



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Middle and High School Principals

FROM: Whitney Oakley, Ed.D.  
Chief Academic Officer

DATE: April 14, 2020

RE: 6-11 Grading during COVID-19 Pandemic


Since Governor Roy Cooper took the unprecedented action of closing North Carolina's public schools effective March 16, 2020, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has encouraged LEAs and Guilford County Schools (GCS) to provide remote learning opportunities to engage students, continue academic growth, and respond to students' social and emotional needs. However, NCDPI reminds us that given the condition students are learning in, as educators, *we must focus on engagement more than evaluation*. NCDPI has provided guidance for grading.

### Course Grading Guidelines

**Fall Courses:** Students will receive grades for fall courses as already stored, yearlong and semester. Fall grades will count toward students' GPAs. For year-long courses, the fall term grade will be counted into the student's GPA weighted as a .5. For example, a student earning a 4.0 in a year-long course will receive a weighted 2.0 in their GPA for the fall term because only half a credit is earned.

### Guidance for Third Quarter Grades 6-11:

**Spring Courses:** The third quarter grade will reflect student understanding and demonstration of concepts covered through March 13, the last day of instruction prior to school closure. March 13, the last day GCS was in session prior to school closure, has become the revised ending date for third quarter. All grades for the third quarter should be entered into PowerSchool by Friday, April 17. Grades should only reflect work that was completed prior to March 13. Students will have the opportunity during remote learning to improve grades to a Pass "PC19" prior to the end of the fourth quarter should schools remain closed.



Year-long Courses: The third quarter grade will reflect student understanding and demonstration of concepts covered through March 13, the last day of instruction prior to school closure. March 13, the last day GCS was in session prior to school closure, has become the revised ending date for third quarter. All grades for the third quarter should be entered into PowerSchool by Friday, April 17. Grades should only reflect work that was completed prior to March 13. Students will have the opportunity during remote learning to improve grades to a Pass “PC19” prior to the end of the fourth quarter should schools remain closed.

#### Guidance for Fourth Quarter Grades 6-11:

For the fourth quarter in both spring and year-long courses, students in grades 6-11 will be asked to work through 5 – 7 core concepts from each course. This means students will endeavor to complete a number of lessons and assignments that are aligned to the major concepts necessary to progress to the next level. In accordance with the [State Board of Education Guidance for Remote Learning, Evaluation of Student Progress and Graduating Seniors](#) issued prior to spring break, when remote learning occurs, school districts will provide meaningful feedback to promote student growth. The fourth quarter grade will be a Pass “PC19” if the student demonstrates understanding of the 5-7 core concepts and completes related assignments. The Pass “PC19” will not count in GPA but will be awarded as a full credit. Students who are unable to complete and submit assignments remotely during the fourth quarter will be automatically withdrawn from the course at the district level. However, these students will be provided another opportunity during the summer to make up the incomplete course assignments and earn the credit prior to the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

#### Guidance for Students Enrolled in IB Programs:


The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) has issued clear guidance on completion requirements for students enrolled in IB programs [International Baccalaureate COVID-19 Guidance](#). Since IB exams will not be administered in May, IB diplomas and certificates (and potential college credit) will be awarded based upon internal assessment components for each IB content area. These assessments are due to the IBO by April 20. **[This is a hard, fast deadline and failure to submit student work will prevent students from receiving the IB Diploma.](#)** These internal components are typically work that was started much earlier in the year (lab research, recorded language interviews, research papers and art portfolios) that students are refining for final submission. These items will not be counted as grades but will count towards assignment completion for a grade of Pass. **Teachers and students must adhere to the deadlines announced by the IBO. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

#### Guidance for Students Enrolled in AP Courses:

Students will take **online, secure AP exams from home** and will earn college credit for passing scores. AP teachers are authorized to provide the necessary instruction to prepare students for these exams and to address major concepts that colleges will assume have been mastered. **AP exam grades will not be part of student final grades.**

#### Guidance for Students enrolled in Occupational Study

If an OCS student completes 157 hours of the 225 hours of “paid work hours” graduation requirement, the student will receive a Pass “PC19”. OCS students who have not completed 157 hours of the 225 hours of “paid work hours” can work directly with teachers who will provide support during distance learning so that students are able to complete hours needed to attain a Pass “PC19”.



#### **4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Remote Learning**

New research from the Collaborative for Student Growth Research Center, which has done significant research on the summer slide, suggests that when students return to school in the fall, they are likely to retain about 70% of this year's reading gains and about 50% of this year's math gains. Losses are likely to be even more pronounced for students who face significant inequities. Many of our students' families are facing crises in housing, the loss of income and lack of transportation, and food insecurity.

For the fourth quarter, students in grades 6-11 will be asked to work through 5 – 7 core concepts in the major courses. This means students will endeavor to complete a number of lessons and assignments that are aligned to the major work necessary to progress to the next level. In accordance with the [State Board of Education Guidance for Remote Learning, Evaluation of Student Progress and Graduating Seniors](#) issued prior to spring break, when remote learning occurs in grades 6-11, school districts will provide meaningful feedback to promote student growth.

Classroom teachers will support students as they work to complete assignments and teachers will provide meaningful feedback to mitigate learning loss, best prepare students for the 2020-2021 academic year, and to keep students on track for high-school graduation. For course assignments, GCS teachers will provide feedback on completed assignments by giving a Completed, Incomplete or Missing.

Students who are unable to complete and submit assignments remotely during the fourth quarter will be automatically withdrawn from the course at the district level. However, these students will be provided another opportunity during the summer to makeup the incomplete course assignments and earn the credit prior to the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

English language learners and students with disabilities who are not receiving services cannot be penalized during distance learning. All students should be receiving modifications and supports needed to be successful during distance learning.

#### **Guidance for Students with Individualized Education Plans and 504 Plans**

Meeting the needs of all students remains a priority during remote learning, and we have staff ready and available to help students succeed during this unusually difficult time. Teachers should continue to focus on students meeting IEP goals and should provide modifications, adaptations and support to the fullest extent possible for all students who receive modifications. We recognize this will be challenging for some of our students, particularly those with more significant and profound disabilities. Students with IEPs should receive support from both content teachers and special education teachers. Assignments may be modified as appropriate to ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to complete the major concepts of the course and earn a Pass grade. Because every child with an IEP has goals that are unique to that student, the IEP team must regularly monitor the student's progress toward their IEP goals.



### Digital Divide

**Students who still need a device are asked to contact their school to ensure that a laptop or tablet is issued immediately.** GCS teachers who have had no contact with a student or intermittent contact should contact the student(s) immediately and continually inform his/her principal. GCS will continue to work with families who do not have internet connectivity to make certain all students have an equitable opportunity to participate in lessons, complete assignments and receive social-emotional supports.

Students will be given as much time as necessary to complete their work because their social and emotional needs must come first. Our students are facing stress and anxiety that they have never experienced. Additionally, many parents are stretched thin and overwhelmed. And while we are attempting to prevent extensive learning loss and the widening of achievement gaps, disparities in technology access and internet connectivity are persistent and glaring.

GCS is already planning for the 2020-2021 school year which must include more academic time to address learning loss and gaps widened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will require dramatic changes in how we think about school and in how we provide academic and social-emotional supports to students.

As we receive additional information from NCDPI, we will continue to update grading guidance accordingly.

We are incredibly grateful for your leadership. We will get through this. We are GCS.

Attachment(s):

[Advanced Placement Coronavirus Updates](#)

[APEX and NC Virtual Guidance](#)

[College and Career Promise \(Dual Enrollment\) Guidance](#)

[International Baccalaureate COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[State Board of Education Guidance for Remote Learning, Evaluation of Student Progress and Graduating Seniors](#)

