

High School Grade Reporting Guidelines **Information for Students and Parents**

Introductory Comments:

The purpose of this document is to provide you with the details and rationale of our grading approach as we close out the school year under Distance Learning.

The school and district administrative teams have spent considerable time weighing options and the input from many parents, students, and teachers. We have reviewed the approaches of other districts across the state as well as from within Fairfield county. We have weighed the guidance and suggestions provided by the State Department of Education. We have also considered the comments from post-secondary institutions and colleges to make sure we had options that would be beneficial to students in the application process.

Foremost in our minds, we wanted to create an approach that is flexible to support the many different types of learners and needs of students who attend our school. We know that a “blanket” approach to grading would not work for all students. We also know that our decisions may not be a perfect fit for every situation. To try to do what is best, we started our discussion by making a set of guiding principles and we have tried to stay true to those principles. (Listed below)

Teachers have been mindful of the extra challenges this type of learning places on students and it is important to note that many accommodations have been made, including a reduction in curricular topics, consideration for lost supports, and modification of assessment practices. We also want to honor the hard work and commitment that so many teachers and students have put into this time. This will mean that the scores from Term 4 tasks will still count toward the final grade, but their overall impact on the final grade has been adjusted to compensate for the new challenges. The adjustments are reflected in the point values and weighting the teachers have assigned the tasks.

The Grading Approach

1. Students can choose to have transcripts and report cards reflect the final cumulative letter-grade earned from throughout the entire school year, including distance learning. Students' grades will include both formative and summative assessments. Details for choosing this option are described below.
2. Students earning a cumulative percentage of at least 60% and feel that their final grade is affected by distance learning can opt to have a “P” for Pass reflected on their transcript and report card as their final grade. Since each term grade is a cumulation of all grades prior to that point in time, there is no option for receiving a “P” grade for just Term 4. Students choosing a “P” option will be applying it to the final grade for the course. Details for choosing this option are described below.

3. The final grade will be calculated by all assessments from the grade book from the start of the year. Since there are no “final exams,” there is no grade that will count 20% of the final grade. Teachers will be assigning some culminating tasks that help students reflect on important learning from the course, but these grades will be entered into the gradebook as another task (just like any test or project would be).
4. Students who are in danger of failing a course should communicate directly with teachers to work toward improvement and to take advantage of opportunities to demonstrate their learning. If students are still unable to earn a passing grade for a course, summer school/ credit recovery opportunities will be explored at a later date. We are still awaiting word if the schools will be open in the summer. A plan will be made with the student, parent, housemaster and counselor to determine what is best for the student.

The Procedure for Choosing Grading Options

1. Each teacher will send a standard Google Form to all students in their courses on or near May 22, 2020.
2. Students and parents should discuss which option is in the best interest of the student for each course.
3. The student will complete the Google Form and submit to the teacher by June 1, 2020.
4. If students do not respond to the Google Form, a letter grade will be assigned to the student as a default.
5. Teachers will report the final letter grade or a P (if the average is above 60%) depending on the student’s choice.

Once all grades are posted, parents and students will have an opportunity to review all final entries through report cards. The school will provide a process for parents to follow if there are any concerns.

Considerations for Choosing Grade Options

Every student situation is unique, and therefore, each student and family will have to weigh several considerations in making a decision that is best for students. Here are some important things to weigh in those decisions.

- The choice of the letter grade or the “P” will appear on the official student transcript. As described in our Program of Studies, a “P” grade is not factored into GPA calculation.
- There will be a small window of time for reconsiderations (summer of 2020), but after that time we cannot entertain requests for changes. As an official record from the school, we are bound to the integrity of the document.
- Our school profile is sent to all colleges, and we will need to reflect our grading approach for the 2019-20 school year. This will include a statement that students had the option to choose their letter grade or the “P.”

- Each individual college will make its own determination of how it will interpret the “P” grade and grades in general. Many colleges have indicated they will be understanding the challenges faced during this time, but we cannot predict how each college will approach this. Some specialized majors (like nursing and engineering, for example), may rely more on grades for admissions decisions.
- Students will always have an option to share their rationale as part of the application process or through the counselor letter of recommendation.
- We invite families to consult with school counselors, social workers, psychologists or administrators to help them weigh their options. We will support you in your decision making process.

Our Guiding Principles

The following statements were developed prior to finalizing our grading approach to guide us in our decisions.

1. Honor different learners and different learning needs
2. Honor different family situations in supporting students in the distance learning environment
3. Honor the hard work of students and teachers during the school year
4. Honor the hard work of students and teachers during Distance Learning
5. Wherever possible, grades should reflect the mastery of course content
6. Reporting should not put students at a disadvantage when considering student grade options in other districts.
7. Consider the recommendations from the CT State Department of Education

The Impact of Cumulative Grading

The advantages of cumulative grading held true during distance learning:

- a. It allows for students to track their learning and their grade with each graded task during Distance Learning.
- b. It allows for teachers to weigh assessments appropriately based on the circumstances of Distance Learning. This means that students can benefit from the work they have completed or special considerations can be made for those in need of support.
- c. The structure of cumulative grading allowed for us to be true to the guiding principles.

No Impact on GPA Calculation

Student GPAs are calculated in our system once final grades are posted. GPAs are a product of the credit assigned and the weighting level of each course as outlined in the Program of Studies. There will be no changes in GPA calculation due to distance learning or this grading approach, including the fact that a “P” grade does not factor in the calculation of the GPA.