request, BUT they may NOT take the assessment.

5. The parents must be contacted After a student's second grade of "0" is assigned during a grading period. If the problem persists, a student-teacher-parent conference is required.

LATE WORK

1. When an assignment is submitted after a deadline, a maximum penalty of ten (10) points per class meeting may be deducted from the grade.

2. Teachers will use professional discretion in determining when such a deduction is appropriate.

3. Late work will be accepted for a grade until the end of the school day on the Tuesday before the end of the grading period 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 to provide 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 grading period and extenuating circumstances prevent the assignment from being submitted on time, the teacher may assign an incomplete (I) mark on the report card. In such situations, the timelines described in #1 will be used.

MAKE-UP WORK

1. All students shall be allowed to make-up work when absent from class.

2. Students shall have time equal to days absent from class plus one day to complete all missed assignments.

3. Under extenuating circumstances, such as long-term illness or family emergencies, teachers may give students more than one day for each missed day to make up assignments.

4. Make-up tests or quizzes should be administered at school, during school hours, and during small groups.

Homework (All Grade Levels)
The classroom teacher communicates and distributes homework guidelines to students and their parents for each grade level. The district superintendent reviews and approves these guidelines.

Enrichment

- Enrichment activities should be designed to extend skills in logical thinking, strategic reasoning, estimation, mental arithmetic, and problem-solving.
- Enrichment activities should not be additional work (busy work) or more complex problems that expand upon the ideas presented in the traditional curriculum. (Modifications)
- Enrichment activities can be provided through meaningful learning centers, grouping within the classroom, whole-class projects, and individualized programs.
- Other examples appropriate for enrichment activities include: independent research projects. These games require strategies or higher-level thinking skills, or logic problems that require students to recognize patterns and apply sequencing skills.
- Enrichment activities can also include developing an **individual instructional plan** so that the student, parent, and teacher can monitor progress.

Standards for Mastery
Mastery of skills necessary for success at the next grade level shall be validated by various assignments, projects, and assessments incorporated into the nine weeks. Mastery shall be determined as follows:

- **Kindergarten-** promotion to the next grade level shall be based on teacher recommendation and mastery of kindergarten standards
- **Grades 1-3**- promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in English language arts, reading and mathematics, and attendance
- **Grades 4-5-** In grades 4–5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in four of the following areas: English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. And Attendance
- Special education students in all grades will be evaluated for success based on their achievement of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and mastery expectations.

PROMOTION and RETENTION
Promotion in Second through Fifth grade shall be based on Texas Standards Mastery of the curriculum and attendance. Expectations and standards for promotion shall be established for each grade level, content area, and course.

At the end of the year, students who do not meet state standards or pass the district assessments will meet with the grade placement committee (GPC) to create an acceleration plan to review assessments, student progress, attendance, and engagement.

If the committee determines that a student with chronic absenteeism does not meet state attendance requirements, the student will be allowed to make-up all absences after school. If the student's parents refuse their child to make-up his/her absences, the student will not be promoted to the next grade level based on the State of Texas 10% rule.

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