

Frisco Independent School District Middle School Retest Regulations: FAQs

This year, FISD is implementing some changes in its retest policy in an effort to provide parents and students with more meaningful feedback on student's learning. Our ultimate goal is for our students to master all learning objectives and for grades to reflect a student's level of mastery. If assessment and grading are going to provide students and parents with feedback, document academic progress, and inform instructional decisions we must critically examine commonly accepted grading and assessment practices. The new retest regulations value maintaining clear communication with parents regarding their student's academic progress and any necessary steps or interventions needed for remediation or acceleration. Over the past two years, Frisco ISD teachers and administrators have been engaged in research and study on the topics of assessment and grading. The Frisco Independent School District middle school retest regulations are based on sound research and best practices. Below are some frequently asked questions (FAQs) that we wanted to share with our parents and community members. If you have any additional questions, please contact the principal of the school your student attends.

Q: What are the middle school retest regulations and where can I find them?

A: The middle school retest regulations are published in the FISD Middle School Handbook.

Middle School Retest Regulations

A classroom teacher must assign a grade that reflects a student's relative mastery of the curriculum as closely as possible. In accordance with grading guidelines, a student shall be permitted a reasonable opportunity to retest in order to demonstrate their level of mastery with the curriculum. Requirements to retest such as attending tutoring sessions and/or completing remedial assignments will be determined by campus guidelines. A timeline for completing the requirements will be included.

- ◆ *All students will be provided the opportunity to retest following the return of each test **
- ◆ *The student will be awarded the full value of the retest exam.*
- ◆ *The retest grade cannot lower the student's major grade average and will be discounted if this is the outcome of the test.*
- ◆ *The student will not be given the original assessment for a retest.*
- ◆ *Semester exams are summative assessments and are not eligible for retakes.*

**High school credit courses taken in middle school will follow the high school retest regulations. High school retest regulations involve a comprehensive retest during the last week of the grading period. A complete outline of high school retest regulations can be found in the high school student handbook. A copy of this handbook can be accessed on the Frisco ISD website.*

Q: Why are we letting students retake tests?

A: If we believe the following about learning, then our policies and practices must align with our beliefs.

- 1. All students can learn.*
- 2. Students learn in different ways.*
- 3. Students learn in different timeframes.*
- 4. Errors are inherent in the learning process.*

Allowing students the opportunity to retest provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their mistakes and improve their understanding of the concepts being assessed.

Q: What about the importance of work habits and responsibility?

A: Work habits and responsibility are important. However, a grade should be based on the student's mastery of course objectives. The middle school report card has a place for teachers to provide students and parents with feedback on work habits. Our goal is for all students to master all learning objectives and for grades to reflect a student's level of mastery of those objectives.

Q: Why are students able to earn the full value of the retest?

A: Our former retest regulation allowed students to retest, but only for a maximum grade of 70%. This practice is not defensible if we believe learning is a process. Assigning a lower grade than what was earned on a retest does not accurately communicate that student's mastery of the learning objectives. Instituting a maximum grade allowable on retests because some students earned a high grade the first time does not support our belief that students learn at different rates and errors are inherent in the learning process. If we want students to use feedback as a tool to improve, they have to know their efforts will count. The retake option is not a free pass for students not to study. In order for a student to have a retest opportunity, they have to do something to show the teacher that they are committed to improving their performance. This might include additional time with the teacher, extra practice assignments, or making corrections on previously completed work.

Q: Are semester exams and final exams eligible for retesting?

A: No, semester exams and final exams are not eligible for retesting. We believe that ongoing feedback and opportunities for mastery throughout the semester will provide our students with the support they need to perform their best on semester and final exams.

Q: What resources contain more information on the research the middle school retest regulations were based on?

Guskey, T. (2009) *Practical Solutions for Serious Problems in Standards-Based Grading*

Marzano, R. (2006) *Classroom Assessment & Grading that Work*

Stiggins, R., Arter, J., Chappuis, S., Chappuis, J. (2009) *Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it Right-Using it Well*

Wormeli, Rick (2006) *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*