

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Middle School Grading Procedures Plan

CMS Vision

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provides all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life.

Mission

The mission of CMS is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school.

Strategic Plan 2018: For a Better Tomorrow

Goal 1: Maximize academic achievement in a personalized 21st-century learning environment for every child to graduate college- and career-ready.

Focus Area II: Academic growth/high academic achievement

2.2 Provide high-quality teaching and reteaching opportunities to ensure mastery learning

Goal 6: Inspire and nurture learning, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship through technology and strategic school redesign.

Focus Area I: Learning everywhere, all the time

1.1 Ensure each student has equitable access to personalized learning

Guiding Principles of Effective Grading Practices

Evaluating student progress and grading that progress are essential components of the educational process (CMS Board Policy IKA). The purpose of assessment is to provide teachers, students, parents, and other individuals who support students' learning with feedback on the extent of individual student mastery. This allows adults to be strategic in designing future instruction to meet students' individual needs, it allows students to take ownership over their academic performance, and it ensures parents stay informed so they can be partners in the education process.

Achieving the goals of *Strategic Plan 2018: For a Better Tomorrow*, instructional leaders and teachers will embrace a shift in thinking and implementing effective, standards-based grading practices. Standards-based grading practices will increase student achievement, reduce course failures, and improve the academic environment. At any given time, students, teachers, and parents can use a student's grades to clearly understand the extent to which students are on track to mastering the knowledge and skills needed to pass the course and move closer to high school graduation. There will be alignment between course grades from teachers and scores on assessments. Grades will provide specific feedback on the knowledge and skills students need to practice more in order to improve their academic performance. Students who do not initially demonstrate mastery on standards-based assessments can receive additional support and can show their ongoing growth through retests. This ensures students are held accountable to mastering the content by the end of the grade. The objective of these practices is not to give students unearned grades, but to create an environment in which students earn higher grades because they put forth more effort, improve through teacher feedback, and complete work at a higher level of quality.

(Research from Douglas Reeves, *Elements of Grading*, 2011)

Effective Grading Practices:

1. Teachers
 - a. shall ensure that grades reflect mastery of content,
 - b. shall record grades in PowerSchool within ten school days of the assignment's due date,
 - c. shall not use grades in a punitive manner,
 - d. shall assign the initial score earned for an assignment or assessment on which the student made a concerted attempt;
 - e. shall assign an initial score of zero (0) to an assignment or assessment on which a student made no attempt or which is missing,
 - f. shall implement the following guidelines related to formal assessments:
 - i. assessments should be standards-based and measure students' level of mastery on specific learning objectives,
 - ii. additional practice will be provided for students who do not achieve initial mastery (84%),
 - iii. following additional practice, new opportunities shall be provided to measure student mastery. A maximum score of 84% can be earned.
2. Assignments
 - a. Late work and make-up work must be accepted by all teachers in accordance with the procedures established by the school. These procedures must align to the CMS Board Regulation IKB-R:
 - i. A student who misses homework or other assignments or due dates because of absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be allowed to make up the work. Arrangements for completing the work should be made within five school days of the student's return to school. Arrangements should include a schedule for completion of the work. For middle and high school students, the student must initiate the contact with the teacher.
 - ii. In all circumstances, homework and other assignments should be accepted, even when turned in after the designated due date. Credit for late work shall be awarded according to the following guidelines:
 1. If the student was present in class on the due date, the work may be given less credit;
 2. If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an excused absence, full credit must be given for the completed work;
 3. If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an unexcused absence, the work may be given less credit.

Principals will work with staff and students, to establish consistent school-wide procedures for giving less credit for make-up work due to unexcused absences and work turned in past the due date. These procedures will be communicated clearly to teachers, students, parents, and all other school stakeholders.
 - b. Graded assignments should be aligned with content standards. Giving students extra credit or grades for activities such as bringing in canned goods, classroom materials, parent signatures, or participating in non-curricular activities are not acceptable grading strategies.
 - c. Projects should not place an undue burden on students/families with limited access to technology and/or financial resources.
3. Students with a 504 plan, Individualized Education Program (IEP) or who are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) should receive accommodations on assignments and assessments to allow them to engage in on-grade level content. Teachers should assess student work based on these accommodated assignments and assessments and not compared to their peers or other norm referenced standards. While students with accommodations can receive below grade level marks, these marks should be based on the students' performance with specified accommodations. Additionally, if a student with accommodations is failing, the 504, IEP or LEP team should reconvene to review and amend the plan as needed.

Percentage Breakdown:

| <u>Classwork/Informal Assessments/Homework</u> | <u>Formal Assessments</u> |
|---|---|
| <p><i>35% of quarter grade</i></p> <p>Classwork must include a variety of assignments such as warm-ups, notebook checks, quizzes, group work, in-class tasks, class participation, etc. Class participation rubrics must be approved by the principal/designee</p> | <p><i>65% of quarter grade</i></p> <p>Formal assessments must include a variety of assignments such as tests, comprehensive writing assignments, projects, etc. A minimum of 4 formal assessments shall be included in the final grade. Project rubrics must be approved by the principal/designee.</p> |
| <p><i>The principal will be responsible for developing a process of approving and monitoring teachers' gradebooks. The process shall ensure an appropriate number of informal are assigned to calculate a grade that accurately represents mastery of content objectives.</i></p> | |

Mastery Grading Plans

The goal of designing mastery grading plans is to create consistency of best practices.

- In collaboration with district leadership, all schools will establish a plan for grading based on mastery learning.
- School Leadership Teams will support the development of consistent procedures that maintain consistency with school level (elementary, middle, K-8, and high) and the CMS Grading Procedures.
- Schools will provide opportunities for staff, students, and parents to provide input on the creation and implementation of the mastery grading plan,
- In addition to the guidelines in the CMS Grading Procedures, schools should consider the following components in the development of mastery grading plans:
 - Common assessments,
 - Data disaggregation,
 - Flexible grouping,
 - Additional learning opportunities,
 - Late and make-up work,
 - Timeliness of recording grades in PowerSchool,
 - Professional development,
 - Communication to staff, students, and parents regarding the practices of mastery learning.

Grading Students with Disabilities

What is the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team required to do if a student with a disability is failing a grade or course?

The IEP team is **required** to convene in order to review, and if necessary, to revise a student's IEP whenever a student is failing a subject(s) or class(es) to address any lack of expected progress in the general curriculum. This allows parents and students to be apprised of any difficulties the student may be experiencing in the general education classroom and/or special education program. New or additional interventions or strategies may be implemented to improve student performance. Special Education services, including accommodations and related services, may need to be reviewed by the IEP team.

Do federal or state laws provide guidance on how to grade students with special needs?

Federal and state special education regulations are largely silent on the topic of assigning a grade. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has a Board of Education policy that addresses grading of all students. This policy outlines appropriate grading policies and grading scales for schools. IEP teams must provide accommodations or modifications found on a student's IEP. Although students with disabilities have required accommodations and modifications, IEP Teams cannot provide an accommodation or modification that is in violation of Board policy (i.e., using a different grading scale or using a different type of grade). Teachers should maintain written documentation to support grades earned for all students.

What role should a student's score(s) on the EOG/EOC assessment(s) play in their final grade?

Report cards represent an opportunity to evaluate students across three areas: the work they produce, the process through which they complete their work, and the effort they put into their assignments. Standardized testing generally measures the amount of course or academic content retained or produced and so it is in many ways incomplete. It is quite likely that the student is learning more than is measured solely by the EOG/EOC assessment(s). The report card provides a place to communicate this fact to parents and students.

When students with disabilities are in a co-taught class, who is responsible for assigning their grades? Who is accountable for their performance on high stakes tests?

The general education teacher is the teacher of record for the entire class. Both teachers share responsibility for all the students in their co-taught class and should collaborate on all areas of instruction.

How do teachers document on the PowerSchool Report Card that a student's work is modified?

Report cards should have no indication that a child may be receiving Exceptional Children services. Teachers should use the IEP progress report to document academic and behavior specific information, which may include attachments of data collection and/or work samples that inform a parent of student progress. They should also continue to maintain ongoing communication with the family regarding strengths and needs of the student.

Grading English Language Learners (ELLs)

Student work should be graded in accordance with what they “Can Do” based on English language proficiency levels. Classroom teachers should design and modify instruction, assignments and tests based on students’ English language proficiency levels in reading, writing, listening and speaking as determined by the WIDA W-APT or ACCESS test.

ELLs may receive language modifications and testing accommodations in the classroom, while being instructed with Core Curriculum State Standards on grade level. The [WiDA English Language Development Standards](#) should be used as a tool to access Core Curriculum State Standards. The [WiDA Can Do Descriptors](#) highlight examples of what students can do at each English proficiency level. It is a grade specific resource designed to guide teachers in planning for meaningful activities with ELLs.

Report card grades should reflect these instructional and language modifications without limiting the student from earning the highest grade in the content area. Students should not receive grades of “D,” “F,” or “I” on assignments solely based on their limited English proficiency. A student could receive a “D,” “F,” or “I” only if the student’s lack of performance on appropriately modified work warrants such a grade.