

West Holmes Middle School: 2026-2027 Policy Updates

Dear Parents and Guardians, as we prepare for the upcoming school year, West Holmes Middle School has updated several key academic and operational policies to better support student learning, ensure academic integrity, and maintain a productive environment. This document highlights and summarizes essential guidelines and policy shifts for the 2026-2027 school year. As always, if you have questions concerning any of these please do not hesitate to contact me at bbaughman@westholmes.org.

1. Grading Guidelines & Homework Policies

The purpose of grading at West Holmes Middle School is to accurately reflect and communicate what students know and are able to do relative to course objectives and state standards. For the 2026-2027 school year, the Grade Book setup is structured as follows:

- **Summative Assessments (90% - 100% of final grade):** These include tests, quizzes, essays, projects, presentations, and oral assessments that provide actual evidence of student performance level after learning has occurred.
- **Formative Assessments (0% - 10% of final grade):** Practice problems, participation, homework, and compliance-type assignments will be tracked and communicated but will have a minimal impact on the direct grade.

Homework and Absences: Homework is designed for independent practice of familiar skills and will not directly impact a student's grade outside of the minor formative weight. In the event of an absence, students are expected to complete practice assignments outside of class, while summative assessments must be made up during the school day (e.g., during study hall or flex periods).

Feedback: Students will receive timely feedback and will be provided multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. This could take the form of many different grades, one grade with multiple opportunities to improve the grade, or a combination both. However, teachers can require students to show evidence of readiness before a retake is granted.

General Grade Descriptors: The chart below is a general description of what a grade should represent in a given class. Each class and subject is inherently different and thus grading may look different however; the grade should generally reflect student performance as noted.

Grade	Descriptor	Focus Areas
A	Exemplary (Exceeds Expectations)	Demonstrates deep understanding; applies concepts to new/complex situations independently.
B	Proficient (Meets Expectations)	Strong grasp of grade-level standards; completes work with minimal guidance and high accuracy.
C	Developing (Approaching)	Grasps basic concepts but struggles with complex application; requires occasional redirection.
D	Emerging (Below Expectations)	Limited understanding of core concepts; requires significant support for grade-level tasks.
F	Incomplete (Not Meeting Standards)	Insufficient evidence of learning; key concepts and skills have not been demonstrated.

2. Key Change: Credit Recovery Policy

An important shift is taking place for the **2026-2027 school year** regarding academic standing. Moving forward, **any student who fails a course for a single nine-week period will be immediately removed from an elective course** and placed into the credit recovery program. They will remain there until they successfully complete the necessary coursework to get back on track.

3. Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Digital Work

All digital schoolwork must be completed in the specific document assigned via Google Classroom or created via Google Docs. Teachers have the right to monitor the Version History of files; copying and pasting content without discussion may be flagged as academic misconduct. Generative AI tools (like ChatGPT) should only aid thinking, learning, and communication—never replace originality. If a teacher does not explicitly state an allowed "Level of AI Use," **no AI tools may be used**. Students must cite and disclose any AI assistance. If a teacher suspects unapproved AI usage, the student will be asked to meet in person to verbally demonstrate their understanding of the topic.

4. Flex Period

The Flex Period provides small-group interventions, prerequisite skill remediation, and grade-level support. Students are initially placed into Flex based on scoring "Basic" or "Limited" on the previous year's Ohio State Tests (OST) in ELA or Math. Grouping changes dynamically throughout the year based on ongoing assessment data (STAR, classroom data). ELA and Math groups alternate Monday through Thursday, while Friday serves as a Flex study hall and intervention period.

5. Honors and Accelerated Course Placement

Students will automatically be placed into the Honors or Accelerated course pathway if they meet any of the following criteria (unless a parent opts them out):

1. Gifted identification in the specific discipline.
2. Scoring "Advanced" on the previous year's OST (Science utilizes a 6th-grade placement test).
3. Scoring "Accelerated" on the previous year's OST AND earning all A's in the prior course.
4. Successful completion of a prior Honors/Accelerated course with a C average or higher.
5. Specific teacher recommendation (evaluated case-by-case).

Honors classes - Typically cover grade-level standards but do so in greater depth and higher rigor and/or start covering the next grade level standards later in the year. Students in honor classes will take their grade level Ohio State Test at the end of the year. (e.g. Honors ELA 6 will take the 6th grade ELA test).

Courses: Honors ELA 6, Honors ELA 7, Honors ELA 8, Honors Math 6, and Honors Math 7 (in the 27-28 school year Honors Math 7 will become Accelerated Math 7).

Accelerated classes - These classes cover grade-level standards that are higher than the grade in which the student is currently enrolled. Students in accelerated classes will take a higher grade Ohio State Test at the end of the year. (e.g. Accelerated Science 7 will take the 8th grade OST in the spring.)

Courses: Accelerated Science 7, Physical Science (HS credit), and Algebra 1 (HS credit).