

ELEMENTARY GRADING HANDBOOK



Galena Park ISD

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PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF GRADING

The mission of the Galena Park Independent School District is to prepare students to become productive citizens and life-long learners.

Academic grades play an important role in the schooling process and are required by law. When teachers inform students of how grades will be determined in a particular subject, they are defining the standards and instructional requirements for that subject. Subsequently, report cards are sent to parents informing them of the degree to which student success in learning and in mastering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) has occurred. Report cards provide reinforcement for students and reflect progress and achievement of students' work at the grade level they are assigned.

Grades serve multiple functions: *information* and *guidance*. They serve to do the following:

- Give parents information about the student that will be useful in helping to promote and maintain desirable patterns of behavior and achievement
- Help identify areas of special ability as a basis for realistic self-appraisal and for future educational planning
- Serve an administrative function in providing data for use in educational planning and decision making

Galena Park Independent School District believes that grading has a purposeful and useful role in the schools. It is the district's desire to make the process both meaningful and helpful to teachers, students, and parents. The grading policy and procedures follow state-mandated requirements, district policies and guidelines, and reflect professional evaluation by teachers.

Grades, based on documentation, participation, attitude, conduct and work habits of each individual student, are given on the basis of sound measurement techniques. Students *earn* grades; teachers do not *give* grades. Parents are encouraged to talk to students about school work and grades and contact teachers (first) and campus level administrators (second) whenever there is a question regarding grading.

GPISD GRADING GUIDELINES POLICY FOR STUDENT FAILURE CRITERIA

Per GPISD policy EIA(R) (LOCAL), the following sequence for student failure shall apply.

Student Failure Criteria

- Parents must be contacted if students are receiving a failing grade on the progress report or report card.
- Teachers must submit a phone log to their appraiser/principal at the end of the grading period with the failing students' names and grades attached. Leaving a message on an answering machine is not considered contact with the parent/guardian.
- A parent/guardian must be contacted anytime a student's grade drops a letter grade from passing to failing prior to the next grade reporting period.
- A conference must be scheduled with a parent/guardian of students who fail during the grading period. Documentation will be submitted to your appraiser/principal.

SECONDARY ONLY:

- Every student must have the opportunity to RETEST after failing (69 or below) a major test. If a student is eligible to retest, he/she must attend at least one tutorial session before taking the test. The two tests will be averaged together for the test grade. Quizzes and 9-week exams and semester exams are not eligible for retesting.

GPISD believes that a success rate of 90% is acceptable. Every avenue must be investigated to help students become successful.

GRADING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each 9 weeks grading period.

Pre-kindergarten children will be assessed in the following areas:

- ❶ Language and Early Literacy Development
- ❷ Science and Social Studies
- ❸ Health and Safety
- ❹ Social/Emotional Behavior
- ❺ Fine Arts
- ❻ Math
- ❼ Physical and Social Development
- ❽ General Information

KINDERGARTEN

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each 9 weeks grading period.

Kindergarten students will be assessed in the following areas:

- ❶ Language Arts
- ❷ Math
- ❸ High Frequency Words
- ❹ General Information
- ❺ Science and Social Studies
- ❻ Work Habits and Conduct
- ❼ Physical Education, Music and Art

For Pre-K and Kindergarten students, students will be assessed on a grading scale of “emerging,” “still developing” and “developed.”

GRADES 1 - 5

For grade 1, numerical grades shall be established for the subjects of language arts (written composition, grammar and spelling), reading and math. Grades for health, science, social studies, art, music and physical education shall use designations of “E, S, N, U” (see next section for explanation of E, S, N, and U). **There will be no Language Arts Composite in the first grade.**

***There will be no numerical grades for science and social studies in first grade for the duration of the school year.**

For grades 2-5, numerical grades shall be established for the subjects of language arts, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Grades for health, art, music and physical education may use designations of “E, S, N, U” (see next section for

explanation of E, S, N, and U). **There will be no Language Arts Composite in second through fifth grade.**

Note: *Handwriting grades* will not be recorded on the report cards for elementary students in grades 1 - 5.

Progress Reports: At the end of four-and-a-half weeks of the 9 weeks grading periods, the school shall provide notice of progress to the parent or guardian of a student whose grade average in any class is lower than 70 (or an "N" or "U") or whose grade average is deemed borderline (SBOE, July, 1988).

Report Cards: Grades in all subjects shall be reported to parents and students at the end of each grading period. The report shall include the number of times the student has been absent. For students in alternative programs, **the report to parents must clearly specify the instructional level (for each content area) at which the student is functioning.**

Special Programs

Students in special education classes who receive curriculum modifications will receive a coded letter M under the column "TYPE": on the report card to indicate that the curriculum has been modified

M - Modified Instruction

Make-up Work: Make-up assignments or tests shall be made available to students after any absence. Teachers shall inform students of the time allotted for completing make-up work after an absence (three days for each day of absence); however, the student shall be responsible for finding out about the assignments and for satisfactorily making up the work within the allotted time (FDD Local).

OVERALL AVERAGE AND PROMOTION

In kindergarten, the standard for promotion is developed on 25 out of 30 assessed skills by the end of the fourth nine week period. ("Promoted" or "placed" shall be indicated on student's cumulative folder.)

In grade 1, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math. **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.**

In grades 2 – 5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math plus a passing average or above in two out of the three following subjects: language arts, science and/or social studies. (GPISD policy, EIE Local). **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.**

GRADE REPORTING SYMBOLS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

GRADING SYMBOLS

- E Excellent (100-90)**
Indicates outstanding and exceptional achievement
- ♦Masters all concepts
 - ♦Always brings required materials to class as required
 - ♦Maintains positive attitude
- S Satisfactory (89-80)**
Indicates normal and average achievement; applies to vast majority of students
- ♦Attempts to master all concepts
 - ♦Brings required materials to class as required
 - ♦Maintains positive attitude
- N Needs Improvement (79-70)**
Indicates passing but needs improvement
- U Unsatisfactory (69 and below)**
Indicates unacceptable and below average achievement
- ♦Makes little or no attempt to master concepts
 - ♦Makes little or no attempt to bring required materials to class
 - ♦Exhibits poor attitude
- A 90 - 100**
B 80 - 89
C 75 - 79
D 70 - 74
F 69 – below
Inc Incomplete

Incomplete homework shall not be reflected in a student's general conduct grade.

Accommodations refer to a teaching technique that a teacher may use to help a student master a concept. For example, a student may need to be tested orally in science or social studies because he/she cannot read on graded level. The teacher should consider accommodations for regular education students to overcome deficiencies.

Refer to page 24 in manual for a detailed explanation of accommodations and modifications.

Modification*- Indicates that what is being taught, the content, is modified. The student is expected to learn something different than the general education standard. (e.g. not all TEKS are being assessed according to the student's IEP).

Accommodation- Indicates changes to how the content is taught, made accessible, and/or assessed. Accommodations do not change what the students are to master. The objectives of the course remain intact. Accommodations should not be coded on a report card.

***Modifications are only available to students receiving special education services per their IEP.**

CORE SUBJECTS. GRADES 1 - 5

1st Grade: Reading, Language Arts (Written Composition, Grammar and Spelling), Math, Science and Social Studies)

2nd-5th Grade: Reading, Language Arts (Written Composition, Grammar and Spelling), Math, Science and Social Studies

Numerical grades are required in core subjects in grades 1-5. Averages are calculated at the end of the school year for core subjects.

The elementary grading policy requires that all grades earned by a student should reflect the student's relative mastery of an assignment and recorded as the actual percent earned by the student. If a student makes a 40, it is recorded in the grade book. However, at the end of the grading period, if the average is below 50, a 50 is to be recorded as the average on the report card.

Teachers shall take two grades per subject per week (in language arts: two grades for written composition, two grades for grammar and two grades for spelling each week).

Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies: The grading of these subjects will be based on student mastery of grade level T.E.K.S., unless otherwise indicated.

If any student is working below level, the level must be indicated on the report card (see page 6). The level will be determined by the teacher using available data. This data may include both formal and informal assessment. If a student is receiving modifications in a subject, "M" will be recorded on the report card next to the grade

NON-CORE SUBJECTS

Parents will be notified when an "N" or "U" is recorded on the report card. Comments will be written on the report card by teachers.

Health, Art, and Music

Grades will be recorded as "E, S, N, or U" on the report card for non-core subjects.

Physical Education

Grades will be recorded as "E, S, N, or U."

Every student starts each week with 85 points. By meeting the objectives of physical education through active participation during each class period and following the rules and regulations, each student is capable of maintaining "S". In the area of participation, a grade may be lowered or raised each day by a student in any of the following ways:

NON-CORE SUBJECTS (P.E. - Continued)

- a. Participation minus 2 points to plus 2 points
- b. Improvement and skills plus 2 points
- c. Attitude, effort, cooperation, sportsmanship minus 2 points to plus 2 points

NOTE: No more than 2 points may be added or deducted in any class period for any student. Written tests are optional in each school. Points can be rewarded for written tests, but no points can be deducted.

E Excellent (100 - 90)

Indicates outstanding or exceptional achievement

- ◆Masters skills being taught and improves fitness level
- ◆Always brings required materials to class as requested
- ◆Maintains positive attitude consistently
- ◆Demonstrates self-discipline consistently

S Satisfactory (89-80)

Indicates normal and average achievement; applies to the vast majority of students

- ◆Attempts to master all skills and improves fitness level
- ◆Brings required materials to class as requested
- ◆Maintains positive attitude
- ◆Demonstrates good self-discipline

N Needs Improvement (79 - 70)

Indicates passing but needs improvement; student is capable of better work

U Unsatisfactory (69 and below)

Indicates unacceptable and below average achievement

- ◆Makes little or no attempt to master skills or to improve level of fitness
- ◆Exhibits poor attitude
- ◆Makes little or no attempt to bring required materials

- ◆Demonstrates little or no self-discipline

Medical Excuses

Students will be excused from regular P.E. activity no more than five days per illness or injury unless a medical doctor writes the excuse. A note may be requested by the physical education teacher from the parent for illness or injury requiring less than five excused days from P.E.

General Conduct

- E** **Excellent** - indicates behaviors that are outstanding or exceptional
- S** **Satisfactory** - indicates behaviors that meet or exceed standards expected
- N** **Needs Improvement** - indicates behaviors that do not meet standards expected
- U** **Unsatisfactory** - indicates behaviors consistently not meeting standards expected

GRADE AVERAGING STANDARD FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

All GPISD elementary schools will average grades as follows:
Test grades will count as 40%. A minimum of three test grades shall be given each nine week period. Daily grades will count as 60%, and a minimum of two daily grades per week shall be given in each core/graded subject.

HONOR ROLL CRITERIA

All GPISD elementary schools will use the following criteria to determine eligibility for A Honor Roll and A & B Honor Roll.

A Honor Roll:

All *A*'s (**no *B*'s**) in all core subjects
E or *S* in Conduct, Health, Art, P.E. and Music

A & B Honor Roll:

Only *A*'s or *B*'s in all core subjects
E or *S* in Conduct, Health, Art, P.E. and Music

PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARDS

All GPISD elementary schools will use the same criteria to determine student eligibility for Perfect Attendance Awards. In order for a student to receive a Perfect Attendance Award, the student must have **no absences and no tardies** for the entire school year.

CREDIT BY EXAM (FORMERLY KNOWN AS ADVANCEMENT PLACEMENT EXAMS)

Credit by Examination provides for grade level acceleration in grades K-5 for students with **no prior formal instruction** in the grade level or course.

ASSESSMENT FOR ACCELERATION

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students must meet the age requirement by being 5 on or before September 1st. Kindergarten Credit by Examination applicants will be tested during the last week of August to determine placement. These students must meet requirements as mandated by the campus committee for placement. Criteria for acceleration may include:

- ♦scores on readiness and/ or achievement test;
- ♦kindergarten or pre-school recommendation; and
- ♦chronological age and observable social emotional development of the child.

Grades 1-5

A student may be advanced one grade level if:

- ♦the student scores a minimum of 90% on a criterion-referenced test for the grade level he or she wants to skip in each of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies;
- ♦a school district representative recommends that the student be accelerated; and
- ♦the student's parent or guardian gives written approval for the acceleration.

Retesting

Applicants shall be allowed only one testing opportunity over a particular grade or course each year.

Transportation

The District shall not provide transportation to test sites. The District shall not be responsible for transporting students who qualify for courses offered on different campuses.

Eligibility

A student must complete a Credit by Exam registration form indicating the grade level/

subject area for testing. The student's parent or guardian must sign all forms.

Registration Deadlines & Test Dates

Applications are available on all campuses April 1st for the June testing. All forms must be received in the student's campus office by April 15th for the June testing.

Applications are available on all campuses the first week of May for the July testing. All forms must be received in the student's campus office by the end of May for the July testing. A \$15.00 deposit per exam is required at the time of registration. Deposits will be refunded after the exam is administered. Registered students who do not take the exam(s) during the specified test period will forfeit their deposit. No make-up exams will be scheduled.

Students or parents who have questions about these examinations should contact the principal or counselor.

TUTORIAL PROGRAMS

Tutorials are provided on each campus as determined by the principal and/or site-based decision-making team.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT AND RETENTION

PROMOTION

A district may not grant *social* promotions. Students may be promoted **ONLY** on the basis of academic achievement.

Galena Park ISD Policy EIE (Local) states:

"In order to be successful, a kindergarten student should be "developed" on a minimum of 25 out of 30 assessed skills by the end of the fourth nine week period." ("Promoted" or "placed" shall be indicated on student's cumulative folder.)

"In grade 1, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math. **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.** "

"In grades 2 – 5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math plus a passing average or above in two of the three following subjects: language arts, science and/or social studies. (GPISD policy, EIE Local). **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.** "

PLACEMENT

Students are placed in the next grade level if they have already been retained one year and do not meet promotion criteria.

RETENTION

NO STUDENT shall be retained more than **ONE TIME** in grades K - 4 and more than one time in grades 5 - 8. In exceptional cases, with approval of a committee consisting of at least the student's teacher(s) and two administrators (one of whom shall be assigned above the campus level), and the permission of the parent, a second retention within either grades 1 - 4 or grades 5 - 8 may be allowed.

REMOVED:

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten students shall not be retained without parental consent.

RETENTION/CONFERENCES

After the end of the 3rd 9 weeks reporting period, each teacher will submit to the principal a list of students who are "at-risk" of retention if performance does not improve.

The principal/teacher will notify the parents in writing of each identified student, informing them their child is at-risk of not meeting the promotion criteria for his/her grade level and that failure to improve may result in retention. This can be done at a conference at which time the *At-Risk of Retention Parent Notification Form* (see Exhibit A, page 11) is signed by the teacher and the parent. Documented parent/teacher contact is continued throughout the spring semester discussing possible retention.

The *Retention Conference Form* (see Exhibit B, page 12) must be completed by the teacher near the end of the 4th reporting period for each student not likely to meet the promotion criteria by the end of the year. This form is to be submitted to the principal for review.

Each elementary campus will establish a committee to review placement of all students who do not meet promotion requirements. The committee may be comprised of the teacher(s), an administrator and parent(s). The committee should convene only for those students who fail to meet the promotion criteria and are recommended for retention.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT AND RETENTION (Continued)

The principal ensures that a final parent/teacher conference is held, or documents that reasonable efforts have been made to hold one. Exhibit A is stored in the student's permanent record folder.

Retention Timelines/Deadlines

Although no formal policy or administrative regulations exist in this area, policy does exist in services offered for students potentially at-risk. (Policy EHBC Local)

It is always wise to provide feedback to parents in a timely manner if their child is at-risk of being retained, and inform them of services available to intervene and prevent retention. Retention is a serious matter, and parents must be involved in such a decision well in advance.

EXHIBIT A
GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

**AT-RISK OF RETENTION PARENT NOTIFICATION
GRADES 2-5**

To the parents of: _____

Date: _____ Teacher: _____

In reviewing your child's progress this school year, it has become evident that there is a possibility your child may not be promoted to the next grade level in May if he/she continues to perform at the present rate, or if your child's grade average falls below the 70 percent mastery level.

Galena Park ISD Policy EIE (Local) states:

“In grades 2 – 5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math plus a passing average or above in two out of the three of the following subjects: language arts, science and/or social studies. (GPISD policy, EIE Local). **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.**”

Every effort is being made to work with your child at school, through regular class work and in the tutorial program. We also encourage you to continue to work with your child at home. The final decision about grade placement will not be made until May. Your cooperation as part of a team whose aim is to give your child every opportunity to improve is essential. Let us work together for this common goal. Please contact the school office for an appointment.

Respectfully,

Principal

Teacher

Please return to (name of teacher): _____

Date: _____ Name of child: _____

I have read the above letter and agree to offer my child and the school my cooperation in helping my child improve.

Parent's Signature

Date

EXHIBIT A
GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
AT-RISK OF RETENTION PARENT NOTIFICATION
GRADE 1

To the parents of: _____

Date: _____ Teacher: _____

In reviewing your child's progress this school year, it has become evident that there is a possibility your child may not be promoted to the next grade level in May if he/she continues to perform at the present rate, or if your child's grade average falls below the 70 percent mastery level.

Galena Park ISD Policy EIE (Local) states:

“In grade 1, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math. **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.**”

Every effort is being made to work with your child at school, through regular class work and in the tutorial program. We also encourage you to continue to work with your child at home. The final decision about grade placement will not be made until May. Your cooperation as part of a team whose aim is to give your child every opportunity to improve is essential. Let us work together for this common goal. Please contact the school office for an appointment.

Respectfully,

Principal

Teacher

Please return to (name of teacher): _____

Date: _____ Name of child: _____

I have read the above letter and agree to offer my child and the school my cooperation in helping my child improve.

Parent's Signature

Date

EXHIBIT A
GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
AT-RISK OF RETENTION PARENT NOTIFICATION
KINDERGARTEN

To the parents of: _____

Date: _____ Teacher: _____

In reviewing your child's progress this school year, it has become evident that there is a possibility your child may not be promoted to the next grade level in May if he/she continues to perform at the present rate.

Galena Park ISD Policy EIE (Local) states:

“In kindergarten, the standard for promotion is developed on 25 out of 30 assessed skills by the end of the fourth nine week period.” (“Promoted” or “placed” shall be indicated on student’s cumulative folder.)

Every effort is being made to work with your child at school, through regular class work and in the tutorial program. We also encourage you to continue to work with your child at home. The final decision about grade placement will not be made until May. Your cooperation as part of a team whose aim is to give your child every opportunity to improve is essential. Let us work together for this common goal. Please contact the school office for an appointment.

Respectfully,

Principal

Teacher

Please return to (name of teacher): _____

Date: _____ Name of child: _____

I have read the above letter and agree to offer my child and the school my cooperation in helping my child improve.

Parent's Signature

Date

**EXHIBIT B
GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**RETENTION CONFERENCE
GRADES 2 - 5**

Galena Park ISD's Policy EIE (Local) states:

“In grades 2 – 5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math plus a passing average or above in two out of the three following subjects: language arts, science and/or social studies. (GPISD policy, EIE Local). **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.**”

_____ will be retained in _____ or _____
(*Student name*)
_____ placed in _____ grade at _____ for the
(*School name*)
scholastic year of _____.

Teacher Signature

Date

Principal Signature

Date

I have had a conference with school personnel and I understand the recommendation made by the school. I **am in agreement** with the school's recommendation for:

_____ retention

_____ placement

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

I have had a conference with school personnel. I understand the recommendation made by the school, but I **do not agree** with it.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**EXHIBIT B
GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**RETENTION CONFERENCE
GRADE 1**

Galena Park ISD's Policy EIE (Local) states:

“In grade 1, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math. **Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.**”.

_____ will be retained in _____ or _____
(Student name)
_____ placed in _____ grade at _____ for the
(School name)
scholastic year of _____.

Teacher Signature

Date

Principal Signature

Date

I have had a conference with school personnel and I understand the recommendation made by the school. I **am in agreement** with the school's recommendation for:

_____ retention

_____ placement

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

I have had a conference with school personnel. I understand the recommendation made by the school, but I **do not agree** with it.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**EXHIBIT B
GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**RETENTION CONFERENCE
KINDERGARTEN**

Galena Park ISD's Policy EIE (Local) states:

"In kindergarten, the standard for promotion is developed on 25 out of 30 assessed skills by the end of the fourth nine week period." ("Promoted" or "placed" shall be indicated on student's cumulative folder.)

_____ will be retained in _____ or _____
(*Student name*)
_____ placed in _____ grade at _____ for the
scholastic year of _____. (School name)

Teacher Signature

Date

Principal Signature

Date

I have had a conference with school personnel and I understand the recommendation made by the school. I **am in agreement** with the school's recommendation for:

_____ retention

_____ placement

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

I have had a conference with school personnel. I understand the recommendation made by the school, but I **do not agree** with it.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

SPECIAL EDUCATION

GRADING AND REPORTING

- a. **Grades** must be based on student performance per the Individual Educational Program (I.E.P).

Students mainstreamed into general education (with or without co-teaching assistance) with **accommodations** that do not alter the TEKS or the curriculum receive **regular** grades.

For students mainstreamed into regular classes receiving modifications (with or without co-teaching assistance) that alter the content to the extent that the TEKS have been reduced or changed, the numerical grade is followed by an "M" for *modified* in elementary and middle school and an "S" for *special education* courses for high school.

- b. An **alternate reporting form** may be used, if approved by the Director of Special Education, for some self-contained classes, i.e. LIFE Skills and the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities. An "M" will be placed on the elementary and middle school report cards and an "S" on high school report cards by subject areas that curriculum has been altered, and is being taught below grade level.
- c. **Failing Grades:** If a special education student does not successfully complete goals and objectives (and the I.E.P. is deemed appropriate), the student has not "passed" the course. An ARD Committee Meeting should be held if the student continues to receive failing grades to determine if the I.E.P.'s are appropriate. However, care must be taken to ascertain that the goals and objectives (outlined in the I.E.P.) are within the range of the student's skills. Appropriate modifications, as determined by the ARD Committee, must have been provided by both regular and special education personnel as mandated by TEA.
- d. A **work sample folder** with examples of the modifications implemented by the classroom teacher(s) is required for all students for documentation purposes. The work sample folder will be maintained by the classroom teacher(s).

GUIDELINES

- a. **Testing Methods**
For special education students, testing methods must allow the students to demonstrate certain knowledge and skills regardless of their disability. For example, evaluation of social studies, science, or math applications for a student with severe reading disabilities should not be based on test methods that require average reading and writing skills. It would be difficult to determine whether poor performance was due to reading problems or lack of achievement in the content areas being tested. If alternate methods of testing are required, it should be documented in the modification section of the I.E.P. All teachers working with the student should be aware of these modifications.
- b. **Grade Responsibilities**

Students who attend a special education class for an entire subject area/course shall receive the grade from the appropriate special education teacher. **Teachers must provide instruction and grade reporting based on students' I.E.P.'s.**

Students who are served through the special education program but mainstreamed for a particular subject will receive their grade from the classroom teacher. For students in a co-teach arrangement, both the special education and the general education teacher should provide input for determining the final grade. Instructional modifications must be provided by regular and special education teachers. A record of pupil modification forms, approved by the ARD Committee, must be maintained by the classroom teacher for documentation purposes.

Altered or Adjusted Grading Due to Instructional Modifications:

- ♦The need for altered or adjusted grading will be determined at the annual ARD Committee meeting for each eligible student.
- ♦Grading procedures must be explained to the parents of special education students at the annual ARD Committee Meeting.

If the parent agrees to the altered or adjusted grading, the student's report card should indicate that adjustment with “**M**” or “**S**” recorded next to the grade on the report card.

Special education students shall receive recognition for work successfully completed as specified by their I.E.P. as any general education student would. (Example: Resource students making “A’s” in resource class and “A’s” in mainstreamed classes should be eligible for honor roll.)

SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADING INFORMATION FOR STUDENT CUMULATIVE FOLDERS

Elementary and Middle School:

An “M” beside a number grade can be noted where the mastery level is below grade level and the curriculum content has been modified. In addition, a notation is made in the ARD Meeting that the student is receiving modified TEKS instruction.

At the bottom of the cumulative folder under *Explanation on Marks*, write “M” - modifications have been made to the TEKS instruction.

Special education students receiving instruction in regular classes who are taught grade level curriculum, receive no modifications that alter the curriculum and receive regular grades when passing grade level tests.

Intervention

Intervention methods come from a range of resources available to general education teachers including: supplementary instruction; increased exposure to curriculum; more intensive instruction on curriculum components; small group instruction.

Intervention is not synonymous with “modification” or “accommodation,” nor is it any of the other following actions educators might take: moving a child closer to the board or teacher’s desk; reduced work demands; conferencing with parents; retention; referral for testing.

Intervention is actually a process with five main components, all of which are embedded within the GPISD RTI process.

- 1) Problem identification: an objective, measurable description of a directly observable problem.
- 2) Goal setting: an objective, measurable description of a directly observable outcome which addresses the identified problem.
- 3) Intervention plan: the plan specifies materials, methods, timelines, and personnel involved. The intervention plan is based on evidence-based practice guidelines.
- 4) Monitoring data: the outcome data are directly linked to the identified problem and must be collected frequently and consistently.
- 5) Follow-up: within a specified time frame, the staff involved in the intervention review the student’s response and make decisions about next steps.

CONTENT MODIFICATIONS VS. INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

	<i>Content Modification</i>	<i>Instructional Accommodation</i>
<u>EXPLANATION</u>	<p>Indicates that <u>what</u> is being taught, the content, is modified. The student is expected to learn something different than the general education standard (e.g., TEKS).</p> <p>The instructional level or general education benchmarks or number of key concepts to be mastered are changed.</p>	<p>Indicates changes to <u>how</u> the content is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) taught, 2) made accessible, and/or 3) assessed. <p>Accommodations do not change what the student is expected to master. The objectives of the course remain intact.</p>
<u>EXAMPLES</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A locally developed course to substitute for a general education course (e.g., Life Skills courses, Functional Mathematics) • Selected TEKS instead of all of the TEKS for the grade level course • Off-level instruction and performance expectations in a general education setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one instruction, small group instruction, multisensory approaches, extended time on projects, study guides, highlighted texts, programmed materials, preferential seating, immediate feedback, etc. • Braille, books on tape, screen readers, interpreter, word processor, etc. • Oral testing, untimed testing, extended time to complete assignments, shortened tests, draw a diagram, develop a model, perform the answer, etc.

*** students should only receive the "M" on the report card if the CONTENT is being modified, as described above.**

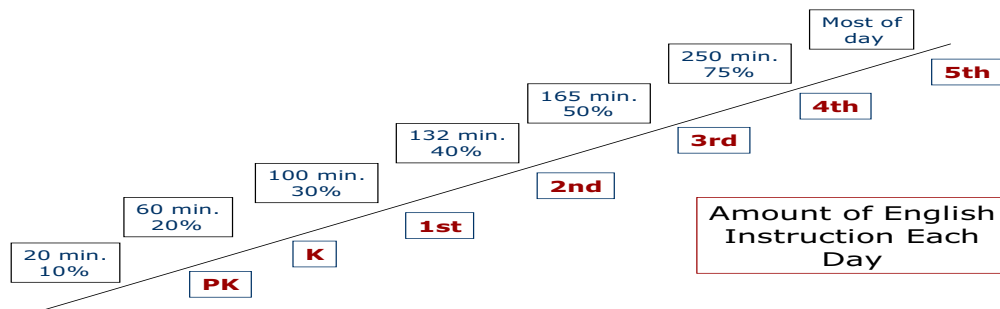
Bilingual and ESL Instructional Guidelines

BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Bilingual students receive classroom instruction in their primary language and in increments of English instruction as a bridge to ensure mastery in academic English as determined by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC). The bilingual program emphasizes mastery of the TEKS as required for all students.

Transition Program

■ Bilingual To All-English Instruction



The students in the bilingual program are graded following the same guidelines and requirements as the mainstream population. This will be coded “B” on their report card to indicate that a student is enrolled in a bilingual program.

ESL Guidelines

The goal of the program is to meet instructional needs of the limited English proficient students, addressing their affective, linguistic, and cognitive levels through an intensive instructional program and second language acquisition methods. Districts may modify their programs to ensure mastery of the English language as well as mathematics, social studies, and science essential skills (TEKS).

Modifications of Pacing and Teaching Strategies

The ESL student program must be paced according to the different stages of language acquisition and employ teaching strategies designated to meet the needs of LEP students. In an ESL program, the participation of teachers, counselors, and administrators is essential to ensure proper classroom placement, selection of instructional materials, and an appropriate instructional pacing in which modifications concentrate on vocabulary, concept and language development.

ESL students may receive grade from ESL teachers and mainstream classroom teachers. In both cases, grades must be based on students’ language proficiency level.

ALTERNATIVE AND AT-RISK PROGRAMS

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

School districts may operate alternative school programs to serve special student populations who are not able to function in the structure of the regular school setting. This pertains to potential dropouts or severe discipline problems.

In implementing an alternative program, the district may modify clock hour requirements and the methods, pacing, and materials of instruction as appropriate. An alternative program may utilize below grade level text, the use of different teaching strategies, or other modifications that may be necessary.

Referral to the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) is suggested when alternative programs are considered for any student. Additional information concerning alternative placement can be provided through GPISD's Special Programs Department.

AT-RISK STUDENTS AND PROGRAMS

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a three tier approach for the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction for all children in the general education classroom (Tier I). Struggling learners are identified and provided with additional instructional interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning (Tier II). These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Student responses are monitored through frequent data collection to assess learning rate and level of performance. Decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on this response data, including whether to refer for special education testing (Tier III). RTI is used to make decisions in both general education and special education, creating an integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

The GPISD RTI model allows for two approaches, depending on the student's needs. The first approach, Problem Solving Team (PST), is used to address behavior, writing and math problems. The struggling student is identified via teacher referral. Intervention and progress monitoring plans are developed on a case-by-case basis. The second approach, the "Reading Roadmap", is used to address reading problems. The struggling student is identified primarily through universal screening using curriculum based measures, but other data sources are considered. Intervention methods and progress monitoring measures are guided by the GPISD Reading Road Map.

DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

Dyslexia screening and assessment instruments are available at each campus to determine student placement into a structured Dyslexia Program. If a student is identified as dyslexic, a Pullout/ Inclusion Program is available to provide specific instructional strategies to those students in the reading process.

GRADING

GRADE BOOK GUIDELINES

A teacher is required to record and/or file evidence to support grades reported on the report card. A minimum of two grades per core subject each week is recommended for students in grades 1-5 (ECE, PK, and KN are exceptions). Grades may be labeled in each column at the bottom of the grade book page to indicate what the grade represents (i.e., spelling test, book report, etc.).

GPISD Policy **EIA (R) (Local)** states that the grade book should include the following:

- ◆ A record of attendance for each student
- ◆ A sufficient number of grade entries for each student so that realistic grade averages may be obtained
- ◆ Quiz and exam grades shall be identified with a notation at the column heading
- ◆ Point deductions shall be clearly identified
- ◆ Grade books shall be available for examination or audit at all times
- ◆ Grade books shall be filed with the principal at the end of the school year

WORK SAMPLE FILE

In an effort to reduce paperwork and as documentation to determine achievement of the essential knowledge and skills, a work sample file should be **maintained for all students**. This file should maintain a variety of activities, assignments, tests, and other related information for potential audit purposes and/or parent conferences.

TAKE HOME FOLDER

The take home folder provides regularly scheduled communication to parents on student progress. Parents are asked to remove the papers, look at them with the student, sign the folder, and return it the next school day. Practices may vary from campus to campus and grade level to grade level.

Note: Every effort should be made to communicate with parents on a regular basis. The report card is *only one* of the methods of communication to be used.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are suggestions to provide consistency and balance with homework. Homework is a vital part of the learning process and the parent -child-school partnership.

- ♦ The purpose of homework should be:
 - a. To help students improve achievement
 - b. To nurture the development of good study habits
 - c. To familiarize parents with their student's work and give them a chance for involvement
- ♦ Guidelines for assigning homework:
 - a. Students should have prior instruction
 - b. Homework should be promptly evaluated with feedback for the student
 - c. Homework should be directly related to classroom instruction and student needs
 - d. Teachers should consider the availability of resources before assigning homework
- ♦ Class work is generally work that is started and finished at school. Homework may be started in the classroom and completed at home.
- ♦ Teachers should strive to ensure that individual students understand the work before homework is assigned. Students have the responsibility of ensuring they have an appropriate understanding of the homework assignment(s).
- ♦ Homework **may count up to 10%** of the student's academic content grade /content or may be counted as extra credit, depending on the nature of the homework. Exceptions to the 10% weight may be made for work such as science and social studies projects.
- ♦ Homework may vary in assignments to include studying spelling words, math facts, reading for pleasure, parent-child projects, etc. The total amount of time per day spent on homework, should **NEVER** exceed 20 - 30 minutes for primary aged children and 45 - 60 minutes for intermediate aged children. Teaching teams should work together to ensure that the total homework time does not exceed 45 - 60 minutes on any day.

Incomplete homework shall not be reflected in a student's general conduct grade.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

It is strongly recommended that parent conferences occur early and that teachers strive to keep parents well informed about their child's academic progress.

RECOMMENDED CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

PK-5: At least two parent/teacher conferences during the school year are recommended for each student (refer to failure criteria).

Other conferences: As requested by parents and/or teachers. Frequent communication between the home and the school helps to meet the student's needs more adequately.

CUMULATIVE FOLDERS

- ◆ All duplicate information should be eliminated from the permanent records
- ◆ If a label is placed on the record, an insert with the same information is **not** necessary
- ◆ Principals will have teachers audit folders before leaving for the summer
- ◆ All personal notes, any discipline information, and other information of this type must be removed from the permanent folder
- ◆ All auditing and removal of excessive information in *special education* eligibility folders will be the responsibility of the Special Education Department
- ◆ *Inactive records* should be housed at the school where the child was last enrolled in a place designated by the principal