

RENAISSANCE ACADEMY GRADING POLICY

POLICY OBJECTIVE

At Renaissance Academy our objective is to provide the best education possible and enable each student to reach, master and exceed clearly defined grade level standards and expectations for achievement. The objective of our grading policy is to ensure academic grades reflect actual student learning and their attainment of specific skills. Regular and effective assessment techniques, quarterly report cards (sent out through Aspire) and parent/teacher conferences are used to provide clear and specific feedback to students, parents and teachers regarding the academic progress, understanding of concepts and achievement of each individual student.

Grades at Renaissance are clearly connected to a student's academic performance and attainment of skills. This allows teachers to progress monitor and accurately assess student achievement, and set appropriate and achievable goals for each student. Standards-based grading allows for accurate communication of skills to parents and the early identification of areas of strength or weakness. Students at Renaissance receive grades according to their level of academic proficiency and achievement on designated tasks used to assess the Utah State Learning Standards associated with each subject in each grade.

Behavioral factors traditionally embedded in school grades such as attendance, punctuality, participation, effort, on-time assignment submission, homework completion, organizational and interpersonal skills, and non-compliance are not included in the academic grades given at Renaissance. These traditional behavioral components skew student grades and prevent them from accurately communicating student proficiency and performance. Students at Renaissance receive separate 'Behavior & Responsibility' grades/indicators as part of their end of term report card to communicate this important information to parents.

PROFICIENCY AND STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTORS

1. ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS

Students will receive grades on both formative and summative assessments to indicate their attainment of skills and proficiency in relation to grade level standards as indicated in the table below. Students will also receive teacher feedback and comments in relation to the work, progress, performance on assessment, and areas of weakness and strength. The following table explains our assessment grading scale, proficiency level descriptors and achievement and performance descriptors in relation to grade level learning objectives and requirements.

Grade & Proficiency Scale	Percentage Equivalent	Proficiency Level Description	Achievement/Performance Descriptors
Advanced / Exceeds the standard	A 93-100% A- 90-92%	Advanced understanding of grade-level concepts and skill development	<p>Student has completed/demonstrated proficient work/understanding of concepts on all course/standard objectives measured AND advanced work/understanding (i.e. demonstrated in-depth inferences and applications) on some course/standard objectives measured.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student answers most test questions correctly; including the most challenging question.</p>
Proficient/ Meets the standard	B+ 87-89% B 83-86% B- 80-82%	Grade-level appropriate understanding of concepts and skill development	<p>Student has completed/demonstrated proficient work/understanding of concepts on all course/standard objectives measured.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student answers most test questions correctly, but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.</p>
Nearing Proficiency / Approaching the Standard	C+ 77-79% C 73-76% C- 70-72	Some grade-level appropriate understanding of concepts and skill development	<p>Student has completed/demonstrated proficient work/understanding of concepts on the most important objectives/standards although not on all objectives. Some absence of foundational knowledge and understanding. The student can continue to the next course/grade level.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student may demonstrate inconsistent performance, answer many test questions correctly but are generally less successful with questions that are most challenging.</p>
Novice / Below the Standard	D+ 67-69% D 64-66% D- 60-63%	Below grade-level and limited understanding of concepts and skill development	<p>Student has not completed/demonstrated proficient work/understanding of concepts on required objectives/standards taught. With HELP, a partial knowledge of some of the simpler and less complex ideas and processes demonstrated.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Student has little success with both the basic and more challenging concepts on the objectives/standards covered.</p>

Fail grade	Below 60%	Very limited or no understanding of grade-level concepts and skill development	Student may requires significant academic intervention, this may include remediation and/or summer school attendance.
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2. BEHAVIOR & RESPONSIBILITY

As we separate behavioral components from academic grades, students will also receive a grade from their teacher on their report each term to indicate behavior, responsibility/accountability and social skills. These factors are often traditionally embedded in academic grades but prevent grades truly reflecting student attainment of skills and understanding of concepts. Some behaviors that will be monitored and communicated to students and parents/guardian under the banner of 'Behavior and Responsibility' include participation, school attendance, tardies, appropriate social skills and interactions, required homework completion (i.e., reading in grades K-5 and Chinese in Chinese Immersion classes), and demonstration of appropriate and compliant behavior. Days absent and tardy will be reported in numerical form (i.e., 5 days absent) while other behavioral components will be reported as A (Exceptional), B (Acceptable), C (Some improvement needed), D (Significant improvement needed).

METHOD OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

1. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS (worth 75% of quarter grade)

Summative assessments account for 75% of a quarter grade and are used to measure actual attainment and mastery of academic skills, knowledge and depth of concept understanding. Summative assessments are graded according to the level of skill and proficiency demonstrated by a student in relation to grade-level standards and objectives.

Prior to the administration of major summative assessment tasks, tests, and assignments, students should be provided with a proficiency rubric indicating the learning objectives and standards covered by the assessment as well as what they must demonstrate to achieve each proficiency rating. Summative grades are given for each student for all major summative assessment tasks administered. These grade indicate student proficiency on the specific standards/skills assessed.

A summative assessment task can be classified as any type of assignment or test designed to assess final attainment of student knowledge, skill and understanding on a topic (after initial

instruction, practice, consolidation of skills and reteaching of misunderstood or more challenging concepts) before moving forward onto a completely new/different topic/area of content. Some examples of summative assessments that contribute to quarter grades include; end of chapter or unit tests, end of topic essays or projects, oral presentations, demonstrations of skills and midterm or end of quarter tests and exams.

2. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS (worth 25% of quarter grade)

Formative assessments account for 25% of a quarter grade and are used to indicate student progress and gradual attainment of academic skills, knowledge and depth of concept understanding. Formative assessments are used by teachers to track and monitor student progress in their attainment of academic skills according to state standards, and to guide and direct teacher instruction. A formative assessment task can be classified as any task, assignment or activity assigned to provide an indication of a specific skill or understanding of a concept mid-topic. Some examples of formative assessments include classroom assignments or worksheets, pop quizzes, teacher observations, in class questioning, 'check my progress', spelling tests, any type of practice test used while still learning about a topic/area of content.

3. QUARTERLY REPORTS AND GRADING SCALE

Students receive subject academic and behavior grades and reports at the end of each quarter. Quarterly reports are sent home for all students to Renaissance families through Aspire at the end of Terms 1-4. Grades indicating student proficiency in the areas taught and assessed each term are given for overall subject achievement (i.e., Math, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies etc) as well as information about student performance on the subject strand and topic areas assessed that quarter according to grade level and subject state standards. Behavior and responsibility grades and indicators are also communicated to parents quarterly.

Quarterly grades are formed based on student performance on both summative assessment and formative tasks. Summative assessments contribute 75% to an overall end of quarter grade, while formative assessments weight at 25%. Students receive quarterly academic grades based on the scale and descriptors indicated in the following rubric. ***Please note - Kindergarten and 1st grade do not assign letter grades and give proficiency ratings according to the skills assessed (i.e., M = Mastered, P = Progressing, NI = Needs improvement).***

2nd-9th Grading Scale

Proficiency Scale	Grade	Percentage Range	Grade/Proficiency Level Description
Advanced/Exceeds the standard	A	93-100	Advanced understanding of grade-level concepts and skill development
	A-	90-92	
Proficient/Meets the standard	B+	87-89	Grade-level appropriate understanding of concepts and skill development
	B	83-86	
	B-	80-82	
Nearing Proficiency/ Approaching the Standard	C+	77-79	Some grade-level appropriate understanding of concepts and skill development
	C	73-76	
	C-	70-72	
Novice/Below the Standard	D+	67-69	Below grade-level and limited/no understanding of grade-level concepts and skill development
	D	64-66	
	D-	60-63	
Fail grade	F	Below 60	Very limited or no understanding of grade-level concepts and skills. Significant academic intervention required, this may include course remediation and/or summer school attendance

COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT LEARNING AND NEEDS

1. PROGRESS MONITORING - MasteryConnect and Aspire

Teachers are required to use MasteryConnect and Aspire to record and monitor student progress and performance on all summative and most formative assessments. Teachers are also required to track student learning according to the Utah State Standards for all subjects. Parents may request to see the progress of their student and their assessment results in MasteryConnect at any time. School Administration has access to all MasteryConnect accounts to keep teachers accountable through random and spontaneous checks.

2. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - Student Proficiency According To Grade-Level Standards

All student summative and formative assessment results will be used to attain student grades/proficiency ratings and provide an indication of performance according to state grade-level standards and objectives. Student grades will be updated for all subjects at a minimum of weekly and communicated to parents/guardians through Aspire through the parent login. Parents will be able to view grades of A-F for their student on all standards and assessments for all subjects. End-of-quarter reports and grades on all standards for all subjects (including Behavior and Responsibility) will be communicated to parents using Aspire.

3. SEPS - Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are held biannually in late September/October and February of every school year. All parents/guardians have the opportunity to make an appointment to meet with their students teacher/s to discuss their learning, progress, attainment of skills, behavior and/or any area of weakness, strength, issue or concern. Parents/guardians may also request to schedule an appointment with their students teacher/s to discuss student progress or any concern at any time throughout the course of the school year.

4. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT INFORMATION

Additional information will be communicated regularly throughout the school year to parents:

- a) Teacher feedback and comments on all aspects of school life
- b) Communication regarding individual student concerns
- c) Resources to help parents - websites, books etc.
- d) Behavior and responsibility ratings and communications

ADDITIONAL GRADING GUIDELINES AND DIFFERENCES TO TRADITIONAL GRADING SYSTEMS

Please see below for an explanation of factors that are different in our Renaissance standards-based grading policy compared to a traditional grading system. These factors are not included in student grades at Renaissance, and hence allow student grades to provide more accurate and useful academic feedback and indication of student learning and growth.

1. Student grades indicate academic achievement and exclude behavioral factors

Behavioral factors and aspects of student responsibility are not included in subject grades. The absence of behavioral components allow the grades to accurately indicate student achievement and performance without undue biasing due to behavioral factors. Research indicates that traditional grading systems that incorporate behavioral factors into students grades result in inflated grades that do not provide an accurate indications of the skills attained. Inflated grades often miscommunicate student progress and suggest that a student who works hard, receives extra credit or participation points, or turns in their homework, has achieved mastery of a skill when this is not necessarily the case. Alternatively, students who master academic concepts more easily in less time and with less effort may be penalised in their grade due to factors such as non-compliant behavior or tardiness.

2. 'Zero' grades not used as a punishment

A 'zero' grade is often issued as a consequence for tardiness or behavioral reasons that do not indicate mastery of content (i.e., if a student does not have in a piece of work by the designated due date). The possibility of receiving a 'zero' grade is also often used to encourage students to submit their work on time. 'Zero' grades will not be issued as consequences for poor behavior.

3. No participation points to prevent skewed grades

Unlike a traditional grading system, our RA standards-based grading system does not work on a points system where students can accumulate academic and behavioral points to boost their final grade. Our goal is to communicate actual academic mastery, points systems that value all assessments equally or average assignment, include participation points or punishment zeros in a final grade, prevent this and result in a skewed final grade. Grade skewness can be prevented by eliminating zeros from student grades and using the median rather than the mean to more accurately reflect student achievement when more than one score is combined to provide an indication of learning.

4. No 'curve' grading

Students will not be graded on a curve. All students will have the ability to achieve proficiency A level grades in the 'Advanced' range based on their attainment of academic skills, knowledge and concept understanding. Grading on a curve does not allow the accurate representation of all students individually and instead indicates student performance relative to one another rather than individual achievement.

5. No extra credit assignments

Students at RA will not be given 'Extra Credit' assignments to boost their quarter grade or receive extra credit for non-academic factors/contributions. Extra credit assignments allow

students to inflate their grade by incorporating level of effort or 'more' into their grade. Extra credit assignments and assessments reduce the validity and therefore usefulness of a skills or standards-based grade and therefore its ability to accurately indicate academic mastery.

ASPIRE GRADEBOOK SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

To maintain consistency between teachers and allow parents to more easily understand and interpret their students grades, teachers are required to set up their quarter grade books in the following way.

SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE CATEGORIES

*Example of Language Arts gradebook

Section 1 - Summative Assessments (total summative assessments weight at 75% of subject grade)

Foundational Skills - Spelling Test 1 9/20 (assessment date)

Foundational Skills - Spelling Test 2 9/30

Speaking and Listening - Oral Presentation 10/15

Writing - Creative Writing Essay 11/1

Section 2 - Formative Assessments (total formative assessments weight at 25% of subject grade)

Reading Informational - Class worksheet 10/18 (assessment date)

Reading Literature - Class worksheet 10/20

****Please remember not to use abbreviations for strand names and to alphabetize both summative and formative assessment categories to allow parents to gain a better understanding of their students performance and skills according to strands.***