

GUIDANCE FOR REMOTE LEARNING, EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS, GRADUATION, AND GRADING for GRADES K-11 and SENIORS

As of 5.5.20



Contents:

- **SBE approved Guidance on Remote Learning, Evaluation of Student Progress, and Graduating Seniors**
- **SBE approved Statewide Grading Policy for K-11, p.5**
- **Related Academics Program Updates, p.9**
- **Frequently Asked Questions, p.15**

For all documents and resources related to COVID-19 Grading, visit:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/covid-19-response-resources> (scroll down to Academics)

- **Full NCDPI recommendations, SBE approved on 3/27/20 and 4/23/20**
- **Recorded webinars and PPT presentations for Seniors and K-11**
- **Additional Guidance and FAQs**
- **One-Pager Overviews for Parents/Students, K-11 and Seniors**
 - **English and Spanish**
- **Slides for local use to share grading policies**

Approved by the State Board of Education, March 27, 2020

LEA/Charter School Guidance for Remote Learning, Evaluation of Student Progress, and Graduating Seniors

REMOTE LEARNING GUIDANCE

Remote learning is strongly encouraged across the state for all NC public school students to support continued student growth and well-being during this public health crisis.

NCDPI encourages LEAs/Charters to provide a variety of remote learning opportunities to engage all students, continue academic growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. It is paramount to remember the unprecedented condition students are learning in and to focus on engagement more than evaluation.

Remote Learning Definition:

In NC K-12 public schools, remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems.

Critical factors for effective remote learning:

Remote learning...

- is accessible by all students for which the learning is intended and is responsive to diverse learning groups;
- maintains consistent communication between instructional staff and students;
- addresses the curricular and instructional needs associated with appropriate standards;
- includes evidence of student learning; and,
- considers the whole child as well as the home learning environment.

GUIDANCE FOR GRADES K-5:

When remote learning occurs in grades K-5, LEAs/Charters will provide meaningful feedback to promote student growth.

If the above critical factors are met for remote learning, LEAs/Charters may evaluate student learning in the format the school already uses for grades K-5. LEAs/Charters will focus on supporting student progress and communicating feedback to students and families rather than on assigning grades.

In the event NC public schools do not reopen for face-to-face learning after May 15, additional statewide guidance for final grading to ensure equitable treatment for all students will be provided by the State Board of Education.

GUIDANCE FOR GRADES 6-11:

When remote learning occurs in grades 6-11, LEAs/Charters will provide meaningful feedback to promote student growth.

If the above critical factors are met for remote learning, LEAs/Charters may assign grades in the format the school already uses for grades 6-11 to evaluate progress. If the above critical factors are not met, student grades will not be negatively impacted; feedback is still expected.

In the event NC public schools do not reopen for face-to-face learning after May 15, additional statewide guidance for final grading to ensure equitable treatment for all students will be provided by the State Board of Education.

GUIDANCE FOR SENIORS, GRADES 12-13:

NCDPI's goals for the Senior Class of 2020 are to graduate high school seniors by meeting minimum SBE graduation requirements of 22 credits on the originally scheduled graduation date.

Considerations:

- Remote learning for graduating seniors will be prioritized to focus on meeting graduation requirements with a particular emphasis on students who were not meeting expectations as of March 13.
- NCDPI encourages that remote learning opportunities be available for seniors to engage students, continue student growth, and respond to social and emotional needs.
- Students may not be able to finish the instructional year equitably across NC. Access to, and quality of, remote learning for NC Public School students varies across the state.
- Students have made progress in their learning this semester and need recognition of their learning until school closure on March 16.
- Grading practices for transcript purposes will hold students harmless for the impact of COVID-19. Note: PowerSchool is in the process of developing a new grade scale to move from Pass/Fail to Pass/Withdraw due to COVID-19. "PC19" and "WC19" are the codes being added to PowerSchool.

SENIOR PLAN TO GRADUATE CLASS of 2020

- **Fall Courses:** Students will receive grades for fall courses as already stored, year-long and semester. Fall grades will count toward GPA.
 - For year-long courses, the fall term grade will be counted into the GPA. Note: Clear directions from PowerSchool will come at a later date.
 - For semester-long courses, the final course grade will be counted into the GPA.
- **Spring Courses:** Students will receive a Pass "PC19" or Withdrawal "WC19" based on their learning as of March 13 for spring courses.
- If the student has an F as of March 13 for graduation requirements, districts/schools shall provide remote learning opportunities for the student to improve to a passing grade. Opportunities for seniors to pass graduation requirements **shall** include:
 - participate in remote learning through the enrolled LEA/Charter;
 - enroll in NC Virtual Public School for all courses applicable; *
 - participate in credit recovery aligned to instructional topics covered through March 13; or
 - pass a final locally-developed assessment aligned to instructional topics covered through March 13. A final assessment can be in a variety of formats, including but not limited to a portfolio, interview, teacher-made test, project, and/or some other performance-based measure.
- Occupational Course of Study (OCS): If an OCS student completes 157 hours of the 225 hours of "paid work hours" graduation requirement, the student will receive a Pass "PC19". Note: This is dependent on a SBE amendment to GRAD-004.

**ADDED NOTE: NCVirtual will prioritize transfer enrollments for seniors with an F as of March 13 in courses required for graduation. The priority enrollment timeframe for senior graduation requirements will continue through April 3.*

Board of Education Policy Actions Effective March 27, 2020:

SBE GRAD 004:

Graduation Requirements

- Occupational Course of Study Paid Work Hour requirement: The SBE approved the reduction of the requirement of “225 of paid work hours” to “157 of paid work hours” for the graduating class of 2020.
- Future Ready Core requirements for CPR: The SBE approved the waiver of this requirement for the graduating class of 2020.

SBE GRAD-001:

Authority for Local School Boards to Exceed Minimum Graduation Requirements:

The SBE approved the suspension of this policy through June 30, 2020.

- LEAs and charters may allow graduating seniors to pursue credits beyond the minimum State Board of Education graduation requirements but may not require more than the state minimum requirements for graduation through June 30, 2020.
- For seniors currently enrolled and passing elective courses beyond state graduation requirements, credit can be awarded as described in this document above.

SBE TEST-003:

Requirements Regarding End-of-Course Assessments

The SBE approved the suspension of this policy through June 30, 2020.

This policy requires a student’s final grade to include at least 20% the end-of-course test score. Since EOC scores will not be available, this is not possible for this year and needs to be waived.

Approved by the State Board of Education, April 23, 2020

STATEWIDE GRADING POLICY FOR K-11 DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND EXTENDED SCHOOL BUILDING CLOSURES

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NC K-12 public schools have been closed for an extended time for in-person instruction. All NC local education agencies (LEAs) and charter schools continue to engage students through remote learning opportunities to support continued student growth and well-being during this public health crisis.

In NC K-12 public schools, remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems. It is paramount to remember the unprecedented condition students are learning in and to focus on engagement more than evaluation.

In an initial scan of grading guidance provided by other state education agencies, NCDPI staff have found that many states are leaving grading decisions up to local public school units with some general recommendations. Some of which include the use of a pass/no credit approach across some/all grades and ensuring a "no harm" approach as it pertains to grades. There is frequent mention of the importance of providing students feedback with a focus on academic growth. NC stakeholders, especially educators and higher education partners, have indicated that there is a great desire for consistency in issues of grading across our state at this time.

NCDPI Grading Workgroup Guiding Principles:

- To develop a statewide grading policy that positively impacts as many students as possible, *with grace and generosity*;
- To understand that no grading policy will solve issues of inequities that typically exist in communities and schools, especially when the school building environment and teacher access are not in place as equalizing and supportive factors;
- To validate the efforts of students, families, teachers, and support staff during remote learning;
- To mitigate potential negative impact of COVID-19 remote learning as much as possible on student grading;
- To address stakeholder concerns, including those from students and parents; and
- To remember that all voices may not be at the table.

NCDPI Recommendation is responsive to:

- Providing feedback and engagement to support continued student growth and well-being and not just evaluation;

- Equity and excellence issues regarding access to learning environment as well as student growth and achievement; and
- Extending grace and generosity through flexibility and varied learning opportunities.

In this time of uncertainty, the NCDPI Grading Workgroup requests the State Board of Education to approve statewide guidance for grading of NC’s public school students in Grades K-11 as described below:

NCDPI GRADING WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADES K-5:

- Students will receive no final grade in grades K-5.
- Instead of a final grade, teachers will provide year-end feedback for students regarding learning from the full academic school year, using a format determined locally.
- Teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.

RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADES 6-8:

- Students will receive a Pass “PC19” or Withdrawal “WC19” for the final course grades for all middle school courses.
 - A student’s grade will be held harmless for learning after March 13.
 - PC19 will be assigned to any student who was meeting expectations and passing the course as of March 13 or who worked to improve to the point of passing after March 13 through remote learning.
 - WC19 will be assigned to any student who was not passing the course as of March 13 and who was unable to improve to the point of passing the course through remote learning opportunities. A middle school course grade of WC19 does not equate to a failing course grade nor does it indicate that a grade retention should occur or that the course must be repeated. The grade WC19 simply indicates a lack of evidence of mastery of standards addressed in the particular content area.
- Teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.
- High school courses taken in middle school will follow the grading options presented below for high school students, with the understanding that if there is a numeric grade on the transcript it will not be calculated in the high school GPA per SBE policy, Course for Credit, CCRE-001.
- Due to COVID-19, NCDPI developed a new grade scale in PowerSchool to move from Pass/Fail to Pass/Withdraw. “PC19” and “WC19” have been added into PowerSchool.

RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADES 9-11:

Students in grades 9-11 and non-graduating seniors will be awarded final grades based on the following grading system for the 2019-20 school year.

Current Spring 2020 Courses:

- Students will be given a choice for how each final course grade will appear on the transcript for both year-long and semester courses currently in progress.
 - Students will have two options for each final course grade:
 - Numeric grade, the highest grade representing learning as of March 13 or as improved through the semester as remote learning continued
or
 - PC19 or WC19.
 - Students will determine how each final course grade will appear on the transcript at the end of the semester after advising from the teacher/school and in consultation with the parent/guardian.
 - When students choose to report a numeric grade as the final grade on the transcript, the numeric grade will be calculated into the cumulative GPA, following the guidelines in SBE policy GRAD-009.
 - When students choose to report a PC19 or WC19 as the final grade on the transcript, there is no GPA impact when using these grades.
 - When students in a yearlong course choose a PC19 or WC19 for the spring portion of the course, the fall term grade will be counted into the GPA. Clear directions for PowerSchool will come at a later date.
- **Additional Notes:**
 - Students will not receive a failing grade. LEAs/Charters will advise the use of WC19 for any student who is failing as of March 13 and was unable to improve through remote learning opportunities.
 - A final grade of PC19 does award a full unit of credit for a high school course while a grade of WC19 does not award a unit of credit.
 - WC19 does not equate to a failing course grade but indicates a lack of evidence of mastery of standards addressed in the particular course and that the school is unable to award a unit of credit.
 - NCDPI encourages LEAs/Charters to use all means possible to support student learning that has been impacted by COVID-19 in the future, such as Credit Recovery and Repeating a Course for Credit (SBE-CCRE-001).
 - Issuing a temporary grade of Incomplete may be used locally in instances when the student, parent/guardian, teacher, and school administration determine it is appropriate and develop a clear, time-bound plan to complete all course requirements.
 - Students will maintain the grades for fall courses as already stored, year-long and semester. Fall 2019 final grades will be calculated into a student's GPA.

STUDENT PROMOTION AND RETENTION:

- Student promotion and retention will remain the decision of the school principal and staff.
- NCDPI strongly recommends that districts/schools only consider retention of students if the retention consideration process was already well underway for a student prior to

March 13, 2020, including communication and collaboration with the student's parent/family.

- If a student was being considered for retention prior to March 13 and is still being considered for retention, NCDPI strongly encourages the development of a local plan to ensure effective communication and collaboration between the school and family to determine the most effective path forward for the student, especially given these extraordinary circumstances that students/families find themselves in as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and extended school closure.

NCDPI RECOMMENDATION FOR SBE POLICY AMENDMENTS:

SBE Policy GRAD-009:

High school transcript standards

NCDPI recommends temporary amendment of this policy through June 30, 2020.

- Sections of this board policy addressing grading scale and GPA calculations require temporary amendment to accommodate the SBE's decisions on both the Graduating Senior (SBE approved March 27, 2020) and K-11 grading systems to be used statewide to complete the 2019-2020 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT FOR GRADING WORKGROUP:

Input on the NCDPI Grading Workgroup recommendation came from across the state:

- SBE Student Advisors and Superintendent Advisors
- District Superintendents and Charter School Leaders
- NCASA and NCSSA recommendations
- UNC System Admission Directors/Enrollment Managers
- NC Independent Colleges and Universities Admission Directors
- CAO Advisory Group, representing all regions and charter schools
- SBE Teacher/Principal Advisors
- Internal NCDPI staff representing all academic areas, regional support teams, and charter schools.
- Students/Families, through contacts initiated by members of the public

Feedback varied from educators and administrators. However, students of diverse backgrounds did clearly state that student options for high school grades were necessary to meet the needs of a variety of students. The UNC System administrators voiced a slight preference for grades, especially those C or better, for more options in the future, and assured NCDPI that they will continue to work with our students to mitigate any negative implications of COVID-19 in future application processes.

RELATED ACADEMIC PROGRAM UPDATES

Advanced Learning and Gifted Education

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Programs and Learners

Under General Statute § 115C-150.5, each local board of education has established a plan which outlines the different types of services provided in a variety of settings to meet the diversity of identified academically or intellectually gifted students.

In keeping with this charge, as we have shifted to remote learning across the state, NCDPI encourages all districts and charter schools to continue efforts to differentiate instruction with learning opportunities to enrich, extend, and accelerate the NC Standard Course of Study for AIG and advanced learners and to find ways to support their social and emotional learning needs during this time. We also encourage districts and charter schools to consider the continuum of services available in the Local AIG plan and determine ways in which these services can be delivered effectively via remote learning means.

<https://files.nc.gov/dpi/documents/advancedlearning/aig/ncaig-program-standards.pdf>

Career and College Promise (CCP), including CIHS and Dual Enrollment Courses

For all dual enrollment opportunities, continue to work closely with representatives from partner colleges and universities for completion of college courses, if possible. The goal is for students to complete CCP courses and other dual enrollment courses within the current term. However, we understand that there may be a multitude of factors which may impact this completion.

If the student does not have the opportunity to access or is unable to access college coursework, NCDPI will need to focus on the high school and college transcripts separately. If a student completes the course, the earned college grade will appear on the college transcript. The college transcript is the authoritative source for college grades. For seniors, even if the course is completed, the student will receive a "PC19" or a "WC19" on the high school transcript. For grades 9-11, dual enrollment course grades on the high school transcript will follow the same guidelines as for other high school courses.

CIHS with UNC and NCICU

LEAs and CIHS who partner with UNC System institutions and Independent Colleges and Universities are working closely with representatives from their partner colleges and universities to serve our CIHS students well. All CIHS students are working towards effective completion of courses. Guidance and protocols related to K-12 students may differ from that pertaining to individual institutions of higher education. Please refer to recent State Board policy for high school grading and high school transcripts.

CCP with NC Community College System

Recognizing the need to support student academic success, the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the NC Community College System (NCCCS) seek to ensure high school students participating in the Career and College Promise program are not negatively impacted by the disruption of learning caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Please see the joint-memo sent to all Superintendents and Community College Presidents on March 27, 2020: [CCP COVID19 Guidance](#)

AP/IB/CIE Course Guidance

High school grading for these courses will follow the guidance above for grades on transcripts for the Spring. Guidance from each outside agency regarding exams is provided below:

Advanced Placement

College Board has invested in an at-home AP exam option for students following the exam schedule published [HERE](#). Information below should be used to help guide coordinators, instructors, and students through the AP exam experience.

- [2020 AP Testing Guide](#) (.pdf/10.9 MB): The guide, designed for educators to walk their students through test day, provides information about logistics around exam day.
- [2020 AP Exam Day Checklist](#) (.pdf/526 KB): Teachers should have their students complete this checklist for each exam they take and keep it next to them while testing.
- [Explainer Videos](#): New videos are available to give students quick, easily accessible information about their test day experience, what they need to do to prepare, exam security, and more. Explore the [playlist](#).
- Online [AP Classes and Review Sessions](#) prep week: The week before exams, online AP classes will focus on the exam day experience and sample exam questions.
- For more information and all AP news and updates please see <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update>

International Baccalaureate

- The May 2020 examinations, as scheduled between April 30 and May 22, for Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme students will no longer be held.
- Depending on what they registered for, students will be awarded a Diploma or a Course Certificate which reflects their standard of work. This is based on a student's coursework and the established assessment expertise, rigor, and quality control already built into the programmes.
- [Download this document](#) for guidance regarding the requirements for internal assessment (IA) for each subject group.
- The IB will require schools to submit the coursework for all candidates. IB will externally mark work that is usually marked by teachers, instead of taking samples and applying moderation. The deadline of April 20 is preferred for all schools to upload their work to ensure results by July 5. Schools can request extensions for individual components or subjects directly with the IBO by emailing support@ibo.org.
- Full details and FAQs are posted on the IB's [COVID-19FAQ site](#).

Cambridge International

- The international examinations scheduled for May/June 2020 will not be run in any country. This includes Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge AICE Diploma and Cambridge Pre-U.
- Schools will be asked to collaborate with Cambridge to ensure that candidates' subject grades are based on a range of evidence that represent their achievement levels as set by rigorous Cambridge programme standards. Cambridge will provide an update directly with the schools involved.
- For frequently asked questions, see the [Information for schools page](#) with more information.
- Cambridge wants to do everything they can to support schools in these efforts and have published a 'Teaching and learning when school is closed' section on their website: www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-for-schoolscovid-19

Career and Technical Education

CTE State Assessments and Federal Reporting

After consultation with The Department of Education – Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, NC CTE has waived the requirement of a CTE State Assessment for state and federal reporting, which is typically included in 5S4. As a result, students enrolled in year-long or Spring 2020 CTE courses with a 100-item post-assessment will not be required to take the CTE State Assessment.

Guidance on Exceptional Children and CTE

As a result of the CTE waiver for the State Assessment above, Exceptional Children following the Occupational Course of Study and enrolled in CTE courses will not be required to participate in the CTE-Indicator Assessment (CTE-IA).

Credentials for Career and Technical Education

Credential opportunities should be provided if at all possible. It is best for students to have these opportunities to accomplish credentials that align to career goals. Many credentialing partners have made credential preparation content available free of charge so current students may continue learning virtually.

Course Sequencing and Prerequisite Considerations for 9th-11th Grade Students

Perkins V places a new focus on Career Pathways for CTE with specific sequences of two or three courses. PSUs will need to consider how best to prepare and place student's regarding content not covered during the 2019-20 Academic year. For example, if a student was enrolled in IC00 Construction Core and did not complete all of the NCCER modules required to earn the credential for this course, priority should be placed on the student completing the remaining modules as soon as possible once enrolled in IC41 Electrical Trades I, IC21 Carpentry I, etc. so they are prepared for success in the subsequent course. Doing so will ensure that students have the opportunity to complete required NCCER modules and be successful in their next level course.

English Learners (EL)

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), public schools must ensure that EL students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs. EL programs must be reasonably calculated to enable EL students to attain English proficiency and meaningful participation in the standard educational program comparable to their never-EL peers.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf>

Exceptional Children (EC) Guidance

EC students are general education students first and will follow the same guidelines as above. When an LEA/Charter continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure, the school must ensure that students with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities, including the provision of FAPE. (34 CFR §§ 104.4, 104.33 (Section 504) and 28 CFR § 35.130 (Title II of the ADA)). SEAs, LEAs, and schools must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP developed under IDEA, or a plan developed under Section 504. (34 CFR §§ 300.101 and 300.201 (IDEA), and 34 CFR § 104.33 (Section 504)).

Graduation Certificate

If a student has been identified as a “child with a disability” as defined by G.S. 115C-106.3(1) and has not earned a high school diploma, a local board of education shall award the student a Graduation Certificate and shall allow the student to participate in graduation exercises, provided the student has satisfied local, nonacademic graduation requirements. The student can remain in school until the age of 22. The student can continue participating in remote learning activities until (1) the 2019-2020 school year ends, or (2) the parent and the LEA agree that the student is ready to exit. Please reference GRAD-010 State Board of Education Policy for the Graduation Certificate requirements.

Occupational Course of Study (OCS)

The SBE approved the reduction of the requirement of “225 of paid work hours” to “157 of paid work hours” for the graduating class of 2020. All other graduation requirements remain and follow the guidance provided above for grading for seniors. If a senior has not yet earned these paid work hours, a student has two options for completion during this school closure time period:

1. If the student is currently in a paid employment situation (i.e., restaurant, grocery store) these may be verified and counted towards the paid employment hours.
2. Alternatively, seniors following the OCS could earn credit towards the graduation work hours requirement through participation in activities targeting the essential employability skills. Guidance and resources for this option are located in the OCS LiveBinder COVID-19 tab. <https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1996892>

Remote Learning Resources and Information

All NCDPI information about remote learning guidance in response to COVID-19 may be located at the NC Remote Learning website located at this [link](#).

Standards, Curriculum and Instruction

The NC Standard Course of Study standards are sequential in nature and cumulative across grade levels. The goal is for students to be career and college ready by the end of high school. While remote learning will continue through school building closures, formative assessments in the Fall will inform needed review and remediation for gaps in understanding due to the remote learning of the 2019-2020 school year and the COVID-19 crisis.

Efforts will be made throughout K-12 to provide additional opportunities for students to engage with course content missed during the COVID-19 crisis. These determinations are still being made on state and local levels but may involve a period of remediation prior to starting new course(s)/work.

Athletics

Athletic Eligibility for the 2020-2021 Academic Year

The State Board of Education approved the following:

Regardless of the school organization pattern, a student who meets Local Education Agency (LEA) / Charter School Promotion standards for the 2019-2020 academic year automatically meets the courses passed requirement for the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic year.

NCAA Eligibility Requirements:

Students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date who initially enroll full time at an NCAA school in 2020-21 will be academically eligible to receive athletics scholarship, practice and compete in the first year of full-time enrollment if they meet the following criteria:

Division I*

- Meet the core-course progression requirement for NCAA-approved core courses (10 core units, seven of which must be in English, math or science) before start of the seventh semester; and
- Present a 2.300 or higher core-course GPA in such courses.

Division II*

- Complete 10 NCAA-approved core course units before start of the seventh semester; and
- Present a 2.200 or higher core-course GPA in such courses.

*Note: These criteria do not include ACT/SAT scores. For PC19 grades, they will only be counted into the GPA if it's helpful to the student. See FAQ for more information.

Link to the NCAA Eligibility FAQ:

http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/COVID-19_Public.pdf

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REMOTE LEARNING, GRADING K-11 and SENIORS



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

All documents released by SBE/NCDPI supporting the COVID-19 grading policies are available at the following URL:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/covid-19-response-resources>

Deputy Superintendents Dr. Emory and Dr. Stegall have made [a series of short YouTube videos](#) addressing some of the typical questions received from students, families, and the field.

POWERSCHOOL DOCUMENTATION

All of the documents and quick reference guides for implementation of COVID-19 grading systems in PowerSchool/SIS are [available here](#).

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON REMOTE LEARNING and GRADING

Q: Does an LEA have to provide the same remote learning experience for all students?

A: No. This will depend on the home environment and needs of the students. Just like schools/teachers differentiate for learning during the typical school experience in the building, that will need to happen in this remote learning environment as well and will need to consider diverse learning needs, including those of EC, EL, AIG, etc.

Q: Should an LEA/Charter stop teaching if one student in the LEA/Charter does not have access to a device?

A: No. It is paramount that remote learning continues. LEAs/Charters are encouraged to use all resources and equipment at their disposal to ensure learning during this public health crisis.

- NCDPI is pleased to hear that some LEAs/Charters are loaning out their school-based laptops for student use; feeder elementary schools' laptops are also being considered for use by upper grade levels.
- For some students, remote learning may be individual sessions over the phone and for others, a zoom class may work, and for others, an assignment via email may work. It is SBE policy that no grades be given if learning is not accessible for all students involved in the class; this does not include extenuating circumstances like illness of a student or refusal of a student to complete work.

Q: Does 'accessible by all students' mean providing school-owned laptops or other devices to the students for remote learning at home?

A: Not necessarily. NCDPI encourages LEAs/Charters to provide a variety of remote learning opportunities to engage all students, continue academic growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. Remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems. NCDPI does encourage the use of all available devices possible for student use. And

use of print materials or other differentiated assignments may be required to support individual student needs.

Q: What are some examples of schedules or an advised amount of time children should spend online for remote learning?

A: Please visit the NCDPI Remote Learning website for [instructional resources](#) and [parent resources](#) that address this topic. The experience should include accommodations/modifications commensurate with the student's unique needs identified in any specialized educational plan.

Q: Does remote learning content allow for instructor-based decisions? Could this expectation include new content? Make-up work? Alternative assignments?

A: Yes. This is instructor-based with district guidance. Even though buildings are closed, school is still on. Be responsive to remote learning factors based on the individual student needs, especially those related to the home environment, and continue student learning.

Q: The guidance from NCDPI states that if the critical factors for remote learning cannot be met, student grades will not be negatively impacted. Can it be inferred, that students' grades may be improved under these circumstances?

A: School is still on for learning. Student grades can improve and the content can be new content. It is important to consider the critical factors for remote learning in determining how grading will occur locally. Remote learning can be differentiated in the same classroom. For example, if a teacher has 20 students in her biology class and knows two students who do not have internet access, in some cases, she can differentiate the assignment so that those two students have another reasonable way to complete it via paper/pencil, phone, etc. If one of those two students simply refuses to do it and could reasonably have been expected to complete the assignment, that does not prevent the other 19 students from getting a grade. An instance where a teacher should not grade an assignment at all would be if the teacher really cannot be sure that it was reasonable to expect completion by the whole class considering the critical factors for remote learning.

Q: How will NCVirtual report final grades?

A: NCVirtual's final grade reports for Spring 2020 and Yearlong 2019-20 courses have been modified to provide schools with the necessary data to implement the temporary statewide grading policy due to COVID-19. For all students grades 6-12, the final grade report will contain the numerical grade from the March 10th progress report and the numerical grade representing the cumulative course average.

- Schools are responsible for looking at the two numerical grades to determine whether seniors should be given a PC19 or WC19 for the course. For 9-12 students and middle school students taking high school courses, schools are responsible for using the reported grades to help advise students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) on whether to take the highest numerical grade or a PC19/WC19. For middle school students enrolled in middle school courses, schools will use the reported numeric grades to determine whether a PC19 or WC19 is given. All middle school students, no matter what course they are enrolled in, will also have comments on their academic needs/strengths and social-emotional perspective to be used by schools to add in transition to the next

course. As always, schools are responsible for inputting grades for NCVirtual courses into PowerSchool.

- Final grade reports will be available via the NCVirtual registration system on:
 - May 14, 2020 for Early Start calendar courses
 - June 4, 2020 for Traditional calendar courses

Additional information on NCVirtual’s grading response to this period of school building closure is located at <https://ncvps.org/coronavirus-updates/>.

Q: How will post-secondary institutions view student grades from COVID-19?

A: Post-secondary institutions are in the same scenario as K-12 public schools. They are adapting to the situation as the pandemic continues and understand the widespread impact of COVID-19. NCDPI continues to work closely with the UNC System Office, NC Independent Colleges and Universities and NC Community College System to ensure the most effective transitions possible to support student success. NCAA guidelines for eligibility have also been adapted as a result of COVID-19 for graduating seniors and other high school students as this will impact their overall high school transcripts.

GRADES K-11:

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS and GRADING QUESTIONS

[See Also: End of Year Grading and Promotion Summary Document \(Grade K-11\)](#)

Q: How do we assign final grades in grades K-11?

A: School is still on for learning and final grades are not to be resolved until each LEA/charter’s end date for this year. Based on remote learning critical factors, LEAs/Charters may assign grades for individual assignments as discussed throughout this document and in documents adopted by the SBE as a result of this crisis. For FINAL COURSE GRADES for students in grades K-11, all NC school districts and charters will follow the [SBE approved grading policy approved on April 23, 2020](#) and the [one-pager overview](#) with additional technical or implementation documentation issued from PowerSchool/SIS to support data entry and logistics:

GRADES K-5:

- Students will receive no final grade in grades K-5.
- Instead of a final grade, teachers will provide year-end feedback for students regarding learning from the full academic school year, using a format determined locally.
- Teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.

GRADES 6-8:

- Students will receive a Pass “PC19” or Withdrawal “WC19”* for the final course grades for all middle school courses.
 - A student’s grade will be held harmless for learning after March 13.

- PC19 will be assigned to any student who was meeting expectations and passing the course as of March 13 or who worked to improve to the point of passing after March 13 through remote learning.
- WC19 will be assigned to any student who was not passing the course as of March 13 and who was unable to improve to the point of passing the course through remote learning opportunities. A middle school course grade of WC19 does not equate to a failing course grade nor does it indicate that a grade retention should occur or that the course must be repeated. The grade WC19 simply indicates a lack of evidence of mastery of standards addressed in the particular content area.
- Teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.
- High school courses taken in middle school will follow the grading options presented below for high school students, with the understanding that if there is a numeric grade on the transcript it will not be calculated in the high school GPA per SBE policy, Course for Credit, CCRE-001.

GRADES 9-11 and non-graduating seniors:

Current Spring 2020 Courses:

- Students will be given a choice for how each final course grade will appear on the transcript for both year-long and semester courses currently in progress.
 - Students will have two options for each final course grade:
 - Numeric grade, the highest grade representing learning as of March 13 or as improved through the semester as remote learning continued
or
 - PC19 or WC19.
 - Students will determine how each final course grade will appear on the transcript at the end of the semester after advising from the teacher/school and in consultation with the parent/guardian.
 - When students choose to report a numeric grade as the final grade on the transcript, the numeric grade will be calculated into the cumulative GPA, following the guidelines in SBE policy GRAD-009.
 - When students choose to report a PC19 or WC19 as the final grade on the transcript, there is no GPA impact when using these grades.
 - When students in a yearlong course choose a PC19 or WC19 for the spring portion of the course, the fall term grade will be counted into the GPA.

Q: What about students in grades 9-11 currently in year-long courses?

A: Students will maintain the grades for fall courses as already stored, year-long and semester. Fall 2019 final grades will be calculated into a student's GPA, independent of the Spring 2020 semester choice for grading. PowerSchool/SIS has released detailed instructions just as they did with the Senior Quick Reference Guide showing how to implement these policies in both year-long and semester courses for high schools [available here](#). If a student chooses a numeric grade for a year-long course for the Spring semester, two half-credit grades will be

entered. If a student's cumulative grade is higher than that of the fall or spring semester grade, change those grades to represent the cumulative grade. This will ensure that all year-long and block semester credit courses receive the same parity, if numeric grades are chosen.

Q: Will students in grades 9-11 who are able to complete the course receive Honors, AP/IB/CIE, and/or CCP added weight for their GPA?

A: Students in grades 9-11 are still receiving regular grades for the courses they are in, dependent on the remonte learning factors. At the conclusion of the semester, each student will have a choice with each high school course as to whether they choose to report a final grade on their transcript reflecting EITHER the highest numerical grade earned or PC19. If the student reports the traditional, numeric grade the additional quality point system for honors and college-level courses still applies.

Q: How will CCP students' grades be handled for students in grades 9-11 and non-graduating seniors?

A: In the same manner as all other high school courses. If a student completes the course, the earned college grade will appear on the college transcript and the student's choice of either the numeric final grade or PC19 will appear on the high school transcript. If the student does not have the opportunity to access or is unable to access college coursework, NCDPI will "separate out" the dual enrollment. The college transcript is the authoritative source for college grades but SBE policies on grading apply to high school transcripts, even for CCP courses. [Please see CCP COVID-19 Guidance for more information.](#)

Q: What about promotion / retention of students for the 2019-2020 school year?

A: School is still on for learning. Continue to follow best practices to ensure student success. Based on the SBE approved policy:

- Student promotion and retention will remain the decision of the school principal and staff.
- NCDPI recommends that districts/schools only consider retention of students if the retention consideration process was already well underway for a student prior to March 13, 2020 and that there was well-documented communication with the student's family discussing the possibility of retention prior to that date.
- If a student was being considered for retention prior to March 13 and is still being considered for retention, NCDPI strongly encourages the development of a local plan to ensure effective communication and collaboration between the school and family to determine the most effective path forward for the student, especially given these extraordinary circumstances that students/families find themselves in as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and extended school closure.

Q: Does the Graduating Senior grading policy apply to Grades 12 and 13 in a Cooperative Innovative High School?

A: No. The Graduating Seniors Grading policy is only intended for those seniors who are graduating in June 2020. Non-graduating seniors would follow guidance the SBE adopted from Grades K-11 and non-graduating seniors.

Q: What about credit recovery and other options for high school students in grades 9-11 who do not have a passing numeric grade or PC19 at the end of the semester but instead received a final course grade of WC19?

A: The SBE has made clear that students will not receive a failing grade. LEAs/Charters will advise the use of WC19 for any student who is failing as of March 13 and was unable to improve through remote learning opportunities. WC19 does not equate to a failing course grade but indicates a lack of evidence of mastery of standards addressed in the particular course and that the school is unable to award a unit of credit.

NCDPI encourages LEAs/Charters to use all means possible to support student learning that has been impacted by COVID-19 in the future, such as Credit Recovery and Repeating a Course for Credit (SBE-CCRE-001). Issuing a temporary grade of Incomplete may be used locally in instances when the student, parent/guardian, teacher, and school administration determine it is appropriate and develop a clear, time-bound plan to complete all course requirements.

Q: What documents are required for K-8? Can you provide further guidance and examples?

A: Based on SBE policy, the following documents are required:

- For K-5, (1) student/parent feedback instead of final grades and (2) a transition document for the next year's teachers.
- For 6-8, (1) a transition document for the next year's teachers.

For K-5 students, instead of a final grade, teachers will provide year-end feedback for students/families regarding learning from the full academic school year, using a format determined locally.

For students in K-5 and 6-8, teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.

Parent/Student Feedback for K-5:

- Locally determined. Consider developing consistent documents for use across an LEA/Charter appropriate to each grade level. Involve a team approach in the development.
- Audience: Students/parents/guardians
- May be part of the transition document.
- Recommend comments for all content areas and other applicable programs.

Transition Documents for K-8:

- Locally determined. Consider developing consistent documents for use across an LEA/Charter appropriate to each grade level. Involve a team approach in the development to ensure effective communication.
- Audience: Next year's teachers/school

- Must address the student's strengths and needs from an academic perspective:
 - Recommend information regarding all content areas or courses
 - Intent is not to address every standard for every course; but overall thoughts to support successful re-entry into schooling in Fall 2020.
- Must address the student's strengths and needs from a social/emotional perspective:
 - Recommend teachers sharing student social/emotional context during remote learning across varied learning experiences, especially because some may have different situations to share.
 - Encourage teachers to share observations and interventions that had positive impact and to be careful not to diagnose mental health disorders.
 - For an LEA/Charter implementing a focus on SEL competencies and MTSS, consider possible integration.
- NCDPI recommends LEAs/Charters to store the transition documents in cumulative folders to ensure effective student transitions for Fall 2020, especially if a student moves from your LEA/Charter to another school.
- **LEA/Charter SAMPLES:** NCDPI will provide an online space to share templates.
 - To submit contributions and view contributions, see this google folder: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OzfcFPxLXEWvI7uFkvrXoMbTzmNxo fgO>

Q: Are non-graduating seniors at Cooperative Innovative High Schools/Early Colleges following the same grading guidance as juniors?

A: Yes.

Q: What happens if a student is unreachable to make the choice for the final grade in grades 9-11? When students make their choice of final reporting of spring grades at the end of the school year, can that decision be changed when 20-21SY begins during the 45 day grace period?

A: If a student is unreachable by the end of the school year to make a choice for the final grade in high school courses, students will be given a PC 19 if they were passing the course and a WC 19 if they were failing the course as of March 13 and were not able to improve the grade. Once school buildings re-open, these students will have 45 days to change their grade to a numeric grade, if he/she chooses. This 45-day grace period is intended to allow for changes necessary because a student was unreachable at the conclusion of the 2019-20 school year and not for whole scale changes. However, if there are unique circumstances for a student situation that arise, a grade may be changed during the 45-day grace period. NCDPI recommends to document any changes for future reference.

Q: Do we have any guidance on issuing diploma endorsements?

A: The requirements for earning diploma endorsements are unchanged. If the student earns the credits and meets the various requirements for earning a diploma endorsement, even using a mark of PC19, then the endorsement is to be awarded.

Q: For middle school students taking Math 1 or other high school courses in middle school, if students select the numeric grade, will that show up on the transcript even if it is not factored into GPA?

A: Yes, in keeping with the normal reporting guidelines for such courses.

Q: For grades 9-11, if students are unreachable should the school assign a PC19 with a 45 day grace period when we return to school - even if they were failing on March 13?

A: No. If a student is unreachable and unresponsive at the conclusion of this school year, the district/school should assign EITHER PC19 if the student had a passing grade OR WC19 if the student had a failing grade. The grace period at the beginning of next fall could be used to resolve outstanding issues if there is a need to change the mark from WC19 to PC19. However, if the student simply must do more work to get to the point of passing, credit recovery done over summer or during next school year would be the best option.

Q: We use Standards Based Grading rather than a traditional report card. Can we still use SBG with comments?

A: Yes and take into consideration the intent of the policy. Traditional report cards will use “NG19” in place of a final grade in K-5 for PowerSchool entry. For non-traditional report cards, including Standards-Based Report Cards, it is not necessary to enter the “NG19” for a final grade. The intent is for students to be held harmless during remote learning for any type of grading when they were not in the school building, so as a result, we would not want parents/students to receive numerous “not progressing marks” for standards during remote learning due to issues of access which may be misinterpreted.

Q: Does this guidance also pertain to quarter grades entered into PowerSchool?

A: No. This guidance is specific for final grades only. LEAs and charters have flexibility as it pertains to grading before the final grades. Final grades must follow the SBE approved policy. PowerSchool guidance documents provide additional information.

GRADUATING SENIORS:

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS, GRADUATION & GRADING QUESTIONS

[See Also: Senior Grading & Graduation Summary](#)

Q: My LEA/Charter has additional course requirements beyond the SBE 22 credits. Can a student graduate with only the SBE minimum 22 credits?

A: Yes. The SBE approved policy indicates that any student meeting the SBE graduation requirements will graduate, even if there are local additional course requirements. All local graduation requirements are optional and cannot keep a student from graduating.

Q: Now that grades are determined, can we go ahead and graduate seniors?

A: No. NCDPI encourages that remote learning opportunities be available for seniors to engage students, continue student growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. This is inclusive of all student populations on the Future Ready Core and Occupational Course of Study pathways. School is not over; graduation will occur at the end of the school year. PowerSchool

has clear directions for grade entry and graduation procedures. For students who have completed graduation requirements and are enlisting into the military, NCDPI does support early graduation for those students.

Q: Do we go ahead and give seniors who are failing a WC19? Do we work with them to pass the entire course or just content to March 13?

A: No. Seniors who were passing a course as of March 13 will be issued a final course grade of “PC19”, but those who were not passing as of that time shall be given an opportunity to work on improving their grade to a passing mark. The scope of content to be addressed is only up through that content addressed in the course by March 13, not the entire course. The grade of “WC19” could be used for a course that is no longer needed for graduation requirements OR at the conclusion of the school year for a student who was failing as of March 13 and did not take any action to remediate content despite the LEA/Charter’s best efforts to support the student with remote learning opportunities during the extended school building closure period.

Q: Are seniors who were passing courses as of March 13 able to continue working via remote learning to improve their grade?

A: Yes. LEAs/Charters are encouraged to provide remote learning opportunities to engage seniors, continue student growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. School is not over for students. For all courses currently in progress, seniors will receive a grade of “PC19” or “WC19” on their transcripts, not the typical numeric grade. The priority is for schools to provide an opportunity for those seniors who were failing to get to passing status. LEAs/Charters may consider adopting an invitational approach to the learning opportunities for seniors during the school closure period. This could present a unique learning opportunity for seniors if approached realistically and strategically. NCDPI fully supports options for students that allow them to improve their learning and grades, including grades from the fall semester of year-long courses still in progress. [The PowerSchool senior quick reference guide](#) describes how that works.

Q: How does this new policy ensure that all seniors across the state are treated equally in the calculation for GPA?

A: All NC public school seniors are being treated equally in that the same grading system is being applied for all high school courses on transcripts using the “PC19” or “WC19” grades. Even if a senior completes a course through CCP, AP, NCVPS, those final grades will still be a “PC19” or a “WC19” on the high school transcript. This includes CCP courses taught in a mini-semester format or any other courses within the spring 2020 semester.

Q: How will Pass/Withdraw work for graduating seniors in year long courses?

A: Due to the variety of high school schedules represented in North Carolina, NCDPI will be proportionally calculating fall grades into the GPA. For seniors in yearlong courses, the actual grade entered at the end of the first semester will be included in GPA calculations in parity with students in 4x4 block courses. The year-long course will essentially be divided into two half-credit courses determined by the semester break. [The PowerSchool quick reference guide document released in early April provides additional technical information.](#)

Q: Will seniors lose any quality points (honors, AP/IB/CIE, CCP) that go towards their GPA?

A: Seniors will only receive a course grade of “PC19” or “WC19” for spring courses on the high school transcript. Spring courses will not be calculated in the GPA. All fall courses will receive traditional grades and will be calculated into the GPA with appropriate weighting.

Q: If college course grades are not on the high school transcript, will this impact the student’s ability to obtain or transfer their degrees or credits?

A: No. The college transcript has always been and remains the authoritative source of grades for college courses.

Q: Can seniors earn traditional grades through NCVPS, CCP, a virtual academy, or Charter school if they complete the course?

A: No. Seniors will only earn a “PC19” or “WC19” for spring courses on their transcripts. There are no exceptions.

Q: In your discussions with the UNC System, how will students be impacted?

A: NCDPI is having continued discussions with the UNC System and NCICU Admission Directors/Enrollment Managers. Both IHE groups see the plan for seniors to be reasonable and do not foresee any impact on students who have already been admitted to their IHEs. For students who are waitlisted, NCDPI and the IHEs are having discussions on how to gather further information regarding a student’s achievement and growth. NCDPI has brainstormed with the IHEs on different ways to do this and IHEs are committed to work with students. The UNC Board of Governors has also responded to COVID-19 by approving new Minimum Admissions Requirements effective immediately in light of the current public health crisis. A student may meet MAR by either the high school GPA “or” standardized test score to be considered for admissions rather than “and” which was the prior policy. For more information, see the [UNC System Office policy manual](#) and go to Chapter 700.1.

Q: Will seniors graduating in spring 2020 be required to meet the CPR requirements?

A: No. Both the State Board of Education and the General Assembly have waived this graduation requirement for the class graduating in May/June 2020.