

April 28, 2020

Dear Families,

This unprecedented time of COVID-19 has presented difficulty and struggles for all New Yorkers, and we recognize that supporting your children in their continued learning in the midst of this crisis has been no small feat. We are amazed by the resilience and resolve that all of you—the families of our 1.1 million students—have shown as we transformed our entire system to remote learning. We are grateful for all that you are doing to support the success of your child as we finish the 2019-2020 school year in remote learning.

This transition would be a challenge at any time, but in the midst of the anxiety and trauma so many of our communities are experiencing due to the pandemic, it could have been insurmountable. Still, you have done it, being there for your children in every way you can to support their learning despite not necessarily knowing where the next meal will be coming from, or dealing with illness or loss in your family or community, or any other number of insecurities this time has brought.

That is why we have continually evolved our policies to meet this moment, developing and in some cases entirely reinventing them to support all of you—our students and families. These policies run the gamut from attendance to class scheduling to technology usage and beyond. Today, we are writing with another important policy update, concerning student grading.

Grades are important for understanding a student's progress toward meeting learning standards, but they are just one way our educators are measuring and discerning how a student is engaging with schoolwork and making progress. We must ensure that support for our students includes not just academics, but social-emotional learning, health and safety, and physical and mental wellness, and there are relationships in place that affirm and empower our students and families. We are giving our educators the tools and skills they need to understand and support our students socially and emotionally. We will continue to create resources for students and families that elevate these supports within the context of COVID-19. Implementation of the policy by school leaders will be considerate of students who have experienced emotional loss, death, mental health issues, or didn't have access to a device or connectivity right away. We know that just as you are our partners in learning, we are yours in the emotional support your children may need during this time.

We have heard from students, parents, teachers, school leaders, and many others across the City to inform our revised grading policy. We see you, we hear you, and we believe that the final policy we are issuing emphasizes flexibility and patience for students in these unprecedented times, while also keeping students engaged without penalty for the trauma they may be experiencing. It maintains clear expectations that acknowledge each individual student's experience, and creates a consistent, equitable system across all schools. The policy seeks to minimize stress on families and students, while still providing next year's teachers with the information they need about an individual student's progress toward achieving standards.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW The grading policy outlined below is in effect for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year only. Teachers will base students' final grades on a holistic review of their progress before and after we started remote learning. Attendance will not be a factor in students' grades. No student will receive a failing final grade.

GRADE(S) GRADING POLICY SUMMARY 3K & Pre-K No change – students in 3K and Pre-K do not receive report cards or grades. K - 5th Students receive final grades of either “Meets Standards” (MT) or “Needs Improvement” (N). 6th - 8th Students receive final grades of “Meets Standards” (MT), “Needs Improvement” (N), or “Course

in Progress” (NX), if additional time is needed to complete the course. 9th - 12th Your school's existing grading scale applies, but no failing grades will be issued. A “Course in Progress” (NX) will be issued instead, providing students with additional time to complete the requirements for the course. After final grades have been issued, students and families have the option to convert any or all passing Spring Semester 2020 final grades to ‘CR’ which indicates the course was passed and credit was earned but does not have a value in the student's GPA.

The DOE is continuing to develop plans for programming and supports over the summer months. More information about summer school will be made available by your school and shared in the upcoming weeks.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS For elementary and middle schools, principals will generally serve as primary points to answer questions regarding the grading policy for families.

For high schools, school counselors and college counselors will generally serve as primary points to answer questions regarding the grading policy for students and families, along with principals. If you need help identifying the school counselor or college counselor, please contact your principal (principal contact information can be found on your school's website at <https://www.nycenet.edu/schoolsearch>).

Please also see our Frequently Asked Questions document for additional information at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learn-at-home/information-on-remote-learning>. We are committed not only to supporting students in their continued learning through June and beyond, but to supporting you as our primary partner in your child's education. We know you have had a lot of questions and faced a lot of challenges in this transition; you have had to take on essential, invaluable new roles to keep your child's education going and become indispensable partners to teachers. There are many resources available at schools.nyc.gov and your student's school is also standing by to support you.

We always say that New York City has the best students, staff, and families in the world, and nothing will ever change that. You continue to prove this true each and every day. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Carranza, Chancellor

Linda Chen Chief Academic Officer

New York City Department of Education New York City Department of Education