



MEMORANDUM

TO: Elementary School Principals

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

DATE: April 14, 2020

RE: K – 5 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. 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.

Third Quarter Grading Guidelines

In grades K-2, the third quarter grade will follow the 1, 2, 3 or 4 scale based on where students were performing prior to March 13.

In grades 3-5, 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.

Fourth Quarter Grading Guidelines

For the fourth quarter in both spring and year-long courses, students in grades K-5 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 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, school districts will provide meaningful feedback to promote student growth. The fourth quarter grade will be a Pass “PC19” if the student

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demonstrates understanding of the 5-7 core concepts and completes related assignments. Students who are unable to complete and submit assignments remotely during the fourth quarter will be automatically withdrawn from the course at the district level.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.

Fourth Quarter Remote Learning Guidelines

For students in grades K-5, completion of grade-level work, to the extent possible and practicable, is important to prevent students from entering the next grade level with gaps in learning that will have a lasting impact. 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 (NWEA, 2020).

Losses are likely to be greater at the elementary level where students are developing basic skills, and even more pronounced for students who face significant inequities. Many of these children's families are facing crises in housing, the loss of income, lack of transportation, and food insecurity.

For the fourth quarter, students in grades K-5 will be asked to work through 5 – 7 core concepts in the major academic subjects. 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 K-5, 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 and best prepare students for the 2020-2021 academic year. GCS teachers will provide students feedback on completed assignments and will grade these assignments using either a Completed, Incomplete or Missing. Additionally, remediation opportunities will be built in for the fall for the youngest students.

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, considering the challenges of distance learning. 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. **Please be sure to record and document all modifications to instruction, attempts to engage with the student and parent and other efforts to provide services.** 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.

Evaluating English Language Learners and Students with Individualized Education Plans

English language learners and students with disabilities who are not receiving services or who are receiving decreased services, cannot be penalized. These students should be receiving necessary modifications and supports to the extent possible in order to be successful during the remote learning period.

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 First

Students will be given as much time as necessary to complete their work because their social and emotional needs must come first. Our children 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.

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

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

Attachment(s):

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

