

March 12, 2021

Dear YES Prep Families,

It's hard to believe that it's been **a year** since COVID-19 surfaced in Houston and forced a new reality. The challenges the virus brought were impossible to predict, but what remained clear was our shared commitment to our YES Prep community. No matter what, we prioritized health and safety for all. Online or in person, we remained committed to rigorous education and success for every student on their path to college and beyond.

It has not been an easy year, but there is still so much to celebrate. Here are a few highlights from this past year and our response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- We secured devices and internet hot spots for every student who needed it.
- We launched our [Keep YES Prep Learning Fund](#), which provides emergency assistance to students and alumni impacted financially by the pandemic.
- YES Prep teachers and staff helped seniors stay focused and ready for AP exams, which help them earn college credit and save on tuition. Seniors complete admissions, financial aid and scholarship applications, and much more.
- We initiated a [social-emotional learning](#) program for students. Our student support counselors and health partners continued their work supporting students.
- YES Prep alumni advisors supported thousands of YES Prep graduates, most of whom are among the first in their families to go to college. These alumni advisors worked around the clock to do everything they could to keep a pandemic from standing in the way of students' college dreams.
- At the beginning of 2021, we established districtwide afterschool tutorials for students in special education to mitigate the loss of critical skills for our most vulnerable students learning virtually.
- We now [deliver breakfasts and lunches for all seven days of the week to 8,500 Houston-area homes with students learning online](#). These home deliveries eliminate the need for families to pick up meals from their children's campuses.

We want to assure you that YES Prep is committed to helping students and families in any way we can. We are full of gratitude for how our families and students have persisted through this unprecedented time.

Thank you for reading this Family Update in its entirety. We're sharing updates and reminders about grading policy changes, re-enrollment for current students, Quarter 4 learning program selection survey, student lottery seat acceptance deadline for new students, STAAR testing, graduation, new Family Workshops, and more.

Important Dates Reminder

- **March 15-19** – Spring Break
- **Wed. March 24** – SAT School Day for 11th graders
- **Fri. March 26** – Deadline to complete re-enrollment form for current students
- **Fri. March 26** – Deadline to complete Learning Program Selection Survey
- **Wed. March 31** – Deadline for families to accept lottery seats

YES Prep System-Wide Grading Policy Changes

YES Prep has made the following system-wide adjustments to its 2020-2021 Grading Policy, effective immediately, to further pursue mastery-based and equity-driven grading policies and to better position YES Prep students for success and college-options in this era of pandemic-schooling. To review YES Prep's entire 2020-2021 grading policy [CLICK HERE](#).



- The floor for all attempted district assessments in Q3 and Q4 (Common Assessments and Unit Exams) will be increased to 60% (Regular and Accommodated versions) and 65% (Modified versions).
- The grading floor for all attempted work in Q3 and Q4 will be increased to 60%. Missing work and assignments with confirmed honor code violations will remain floored at a 50%.
- Final Q3 and Q4 Common Assessment scores between 61%-100% (Regular and Accommodated versions) and 66%-100% (Modified versions) will replace all grades in the gradebook for that quarter that are lower. However, assignments with confirmed honor code violations and missing assignments will remain floored at 50%. *Please note that for our Spring Branch ISD partnership campuses this will only apply during Q4.*
- For the 2020-2021 school year all final grades of “F” in high school credit courses will be reported on transcripts as No Credit (“NC”) and will be excluded from GPA calculations. Students who earn No Credit (“NC”) in a class may be required to enroll in and pass a corresponding makeup class in order to be promoted to the next grade level or graduate. This will be determined by the determined by the RPC committee, Dean of Students, and/or College Counselor in accordance with YES Prep promotion standards and graduation requirements, as allowed by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Education Code.

Complete Re-enrollment Form for Current Students by March 26

We are truly grateful that you have entrusted us with the education of your child(ren). As we look ahead to the '21-'22 school year, we hope that you will once again choose YES Prep Public Schools. We would kindly ask that you complete a [brief re-enrollment form](#) for each of your children to share your intent to return next school year so we can effectively plan to serve the students, families and communities of YES Prep. You can access the form by [logging in to your Skyward Family Access center account](#) and clicking the Re-enrollment form tile. Please submit the form no later than March 26. [Click HERE for Skyward Family Access Center link](#)

Quarter 4 Program Selection Survey – Available March 8-26

We look forward to hearing from you on your selection of online or in-person learning for next quarter. Reminder, if you wish to have your student in the same learning program for Q4, you do not need to complete the survey again. We recognize this year has been incredibly difficult for many families, and there are many factors to consider when deciding between in-person and online learning. We have a full-scale effort to welcome students for in person learning with health and safety measures to do everything we can to help keep the virus out of our schools, including:

- Required use of facial coverings over mouth and nose
- Social distancing whenever possible
- Health and temperature checks for students and staff before getting onto campus each day
- Regular hand washing while on campus
- Safety protocols on school buses
- In addition to the standard daily cleaning protocols, schools undergo intense disinfecting
- Strict adherence to CDC and state guidelines for isolating at home after a student or staffer is infected or exposed to someone infected
- Rapid testing for any staff member or any student, as approved by families, who may experience a known COVID symptom
- Anyone showing symptoms is immediately separated, and areas used by that person are cleaned and disinfected
- No non-essential visitors allowed on any campus

For students who remain online, attendance and active engagement in every class, every day will directly impact their academic success, especially as we approach STAAR testing and other critical milestones this school year. You can track your child’s progress online by monitoring grades and attendance in Skyward and viewing daily assignments and activities on Teams.

Online or in person, we remain firmly committed to the rigorous education and success of your children on their path to college and beyond. Many families have reported—since their students returned in person—that they were better able to concentrate, with fewer distractions and opportunities to leave the class or miss assignments. We are here to help in any way we can. If you have a question, concern or an urgent need for your family, we want to know. Please inform your campus leadership, who are eager to help. [Click HERE for Skyward Family Access Center link](#)

STAAR Update

STAAR is an important data point for our students, campuses, and district. Successful performance on STAAR EOCs is also required by law for high school graduation. To provide students the greatest opportunity for success and to protect student and staff health, a plan has been developed to create an effective, compliant, and safe testing environment for all students, outlined [on this site](#).

Parents of students in all grade levels should review the information [on this site](#). Even on days where your student may not have a STAAR test, a STAAR test in another grade level may impact your student's schedule

Graduation: Save the Date

Families and students, with spring break next week, the end of the school year is in sight. We are excited to share the first update about our graduation for the Class of 2021. YES Prep Public Schools will be hosting the 2020-21 Graduation Ceremonies on Friday, June 4 - Sunday, June 6, 2021. The date and time of your campus's ceremony are listed below:

	Friday, June 4, 2021	Saturday, June 5, 2021	Sunday, June 6, 2021
9:00 AM	Eisenhower	Southeast	Brays Oaks
12:00 PM	White Oak	North Forest	East End
3:00 PM	Northside	West	Southwest
6:00 PM	Fifth Ward	North Central	Gulfton

YES Prep Northbrook High School will be participating in Spring Branch ISD's graduation exercises with Northbrook HS. Your campus's leadership will share more information about your campus's ceremonies.

We will have more information about graduation following spring break by April 1, 2021. We hope this announcement will let your family begin planning for graduation. All plans are dependent on health and safety conditions in our communities. As we actively plan graduation, your safety is our #1 priority. Families and students, we cannot wait to celebrate with you this June!

Student Lottery: Reminder to Accept your Child's Seat for Next School Year

Lottery notifications for the 2021-2022 school year were sent out last Friday, March 5. If you applied for siblings of your current YES Prep student(s), you can also check their status and accept or decline their offers by logging in to your SchoolMint account at yesprep.schoolmint.net. Act fast and accept your seat by March 31 as space is limited!

Haven't applied yet or want to refer a family? YES Prep is still accepting applications, visit yesprep.org/enroll to apply for the 2021-21 school year. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at lottery@yesprep.org.

New elementary schools coming for East End and Northline communities

We are also excited to announce that YES Prep will open two new elementary schools serving the East End and Northline communities for the **2022-2023** school year! Houston families in Northline and the East End with



children entering Kindergarten through second grade in the fall of 2022 will have the option of attending a YES Prep elementary school, as space permits. In subsequent years, the new schools will add Pre-Kindergarten classes and grow students into third, fourth and fifth grades. Applications for these two schools will be available later this fall 2021.

Family Workshop Series: The Teen Brain – A Guide for Families

You are invited to join us for our virtual Family Workshop Series titled “The Teen Brain: A Neurodevelopmental Guide for Parents and Families” on Tuesdays from 5 to 6 p.m. This past Tuesday, we hosted the first session titled “The Brain & Stress”. Presenter, Dr. Crystal Collier, shared the effects of stress on the developing brain as well as active coping skills and tools for managing anxiety. To view the recording of the session, [click here](#).

After Spring Break, the next session “The Brain and Substance Abuse” will be on Tuesday, March 23, in Microsoft Teams. To learn more about this session and the upcoming sessions, and to register, [click here](#).

Bonus: For those who attend, Dr. Collier will use the session attendance lists to raffle off a copy of her new book, the *Neurowhereabouts Guide, a neurodevelopmental guide for parents and families who want to prevent youth high risk behavior*. The book is available in English and Spanish.

Did You Know?

Charters add to the public-school system; they don't take from it! In Texas, as charters have grown, overall per-student funding for traditional ISDs also increased by 2.5%. There is no evidence of decreased funding per student because of charter schools. [Learn more about the financial impact of charters on ISDs here](#).

As always, thank you to our families for trusting us with the responsibility of educating your children. Thank you for your support and partnership as we continue our commitment to prioritize safety while also working tirelessly to provide the highest quality instruction, online and in-person. Our next Family Update will be until **Friday, March 26**. We wish you a fun and safe Spring Break!

Thank you