



# Timberlin Creek Elementary School

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## *How to understand your child's grades in third through fifth grade at TCES:*

### **WHAT IS STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?**

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Standards-based grading measures your child's mastery of the grade-level standards for each grade level, or how well your child understands the material in class. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of essential standards taught and assessed throughout a unit of instruction.

A focus on learning: The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, your child, and you as a parent with a true picture of the knowledge and skills mastered, and to encourage a dialogue about what instruction your child needs next. Teachers will assess your child's learning using a variety of formative and summative assessments, tools such as traditional paper-and-pencil tests, written papers, or projects, but also informal assessments such as classroom discussions or teacher observations. Essentially, everything your child does in a standards-based classroom will provide teachers with evidence of his/her learning.

### **WHAT ARE TCES' GRADING PRACTICES FOR THIRD – FIFTH GRADE?**

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TCES teachers report grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning. As you sit with your child to review class progress using Home Access Center (HAC), here are some things to keep in mind:

- Teachers' gradebooks are developed to place emphasis on assessments over general assignments (class activities, and assignments that allow your child to practice and deepen new knowledge).
- Teachers continually monitor assessments and assignments to gather data they use to make instructional decisions based on your child's learning and growth. They update gradebooks in eSchool Plus on a regular basis to provide both students and parents with timely feedback through HAC.
- Once an assessment is given, teachers review the data and determine areas of need for specific students. Teachers utilize a "targeted instruction" time during the day to meet with the identified students and provide re-teaching opportunities to master the skills that were taught.

### **WHAT DOES THIS LOOKS LIKE IN HAC?**

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Here are some guidelines for interpreting the grading practices above when looking at your child's performance in HAC:

#### **Summative Assessments:**

If your child scores below a 50% on any test, his/her grade will be recorded as a 50% in Home Access. Please check to see if there is a decimal after the score. The number after the decimal indicates your child's actual performance score. For instance, if you see a score of "**50.41**", your child's actual performance score (demonstrating mastery of the standard(s) targeted) is a **41%**. This indicates your child is struggling in this area and will receive specialized support from the teacher during targeted instruction time within the class.

## **WHY THIS DECIMAL SYSTEM?**

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Although it may seem confusing, when consistently applied across all TCES third through fifth grade classrooms, this grading system helps TCES teachers, administrators, parents, and most importantly, students, easily compare their progress over time when checking class grades. Teachers are also better able to make instructional decisions to meet the needs of individual students in preparation for upcoming assessments in which students may encounter standards/concepts they struggled with previously.

## **WHY IS 50% THE LOWEST POSSIBLE GRADE FOR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS?**

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TCES teachers are your child's advocate in the classroom in support of learning and knowledge gained over time. Our teachers believe what students do not know at the beginning of a grade level class or unit should not be held against them at a later point in time. In our 100-point grading scale, a much larger range exists for failing grades (0-59—F) than for other grade categories (60-69—D; 70-79—C; 80-89—B; 90-100—A). Our teachers and students recognize this system would make it much more difficult for a student to “recover” from a low grade. Much research on this practice notes that the use of zeros (and lower “F” grades) demotivates students rather than instilling determination and perseverance. As such, 50% will be the lowest possible grade students will be assigned for a summative assessment/assignment. When your child brings home his/her test, the decimal grade will be given to show the actual grade your child would have earned being the score after the decimal point.