

GRADE REPORTING DURING DISTANCE LEARNING

Since our transition to distance learning due to COVID-19, many experts have suggested how grading will adapt to these trying times. Grading is frequently defined as "the measurement of student academic progress." Student engagement can be defined in a number of ways: online communication, assignments, parent communication and assistance, and other ways defined by teachers and schools. Examples of student engagement: a "daily check in" assignment within Google Classroom, a daily practice activity, paper packet completion, formative feedback, call, email, or anything that leaves a digital footprint saying they looked at your class.

Our main goal throughout this crisis period of Distance Learning is to provide students with activities to continue to encourage their love of learning and to continue to maintain the sense of connection and community. In a remote learning environment, there are many unknown variables that can contribute to students' ability or inability to engage. Due to this uncertainty, we have organized the following guidance to support schools with grading at each level.

High Schools

Term 3 was scheduled to close on Friday, March 27, 2020. Due to the closure of schools ordered by Governor Walz, Term 3 grades will be calculated based on work assigned prior to March 17, 2020 (the day before the school closure period began). Work assigned prior to the closure will be accepted through April 17, 2020. At that time, final Term 3 grades will be assigned. This grade will serve as the lowest possible grade a student can receive for this semester. Students will be able to improve upon this grade for the remainder of this semester. Additionally, a student can work with the school principal, or designee, to evaluate the need to move their semester grade to a credit/no credit indicator on the transcript. This is transcribed as pass "P" for credit and no mark "NM" for no credit. Neither P nor NM impact GPA. For the second semester final grade, all F grades will be transcribed as "no mark;" seniors will need to work with their principal, or counselor, before May 22. All other students currently enrolled in high school can initiate the credit/no credit option up until June 5.

There are a few exceptions in high school concurrent and dual enrollment classes where letter grades and final exams may be required and high schools must work with their post-secondary partners on completion requirements. Please refer to your school for more information.

Residential and Day Treatment Programs

Student engagement with teachers and academics during this time is the foundation of remote learning practices at the middle school level. In collaboration with treatment centers, students will continue to receive academic services in their facilities. As in the high school, Term 3 was scheduled to close on Friday, March 27, 2020. Due to the closure of schools ordered by Governor Walz, Term 3 grades will be calculated based on work assigned prior to March 17, 2020 (the day before the school closure period began). Work assigned prior to the closure will be accepted through April 17, 2020. At that time, final Term 3 grades will be assigned. This grade will serve as the lowest possible grade a student can receive for this semester as long as students continue to participate (*see below for more on participation). Students will be able to improve upon this grade for the remainder of this semester.

Middle Schools

Student engagement with teachers and academics during this time is the foundation of remote learning practices at the middle school level, and we know students will continue to engage in remote learning for the duration it is required by the state. As in the high school, Term 3 was scheduled to close on Friday, March 27, 2020. Due to the closure of schools ordered by Governor Walz, Term 3 grades will be calculated based on work assigned prior to March 17, 2020 (the day before the school closure period began). Work assigned prior to the closure will be accepted through April 17, 2020. At that time, final Term 3 grades will be assigned. This grade will serve as the lowest possible grade a student can receive for this semester. Students will be able to improve upon this grade for the remainder of this semester.

Middle and High Schools: Improving 3rd Quarter Grade

Students are offered the opportunity to complete work assigned prior to March 17, 2020. The Term 3 assignment extension ends on April 17, 2020.

Middle and High Schools: Term 4 Grading

We have decided as a school district that Term 4 grades will not be individually calculated. Term 4 grades can only improve the grade a student earned for Term 3, they cannot have a negative impact on Semester 2 grades. There will not be a final exam for Semester 2 classes, unless high school concurrent or dual enrollment courses require them.

Although fourth quarter grades will be “no mark” (NM). If a student continues to demonstrate improvement in understanding and mastery of learning during Term 4 in credit-bearing courses, that improvement can help raise the final semester grade. In other words, any work done through distance learning can only benefit the student by positively contributing to the final

grade. Non credit-bearing courses will be graded as “pass” (P) or “no mark” (NM) and do not impact GPA.

Even though there will be no “official” final grade from Term 4, teachers will be providing feedback to students so they know how they are doing. Distance learning is a new experience for everyone. All students are encouraged to reach out to their teachers and school counselors when they have questions throughout the rest of the school year. Virtual office hours are a great time to connect with individual questions. Although the Term 4 grade will be No Mark (NM), at the end of the year, final Semester 2 letter grades will be based on a student’s understanding of the content for the whole semester or “mastery of learning.” Beginning with the grade earned during Term 3, any work completed for Term 4 can be calculated in to improve the grade. In other words, if a student was improving and participating all semester long, that improvement can help bring up the final grade. We will be keeping students in mind as we look for ways to help them continue to improve their grades during distance learning.

We must be fair and equitable to all of our students and act in accordance with Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) guidance received on May 1, 2020. We know students and families are in different places with how they will be able to finish the year academically. The Duluth Public School District is committed to maximum flexibility in assessing and evaluating student learning for the remainder of the school year.

While the work assigned during distance learning may not be graded traditionally, it is important to complete your assignments to be able to show your teacher participation and progress toward mastery of the concepts. This is your opportunity to have a positive impact on your final grades.

Residential and Day Treatment Programs: Term 4 Grading

We have decided as a school district that Term 4 grades will not be individually calculated with the exception of programs that provide quarter credits. Term 4 grades can only improve the grade a student earned for Term 3, they cannot have a negative impact on Semester 2 grades. **Second semester, all F grades will be transcribed as “no mark;”** Students can request a letter grade from the teacher.

Because students receive quarter credits there will be a determination of credit earned for the quarter. Students will receive a P/NP for the quarter. A student that continues to demonstrate improvement in understanding and mastery of learning during Term 4 will receive credit for the quarter. This improvement can help raise the final grade for students who were present for the semester. In other words, any work done through distance learning may

only benefit the student by positively contributing to the final semester grade or a quarter credit.

AEO

All 4th grade term grades will be NM. *There will be no final exams.* If a student requests a letter grade for Term 4, it will be provided. *(We have decided as a school district that Term 4 grades will not be individually calculated. Term 4 grades can only improve the grade a student earned for Term 3, they cannot have a negative impact on Semester 2 grades.)*

ALC Independent Study

The equivalent of term 4 NM will be applied to their course completion and reflected in Positive Attendance = 25% Face-time (4.75 hrs) and 25% Carnegie Units (23.75 hrs) for 1.0 cr S1 & S2 course or 50% face-time (9.5 hrs) and 50% carnegie units (47.5 hrs) for .5 cr course

ALC Credit Recovery

The equivalent of term 4 NM will be applied to their course completion and reflected in Positive Attendance = 25% Face-time (4.75 hrs) and 25% Carnegie Units (23.75 hrs) for 1.0 cr S1 & S2 course or 50% face-time (9.5 hrs) and 50% carnegie units (47.5 hrs) for .5 cr course

Semester Two Report Cards

Per MDE, this language will be added to all report cards and transcripts:
Grades that are documented during the time period of March 16 through June 30 of 2020 reflect the distance learning period resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Future use of these grades for academic placement, admission, acceleration, or remediation is discouraged and should only be used with caution after balancing the information against student performance in other grading periods.

The following chart will be used to determine a student's final second semester grade.

Credit Bearing Class Calculations Semester 2 - 2020		
Qtr 3 Grade	Qtr 4 Grade In Gradebook- DL (No Final Exam)	Final Sem II Grade
A		A
B	A	A
B	B	B
C	A	B
C	B	B
C	C	C
D	A	C
D	B	C
D	C	C
D	D	D
F	A	C
F	B	C
F	C	D
F	D	D
F	Attempted 50% or More of Packets/Google Classroom Assignments	D
F	Attempted Less Than 50% of Packets/Assignm ents	No Mark Credit Recovery

Non-Credit Bearing Class Calculations Year Long and Semester 2 - 2020		
Average Grades Quarter 1, 2, 3	Qtr 4 Grade In Gradebook- DL	Final Grade for Year Long Course
Qtr 3 Grade	Qtr 4 Grade In Gradebook- DL	Final Grade for Semester 2 Course
A		P
B	A	P
B	B	P
C	A	P
C	B	P
C	C	P
D	A	P
D	B	P
D	C	P
D	D	P
F	A	P
F	B	P
F	C	P
F	D	P
F	Attempted 50% or More of Packets/Goog le Classroom Assignments	P
F	Attempted Less Than 50% of Packets/ Assignments	No Mark

Elementary Schools

Student engagement with teachers and academics during this time is the foundation of distance learning practices at the elementary school level. Students will continue to engage in distance learning for the duration it is required by the state. Elementary report cards are standards based and are reflective of growth over time. As the governor's orders for school closure occurred mid-way through the second semester, many standards-based grading points have already been recorded by teachers. Since the shift to distance learning, grading for the remainder of the school closure will focus on more on-going, qualitative feedback from assignments. Feedback in Google Classroom work and paper packets should be focused on formative feedback and could be provided through an email, phone call, or comment on the work being submitted. Students will not be penalized for the work being submitted during this time, maintaining their base score before the school closure.

Longer term closure

Numeric grades will only be given if evidence of standards had previously been collected and will not be assigned for K-5 students in the remainder of the second semester grading period where distance learning was provided. Teachers will be given additional choices for grading options. The letters "IP" will be used where teachers have collected some evidence but due to the lack of rigor or more time with the standard do not have the evidence to say a student met or exceeded expectations. The letters "DL" (Distance Learning) will be used in standard fields where student progress scores had not previously been ascertained or no assessment evidence was collected. The report card at the end of the year will note in the comment section the evidence of engagement the student has made in meeting distance learning expectations during the second semester. Additionally, the report card will note that the student will be promoted to the next years' grade.

We must be fair and equitable to all of our students and act in accordance with Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) guidance. We know students and families are in different places with how they will be able to finish the year academically. The Duluth Public School District is committed to maximum flexibility in assessing and evaluating student learning for the remainder of the school year.

While the work assigned during distance learning may not be graded traditionally, it is important for students/families to remain connected to the classroom, demonstrating engagement through their participation in academic tasks.

Guidance for Teachers:

Weekly Packet Grading

- Focus on formative feedback: comments instead of grades
- Feedback and comments are the most important way to stay connected and will validate the work being completed during this Distance Learning time.
- Teachers should not be as concerned about “who is helping” or “who is completing” the work.
- Teachers should strive to provide this feedback to students within a week’s time.
- Specialists will follow their own developed schedule in providing feedback.
- Assignments in Google Classroom should be set as ungraded.
- Comments will be given on individual assignments, providing the necessary feedback.

Evidence of work can be provided in many different ways, including:

- an email
- a photo
- a Google classroom comment

Feedback on assignments submitted through paper packets:

- email
- phone call
- Google Classroom if the student is engaging online

Elementary Report cards/long term closure grading

Benchmarks taught before March 15, where evidence has already been documented, can be reported on the Standard based report card using the 1-4 grading rubric. All other taught standards, “DL” for Distance Learning or “IP” for In Progress will be given. Spiraled benchmarks with evidence can be reported with the grading rubric but needs to reflect student achievement at the time of school closure. This is especially true in ELA. “IP” for In Progress could be given for standards worked on but not assessed during distance learning. In Progress honors the work effort of a student that might get a 1 or 2 but due to the situation have not been able to attain a 3 or 4. “DL” would be used for standards that were not yet covered or very little evidence of proficiency can be demonstrated.

- 1-4 benchmark grade is based on data gathered up to March 15 or when teachers have gathered enough evidence to report on the standard throughout the year
 - 4 Mastering: The student exhibits knowledge and understanding of the concepts, skills, and processes the standard

requires and can readily apply this knowledge in a variety of settings.

- 3 Meeting: The student has a thorough knowledge, understanding, and application of the concepts, skills, and processes the standard requires.
- 2 Developing: The student is gaining understanding of the concepts, skills, and processes the standard requires, but has not been able to consistently demonstrate the learning.
- 1 Beginning: The student is just starting to understand the concepts, skills, and processes the standard requires and needs consistent support.
- “IP” for *In Progress* is a choice for teachers to use when standards have continued to be worked on but not assessed during distance learning
- “DL” for *Distance Learning* is a choice for teachers to use where little to no evidence was collected or the standard was unable to be addressed due to emergency distance learning

Distance Learning Evidence expectations:

We need to look through the equity lens when thinking about student engagement with District learning. There are many factors at home that we need to be aware of, please consider these factors when making comments. Possible comments: Evidence of engagement with distance learning was provided daily, weekly, periodically

Per MDE, this language will be added to all report cards and transcripts:

Grades that are documented during the time period of March 16 through June 30 of 2020 reflect the distance learning period resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Future use of these grades for academic placement, admission, acceleration, or remediation is discouraged and should only be used with caution after balancing the information against student performance in other grading periods.

References:

- MDE Guidance: [Creating Equitable Grading Systems During COVID-19](#)
- [ASCD Article: To-Grade-or-Not-to-Grade](#)
- Dr. Katie Pikel, Principal in Residence of the MN Principals Academy at the U of MN, [shared 5 articles and a summary of their findings](#) on the research done on pass/fail.
- [This article](#), written by Joe Feldman, author of *Grading for Equity*, approaches this question from an equity lens and recommends a Pass/Incomplete model for the time being.
- Postsecondary partner school grading practices (UMD, FDLTCC, LSC)
- [Why Grading Policies Matter More Than Ever for Equity](#)