

General Information

Purpose of Grading Guidelines

Grades serve to monitor and assess student progress, document the level of mastery, and demonstrate what has been learned by students in a quantitative format. Providing timely feedback to students and parents via grades is essential in identifying areas of strengths and opportunities for growth.

State Curriculum

Curriculum content is prescribed by the Texas Education Agency through the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Local curriculum documents are based upon the State curriculum framework and SBOE approved standards. Curriculum content is not prescribed in detail by the Texas Education Agency, but provides a framework to draw upon for the development of the district's locally developed curriculum.

Instructional Program (EHAA, EHA, EIA)

The District shall establish instructional objectives that relate to the essential knowledge and skills for grade-level subjects or courses. These objectives shall address the skills needed for successful performance in the next grade or next course in a sequence of courses. Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated district objectives.

The District shall ensure that all children in the District participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs. *Education Code 28.002(g)*

In grades K-5, offerings include language arts (reading, literature, oral language, writing, handwriting, spelling), science, mathematics, social studies, art, music, physical education/wellness, theater arts, technology applications, and to the extent possible, languages other than English (LOTE).

In grades 6-8, campuses maintain a balanced curriculum which includes English language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, fine arts, health/physical education, technology applications, and to the extent possible, languages other than English.

At the high school level, the district provides instruction in the required curriculum as specified in 19 Administrative Code 74.1. This includes: English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, fine arts, career and technical education, languages other than English, technology applications, and personal financial literacy.

Academic Achievement (EIA Local)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned.

DISD Written Curriculum (DISD Curriculum Management Handbook)

Written curriculum is defined as those standards, goals, and objectives that students are to achieve and teachers are to teach. It contains objectives, which are aligned to district assessments, a scope and sequence, non-negotiable/best practice lessons, and aligned resources.

The written curriculum is designed to provide teachers and students with the State's expectations of what students are to learn. Teachers are required to use the district written curriculum as their primary source of instructional direction.

Instructional Materials (EFAA)

State-adopted textbooks and electronic media serve as one instructional resource to meet course and curriculum objectives. Instructional materials (either print or online versions) that have been evaluated by the state are placed on a list identifying their percentage of TEKS alignment. These instructional resources are offered for purchase and selected by the district through a formal committee process (19 TAC 67.107).

Online Instructional Materials and Resources

Some instructional materials and resources are only available to students in an on-line format. These materials are considered to be an integral part of the instructional programs.

Instructional Practices

Instructional strategies and practices to ensure student success are based upon district philosophy and campus and teacher analysis of student needs, effective teaching practices, student learning styles, and demonstrated success through the assessment process.

Student academic achievement shall be based on the degree of mastery of the District's instructional objectives as outlined in the curriculum guides for each subject. The objectives reflect the Texas Education Agency statewide standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and address the skills and concepts needed for successful performance in the current grade and in the next grade.

Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated TEKS. The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course.

Grades should be fairly determined from a wide variety of information, which could include student performance on daily assignments/homework, tests, and/or special projects. The information used in grading should be appropriate to the grade level and subject being considered. Prior to instruction, students should be informed of the class or course expectations, and the teacher must be prepared to document and explain how grades are determined.

Curriculum Mastery

Promotion and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum. Expectations and standards for promotion shall be established for each grade level, content area, and course and shall be coordinated with compensatory, intensive, and/or accelerated services. [See EHBC] The District shall comply with applicable state and federal requirements when determining methods for students with disabilities [see FB] or students who are English language learners [see EHBE and EKBA] to demonstrate mastery of the curriculum.

Official Grade Reports

The District shall issue grade reports/report cards every nine weeks on a form approved by the Superintendent or designee. Interim progress reports shall be issued for all students after the third or fourth week of each grading period. Supplemental progress reports may be issued at the teacher's discretion. (EIA Local)

2018-2019 Grade Reporting Calendar to Parents

Grades PK-6

<i>1st Semester</i>		
Grading Period	Progress Report Date	Report Card Date
1 st Aug. 20 – Oct. 19	9/14/18	10/22/18
2 nd Oct. 22 – Dec. 21	11/16/18	1/8/19
<i>2nd Semester</i>		
3 rd Jan. 8 – Mar. 8	2/1/19	3/18/19
4 th Mar. 18 – May 23	4/12/18	5/28/19

Grades 7-12

<i>1st Semester</i>			
Grading Period	Progress Report 1 Date	Progress Report 2 Date	Report Card Date
1 st Aug. 20 – Oct. 19	9/7/18	9/28/18	10/22/18
2 nd Oct. 22 – Dec. 21	11/9/18	11/30/18	1/8/19
<i>2nd Semester</i>			
3 rd Jan. 8 – Mar. 8	1/25/19	2/15/19	3/18/19
4 th Mar. 18 – May 23	4/5/19	4/26/19	5/28/19

Progress Reports

The purpose of the Progress Report is to inform students, parents/guardians, and campus administrators regarding progress in a subject, in conduct, or in both. The Progress Report reflects both satisfactory and unsatisfactory student progress.

1. All students in grades K-6 will receive a Progress Report at the end of the fourth week of a nine week grading period.
2. All students in grades 7-12 will receive a Progress Report at the end of the third and sixth week of a nine week grading period.
3. It is the student's responsibility to deliver the Progress Report to the parent/guardian.
4. The Progress Report is to be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher/school. (K-6).
5. It is imperative that parents be contacted at any time the student is in danger of failing or if there is a significant decrease in grades. It is strongly suggested that parents/guardians be contacted at a time it becomes apparent that failure is probable or if a student's grade decreases by 10 or more percentage points.
6. If a student's grade falls below 70 after the sixth week of a nine week grading period, the teacher will contact the parent/guardian by phone or in writing.

7. Telephone or electronic contact with parents/guardians should be made when a Progress Report is not returned with a parent/guardian signature or when immediate notification of possible failure is required.
8. Teachers are required to maintain a telephone or electronic log of contacts and attempted contacts with parents/guardians. Logs will be submitted to campus principals upon request and at the end of the year.

Report Cards

The Report Card is a communication tool for parents/guardians and students. Report Cards provide information regarding academic progress, student conduct, and absences.

1. Report Cards are electronically generated.
2. Report Cards are issued at the conclusion of each nine week grading period.
3. It is the student's responsibility to deliver the Report Card to the parent/guardian (Junior High and High School Report Cards are mailed at the end of each semester).
4. Report Cards require a parent/guardian signature indicating they have seen the Report Card (K-6).
5. New students to the District with less than 10 days in the reporting period will not receive a Report Card until the next reporting period.

New Student Transfer Grades

When students transfer into the District during a grading period, the grades received from the sending school for the same or similar course will be calculated with the current course grades to compute the Report Card grade.

Online Gradebook

Parents/guardians may access student information through the electronic gradebook available in Skyward Family and Student Access (www.dickinsonisd.org). The electronic gradebook will provide letter grades and the assignments that make up that grade, missing assignments, and any comments entered by teachers from the last grading cycle. Parents/guardians should contact the school regarding access information.

Lesson Plans

All DISD teachers are required to prepare weekly lesson plans to assist with planning for instruction. The purpose of a lesson plan is to provide an electronic document outlining daily learning and language objectives and activities for instruction. Lesson plans will include the TEK(S), teaching points, student outcomes, instructional activities, resources/materials and other appropriate information.

Lesson plans shall be completed in *Eduphoria Forethought* on a scheduled basis as determined by each campus principal.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of teaching, learning and scholarship. DISD has the primary responsibility for protecting and promoting the highest standards of academic integrity. Both students and faculty will thrive in an atmosphere where academic work is challenging, relevant and fair.

Academic dishonesty as defined in the Dickinson ISD Policy (EIA)

A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.

Behaviors defined as cheating include, but are not limited to:

- Giving or receiving information, looking on someone else's work, or allowing someone else to see one's work during an exam, test or quiz.
- Unauthorized receipt or distribution of exam, test or quiz contents, materials, or answer key.
- Use of unauthorized resources such as notes, cell phones, or other electronic devices during an exam.
- Taking an exam, producing a project, paper or assignment for another student or asking someone to take an exam or produce a project, paper or assignment for an individual.
- Copying work assigned to be done independently or letting others copy one's work.

Behaviors defined as plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any misrepresentation of another's work as one's own, including the copying of sentences, phrases, images, entire essays, passages from an undocumented source, musical scores, electronic media, and other similar works.
- Paraphrasing another's work as one's own without proper citation also constitutes plagiarism.

Credit by Exam for Acceleration without Prior Instruction

Grade Acceleration

Exams for Acceleration are offered four times per year for students enrolled in DISD on an advertised schedule. Application should be made through the school counselor. Application deadlines for exam sessions are listed on the registration form. No other Exams for Acceleration are offered during the school year. Student placement in a new grade level will only occur at the start of a school year. Once a student has begun a grade level or course, the student is no longer eligible to take the corresponding Exam for Acceleration.

Kindergarten Acceleration

State law requires that students be five years old by September 1st for entry into Kindergarten. Consequently, DISD Board Policy does not provide for early admittance to Kindergarten. A five-year old student who attends private Kindergarten may take the first grade Exams for Acceleration the following

year. A student must be enrolled in Dickinson ISD in order to participate in the Kindergarten Exams for Acceleration during the summer. There will be only one Kindergarten Exam for Acceleration administration each year, and it will take place in June. Students will take four exams: English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Per DISD Board Policy EHDC (Local) a student must receive a score of 90% or higher on all four exams in order to be accelerated to first grade. Other requirements outlined in EHDC (Local) also apply.

Acceleration for Grades 1 through 8

Students will take four exams: English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students must receive a score of 80% or higher on **all** four exams in order to be accelerated to the next grade level. Students in grades 1 – 5 must have a recommendation from a school district representative to be accelerated. [EHDC(LEGAL)]

High School Course Acceleration (Courses with No Prior Instruction)

Students must take an exam for each semester of an academic course for which they are attempting to earn credit. The student must earn at least an 80% on both semester exams to receive credit for the course. If a student is given credit in a subject on the basis of an exam in which the student scored an 80% or higher, then the exam score will be entered on the student's transcript. The exam score will not be computed in class rank.

For more information on Credit by Exam and the registration form, see the DISD website – www.dickinsonisd.org and policy EHDC(Local).

Credit by Exam for Credit Recovery

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a non-accredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

The school counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject. The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam. For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

Grades 3–8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student at the middle school or junior high level who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student [EIF(Legal)]. For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II,
- Biology
- United States History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules. There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student who is subject to the requirements of the foundation graduation program. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the

transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student's personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

Parents of a student at any grade level at or above grade 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated exams must be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.