



Educational Services Building

25345 Taft Road, Novi, Michigan 48374
(248) 449-1204 • Fax (248) 449-1219

To Novi Community School District Parents and Community Members:

Yesterday, phase 2 of our online experiences for students began. Our teachers and administrators created a Continuity of Learning plan to support our students. An overview can be found on our website here: <https://www.novi.k12.mi.us/academics/continuity-of-learning>

Staff and parents reported that things went very well yesterday. Participation was high. Students were engaged.

I also know that there were students (and parents) who struggled yesterday. Learning online is different and at times more difficult than learning in a classroom surrounded by your friends and with the support of the teacher.

Each day will be a new and unique challenge. There will be ups and downs. We will support each other through this process.

As you are aware, the Novi Community School District is not assigning grades at Novi High School for second semester of the 19-20 school year, as a result of COVID-19. I would like to explain our rationale.

This is a disrupted semester. Our high school second semester marking period began on January 27, 2020. Our students had six weeks of a traditional, in school learning experiences and will have 12 weeks of online learning experiences. The online learning experience had two parts as well - the first being a focus on reviewing and deepening knowledge that was previously taught, while the second was the introduction of new learning.

Grades on a transcript indicate that a student has been able to demonstrate proficiency on all content standards within a course. So, when a person - be that a college admissions officer or an employer - sees Algebra 2 on a transcript there is an assumption that it is the same course whether it was taught in 2019, 2020, or 2021. That is not the case with this semester as traditional, face to face teaching and learning has been disrupted.

In an online experience - especially one that we were not given weeks to prepare for - there is a significant inequity in the experience of our students. Some students do not have adequate, or any, online access. Some students have to share devices. Other students have robust online access and their own device. Grades presume that students have had equal opportunity to engage with and learn the curriculum. This online experience does not provide us with confidence that this has occurred.

Finally, we were guided by the Michigan Department of Education in their "Learning at a Distance Guidance" document. They state: "we strongly urge districts to consider adopting a credit/no-credit policy. This will help to incentivize students to engage in ongoing learning while

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at the same time recognizing the unusual and challenging situation students face. Districts must recognize that having grading policies without a fully formed plan for absolute equity, runs the risk of creating disparities in the education of students, thereby disadvantaging more students than will be advantaged.”

For these reasons, the Novi Community School District will have a credit/no credit policy for this second semester.

Thank you for all that you are doing to support our students. Don't hesitate to share feedback and perspective with any members of our team. We are looking to see what is going well and what we can improve.

Gratefully and Appreciatively,
Steve
Steve M. Matthews, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Novi Community School District

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