

# GRADING POLICY at SPICEWOOD



**...A single letter grade is a less than optimal way to report student progress. ...letter grades or overall percentage scores are extremely deficient because they cannot provide the level of detailed feedback necessary to ENHANCE student learning...**

**---Robert J. Marzano**

Spicewood's grading policy has been developed in grades three through five in order to provide developmental consistency from grade level to grade level. According to Round Rock Independent School District's Policy FDD, "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 student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course."

## THE PURPOSE OF A GRADE

Grades communicate to a variety of audiences the degree of achievement of academic competence of individual students. A grade should be an indication of what the student has learned. Good work habits and high performance standards are important. Therefore, after an initial grace period when students are taught grade-level expectations, work habits and performance standards may be included in a student's grade. We set high expectations for our students and therefore performance standards may include legible handwriting, correct spelling of core words, and a correct heading (name, date, teacher, etc.) on work turned in, etc. Work habits may include, but are not limited to; completing work in a timely manner, turning work in when it is due, following written directions, and/or keeping up with assignments that are extended over a period of time. Teachers notify parents if their child's grades are "suffering" due to poor performances.

## WORK THAT RECEIVES A GRADE

Work assigned by the teacher can include class work, projects, research papers, tests, homework, and other authentic assessments. *Assignments marked with a numeric grade are recorded in the teacher's grade book.* Grades recorded in the teacher's grade book are averaged for a final grade at the end of each nine-week grading period in reading, written composition, spelling, math, science, health, and social studies. This is the grade

that is reflected on a student's report card. P.E., music, art, and health are graded with an E for excellent, S for satisfactory, N for needs improvement, or U for unsatisfactory. *Homework* that is assigned for the purpose of practice is not always given a numerical grade.

All students in grades three, four and five are given an Assignment Notebook/Student Planner that is funded by our PTA and expected to go home every (Monday through Friday) night and be returned the next day. On Friday, student work is sent home in a Friday Folder (also funded through our PTA) for the purpose of parent-review and parent-student discussion. Folders are to be reviewed, signed, and returned the following Monday. Projects and units of study are sent home upon completion; however, work in progress may be sent home for review (and returned the next day). A parent's signature indicating the work has been reviewed may be required of some students.

Parent signatures are often required on work receiving a 70 or below.

#### GRADE CONVERSIONS

A = 90 to 100

B = 80 to 89

C = 75 to 79

D = 70 to 74

F = Below 70

#### PROGRESS REPORTS

A student receives a Progress Report if she or he is doing unsatisfactory work (grades of D or F). Progress Reports are sent home at the end of any third week or sixth week in a nine-week period. These are to be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher.

#### REPORT CARDS

The primary purpose of grading and grade reporting is to clearly communicate to students and parents information regarding student progress toward educational goals.

The teacher's evaluation of a child's progress is based on daily written work, class participation, performance evaluations, individual and group projects, and contributions beyond the assigned task. Promotion from one grade level to the next in grades three - five will be based on an overall average of 70, on a scale of 100, based upon grade-level standards for all subject areas, and a grade of 70 or above in both math and language arts, and either science or social studies. In grades 3-5, promotion is also contingent on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAKS). A student earning passing grades in an alternative program or who has not met the minimum requirements for promotion may be promoted with an improvement plan to the next appropriate grade level. Further information regarding PROMOTION and RETENTION standards can be found in the RRISD Policy EI (LEGAL) and in EIE (LOCAL).

Report Cards are sent home to RRISD elementary students each nine weeks. Dates of the nine-week periods and dates for distributing report cards are listed in the [R.R.I.S.D. Student Parent Handbook](#). District Policy is located on the RRISD website at [roundrockisd.org](http://roundrockisd.org) under "about Round Rock ISD" and then under "Board and District Policies."

## STUDENT ABSENCES

R.R.I.S.D. Policy states, "Students shall be expected to make up assignments and tests after absences. Students shall receive a zero for any assignment or test not made up within the allotted time."

## RETEACH

Tests and major assignments that are graded as a 69 or below will be redone.

The highest grade recorded for redone work will not be above a 70 and will replace the original grade. RRISD Policy, "For each grading period, the District shall record a 50 (on the report card) for any average numerical grade lower than 50 provided the student was not absent more than three days if in the elementary school, or for more than three class periods if in the secondary school."

## LATE WORK

Work is considered late if it is not completed and turned in by the student by the appropriate class period\*. (Late work is not work that is assigned when students are absent.) Late assignments will result in a 10-point deduction.)

\*The student is responsible for bringing his or her own work to school.

## EXTRA CREDIT

We do not give extra credit. We are interested in the best job a student can do on his or her required work. Extra credit is not assigned to replace required assignments that have not been turned in and have received a zero.

## SPECIAL ED: RESOURCE AND/OR S.A.I.L.

Goals for students in special education are specified in the student's I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan) and are not necessarily reflected in the grading policy.

## SAIL: AT-RISK

Grades will be given to students for work accomplished with S.A.I.L. assistance.

## **HOME ACCESS CENTER ("HAC")**

The Home Access Center ("HAC") allows parents of elementary students in grades 3 – 5 to review their child's grades on-line. Parents must complete an application to acquire a username and password and then have internet access to view their child's attendance data, discipline incidents, and for students in grades 3 through 5, student daily and nine-week grades.

A different username and password is required for each enrolled child in a family. To register online, our Registrar must have entered the parent's e-mail address that was provided on the student registration form. If parents are unable to complete the registration process online or if they don't have access to the internet, they can visit our office and register with our Registrar who can assist with specific questions. This procedure is in place to protect the confidentiality of student information.

Teachers enter grades in a timely manner, but we emphasize that adequate time needs

to be given to enter grades, particularly written assignments and long-term projects. Additional guidelines that may clarify the HAC are included below.

- How often grades are recorded:
  - Homeroom teachers record a grade for each content/subject each week.
  - Specials (music, physical education, Spanish) teachers input grades every other week.
  - Art teachers input grades as projects are completed.
- Teachers send graded work home each week in Friday Folders.
- If there is a grade given on a paper, it is recorded and can be viewed by parents in the HAC. Otherwise, a check, stamp, or comment is used to show that work has been reviewed, but not graded for input into the grade book.
- Parents should direct their questions about recorded to the homeroom teacher.



## HOMEWORK

Homework assigned by the teacher should reinforce what the student has already learned in class. In addition, homework should be: related to the TEKS, explained fully before students leave school, aligned to classroom learning, varied in levels of difficulty, reasonable in length, assigned to each and every student, and reviewed by the teacher (with feedback immediately following). Spicewood students are expected to read or be read to daily and practice arithmetic facts (appropriate to his/her grade level). Students in grades 3 –5 will also be expected to study for scheduled tests. With the exception of long term projects, assigned homework is typically given a “completion” grade, not a percentage correct grade.

### TIME SPENT ON HOMEWORK . . . WHAT’S REASONABLE?

We do not have a set time for homework at Spicewood, but, we do have a “reasonable chart.” This chart can be used for the student who is organized and disciplined: can stay focused on homework until it’s completed; has a set time and place to do his/her work every day; has all materials and resources ready; can *tune out* interruptions, conversations, television, friends ringing the doorbell; and can wait to get another snack or drink. Parents are encouraged to help their children develop these excellent study habits.



There is the student who cannot stay focused: day dreams; needs to tell someone “one more thing;” see one more thing on the T.V.; get one more little drink; get one more

thing to snack on; sharpen his/her pencil; get the dictionary; call the neighbor for the book forgotten at school; find the missing orange map pencil, etc! This student can't use the reasonable chart without modifications. S/he should be able to subtract out all disruptions and unfocused time to determine *the actual amount spent on homework*. This should then match with the "reasonable chart." Parents and teachers are encouraged to work together to improve the study habits of children with these types of distractions.

There is also the student that truly enjoys a research project or other type of assignment that he or she chooses to delve into deeply. This is highly encouraged, and the "reasonable chart" will be unnecessary for this type of student who chooses to spend more time than listed on our chart.

Parents are encouraged to contact the student's teacher if s/he continually exceeds the reasonable amount of time spent on homework or if s/he consistently brings home unfinished class work in addition to the regularly assigned homework.

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>The amount of time a student should spend on homework each night, excluding the exceptions mentioned above.</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Students are expected to read or be read to for about 15 minutes per night. Occasionally, individual teachers may assign additional homework as appropriate.
<b>First</b>	Students are expected to read or be read to for 20 minutes per night. As students are introduced to addition & subtraction facts, they are expected to be practicing them to develop instant recall. Spelling words are to be studied throughout the week.
<b>Second</b>	Students are assigned 20 to 30 minutes of homework and an additional 20 minutes of reading Monday through Thursday nights. Assignment sheets are sent home weekly that describe the homework for the week. Students are also expected to practice addition and subtraction facts to develop instant recall.
<b>Third</b>	Students are assigned about 30 minutes of homework, and an additional 20 minutes of reading, Monday through Friday nights. Student Planners are sent home daily and are expected to be signed. In addition, students are expected to practice their math facts to develop instant recall.
<b>Fourth</b>	Students are assigned projects and nightly homework. Students should spend about 40 minutes a night on homework, and an additional 100 minutes of reading each week. Students should also be practicing their multiplication and division facts to develop instant recall.
<b>Fifth</b>	Students are assigned projects and nightly homework; they should spend approximately 60 minutes a night on homework, which typically includes 25 minutes of reading, 25 minutes for a math assignment, and 20 minutes for Language Arts, Science, and/or Social Studies.

\*Note: This chart is not appropriate for students who have modifications through 504, special

education, or other Interventions.

The Spicewood staff believes stressing the importance of practicing good work habits at an early age will set our students up for a successful school experience. We have taken into consideration the time working-parents get home and the after-school activities that our students participate in. We have also considered the well-meaning parent who does the homework for their child. We want our students to prepare the assigned tasks independently and we encourage parents to review their child's work when it is complete. Younger students will require more parental supervision than our older students, but we do not expect our students to wait for their parents to begin homework or for our parents to sit beside their child for the entire time they are doing homework.

