



SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

2017-2018

Best Practices in Grading: A Guide for Teachers

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Purpose and Committee Information

The purpose of this manual is to outline the information that teachers and administrators need to implement the board's vision for grading and assessment of student academic progress. Special thanks to committee members listed below for their hard work on the manual.

Year 1 (2015-2016) Draft Committee

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A review by principals resulted in essential clarifications. Special thanks to the second review committee for providing additional clarification.

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Carla King
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Lisa Sanderson

Tamra Smith
Bertha Timmons
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Year 3 (2017-2018) Revision Committees

K-1 Standards-Based Report Card

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Tammy Carlisle	John Koumas	Stephanie Sims
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Anja Comerford	Tracey Lear	Kimberly Singletary
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Bev Davis	Robin Martin	Tina Sorrells
Susan Faddis	Annette McCaffrey	Debbie Sweat
Suzanna Foley	Monica McClam	Angela Tomlin-Hart
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Shelly Galloway	Pennie McLeod	Debbie Wilkinson
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Barry Greer, Cherryvale
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Introduction

Sumter School District Policy IKA for Grading and Assessment Systems is that students respond more positively to the opportunity for success than to the threat of failure. The district seeks, therefore, through learner objectives and its instructional program, to make achievement both recognizable and possible for students. The district should emphasize achievement in its process of evaluating student performance.

Regularly issued report cards, combined with scheduled parent-teacher conferences, serve to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance. This process informs students and their parent/legal guardian and provides a basis for bringing about change in student performance if such change seems necessary.

Mission of Sumter School District

The mission of Sumter School District is to equip students to be responsible, successful, and productive citizens in a global society.

Vision of Sumter School District

Sumter School District develops and cultivates competitive students who embrace diversity, act responsibly, and contribute positively to society.

Values and Beliefs of Sumter School District

Commitment to Excellence: Educational excellence requires that all stakeholders strive for continual growth and improvement.

Unyielding Ethical Standards: Build and maintain an abiding sense of honor and integrity that is characterized by high standards.

Accountability: All stakeholders are accountable for their actions and will be responsive to the needs of others.

Educating the Whole Child: All students are granted the opportunity to succeed based on individual needs.

Providing a Safe Learning Environment: Students have the right to learn in an environment conducive to learning.

Collaboration and Support amongst Stakeholders: Pervasive and valuable collaborative efforts create meaningful strategies and solutions.

Sumter School District Grading Philosophy

To achieve the goal of ensuring an accurate measure of progress and level of achievement, grades are used to reflect a student's mastery across all educational settings within Sumter School District. Grades reflect a district-wide, standard representation of academic achievement in an educational setting and are vital in ensuring effective communication between school and home. Assignments and assessments that are meaningful, standards-based, fair, and a reflection of a student's growth and mastery of grade level standards are used for grading purposes. Grades are weighted to reflect the importance of assessments, classroom assignments, and student ability.

On February 9, 2015 the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) approved a list of various indicators and measurements to report on student academic performance. The Profile of the Graduate serves as the overall objective of the state's public education system.

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate



World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills



Statewide uniform grading scale

On Tuesday, April 12, 2016, the State Board of Education (SBE) unanimously voted to implement a 10-point grading scale effective in the 2016–17 school year. The new uniform grading scale is accompanied by a new conversion chart that will also be implemented in the 2016–17 school year.

The school will follow the statewide uniform grading scale as approved by SBE. This uniform grading scale and the system for calculating GPAs and class rank will apply to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle/junior high school level.

The uniform grading scale is as follows.

- A 90 - 100
- B 80 - 89
- C 70 - 79
- D 60 - 69
- F 59 and below

All report cards and transcripts will use numerical grades.

Best Practices

1. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery through a variety of channels such as assessments, class activities, homework, quizzes, essays, labs, projects, and portfolios.
2. Behavior, effort, and attendance are evaluated and reported separately from the academic grade.
3. Grades are based on impartial, consistent observation of the quality of student work and mastery of the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards and the South Carolina Academic Standards.
4. Grades will reflect student achievement toward mastery of course content standards.
5. Grades are based on students' demonstration of proficiency of course content standards at grade level rigor.
6. Students will receive assessment feedback that is timely, specific, understandable to the receiver, and formed to allow for self-adjustment on the student's part.

Marzano, R. (2000). *Transforming classroom grading*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

O'Connor, K. (2007). *A repair kit for grading: 15 fixes for broken grades*. Portland, OR: ETS.

Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve student performance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wormeli, R. (2006). *Fair isn't always equal: Assessing and grading in the differentiated classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade One Reporting



Pre-Kindergarten Reporting

Student progress in pre-kindergarten is reported on a developmental checklist based on the Good Start, Grow Smart Early Learning Standards twice a year. A minimum of two home visits and two parent conferences are made during the first and fourth quarters. Parent Conferences are held during the second and third quarters. The following codes are used to report student progress on the standards:

S - Satisfactory - Demonstrates skill independently

P - Progressing - Beginning to demonstrate with help but not consistently N - Needs Improvement

Kindergarten Reporting

Student progress in kindergarten is reported each quarter on a district report card based on mastery of the South Carolina College- and Career- Ready Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics and South Carolina Academic Standards for Science and Social Studies. The following codes are used to reports student progress on the standards:

- M = met
- P = progressing
- BG = beginning
- N = not met
- / = not introduced

In addition, each kindergarten student's readiness for school will be measured within the first 45 days of the school year across multiple domains (social foundations, language and literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being and motor development) by the state mandated *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* (KRA). The KRA provides a snapshot of a student's abilities at the beginning of the school year which helps kindergarten teachers best meet the child's needs.

If a child demonstrates readiness in the domain of language and literacy, it is best practice to conduct the Next Step Guided Reading Assessment (NSGRA) reading assessment conference to determine an instructional reading level. Once an instructional reading level has been established, teachers can work with students in small guided reading groups or conduct one-on-one reading conferences. Progress monitoring will occur both formally using NSGRA during the pre-determined windows of administration (fall, winter, spring) and informally using running records during administration of small guided reading groups and one-on-one conferences.

Grade 1 Reporting

Student progress at grade one is reported on progress reports and report cards for the core academic subjects of English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and all support areas (physical education, art, music, and computer). Next Step Graded Reading Assessment (NSGRA) reading level and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results will be reported to parents. The following codes are used to report student progress on the standards:

- M = met
- P = progressing
- BG = beginning
- N = not met
- / = not introduced

Special Education

Students will be instructed and graded on grade level with the accommodations outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), unless modified by their IEP.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Teachers are encouraged to maintain high expectations for student learning and should accommodate and adapt lessons and assignments so that English Language Learners (ELLs) can progress. However, a student may not be assigned a failing grade in a content area on the basis of lack of English language proficiency. Appropriate grading should be based upon appropriate instructional accommodations.

Elementary



Grading

Grades 2-5 Reporting

Student progress at the elementary level is reported on progress reports, interim reports, and report cards for the core academic subjects of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Next Step Graded Reading Assessment (NSGRA) reading level and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results will be reported to parents. The following grade codes that align with the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy are used:

- A 90 - 100
- B 80 - 89
- C 70 - 79
- D 60 - 69
- F 59 and below

Grades for assignments are based on mastery of South Carolina Academic Standards. Numerical grades are an average of the student's work. Grades for elementary students are entered in the teacher's grade book using percentage points. These percentages are averaged in the grade book to determine the report card letter grade. Teachers will update a minimum of one grade per week in PowerTeacher Gradebook.

Weight of Grades

Major – 40% (required 3-6 per quarter)	Minor – 60% (minimum of 6 per quarter)
Major assessment of the mastery of standards. Includes assessments such as: mastery assessments (oral, written, and/or performance), summative presentations, demonstrations of proficiency, portfolios, formal/final draft writing assignments, on demand writing, summative large projects, major/formal labs, and major performances.	Minor assessments of mastery of standards such as quizzes, classwork, homework, interactive notebooks, journals, exit slips, and quick writes. Note: Spelling checks, vocabulary checks, and math fluency checks are considered minor assessments and should be recorded in the minor category.

Visual and Performing Arts, Health and Safety, and Physical Education

Student progress on the South Carolina Academic Standards for Visual and Performing Arts, the South Carolina Health and Safety Academic Standards, and South Carolina Academic Standards for Physical Education in grades 2-5 is based on the required number of grades (9) reported by the following grading categories:

- M = met
- P = progressing
- BG = beginning
- N = not met

Related arts, health and safety, and physical education teachers will input one grade each quarter which is the final grade for the quarter. Related arts grades will be reflective of mastery of the following academic standards:

- Art and Music - South Carolina Academic Standards for Visual and Performing Arts
- Physical Education – South Carolina Academic Standards for Physical Education
- Health and Safety - South Carolina Health and Safety Academic Standards

Special Education

Students will be instructed and graded on grade level with the accommodations outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), unless modified by their IEP.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Teachers are encouraged to maintain high expectations for student learning and should accommodate and adapt lessons and assignments so that English Language Learners (ELLs) can progress. However, a student may not be assigned a failing grade in a content area on the basis of lack of English language proficiency. Appropriate grading should be based upon appropriate instructional accommodations.

Minor Assessment

The goal of a minor assessment is to *monitor student learning* in order to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. More specifically, minor assessments:

- help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work
- help faculty recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately

Minor assessments are generally *low stakes*, which means they have low or no point value. Examples of minor assessments include asking students to:

- draw a concept map in class to represent their understanding of a topic
- submit one or two sentences identifying the main point of a lesson
- turn in a research proposal for early feedback
- exit slip
- journal
- quick writes
- spelling, vocabulary, math fluency checks

Major Assessment

The goal of major assessment is to *evaluate student learning* at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Major assessments are often *high stakes*, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include:

- a test
- a final project
- a research paper
- a demonstration of proficiency
- final writing
- portfolio

Common Assessments

Common assessments are developed to inform instruction by measuring students' level of mastery and identifying concepts or skills which require re-teaching. Two to three common assessments will be administered per quarter per core content area on power/major standards. The grade will be recorded and the reteach/reassess option will be applied.

Homework

Homework provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge, skills, and processes from previous learning to display their understanding. Homework should be considered extended learning opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of concepts taught. Homework can be a necessary part of the instructional process that begins in the classroom, extends into the home, and provides a way for parents/guardians to become aware of the instructional program and their student's educational program. Sumter School District Policy IKB States that homework should be assigned as reinforcement to classroom instruction by providing time for practice and application of knowledge. Additionally, because homework can be used as a tool to aid in the development of positive behavioral traits such as self-discipline and intellectual independence, homework should be an expectation on all grade levels.

Homework assignments should be meaningful, relevant to the current lesson, carefully planned, and differentiated. Differentiated homework can provide a great opportunity for students to master missing skills, extend content, challenge advanced learners, and link applications of content to student interests.

Students should be assigned homework on a regular basis to reflect the following purposes:

- reinforce and supplement classroom learning experiences
- encourage accountability and responsibility
- foster student initiative and independence
- enable the successful completion of more curricular material
- reinforce home-school interaction
- extend the learning environment into the reality of the outside world
- should not be assigned for disciplinary reasons

Elementary level homework guidelines:

- Homework should be 10 minutes per night in the first grade, and an additional 10 minutes per grade level thereafter
- Homework will be checked and feedback given to students
- Homework will be formative in nature and no grade will be recorded in PowerSchool.

Extra Credit

Providing extra credit opportunities is not a research-based best practice. Sumter School District provides students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery over time through reteach/retest and other methods, when necessary.

Transfer Students

Transfer information is addressed in the uniform grading policy.

Reteach/Retake Opportunity

Students scoring below 60% on an assessment in the major grading category must be given an opportunity to be retaught and reassessed. A student who fails an assessment in the major category will be given one more opportunity to earn a passing grade on the same grade level standards after re-teaching has been provided. The teacher will determine, based on the circumstances, if a student should retake the entire assessment, a portion of the assessment, or an alternative assessment on the same grade level standards. The student will receive the higher of the two scores (original assessment grade v. re-assessment grade) not to exceed a passing grade of 60.

Communicating Progress

During each nine weeks grading period:

Online Record: PowerSchool Gradebook Portal

- Teachers will publish updated grades weekly to the portal (minimum of one grade per subject area) to keep students and parents informed of ongoing progress.
 - Principal or designee will monitor gradebooks weekly.
- Parents/guardians may also access student progress information through the student/parent PowerSchool Parent portal.
 - **Appendix C: PowerSchool Parent Acceptable Use Policy**
 - **Appendix D: Public Portal Parent Access Request Form**
 - Parents may access the portal by logging on to <https://powerschool.sumterschools.net/public/home.html>
 - Parents/guardians may contact the school for additional access information.
- Individual Student Reports will be printed from the portal and sent home to parents:
 - Progress report at 2 ¼ week mark (2 – 4 grades included)
 - Interim report at 4 ½ week mark (4 – 8 grades included)
 - Progress report at 6 ¾ week mark (6 – 11 grades included)
 - Report card at 9 week mark (9 or more grades included)
- Individual Progress Reporting Calendar
 - 9/20/17 – Interims
 - 11/10/17 – Report Cards
 - 12/01/17 – Interims

- 01/29/18 – Report Cards
- 02/21/18 – Interims
- 03/31/18 – Report Cards
- 04/10/18 – Interims
- 06/07/18 - Report Cards

Send D/F letters to parents at the end of the 1st Semester and at the end of the 3rd Quarter.

Make Up Work

In order to provide the total assessment "picture" of a student's academic progress a student missing classroom instruction should be given the opportunity to make up the missing assigned work. This will ensure instructional continuity and place importance upon consistent attendance and daily study. Students shall be permitted to make up assignments and tests following any absence.

Makeup Work Guidelines:

- Makeup work is available to all students.
- When students are absent, a zero will be recorded by the teacher until the student completes his/her makeup assignments.
- The zero is averaged by PowerSchool until the teacher updates the electronic gradebook after the student submits makeup assignments.
- A student should not, on the day of returning to school, be required to take a quiz or test that was announced during his/her absence.
- Makeup work, including tests, may be an alternate version to assess what the student has learned.
- Missed assignments must be turned in by the next grade progress report.
- Extenuating circumstances are at the discretion of the school.

Middle Level Grading Procedures Grades 6 through 8



Grade Reporting

Student progress at the middle level is reported on progress reports, interim reports, and report cards. All nine-week averages will be calculated on a percentage system for each type (category) of assignment. Grades for assignments will be based on mastery of South Carolina Standards. Each department will communicate grading expectations to students and parents via the class syllabus with the categories listed below. Middle school students taking high school credit courses will be graded on high school procedures for categories and weights. Teachers will update a minimum of two grades per week and a minimum of three major grades per quarter in PowerTeacher Gradebook. In addition, the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results will be reported to parents.

The following grade codes that align with the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy are used:

- A 90 - 100
- B 80 - 89
- C 70 - 79
- D 60 - 69
- F 59 and below

Weight of Grades

Major – 40%	Minor – 50%	Homework – 10%
Major assessment of the mastery of standards. Includes assessments such as: mastery assessments (oral, written, and/or performance), major/formal labs, major presentations, summative presentations, demonstrations of proficiency, portfolios, formal/final draft writing assignments, on demand writing, summative large projects, major/formal labs, and major performances.	Minor assessment of mastery of standards such as quizzes, classwork, homework, interactive notebooks, journals, exit slips, and quick writes, fluency checks, vocabulary checks	See homework guidelines

Appropriate adjustments may be made for schools on A/B schedules.

Dressing Out (Physical Education)

Wear appropriate tennis shoes and socks, shirt, shorts that fit dress code, warm-up pants/sweat pants in school colors or school PE uniform. No leggings/jeggings.

Special Education

Students will be instructed and graded on grade level with the accommodations outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), unless modified by their IEP.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Teachers are encouraged to maintain high expectations for student learning and should accommodate and adapt lessons and assignments so that English Language Learners (ELLs) can progress. However, a student may not be assigned a failing grade in a content area on the basis of lack of English language proficiency. Appropriate grading should be based upon appropriate instructional accommodations.

Minor Assessment

The goal of minor assessment is to *monitor student learning* in order to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. More specifically, formative assessments:

- help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work
- help faculty recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately

Minor assessments are generally *low stakes*, which means they have low or no point value. Examples of formative assessments include asking students to:

- draw a concept map in class to represent their understanding of a topic
- submit one or two sentences identifying the main point of a lecture
- turn in a research proposal for early feedback

Major Assessment

The goal of major assessment is to *evaluate student learning* at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often *high stakes*, which means they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include:

- a midterm exam
- a final project
- a research paper
- a senior recital

Benchmark Assessments

Benchmark assessments are a school option. They were developed to inform instruction by measuring students' level of mastery and identifying concepts or skills which require re-teaching. If needed, re-teaching will occur for non-mastered indicators and students may then be re-assessed on those individual indicators. No grade will be recorded.

Common Assessments

School level common assessments will be given each quarter for each core content area on power/major standards which are embedded in the curriculum. The grade will be recorded and the reteach/reassess option will be applied.

Homework

Homework should be assigned as reinforcement to classroom instruction by providing time for practice and application of knowledge. Additionally, because homework can be used as a tool to aid in the development of positive behavioral traits such as self-discipline and intellectual independence, homework should be an expectation on all grade levels.

Homework assignments should be meaningful, relevant to the current lesson, carefully planned, and differentiated. Differentiated homework can provide a great opportunity for students to master missing skills, extend content, challenge advanced learners, and link applications of content to student interests.

Students should be assigned homework on a regular basis to reflect the following purposes:

- reinforce and supplement classroom learning experiences
- encourage accountability and responsibility
- foster student initiative and independence
- enable the successful completion of more curricular material
- reinforce home-school interaction
- extend the learning environment into the reality of the outside world
- Homework should not be assigned for disciplinary reasons.

Homework provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge, skills, and processes from previous learning to display their understanding. Homework should be considered extended learning opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of concepts taught. Homework can be a necessary part of the instructional process that begins in the classroom, extends into the home, and provides a way for parents/guardians to become aware of the instructional program and their student's educational program. Homework should never be a disciplinary measure, but should be used to enrich and strengthen classroom experiences.

Middle level homework guidelines:

- Homework **for all subjects combined** should not exceed 8 hours per week for grades 6th – 8th
- Graded assignments should be returned to the students in a timely manner.
- Homework will be recorded in PowerSchool and be averaged as 10% of the nine weeks grade.

Extra Credit

Providing extra credit opportunities is not a research-based best practice. Sumter School District provides students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery over time through reteach/retest and other methods, when necessary.

Transfer Students

Transfer information will be addressed in the uniform grading policy.

Reteach/Retake Opportunity

Students scoring below 60 on an assessment in the major grading category must be given an opportunity to be retaught and reassessed. A student who fails an assessment in the major category will be given one additional opportunity to earn a passing grade on the same grade level standards after re-teaching has been provided. The teacher will determine, based on the circumstances, if a student should retake the entire assessment, a portion of the assessment, or an alternative assessment on the same grade level standards. The student will receive the higher of the two scores (original assessment grade v. re-assessment grade) not to exceed a passing grade of 60.

Make-up Work

In order to provide the total assessment "picture" of a student's academic progress for a course, any student missing classroom instruction should be given the opportunity to make up the missing assigned work. This will ensure instructional continuity and place importance upon consistent attendance and daily study. Students shall be permitted to make up assignments and tests following any absence.

Makeup Work Guidelines:

- Makeup work is available to all students.
- Students are responsible for asking teachers for the makeup work upon returning to class.
- When students are absent, a zero will be recorded by the teacher until the student completes his/her makeup assignments.
- The zero is averaged by PowerSchool until the teacher updates the electronic gradebook after the student submits makeup assignments.
- A student should not, on the day of returning to school, be required to take a quiz or test that was announced during his/her absence.
- Makeup work, including tests, may be an alternate version to assess what the student has learned.
- Missed assignments must be turned in by the next grade progress report.
- Extenuating circumstances are at the discretion of the school.

Recording and Communicating Progress

During each nine weeks grading period:

Online Record: PowerSchool Gradebook Portal

- Teachers will publish updated grades weekly to the portal (minimum of two grades per subject area) to keep students and parents informed of ongoing progress.
 - Principal or designee will monitor gradebooks weekly.
- Parents/guardians may also access student progress information through the student/parent PowerSchool Parent portal.
 - **Appendix C: PowerSchool Parent Acceptable Use Policy**
 - **Appendix D: Public Portal Parent Access Request Form**
 - Parents may access the portal by logging on to <https://powerschool.sumterschools.net/public/home.html>
 - Parents/guardians may contact the school for additional access information.

- Individual Student will be printed from the portal and sent home to parents:
 - Progress report at 2 week mark (minimum of 4 grades included)
 - Interim report at 4 week mark (minimum of 8 grades included)
 - Progress report at 6 week mark (minimum of 12 grades included)
 - Report card at 9 week mark (minimum of 18 grades included)

- Individual Progress Reporting Calendar
 - 9/20/17 – Interims
 - 11/10/17 – Report Cards
 - 12/01/17 – Interims
 - 01/29/18 – Report Cards
 - 02/21/18 – Interims
 - 03/31/18 – Report Cards
 - 04/10/18 - Interims
 - 06/07/18 - Report Cards

- Send D/F letters to parents at the end of the 1st Semester and at the end of the 3rd Quarter.

High School Grading Procedures



Grade Reporting

All nine-week averages shall be calculated on a percentage system for each type (category) of assignment. Grades for assignments will be based on mastery of South Carolina Standards. Each department will communicate grading expectations to students and parents via the class syllabus with two categories listed below. Teachers will update a minimum of two grades per week and a minimum of three major (summative) grades per quarter in PowerTeacher Gradebook.

Weight of Grades

Major (Summative) – 60%	Minor (Formative) – 40%
Summative assessment of the mastery of standards. Includes assessments such as: mastery assessments (oral, written, and/or performance), summative presentations, demonstrations of proficiency, portfolios, formal/final draft writing assignments, on demand writing, summative large projects, major/formal labs, and major performances.	Formative assessment of mastery of standards such as quizzes, classwork, homework, interactive notebooks, journals, exit slips, and quick writes

AP/IB classes will continue to follow the program requirements for grading. Dual enrollment is based on the college criteria.

Special Education

Students will be instructed and graded on grade level with the accommodations outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), unless modified by their IEP.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Teachers are encouraged to maintain high expectations for student learning and should accommodate and adapt lessons and assignments so that English Language Learners (ELLs) can progress. However, a student may not be assigned a failing grade in a content area on the basis of lack of English language proficiency. Appropriate grading should be based upon appropriate instructional accommodations.

Formative Assessment

The goal of formative assessment is to *monitor student learning* to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. More specifically, formative assessments:

- help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work
- help faculty recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately

Formative assessments are generally *low stakes*, which means that they have low or no point value.

Examples of formative assessments include asking students to:

- draw a concept map in class to represent their understanding of a topic
- submit one or two sentences identifying the main point of a lecture
- turn in a research proposal for early feedback

Summative Assessment

The goal of summative assessment is to *evaluate student learning* at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.

Summative assessments are often *high stakes*, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include:

- a midterm exam
- a final project
- a research paper
- a senior recital

Benchmark Assessments

Benchmark assessments are a school option. They were developed to inform instruction by measuring students' level of mastery and identifying concepts or skills which require re-teaching. If needed, re-teaching will occur for non-mastered indicators and students may then be re-assessed on those individual indicators. No grade will be recorded.

Common Assessments

School level common assessments will be given each quarter for each core content area on power/major standards which are embedded in the curriculum. The grade will be recorded and the reteach/reassess option will be applied.

Homework

Homework provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge, skills, and processes from previous learning to display their understanding. Homework should be considered extended learning opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of concepts taught. Homework can be a necessary part of the instructional process that begins in the classroom, extends into the home, and provides a way for parents/guardians to become aware of the instructional program and their student's educational program. In order to ensure that homework practices are efficient and effective, consideration for the amount of time per night an average student should expect to spend on homework for all subjects combined, based on the research, should include the following:

- Homework should not exceed 10 hours per week in ninth through twelfth grades.
- Homework should never be a disciplinary measure but should be used to enrich and strengthen classroom experiences final project
- Homework will be recorded as a Minor/Formative grade.
- Exceptions may apply for special projects and advanced academics. If a student chooses to participate in AP, Pre-AP, or Dual Credit classes, additional homework time may be required.

Grading Homework

Homework should be assigned as reinforcement to classroom instruction by providing time for practice and application of knowledge. Additionally, because homework can be used as a tool to aid in the development of positive behavioral traits such as self-discipline and intellectual independence, homework should be an expectation on all grade levels.

Homework assignments should be meaningful, relevant to the current lesson, carefully planned, and differentiated. Differentiated homework can provide a great opportunity for students to master missing skills, extend content, challenge advanced learners, and link applications of content to student interests.

Students should be assigned homework on a regular basis to reflect the following purposes:

- Reinforce and supplement classroom learning experiences
- Encourage accountability and responsibility
- foster student initiative and independence
- enable the successful completion of more curricular material
- reinforce home-school interaction
- extend the learning environment into the reality of the outside world
- should not be assigned for disciplinary reasons

Graded assignments should be returned to the student in a timely manner.

Extra Credit

Providing extra credit opportunities is not a research-based best practice. Sumter School District provides students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery over time through reteach/retest and other methods, when necessary.

Transfer Students

Transfer information will be addressed in the uniform grading policy.

Make-up Work

In order to provide the total assessment "picture" of a student's academic progress for a course, any student missing classroom instruction should be given the opportunity to make up the missing assigned work. This will ensure instructional continuity and place importance upon consistent attendance and daily study. Students will be permitted to make up assignments and tests following any absence.

Makeup Work Guidelines:

- Makeup work is available to all students.
- Students are responsible for asking teachers for the makeup work upon returning to class.
- When students are absent, a zero will be recorded by the teacher until the student completes his/her makeup assignments.
- The zero is averaged by PowerSchool until the teacher updates the electronic gradebook after the student submits makeup assignments.
- A student should not, on the day of returning to school, be required to take a quiz or test that was announced during his/her absence.
- Makeup work, including tests, may be an alternate version to assess what the student has learned.
- Missed assignments must be turned in by the next grade progress report.

- Extenuating circumstances are at the discretion of the school.

Communicating Progress

During each 9 weeks grading period:

Online Record: PowerSchool Gradebook Portal

- Teachers will publish updated grades weekly to the portal (minimum of two grades per subject area) to keep students and parents informed of ongoing progress.
 - Each nine week period there should be at least 3 major grades.
 - Principal or designee will monitor gradebooks weekly.
- Parents/guardians may also access student progress information through the student/parent PowerSchool Parent portal.
 - **Appendix C: PowerSchool Parent Acceptable Use Policy**
 - **Appendix D: Public Portal Parent Access Request Form**
 - Parents may access the portal by logging on to <https://powerschool.sumterschools.net/public/home.html>
 - Parents/guardians may contact the school for additional access information.
- Individual Student Reports will be printed from the portal and sent home to parents:
 - Progress report at 3 week mark (minimum of 6 grades included)
 - Interim report at 6 week mark (minimum of 12 grades included)
 - Report card at 9 week mark (minimum of 18 grades included)

Reteach/Retake Opportunity

Students scoring below 60 on an assessment in the major grading category must be given an opportunity to be retaught and reassessed. The student who fails an assessment in the major category will be given one more opportunity to earn a passing grade on the same grade level standards after re-teaching has been provided. The teacher will determine, based on the circumstances, if a student should retake the entire assessment, a portion of the assessment, or an alternative assessment on the same grade level standards. The student will receive the higher of the two scores (original assessment grade v. re-assessment grade) not to exceed a passing grade of 60. (Exclusions: EOC tests and final examinations).

Final Examination Exemption Policy

Underclassman must have an 80 or above to exempt final exams. Seniors must have a 60 or above to exempt final exams.

Appendix A: Board Policy: GRADING/ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Purpose: To establish the board's vision for grading and assessment of student academic progress.

Students respond more positively to the opportunity for success than to the threat of failure. The district seeks, therefore, through learner objectives and its instructional program, to make achievement both recognizable and possible for students. The district should emphasize achievement in its process of evaluating student performance.

Regularly issued report cards, combined with scheduled parent-teacher conferences, serve to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance. This process informs students and their parent/legal guardian and provides a basis for bringing about change in student performance if such change seems necessary.

Statewide Uniform Grading Scale

The school will follow the statewide uniform grading scale as approved by the State Board of Education. This uniform grading scale and the system for calculating grade point averages (GPAs) and class rank will apply to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle/junior high school level.

The uniform grading scale is as follows:

A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69
F	59 and below

All report cards and transcripts will use numerical grades for courses carrying Carnegie units. Cf. IKAB, IKC, IKF

Adopted 9/26/11; Revised 6/13/16

Appendix B: Administrative Rule: Grading/Assessment Systems

Grading Scales

Kindergarten and grade one

Student progress in kindergarten and grade one is reported for all subjects and all support areas (physical education, art, music, and computer) as follows:

- M = met
- P = progressing
- BG = beginning
- N = not met
- / = not introduced

Kindergarten and grade one teachers may recommend retention of students who are not developmentally ready to matriculate to the next grade. The principal and teacher will meet with the parent/legal guardian to discuss the retention and provide documentation of the student's progress.

Grades one through five

Student progress in grades one through five is reported for all subjects as follows:

Letter Grade	Numerical Average
A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69
F	Below 60

Student progress in grades two through five is reported for all support areas (physical education, art, music, and computer) as follows:

- M = met
- P = progressing
- BG = beginning
- N = not met

Promotion decisions for students in grades two through five may consider the state-identified grade level test in determining promotion, acceleration, or retention. *Grades six through 12*

Grades six through 12

Student progress in grades six through 12 is reported for all subjects as follows:

Letter Grade	Numerical Average
A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69
F	Below 60

State Uniform Grading Scale (Grades Nine through 12)

Numerical breaks for letter grades, weightings for specified courses, and a conversion chart for computing grade point ratios follow:

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions				
Numerical Average	Letter Grade	College Prep Weighting	Honors Weighting	AP/IB/Dual Credit Weighting
100	A	5.000	5.500	6.000
99	A	4.900	5.400	5.900
98	A	4.800	5.300	5.800
97	A	4.700	5.200	5.700
96	A	4.600	5.100	5.600
95	A	4.500	5.000	5.500
94	A	4.400	4.900	5.400
93	A	4.300	4.800	5.300
92	A	4.200	4.700	5.200
91	A	4.100	4.600	5.100
90	A	4.000	4.500	5.000
89	B	3.900	4.400	4.900
88	B	3.800	4.300	4.800
87	B	3.700	4.200	4.700
86	B	3.600	4.100	4.600
85	B	3.500	4.000	4.500
84	B	3.400	3.900	4.400
83	B	3.300	3.800	4.300
82	B	3.200	3.700	4.200
81	B	3.100	3.600	4.100
80	B	3.000	3.500	4.000
79	C	2.900	3.400	3.900
78	C	2.800	3.300	3.800
77	C	2.700	3.200	3.700
76	C	2.600	3.100	3.600
75	C	2.500	3.000	3.500
74	C	2.400	2.900	3.400
73	C	2.300	2.800	3.300
72	C	2.200	2.700	3.200
71	C	2.100	2.600	3.100
70	C	2.000	2.500	3.000

69	D	1.900	2.400	2.900
68	D	1.800	2.300	2.800
67	D	1.700	2.200	2.700
66	D	1.600	2.100	2.600
65	D	1.500	2.000	2.500
64	D	1.400	1.900	2.400
63	D	1.300	1.800	2.300
62	D	1.200	1.700	2.200
61	D	1.100	1.600	2.100
60	D	1.000	1.500	2.000
59	F	0.900	1.400	1.900
58	F	0.800	1.300	1.800
57	F	0.700	1.200	1.700
56	F	0.600	1.100	1.600
55	F	0.500	1.000	1.500
54	F	0.400	0.900	1.400
53	F	0.300	0.800	1.300
52	F	0.200	0.700	1.200
51	F	0.100	0.600	1.100
0-50	F	0.000	0.000	0.000
WF	F	0.000	0.000	0.000
WP	-	0.000	0.000	0.000

Conversion Process

All report cards and transcripts will use numerical grades for courses carrying Carnegie units. Transcripts and report cards will show course title and level/type of course taken. The grading scale must be printed on the report card.

When transcripts are received from accredited out-of-state schools (or in-state from accredited sources other than the public schools) and numerical averages are provided, those averages must be used in transferring the grades to the student's record. If letter grades with no numerical averages are provided, the following equivalents will be used to transfer the grades into the student's record:

- A = 95
- B = 85
- C = 75
- D = 65
- F = 50

If the transcript indicates that the student has earned a passing grade in any course with a numerical average lower than 60, the average will be converted to a 65 numerical grade.

If the transcript shows that the student has earned a grade of "P" (passing) or "F" (failing), that grade will be converted to a numerical grade based upon information secured from the sending institution as to the approximate numerical value of the "P" or the "F."

If no numerical average can be obtained from the sending institution, the receiving school will calculate the student's cumulative transfer GPA and the corresponding number equivalent will be assigned to replace the "P."

If no numerical average can be obtained from the sending institution on the "F," the grade entered will

be a 50.

The district will consider a student's transcript along with additional supporting evidence such as course syllabi, lesson plans, schedules, textbooks, or other instructional resources to validate course credits from homeschools.

For international students, the district will attempt to gather as much course information from the sending school including course syllabi, standards end of course assessment results, or other instructional resources to determine the course credits that are the best match.

End-of-Course Testing and the Credit Recovery Option

In courses requiring state end-of-course testing, the district will apply the mandatory 20 percent weighting of the end-of-course test to the student's final grade. The student will be allowed to take the examination only once, at the end of the regular course duration and not at the end of an extended period granted through the credit recovery option. The school will treat students who repeat the course as though they were taking the course for the first time and all requirements will apply.

Honors Courses

Honors courses are intended for students exhibiting superior abilities in the particular course content area. The honors curriculum places emphasis on critical and analytical thinking, rational decision-making, and inductive and deductive reasoning. Honors courses should not encourage a student to graduate early, but should extend course opportunities at the high school level.

The district may designate honors courses and give the assigned weighting under the following conditions:

- An honors course must have curriculum that extends, accelerates, and enriches the College Preparatory (CP) course study in rigor, complexity, challenges, and creativity as outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.
- Instructional practices for advanced learners must demonstrate appropriate differentiation that will enhance the delivery of instruction while strengthening the components outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.
- Assessments must align with the honors level curriculum and instructional best practices, to include pre-assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment.

One-half of a quality point (.5) will be added to the CP weighting for honors courses that meet all three criteria listed above. These criteria apply to all courses, including those offered online and in other nontraditional settings as well as those recorded on a transcript from an out-of-state-school accredited under the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency. This is applicable even if the district does not offer the course being transferred.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses

The following criteria apply to the College Board's AP courses and to IB courses, including those offered online and in other nontraditional settings as well as those recorded on a transcript from an out-of-state-school accredited under the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency:

- Only AP or IB courses can be awarded a full quality point above the CP weighting. Seminar or support courses for AP or IB may be weighted as honors but not as AP or IB courses.
- An AP course can carry only one credit with the quality point above the CP weighting.
 - A standard-level (SL) IB course can carry only one quality point weighting per course. However, two quality points of IB credit can be granted for higher-level (HL) courses in the IB program that require a minimum of 240 hours of instruction.

Dual Credit Courses

Dual credit courses, whether the course is taken at the school site where the student is enrolled or at a post-secondary institution, are defined as those courses for which the student has received permission from his/her home school to earn both Carnegie units and credit for those particular courses. One quality point will be added to the CP weighting for dual credit courses that are applicable to baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, or certification programs that lead to an industry credential offered by accredited institutions.

College orientation classes for dual credit will be weighted as CP.

All dual credit courses earned in South Carolina should be transcribed with the 1.0 quality point weight when the student transfers to a new school. Dual credit courses earned out of state may or may not carry quality point weightings. When a student transfers, the weight applied at the sending institution according to that state's regulations will be applied to the student's transcript. The district will not change the weight of a dual credit course to match South Carolina's process.

High School Credit for Middle School

When approved by the principal and parents/legal guardian, a student promoted to the seventh or eighth grade who has demonstrated data-supported evidence of superior and/or gifted achievement may be permitted to earn Carnegie units of credit to be counted toward high school graduation prior to enrollment at the ninth grade level. The following will govern the granting of units of credit at the middle school level.

- A middle school student may only complete high school courses that are offered onsite in their current middle school building. These courses are limited to core, career and technology education and foreign language courses that are currently in the 9-12 sections of the *Activity Coding System* from the *Student Information System*. The courses must reflect full coverage of the standards associated with the high school course. Students taking courses for high school credit must have been taught and mastered the middle level school standards prior to taking the courses for high school credit.
- A student in the seventh or eighth grade may be awarded credit for high school courses completed at the middle school level. Credits may be awarded in 1/2 and 1 unit increments dependent upon the course.
- A student will be awarded one unweighted credit for each high school English and/or mathematics course successfully completed during middle school.
- A student in the eighth grade will be awarded 1/2 high school credit for successfully completing the computer applications course at the middle school level.

- Courses for which a student received credit toward his/her school graduation will become part of the student's high school transcript and will be included in calculations of the high school grade point ratio and class rank.
- A student who transfers to Sumter School District from an accredited school will be allowed to transfer credits which the student has been awarded. The courses will become part of the student's high school transcript and will be included in calculations of high school grade point ratio and class rank.
- Middle schools may offer credit-bearing courses that are approved by the superintendent or his/her designee.

Please see board policy JH, Student Absences and Excuses, and its accompanying administrative rule regarding required student attendance for Carnegie Unit credit.

Grade Point Averages (GPA)

The uniform grading scale and system for figuring GPA and class rank will apply to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle/junior high school level.

As applicable, the district will recalculate GPAs already earned by students based on the three-decimal-point scale as outlined in this administrative rule.

Grade point averages will be figured uniformly in all schools using the following formula. The formula will yield each student's GPA which can then be ranked from highest to lowest rank in class. Computations will not be rounded to a higher number. All diploma candidates are included in the ranking.

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{sum (quality points x units)}}{\text{sum of units attempted}}$$

The board will determine the criteria for determining honor graduates, to include valedictorian or salutatorian, and may establish earlier cutoffs (e.g., the seventh semester of high school, the third nine weeks of the senior year) when determining a rank for any local purpose. However, class rank for LIFE Scholarships is determined at the conclusion of the spring semester of the senior year.

Course Withdrawals

With the first day of enrollment as the baseline, students who withdraw from a course within three days in a 45-day course, five days in a 90-day course, or 10 days in a 180-day course will do so without penalty.

Students who withdraw from a course after the specified time of three days in a 45-day course, five days in a 90-day course, or 10 days in a 180-day course will be assigned a WF and the F (as a 50) will be calculated in the student's overall grade point average.

The three, five, and 10-day limitations for withdrawing from a course without penalty do not apply to course or course level changes approved by the administration of a school. The district will establish withdrawal limitations for distance learning courses.

Students who drop out of school or are expelled after the allowed period for withdrawal but before the end of the grading period will be assigned grades in accordance with the following:

- The student will receive a WP if he/she was passing the course. The grade of WP will carry no Carnegie units and no quality points to be factored into the student's GPA.
- The student will receive a WF if he/she was failing the course. The grade of WF will carry no Carnegie units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 50.

If a student fails a course due to excessive absences and is unable to successfully make up the work or demonstrate proficiency in the course, the school will record an FA on his/her transcript. The grade of FA will carry no Carnegie units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 50.

Retaking Courses

Students in grades nine through 12 may retake a course at the same level of difficulty if they earned a D or F in that course. The student's record will reflect all courses taken and the grades earned. However, only once course attempt and the highest grade earned for the course will be calculated in the GPA.

The student may retake the course either during the current school year or during the next school year but no later than that second year. In addition, the student must retake the course before he/she has enrolled in the next sequential course (unless granted approval by the school administration to do so).

A student who has taken a course for a Carnegie unit prior to his/her ninth grade year may retake that course regardless of the grade earned. A student who retakes a high school credit course from middle school must complete it before the beginning of the second year of high school. In this case, only the highest grade will be used in figuring the student's GPA.

Issued 7/1/13; Revised 6/13/16, 6/5/17

Appendix C: District Policies: IKB Homework Policy

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for the assignment of homework to students.

Homework should be assigned as reinforcement to classroom instruction by providing time for practice and application of knowledge. Additionally, because homework can be used as a tool to aid in the development of positive behavioral traits such as self-discipline and intellectual independence, homework should be an expectation on all grade levels.

Homework assignments should be meaningful, relevant to the current lesson, carefully planned and differentiated. Differentiated homework can provide a great opportunity for students to master missing skills, extend content, challenge advanced learners and link applications of content to student interests.

Students should be assigned homework on a regular basis to reflect the following purposes.

- Reinforce and supplement classroom learning experiences.
- Encourage accountability and responsibility.
- Foster student initiative and independence.
- Enable the successful completion of more curricular material.
- Reinforce home-school interaction.
- Extend the learning environment into the reality of the outside world.

Homework should not be assigned for disciplinary reasons.

Adopted 9/26/11

Appendix D: District Policies: IKE: Promotion and Retention of Students

The district affirms academic excellence for students. This promotion and retention policy describes the standards our students must meet in order to maintain academic excellence and to be considered for promotion from one grade to the next.

This policy will be applicable to all students who are in the regular school program. Students functioning in special education programs will be governed by their Individual Educational Program (IEP). **English Language Learners (ELLs) will be governed by the South Carolina Department of Education Guidelines which state that a student may not be assigned a failing grade in a content area or be retained at grade level on the basis of lack of English language proficiency.** The district will administer this policy fairly, equitably, and consistently in the schools.

Promotion

Students in grades nine through 12 will be awarded units of credit for courses that have been approved by the South Carolina Department of Education. Requirements for promotion to each grade level are as follows:

- promotion from grade nine to grade 10: a total of five units of credit, including English I and a unit of mathematics
- promotion from grade 10 to grade 11: a total of 11 units of credit, including English I and II; two units of mathematics; and one unit of science
- promotion from grade 11 to grade 12: a total of 17 units of credit, including English I, II, and III; three credits of mathematics; and two credits of science
- high school graduation: a total of 24 total units of credit, including English I, II, III, and IV; four units of mathematics; three units of science, including one in which an end-of-course test is administered; one unit of U.S. History; 1/2 unit of Economics; 1/2 unit of Government; one additional unit of social studies; one unit of physical education; one unit of computer science; and one unit foreign language or occupational specialty

Academic Assistance

When a student is not progressing in core subjects, he/she will be provided appropriate interventions to help the student perform on grade level in identified subjects.

Students who are not substantially demonstrating proficiency in reading will be provided intensive in-class and supplemental reading interventions in accordance with state law and the district reading plan. A literacy assessment portfolio will be developed for each student who is not demonstrating grade-level reading proficiency to provide evidence of a student's progress in the area of literacy and to indicate the intensive instruction and interventions the student has been provided.

Retention

Any decision to retain a student in the same grade level will be made following considerable deliberation and consultation. A student will be retained only when the student has not demonstrated appropriate grade level competencies and the action of retention would be in the best academic interest of the student and will be based on the professional judgment of the school-based instructional personnel, with the ultimate decision made by the principal.

Read to Succeed State-Mandated Retention

A student will be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the year as indicated by a score at the lowest achievement level on the state summative reading assessment. Parents/Legal guardians of each student not demonstrating third-grade reading proficiency will be notified in writing during the second grading period that the student is being considered for retention, and a conference will be held prior to a determination regarding retention.

Students eligible for retention under this requirement may enroll in a summer reading camp provided by the district in an effort to meet the required reading proficiency level prior to being retained.

Parents/Legal guardians may designate another person as an education advocate to act on their behalf to receive notification and to assume the responsibility of promoting the reading success of the child.

Good cause exemptions

A student may be exempt for good cause from mandatory retention but will continue to receive institutional support and services and reading intervention appropriate for their age and reading level. Students who may qualify for an exemption include, but are not limited to those:

- with limited English proficiency and less than two years of instruction in an English as a Second language program
- with disabilities whose IEP indicates the use of alternative assessments or alternative reading interventions, and students with disabilities whose IEP or Section 504 plan reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years but still does not substantially demonstrate reading proficiency
- who demonstrate third-grade reading proficiency on an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education and which teachers may administer following the administration of the state assessment of reading
- who have received two years of reading intervention and were previously retained
- who demonstrate mastery of the state standards in reading equal to at least a level above the lowest achievement level on the state reading assessment through a reading portfolio
- who successfully participate in a summer reading camp at the conclusion of the third grade year and demonstrate through either a reading portfolio or an alternate assessment that the student's mastery of the state standards in reading is equal to at least a level above the lowest level on the state reading assessment

Information to Parents/Legal Guardians

The district will distribute this promotion/retention policy to every student and parent/legal guardian at the beginning of the academic year. The district will also make every effort to educate and inform parents/legal guardians and students of this policy through newsletters, student handbooks, PTO/PTA meetings, etc.

Adopted ^

Legal references:

- A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
 - 1. Section 59-155-160 - South Carolina Read to Succeed Act, Mandatory retention.

- B. State Board of Education Regulations:
 - 1. R43-240 - Summer programs.

- C. South Carolina Department of Education:
 - 1. *Intervention Guidance Document, Kindergarten through Grade Five (2017).*
 - 2. *Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document, Fall 2016 (2016).*

Adopted 9/26/11; Revised 6/5/17

Appendix E: District Administrative Rule: AR IKE-R Promotion, Retention and Acceleration Of Students

Philosophy

We believe each student will be provided maximum opportunities to achieve at least on grade-level competency in reading, mathematics, science and social studies.

The curriculum will enable all students to make continuous progress at each grade level. When the retention of a student is necessary, the decision will be made on the basis of achievement and grade-level competency as measured by state identified tests, attendance record and judgment of educators.

The philosophy of this policy applies to all students who are in the regular school program. Students functioning in the special education programs are governed by their Individual Education Plans (IEP). This policy will be administered fairly, equitably and consistently in the schools. The policy will establish on grade-level mastery of skills as mandated by the state board of education and as identified in the South Carolina standards.

Promotion

Kindergarten and grade one

All kindergarten and grade one students are expected to learn the South Carolina state standards. Students must be recommended for promotion by the classroom teacher based on proficient classroom performance. Kindergarten and grade one retentions are generally not recommended. However, there may be an occasion when formal and informal assessments indicate that a student is not developmentally ready for promotion and would benefit from more time, instruction and nurturing at this level. The teacher will confer with the principal on the retention. A conference must be held with the teacher, principal and parent/legal guardian of the student to discuss the retention. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis involving parent/legal guardian, teacher, principal, and district administrator as needed or indicated.

Elementary level (grades two to five)

Mastery of reading/language arts and mathematics will be based on teacher-made tests, samples of assigned work and grade-level comprehensive tests. In grades two to five, district and/or state identified grade-level tests will be considered in determining promotion, academic probation or retention. In order to be promoted to the next grade level, a student must meet the following criteria.

Reading

Completion and mastery of grade-level reading/language arts standards and a yearly passing average of 60% including teacher-made assessments, culminating assessments and grade-level comprehensive tests.

Mathematics

Completion and mastery of grade-level reading/language arts standards and a yearly passing average of 60% including teacher-made assessments, culminating assessments and grade-level comprehensive tests.

Additional promotion requirements

In addition to mastery of reading and mathematics grade-level standards, students must also maintain an overall passing average in grades two through five science and social studies and meet attendance requirements to be considered for promotion.

Read to Succeed State-Mandated Retention

Early in the school year and/or when a third grade student transfers in to a district or school, parents/legal guardians will be given a general notice regarding the requirements for promotion and retention.

Retention conference

During the second grading period of the third grade, parents/legal guardians of students that are not demonstrating third-grade reading proficiency will be notified in writing that their child is being considered for retention. A parent/teacher conference will be scheduled and held, at which time the conference participants will review the student's intensive instruction and intervention plan. Within two weeks following the parent/teacher conference, copies of the plan will be provided to the principal, parent or legal guardian, teacher, and other school personnel who are working with the child on literacy.

If a parent/legal guardian is unable to attend the conference after two varied attempts at contact, the parent should be mailed a copy of the student's intensive instruction and intervention plan.

An additional parent/teacher conference will be held during the third nine week grading period for students still being considered for retention.

Retention determination

The principal, classroom teacher, and other school personnel who are working with the child on literacy will review the recommendation for retention and provide suggestions for supplemental instruction. Recommendations and observations of the principal, teacher, parent/legal guardian, and other school personnel who are working with the student on literacy will be considered when determining whether to retain the student.

If it is determined that retention is appropriate, the student may be eligible to enroll in a summer reading camp provided by the district. District summer reading camps will be operated in accordance with the guidelines provided by the South Carolina Department of Education. Parents/Legal guardians may elect to opt their child out of participation in summer reading camp, with the understanding that the child will be unable to qualify for a good cause exemption on that ground. Information regarding the summer camp will be provided by the school or requested from the district office.

Good cause exemption determinations

To request an exemption for good cause, the teacher of a student identified as potentially meeting one of the state-approved exemptions will submit documentation to the principal on the proposed exemption and include evidence that promotion of the student is appropriate based on the student's academic record. This evidence will be limited to the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), alternative assessments, or student reading portfolio.

The principal will review the documentation and determine whether the student should be promoted. If the principal determines the student should be promoted, the principal will submit a written recommendation for promotion to the superintendent for final determination.

The superintendent will determine whether a student may be exempted from the mandatory retention policy. The superintendent's acceptance or rejection of the principal's recommendation will be in writing and a copy will be provided to the child's parent/legal guardian.

Good cause exemption determinations for students with disabilities

A third grade student with disabilities will be exempt from the mandatory retention policy if the student is eligible to take a South Carolina alternative assessment and receives instruction aligned to the state's alternative achievement standards, or the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years.

To demonstrate intensive remediation in reading, there must be:

- documentation that the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance have resulted in one or more annual goals and specialized instruction and/or related services in the area of reading for two or more years
- documentation of intensive general education interventions in the area of reading for two or more years
- a combination of special education services and intensive general education intervention in the area of reading for two or more years

Any evidence submitted to document intensive remediation or evidence-based interventions will be in addition to the student's ninety minutes of daily reading and writing instruction as required by law.

Appeal of a retention determination

A parent/legal guardian may appeal the decision to retain a student to the district superintendent if there is a compelling reason why the student should not be retained. To initiate an appeal, the parent/legal guardian must notify the superintendent in writing within two weeks after receiving the notification of the retention decision. The letter must be addressed to the superintendent and must include the reasons why the student should not be retained. The superintendent will render a final, written decision and provide copies to the parent/legal guardian and the principal.

Appointment of an education advocate

Parents/Legal guardians are permitted to designate another person as an education advocate to act on their behalf to receive notification of their child's level of reading proficiency and to assume the responsibility of promoting the reading success of the child. Parents/Legal guardians interested in appointing such an advocate should contact principal in writing to make their request.

Middle level (grades six to eight)

In grades six to eight, performance on the state identified standards will be used to determine promotion, academic probation or retention. Classroom performance will be the major criteria for promotion, although performance on state mandated tests will be considered each year.

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, a student must meet the following criteria.

Reading

Completion and mastery of reading/language arts grade-level standards and a yearly passing average of 60.

Mathematics

Completion and mastery of grade-level standards and a yearly passing average of 60.

Science and social studies

Completion and mastery of social studies grade-level standards and completion and mastery of science grade-level standards and combined yearly passing average of 60 of the two courses.

Other considerations for promotion/placement (grades two to eight)

When overriding the academic standards and the state testing standards for promotion and retention, evidence must be cited and documented. The teachers, parents/legal guardians and other appropriate school related personnel will make the recommendation for the promotion/retention placement when the following factors take precedence over academic and state testing program standards. The principal will make the retention decision. The district promotion/retention committee must review and approve all retention decisions.

Health factors

Students who experience injury, illness and/or other traumatic experiences will be considered on a case-by-case basis for promotion/retention.

Social and emotional maturity

A student's self-control, self-acceptance and the ability to cope with interpersonal relationships may be considered in the promotion/retention process on a case-by-case basis for promotion/retention.

Chronological age and physical factors

Physical maturation and chronological age are factors which may be considered in the promotion/retention process on a case-by-case basis for promotion/retention.

Mental maturity

A student's inability to achieve at grade-level must be considered in determining promotion/retention.

Disabled students

Identified disabled students will be governed by the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Retention will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the principal and the IEP staffing committee.

Consideration for other retention

The teacher of a student being considered for retention must discuss the retention with the principal. They will examine formal and informal evidence of skills and document their findings.

Transfer students

When a student transfers into the district during the school year, information from the student's cumulative record should be considered in conjunction with his/her classroom performance. Additional testing will be conducted if deemed necessary. If the student's achievement level and other standards do not meet the minimum standards, the district will consider retention.

Communication with parents/legal guardians

Kindergarten, elementary and middle levels

The implementation of this policy will require the cooperation of the total school staff. All personnel must understand the policy and establish an open line of communication between the schools and the parents/legal guardians. If a student is encountering difficulty, the teacher will contact the parent/legal guardian and hold a conference. This procedure will assist parents/legal guardians, students and teaching staff to achieve quality education.

The following procedures will be the formal manner in which teachers will notify parents/legal guardians.

- Interim reports will be issued by teachers.
- All students will receive report cards at the end of each marking period.
- Promotion standards progress reports will be mailed to parents/legal guardians of students failing to meet the minimum academic and attendance requirements. Teachers should prepare this form three days prior to the issuance of the second and third quarter report card and give it signed to the principal after making a copy to be kept on file by the teacher. The principal should sign it and mail it to the parents/legal guardians. Since this report requests parents/legal guardians to set up a conference, the teacher's file copy will serve as documentation. When a conference is held, a brief conference summary will be signed by all persons to document the conference.
- Report card comments should indicate to parents/legal guardians any problems students are experiencing in their work and should coincide with the comments made on interims and the promotion standards progress report.

Conference requests

When parents/legal guardians request a conference, the school will schedule the conference. When a conference is held, a brief conference summary will be signed by all persons to document the conference.

Parental notification of retention

A retention letter and the final report card to parents/legal guardians will be the formal procedure to notify parents/legal guardians that their child will be retained. Parents/legal guardians should have received this information throughout the year via the above procedures and informal contacts.

Appeal procedures

Within three days of notification, parents/legal guardians may appeal the retention decision to the principal if there is a compelling reason why the student should not be retained.

If there is no resolution with the principal, an additional appeal may be made in writing within seven days of the notification of retention. This letter should be addressed to the assistant superintendent for school services and should specify the reasons for disagreement with the retention decision. The assistant superintendent for school services will render a decision. Copies of the decision will be sent to the parents/legal guardians and the principal.

Parents/legal guardians of identified disabled students who are enrolled in special education have specific due process rights under federal and state laws for appealing any disputed matter regarding the student's education placement. The appeal must be made in accordance with those laws.

Grades nine through 12 promotion

High school students must earn 24 units of credit within their four years in high school before receiving a South Carolina high school diploma.

To be promoted to grade nine, students must meet the eighth grade requirements.

Promotion to 10th grade means a student earned at least five units of credit, with at least one credit in English and one credit in mathematics.

Promotion to 11th grade means a student earned at least 10 units of credit, with two units in English and two units in mathematics.

Promotion to 12th grade means a student earned at least 17 units of credit, with at least three units of English and be in a position to complete a minimum of 24 units required for graduation by the end of second semester of his/her senior year. Seniors must demonstrate proficiency in keyboarding and computer literacy before graduation. End of course assessments are state mandated for core subjects as part of the regular high school program for all students.

Twelfth grade

No student will be admitted to twelfth grade without meeting the following criteria.

- Successfully completed a minimum of 17 units to include three units of English, three units of math, two units of science, two units of social studies and one unit of another state required course.
- Completed three years of high school attendance.
- Eligible to graduate at the end of the second semester of his/her senior year.

Issued 9/26/11; Revised 1/08/13, 7/15/14, 6/5/17

Appendix F: IKF-R Graduation Requirements

A student must earn 24 units of credit in state-approved courses for graduation.

The unit requirements are distributed as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Credit units</u>
English language arts	4
Mathematics	4
Science	3
U.S. History and Constitution	1
Economics	1/2
US Government	1/2
Other social studies	1
PE or junior ROTC	1
Computer science (including keyboarding)	1
Foreign language or Career and technology education	1
Electives	7
Total	24

The student must pass a classroom examination on the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers and American institutions and ideals. This instruction must be given for a period of at least one year or its equivalent, either within the required course U.S. History and Constitution or within another course.

The student must take the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration test as part of the U.S. government class, provided there is no cost to the school or for administering the test. Students are not required to meet a minimum score.

The student must pass a high school credit course in science and a course in United States history in which an end-of-course examination is administered.

The student must be enrolled for a minimum of one semester immediately preceding his/her graduation except in case of a bona fide change of residence. Units earned in a summer school program do not satisfy this requirement.

The student must earn the required number of prescribed units.

Awarding of high school credit

A school also may award and accept credit towards a high school diploma for the following:

- in units of one-fourth, one-half and a whole; for example, an academic-standards based course that requires a minimum of 120 hours of instruction (one unit), 60 hours of instruction (one-half unit) and 30 hours of instruction (one-fourth unit)
- a course that has been approved by the South Carolina Department of Education in a proficiency-based system
- those gateway courses that are a part of the end-of-course examination program only if the student takes the course approved by the school in which he/she is enrolled and meets all the stipulated requirements of the program

- courses in summer programs that meet all the regulatory requirements for courses offered for students in grades nine through 12
- a course that is approved by the district - whether the school offers the particular course or not - if the student receives prior approval
- a course that the student takes in an approved adult education program if the course is approved by the superintendent or his/her designee
- locally designed subject-area courses, elective courses and CATE courses under conditions as outlined in State Board of Education regulation
- the PE credit if the PE course meets all statutory requirements including the personal fitness and wellness component and the lifetime fitness component
- the one-half unit of credit carried by the keyboarding course for half the required computer science unit
- the American Sign language course as the required unit in a foreign language
- a college course that a student in grades nine through 12 takes under the district's dual credit arrangement

Adult education

For adult education students receiving a diploma, the unit requirements are distributed as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Credit units</u>
English language arts	4
Mathematics	4
Science	3
U.S. History and Constitution	1
Economics	1/2
US Government	1/2
Other social studies	1
Computer science (including keyboarding)	1
Electives	9
Total	24

**Keyboarding may count up to one-half of the computer science requirement.*

A student may transfer credit earned in the adult education program to a secondary school to count towards the units of credit required for a state high school diploma if, for each unit being transferred, the student has spent a minimum of 120 hours in class time in that subject at that level and the teacher was properly certified to teach the course.

High School Credit for College Work

Students in grades nine through 12 and/or adult education programs can earn credits for college course work that can be applied to the required number of units for a state high school diploma.

The following conditions apply:

- Courses may be offered through distance learning and cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education. One quality point will be added to the CP weighting for dual credit courses that are applicable.
- Only courses applicable to baccalaureate degrees or to associate degrees offered by institutions accredited by the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency (the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (AdvancED/SCACS CASI), North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Colleges and Schools or Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools) qualify.
- Tuition costs and any other fees will be the responsibility of the student or his/her parent/legal guardian.

Issued 9/26/11, Revised 6/5/17

Appendix G: Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for allowing and excusing student absences.

The board believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement and that any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. However, the board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

In order to receive credit for a high school course, a student must attend at least 85 days (for a 90-day semester course) or 170 days (for a 180-day year course). The board may grant approval of excessive absences in accordance with board policy.

The state of South Carolina defines truancy as three or more consecutive unexcused absences or five unexcused absences overall. To improve student attendance and reduce truancy, the district will utilize a written intervention plan. The purpose of the plan will be to link students with attendance problems and their families to all appropriate school and community resources.

The board recognizes that truancy is primarily an educational issue and will take all reasonable, educationally sound and corrective actions prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by his/her parent/legal guardian, to school attendance upon his/her return to school. The excuse will contain such other information as directed by the administration. The school administration will keep all excuses confidential.

If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school, he/she will automatically receive an unexcused absence. If a student brings a false (or forged) excuse, the teacher will refer the student to the school administration for appropriate action.

The district will consider students lawfully absent under the following circumstances.

- They are ill and their attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others. The district may excuse these students from attendance as documented by appropriate excuse.
- They are absent for medical/dental appointments as documented by a doctor's excuse.
- There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family as documented by appropriate excuse.
- They are absent for recognized religious holidays of their faith as documented by appropriate excuse.
- They are absent in order to participate in or attend school-sponsored or school-approved activities or functions that have received prior approval from the board or its designee. The district will not allow students more than five such absences in this category during an academic year.
- They are absent for unusual or mitigating circumstances as determined by the school principal.
- A child in foster care may be absent due to a certified court appearance or related court ordered activity including, but not limited to, court ordered treatment services.

In addition, a student whose parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will, upon presentation of appropriate military orders, be granted up to five additional excused absences upon approval by the superintendent or designee to visit with his/her parent or legal guardian.

The district will consider students unlawfully absent under the following circumstances.

- They are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian.
- They are absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian.
- Their reasons for being absent are not within the described provisions of this policy.
- They have presented more than 10 parent notes.

Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes. Only when determining whether to award academic credit may the district consider out of school suspensions as unlawful.

The principal or his/her designee will make any decision relative to the marking of an absence as lawful or unlawful. The district recognizes that there may be some extenuating circumstances, such as doctor or dental appointments that cannot otherwise be scheduled. These generally will be marked as excused and no penalty will be assessed other than such absences as are counted among the total absences allowed for the year.

Should repeated appointments of this nature result in absences greater than allowed to gain credit, an appeal may be made through the principal to the superintendent for an exception to the general rule.

Absences as a result of participation in a school activity out of district

It is recognized that many students participate in school-sponsored organizations or activities which may lead to absences for school related purposes such as competitions, senior trips, band trips, athletic events, ROTC field trips, conventions, etc. There is also the reality of a need/desire to visit an institution of higher education to consider future enrollment.

While such absences may be for worthwhile causes, they nevertheless result in missed instruction, etc. Each principal will have authority to approve allowable absences in this category.

Absences as a result of non-enrollment

Some students are late in enrolling in the fall and others may miss one or more days in transferring from one school to another. This can be significant if the transferring student enrolls from another country and a week or more of absence occurs.

The days of non-enrollment will count as days missed for instruction purposes. Should the number of absences due to non-enrollment plus other absences after enrollment total more than allowable days to receive credit, an appeal may be made as is outlined in this policy.

High school credit

High school students, or students in the middle school taking courses for graduation credit, who are unlawfully absent from a one-half credit course for five or more times or from a full-credit course eight or more times may not be eligible to receive credit unless the board grants approval in accordance with this policy.

Medical homebound instruction

The principal will be responsible for implementing and expediting medical homebound instruction for students experiencing a prolonged or intermittent illness or injury requiring them to be absent from school.

Adopted 9/26/11; Revised 1/27/14

Appendix H: Sumter School District PowerSchool Parent Acceptable Use Policy

PowerSchool will provide you access to your child's grades, attendance, and homework. Please read these guidelines carefully and fill out the "PowerSchool Parent Portal Custody/Identification Form".

Please read the following Acceptable Use Guidelines for PowerSchool:

1. Username and passwords are to be kept confidential.
 - a. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to protect the security of the login and password. Sumter School District accepts no responsibility in the event the username and password is shared, given, stolen, or in any other way, becomes the possession of a person other than the parent/guardian.
 - b. If a username/password is stolen or lost, the parent/guardian can contact the school to have the password changed. The parent/guardian will need to complete the, "Username/Password Request" form posted on the District website or a form can be obtained at your child's school.
2. Only **one** username and password will be issued per student. It is the responsibility of the parent to determine which parent(s) or guardian(s) will be able to access records.
3. The school district does not provide technical support for your home/work computer system. Some helpful documents are posted on the District website for parents to utilize.
4. Users must realize that email and other communications via the Internet are not guaranteed to be private.
5. We will monitor Parent Access to PowerSchool. The Parent Access Log lists date of login, time accessed, and duration of login (in minutes).
6. Parents/guardians should remember that email and other communications over the Internet are not guaranteed to be private and are subject to State and Federal Law.
7. You should follow the following procedures with questions concerning your child's grades or attendance.
 - a. Talk to your child to ask them about their grades or attendance.
 - b. Check the teacher's grading policy. The information on PowerSchool is subject to change. The information posted is not the official Progress Report, Report Card or Student Transcript.
 - c. Please email teachers with your questions concerning grades, but please do not send excessive emails. Remember your child's teacher has many other students that they teach.
 - d. The parent or guardian may request a meeting with the teacher but should request the meeting using your child's school procedures for setting up the meeting.
 - e. You will be able to check grades 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Teachers should post their grades within approximately 7 school days of the date the assignment is due. Some assignments, such as, written reports may take much longer to grade.
 - f. Attendance is taken once a day in the elementary schools and each period at other schools. Attendance is updated as soon as the teacher enters it. If you have a question concerning attendance, please contact the Attendance Office at your child's school.
8. Please remember that Sumter School District is providing this access as a privilege, and if it is abused, the account will be suspended and/or terminated.
9. Sumter School District is not liable for any damages to my personal equipment when connected to the PowerSchool System.

10. I, release Sumter School District and its officers, employees, and agents from any claims and damages from my use or inability to use the system.
11. As a parent/guardian I have read and signed this policy and understand that access is designed for the educational support of my child's education.

Disclaimer: This system is provided only as convenience. The data is the property of Sumter School District and is only available to parents/students currently in attendance. PowerSchool Parent Portal is not an official record and may not be correct at all times. For official student records contact your child's school.

Appendix I: Sumter School District PowerSchool Public Portal Parent Access Request Form

**Please fill out this form completely.*

By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and agree to comply with the PowerSchool Acceptable Use Policy.

I wish to be granted electronic access to my students' grades and attendance through the PowerSchool Public Portal. I have read the PowerSchool Acceptable Use Policy. I agree to adhere to these guidelines. I understand that any violation of these guidelines will result in suspension and/or termination of my access.

Student(s) Name (Print):

_____	Year of Graduation: _____
_____	Year of Graduation: _____
_____	Year of Graduation: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (Print): _____

Staff Verification (initial): _____

**Appendix J: Teacher Acknowledgement Sumter School District Grading Guidelines and
Teacher Acknowledgement Form**

My signature acknowledges receipt of my personal copy of the Instructional, Grading, and Reporting Guidelines. I agree to read the document and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced herein. I am aware that the Instructional, Grading, and Reporting Guidelines manual is available to me on-line at the district's website located at www.sumterschools.net. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this manual. As the District provides updated policy or procedures information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

Printed Name

Signature

School/Department

Date

Signed forms are due to your principal on or before September 8, 2017