

## Guidance on Grading

State law requires each district to adopt its own grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year. A district policy [Posted April 21, 2020](#)

- must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment;
- may not require a classroom teacher to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard to the student's quality of work; and
- is permitted, but not required to allow a student a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade.

School districts determine the specifics of their local grading policies within the parameters listed above. While TEA does not have the authority over grading policies, examples of district grading policies that have been adopted to address the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year may be accessed in [Section 2.2](#) of the Instructional Continuity Planning Framework.

### 1. How should an LEA show that they are complying with providing instruction to students when closed as a result of COVID-19? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)

For campuses that are “Closed, Instructing,” teachers will be continuing to review student work while they support the instruction being delivered off-site – whether done via an on-line learning system or from periodic phone check-ins with the students or parents. Schools should attempt to retain some documentation that instruction is happening. [This could be grade books](#). For days when work isn’t being graded, this could also be done by retaining a small representative sample of student work (with appropriate notations for the date). In terms of what a small representative sample might mean, it could be a copy of one student’s work per grade level subject team per school per day, with attempts to add an example for students from different program types (e.g., bilingual). If you have on-line learning systems, it’s possible this would be done automatically in those systems.

## 2. What is TEA’s guidance regarding grading for districts doing distance learning with students during this time? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)

Each district has the authority to adopt its own grading policy. Districts may wish to modify grading policies to account for providing instruction in a distance learning format. Educators should try to focus on getting sufficient information to determine levels of proficiency for students to ensure they are prepared to be academically successful moving into the next school year.

Options to consider include the following:

- Districts may choose to delay recording of grades for a short period of time (e.g. the first week of implementation of remote learning) to allow students and teachers time to transition to a different method for teaching and learning.
- Districts may opt to record fewer grades than they would if school were open. However, educators should ensure they are able to monitor student progress through some means.
- Campuses/teachers may choose to require minimum/maximum number of assignments for which grades will be recorded.
- Districts may choose to provide self-addressed, stamped envelopes for students to return specific assignments for grading. See [Logistical Considerations for Paper-Based Packet Pick Up](#) for more information.
- Families who have mobile devices including cell phones and tablets may be able to take photographs of completed work and send the photos back to teachers for review and/or for grading.
- Districts may wish to implement a pass/fail approach to grading certain assignments.
- Districts/campuses may provide assignments for student completion with prompt feedback from the teacher but choose not record grades for assignments.

## 3. What are the best ways to get work back and fairly apply grades? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)

If districts are able to implement high-tech options for completion of work, they may be able to use their current student information systems to document grades. Districts using a low-tech option may arrange for work to be dropped off at regular intervals (e.g., weekly). Families who have mobile devices including cell phones and tablets may be able to take photographs of completed work and send the photos back to teachers.

Districts and charter schools should ensure that the evaluation of student work and assignment of grades be applied fairly and consistently and focused on student proficiency. Students should not be penalized for the following:

- the method used by the student to respond (i.e., apply the same criteria in grading assignments whether the student submitted digitally or in hard copy)
- inability to access resources to complete the assignment

**4. Do we need to record grades, or do we just need to show we provided lessons and some sort of monitoring? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)**

While decisions about the recording of grades for individual assignments falls under local district authority, thought should be given to the information that educators need to monitor student progress and determine students' preparation to be academically successful moving into the next school year and/or to be successful in additional high school courses. Additionally, districts must provide parents with notice of students' performance at least one every 12 weeks.

**5. How should we move forward with grading and completing report cards? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)**

Texas Education Code, §28.022(a)(2) requires school districts, at least once every 12 weeks, to give written notice to a parent of a student's performance in each class or subject. Districts have the authority to determine how they will provide this notice to parents for the remainder of the school year.

Texas Education Code, §28.022(a)(3) requires districts to, at least once every three weeks, or during the fourth week of each nine-week grading period, give written notice to a parent or legal guardian of a student's performance in a foundation subject if the student's performance in the subject is consistently unsatisfactory.

**6. How should districts calculate GPAs for graduating seniors for this year? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)**

Calculation of GPA is a local district decision and is not required. If a district chooses to modify the policy for calculation of GPA, care should be taken to ensure equity in the application of the policy for all impacted students.

**7. How should districts handle class rank for graduating seniors for this year? [Posted March 25, 2020](#)**

Class rank is a local district decision. Please note that while calculation of GPA and class ranking are not required, districts and open-enrollment charter schools must identify junior and senior students in the top 10% of their class for the purposes of eligibility for automatic college admission to a Texas institution of higher education.

Districts may choose to calculate GPA and class rank for the first four six weeks of the school year only. However, any method for calculation of GPA and class rank should be applied to all impacted students equitably.

**8. What options does a district have for awarding credits/graduation? Posted March 25, 2020**

Please refer to the *Graduation Guidance FAQ* on TEA's [COVID-19 Support: Academics](#) web page.

**9. Is there direction on course credit for graduation, meaning would first semester work constitute meeting credit requirement? Posted March 25, 2020**

Please refer to the *Graduation Guidance FAQ* on TEA's [COVID-19 Support: Academics](#) web page.

**10. Can a teacher give a student a grade of incomplete for a grading period during remote learning? Posted April 21, 2020**

Each school district and charter school has the authority to establish its own local grading policy. If the local policy permits, an incomplete may be awarded for a grading period. Districts and charter schools are encouraged to establish timelines for students to make up incompletes so that students receive final grades and schools can make determinations regarding the award of credit for the course or promotion/retention for the grade level in a timely manner. High school students may be awarded proportionate credit if they complete only half of a course (TAC §74.26(d)). Districts and charter schools that do not have a policy permitting the award of proportionate credit may wish to consider awarding proportionate credit so that a student who has completed half of the course can be awarded partial credit rather than awarding an incomplete for the entire course.

**11. If we receive a transfer student in the 2020-2021 school year with a grade of incomplete, can we award credit to or pass the student for the course or grade level? Posted April 21, 2020**

Credit for courses for high school graduation may be earned only if the student received a grade which is the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100, based upon the TEKS for each course. Elementary and middle school students may only be promoted on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the TEKS for the course or grade level. A district or charter school enrolling a student with a grade of incomplete would need to determine the student's academic achievement or proficiency in all the TEKS for the particular course or subject area in accordance with the standard used in the receiving district or charter school. If there is not enough information to make this determination, the district or school may wish to consider administering a [credit by examination](#) to the student to determine proficiency in the TEKS.

**12. If a student was given a final grade of incomplete for the semester, how would the incomplete be noted on the student transcript? [Posted April 21, 2020](#)**

The transcript, or academic achievement record, is the official record of courses completed, grades earned, and credits awarded. All completed high school courses, regardless of the amount of credit earned, must be entered on the student transcript. A final grade of incomplete should not be noted on the student transcript as the student did not complete the course. Districts and charter schools are encouraged to establish timelines for students to make up incomplete assignments so that final grades can be given and a determination made for the award of credit for the course in a timely manner.

New  
5/12/2020

**13. Do districts need to get board approval to revise their grading policy?**

Each school district is required to adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year (TEC, §28.0216). Board approval is required to revise that policy. However, to the extent that the board has delegated its general operational authority to the superintendent, board approval would not be required.

New  
5/12/2020

**14. If a campus had already informed parents of possible retentions and has stopped recording grades after the 4<sup>th</sup> 6 weeks grading period, is there any guidance on how to move forward?**

Districts should follow local policy and use all relevant information that is available to make determinations regarding student retention and support.

New  
5/12/2020

**15. Is it possible to waive the parent/guardian signature and return requirements for Q3/Q4 report cards?**

The board of trustees of each school district must adopt a policy that requires written notice to a parent of a student's performance in each class or subject and additional written notice if a student's performance in the subject is consistently unsatisfactory. The notice must provide for the signature of a student's parent and return of the signed notice to the district (TEC, §28.022(b)). State law does not designate a specific format of the signature. Consequently, a district may opt to obtain an electronic signature or an electronically transmitted image of the signed notice in lieu of an original signed document.

New  
5/12/2020

**16. When districts make adjustments in the dates for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> six weeks grading periods for funding purposes, what should we do with the grades that were entered in the 5<sup>th</sup> six weeks grading period prior to the change in dates?**

Please refer to the ***Attendance and Enrollment FAQ*** on TEA's [COVID-19 Support: District Waivers, Finance & Grants](#) web page.

New  
5/12/2020

**17. Do districts need to grade students' assignments for attendance purposes?**

Each school district is required to adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year (TEC, §28.0216). While grades may be used as one method of documentation, this is not the only method of documentation. Determinations regarding the assignment of grades are left to local district discretion and are not required to be tied to attendance.

New  
5/12/2020

**18. Should districts still issue grades for each instructional grading period based on their instructional calendar even though PEIMS reporting may never record the 6<sup>th</sup> six weeks grading period?**

For high school students, districts are required to report only completion data. Consequently, there should not be a need for districts to alter their grading practices for the 6<sup>th</sup> six weeks grading period because of PEIMS reporting. Please also refer to the ***Attendance and Enrollment FAQ*** on TEA's [COVID-19 Support: District Waivers, Finance & Grants](#) web page.

New  
5/12/2020

**19. For 8th-11th grade students completing the course for credit and excused from the corresponding EOC, how should districts document this on their Academic Achievement Record?**

A new code "**2020 Waived**" will be added to the STAAR performance level code table (TC31) in the Texas Records Exchange (TReX) system for students for whom the STAAR assessment requirement has been waived.

New  
5/12/2020

**20. Due to COVID-19 and the closing of schools to in-person classroom attendance, will school districts be responsible for offering credit by exams for acceleration four times this school year?**

A school district must provide at least one window to test between January 1 and March 31, one window to test between April 1 and June 30, one window to test between July 1 and September 30, and one window to test between October 1 and December 31 annually. These requirements remain in place. For the April 1-June 30 window, districts may want to plan to offer credit by exam (CBE) at the end of the window to allow sufficient time to determine what options they will be able to make available.

Please note that Texas Tech University (TTU) offers online proctored CBEs for a fee. Visit <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/k12/programs/testing/cbe/> for more information. The University of Texas at Austin High School expects to begin offering online proctoring for CBEs for a fee in May. Visit [https://highschool.utexas.edu/credit\\_by\\_exam](https://highschool.utexas.edu/credit_by_exam) for more information.

New  
5/12/2020

**21. Is a district required to provide students with accelerated instruction in the 2019-2020 school year?**

Since Governor Abbott has waived the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) testing requirements for the 2019-2020 school year, any accelerated instruction required for students in grades 3-8, including students who receive special education services, should already have been completed for the current school year.

For a student, including a student who receives special education services, who failed to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessment in the 2019-2020 school year, a school district is required to provide to the student accelerated instruction. While accelerated instruction does not have to be provided currently during the 2019-2020 school year, a district has a legal requirement to provide accelerated instruction prior to the next STAAR EOC administration during the 2020-2021 school year.

New  
5/12/2020

**22. What do we do if a student requires accelerated instruction and that accelerated instruction was not completed prior to school closure?**

Accelerated instruction does not have to be provided during the current school year. However, a district must provide a student, including a student who receives special education services, with accelerated instruction prior to the next STAAR administration during the 2020-2021 school year. This answer also applies to students who started but did not complete accelerated instruction during the 2019-2020 school year.

New  
5/12/2020

**23. What should a TXVSN course catalog provider do about assigning grades for students who stopped participating in their TXVSN course after school closures on March 13?**

The TXVSN course provider and receiver district share responsibility for student success. The course provider should alert each receiver district that has a student in this circumstance. The receiver district should reach out to explore the student's situation. The receiver district and course provider should then collaborate to determine the best way to address each student's needs.

New  
5/12/2020

**24. What should a TXVSN course catalog provider do about assigning grades for students who did not have the technology to complete the course?**

The TXVSN course provider has responsibility for providing instruction to a student enrolled in a TXVSN course and should identify options for each student to complete the course. The course provider may wish to work with the receiver district on the best way to address each student's needs.

New  
5/12/2020

**25. If a TXVSN provider and receiver district agree that giving a student an incomplete grade for spring 2020 is the best course of action, when must the student complete the course?**

If issuing an incomplete is the mutual decision reached by both the course provider and receiver district, providers and receivers are encouraged to establish timelines for students to make up incomplete assignments so that final grades can be given and a determination made for the award of credit for the course in a timely manner.