



2016 – 2017 HEMMS GRADING POLICY

10 POINT GRADING SCALE:

- A = 100-90 (Excellent)
- B = 89-80 (Good)
- C = 79-70 (Satisfactory)
- D = 69-60 (Needs Improvement)
- F = 59-50 (Unsatisfactory)

STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math

H. E. McCracken Middle School (HEMMS) provides a wide range of STEAM activities and programs to enhance students' learning experiences. These activities are based upon College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards and involve engaging in hands-on, real-world projects that pull from industry, government, and the community to help produce a well-equipped 21st century workforce. HEMMS is transforming the way that the educational delivery model is facilitated to ensure that every student has transferrable skills necessary to contribute to their community and the global society at large.

Our strategies, resources, and materials are used to ignite creativity within the STEAM program and eSTEAM periods in each day, and our lesson planning centers on state and national standards. Teachers create quality lesson plans using a school-adopted template that utilizes the highest level of Bloom's taxonomy and pulls from *Understanding by Design* principles to guide lesson planning. Classrooms incorporate higher order thinking questions as part of increasing rigor in instruction through a STEAM approach.

The HEMMS SCHOOL-WIDE STEAM INITIATIVE includes

1. Providing an innovative "Genius Village" with partners in the arts, science and technology to deliver whole brained learning. This educational tool is developed through an original concept called the Corpus Callosum Methodology created by current Principal Henderson. The Corpus Callosum Methodology gives teachers a planning and teaching tool which appeals to all learners, using the whole brain in developing soft skills while solving the problems of today's society.
2. Using project-based learning to create a culture where the barriers for members from a diverse school population can be removed.
3. Increasing academic achievement through STEAM-based activities that include an upgraded globalized curriculum and the use of college and career readiness-based standards across contents that are specifically focused on closing the achievement gap between minority and majority students.
4. Using the best modern technologies and digital learning tools to transform teaching and learning so that it is responsive, flexible, individualized and innovative.
5. Providing consistent support for teachers and leaders so they are inspired to afford students with the educational skills needed for a cutting-edge post-secondary education and career selection.

6. Implementing intensive training for the faculty and staff through access to national consultants with the Literacy Design Collaborative and Math Design Collaborative. Institute their research-based methods and school-wide emphasis to provide a capacity for growth through high quality programs and sustainable training.
7. Providing guidance and work sessions to parents to enable them to become part of school-wide decision-making, reinforcing learning at home and in the community, and imparting the importance of goals in creating a bright future.
8. Implementing activities weekly, while providing resources and training to support college and career readiness for all students.

ENTERING GRADES: Teachers are expected to keep grades updated in PowerSchool in a timely manner, including meeting deadlines provided by the data specialist for reporting grades a progress report and report card times. Each teacher is to ensure their gradebook is set-up correctly to reflect the criteria in the chart below:

Rubrics Used by:	Homework	Classwork	Quizzes/Labs	Tests/Projects
CATE/Arts Teachers	0%	30%	30%	40%
Core Academic Teachers	10%	20%	25%	45%

Failures: Teachers with students who are failing a class at each marking period must follow the RTI protocol mentioned in this document.

Numerical grades are mandated in SC middle schools and the **minimum passing grade** is 60%.

GRADING: Students are assessed using both formative and summative assessments. Grades are recorded electronically via PowerTeacher and parents are encouraged to monitor gradebook activity for their children using Parent Portal. Teachers typically update their grades every two weeks at a minimum.

- a. **Formative assessments**, including diagnostic testing and pre-testing for prior knowledge, includes both informal and formal assessment procedures given by teachers during the learning process in order to modify and enhance teaching and learning activities. Typically, this type of assessment is *FOR* learning and occurs while there is still time to help students grow.
- b. **Summative assessments**, including state and local testing for achievement status, is used to evaluate student learning, academic achievement and skill acquisition at the end of a project or unit, and often at the end of a semester or school year. Typically, this type of assessment is *AFTER* learning has occurred and is a measurement tool.

Formative Standards-Based Assessments/On-going Evidence	55% Core Academic Classes 60% CATE/Arts Classes	Criteria
<i>Examples include:</i> Observations Questioning Discussion Exit Slips Learning Response Logs Graphic Organizers Peer/Self Assessments Visual/Art Representations Think-Pair-Share Specific checks for content knowledge Journaling/Interactive Notebooks Word Study activities Vocabulary quizzes Quizzes		As determined by a Highly Qualified (HQ) teacher with an eye towards balancing each component of the gradebook and in keeping w/CCR standards.
Summative/Cumulative Assessments	45% Core Academic Classes 40% CATE/Arts Classes	Criteria
Unit/Chapter tests Projects with rubrics Performance assessment tasks with rubrics Benchmark Assessments, including USA Test Prep, MAP Testing, Diagnostic Reading Assessments (not graded)		As determined by a Highly Qualified (HQ) teacher with an eye towards balancing each component of the gradebook and in keeping w/CCR standards.

Honor Roll

Principal’s Honor Roll = Students must receive all A’s in all classes.

Honor Roll – Students must receive all A’s and B’s in all classes.

Grading Periods

All student grades are posted in PowerSchool. In addition, official reporting periods are determined for each school year and listed on the school calendar.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are sent home to parents/guardians of all students. The purpose of these reports is to communicate student progress in all classes. Distribution dates are indicated on the calendar.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home at the end of each quarter. Distribution dates are indicated on the calendar in the months of October, January, March and May.

SPED/ESOL Students

Students with 504 plans, IEP’s or IMP’s will require the teacher to implement the accommodations and/or modifications listed in their plans in order to be successful with grade-level, standards-based instruction.

Assessment

Assessments are aligned to the learning goal (Knowledge, Reasoning, Skill, Product/Process): All teachers are encouraged to use “assessments for learning,” per Rick Stiggins, and specifically to involve students in record-keeping, communication and formative assessments when possible (Stiggins et al, 2004).

Assessments that are summative often just require mastery of content and some reasoning, but they cannot tap complex reasoning, performance skills, or product development capabilities, per Stiggins. Hence the type of assessment chosen by the teacher will at times go “outside the box” of typical route content mastery. A teacher must maximize the number of students able to meet standards at grade level, hence assessments are more than tools to gauge student success for grading and ranking purposes, but are also necessary to grow learning for the student. A teacher must gather solid information about student achievement and feed it into instructional decision-making. Specially, a teacher must

- *Anticipate the information needs* of those instructional decision makers who will use the assessment results. The assessments are designed specifically to meet those needs.
- *Identify the achievement targets* (goals, objectives, expectations, standards) that the teacher will expect their students to hit. These are the focus of assessment exercises and scoring procedures.
- *Select proper assessment methods* that accurately reflect the achievement expectations.
- *Design and build high-quality assessments* that lead the teacher to confident conclusions about student achievement.
- *Communicate assessment results* in a timely and understandable manner for the intended user(s) (Stiggins 16).

While all of these steps are necessary to yield gains in student achievement, the most successful students are those that decide that their learning is worth the risk and effort required to acquire it (Stiggins 17).

TARGET TO BE ASSESSED	ASSESSMENT METHOD			
	Selected Response	Essay	Performance Assessment	Personal Communication
Knowledge & Understanding	Can sample mastery of elements of knowledge	Can tap understanding of relationships among elements of knowledge	Not a good choice for this target—three other options preferred	Can ask questions, evaluate answers and infer mastery, but is time-consuming option
Reasoning Proficiency	Can assess application of some patterns of reasoning	Can provide a window into reasoning proficiency	Can watch students solve some problems or examine some products and infer about reasoning proficiency	Can ask student to “think aloud” or can ask followup questions to probe reasoning
Performance Skills	Can assess mastery of understandings needed for skillful performance, but cannot rely on these to tap the skill itself		Can observe and evaluate skills as they are being performed	Strong match when skill is oral communication proficiency; also can assess mastery of knowledge needed for skillful performance
Ability to Create Products	Can only assess mastery of the understandings needed to create quality products	Can assess mastery of knowledge needed for product development; brief essays can provide evidence of writing proficiency	Can assess (1) proficiency in carrying out steps in product development, and (2) attributes of the product itself	Can probe procedural knowledge and knowledge of attributes of quality products, but not product quality
Dispositions	Selected response questionnaire items can tap student feelings	Open-ended questionnaire items can probe dispositions	Can infer dispositions from behavior and products	Can talk with students about their feelings

An Introduction to Student-Involved Assessment *FOR Learning* (2008) by Rick Stiggins. 5th edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Failure/Remediation

A student in grades 6-8 fails a particular subject for the school year if the student’s final average in that subject is below 60%. Retention (repeating the grade level) will be considered when a student earns a failing grade in English, math, science or social studies (1-2 failures will normally mean summer school but 3 or more failures may result in retention). In addition, students may be retained if they do not meet the attendance requirements of Beaufort County School District.

Although parents are encouraged to check Parent Portal for up to date student coursework and to monitor their child’s progress, it is expected that the teacher will contact the parent when the student’s grade drops below a D/70, as well as send home interim reports and report cards at the scheduled time.

Grade Changes

Grades cannot be changed without following district-established procedures that include explicit consent of the teacher. The district follows the statewide guidelines for grading/assessment.

To help reduce the number of grade change request forms, please make every effort to ensure that grades are accurate the first time submitted. Please note, if a teacher gives a higher grade than intended, the grade will remain as reported.

Classroom Assessment for Student Learning (2004) by Rick Stiggins, Judith A. Arter, Jan Chappuis, and Stephen Chappuis. Assessment Training Institute.