

October 26, 2020

Dear Families,

Over the past month, I've been visiting schools throughout the city and have felt such a strong sense of community both in-person and virtually. I've been especially proud to see our schools promoting safe and healthy learning environments—both indoors and outdoors. In every class I see, students and staff members have been diligent about protecting one another's health and safety, wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and more. Whether your child is learning in school for part of the week or fully remotely, ensuring safe, high-quality learning experiences remains our number one priority.

As your child's learning journey continues this year, it is critical that you have a clear picture of their progress. Grades provide a common language for understanding and communicating with your child's teacher(s) about their strengths and areas for growth. However, given the challenges we have been navigating together throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have recognized the need to update our grading policy. In this letter, I will share information about the grading policy for the 2020-21 school year.

Please note that our policy reflects feedback from school communities, school leaders, and many other stakeholders across the city. We have heard loud and clear that as students continue to adapt to remote and blended learning, our grading policy must also evolve to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of our students. The 2020-21 grading policy aims to provide you with a clear picture of your child's progress while honoring each individual student's experience adapting to new ways of learning.

What You Need to Know About Grading in the 2020-21 School Year

Here are key elements of this year's grading policy:

- Student grades will still be based on academic progress and performance, considering students' entire body of work in each subject. Grades reflect students' level of understanding and skills in a subject as of a specific point in time.
- This year, each school selects its own grading scale from among several options. Examples of common grading scales include the 1-4 scale, the numerical scale (100 points), and the alphabetical scale (A-D).
- Schools' grading policies will reflect the new ways students complete their work in blended and remote learning models. This means flexibility with assignments, giving students different ways to show what they have learned, and more.
- Families have flexibility in determining how passing final grades are reflected on student records. This is an option for families who prefer to have their child's performance reflected more generally (such as "Pass" instead of a numerical grade) as they continue to adapt to blended and remote learning.
- Additionally, students will not receive failing grades if they have not yet met the learning outcomes for their courses; instead, they will receive another mark ("needs improvement" or "course in progress," depending on grade level) and will be provided with additional time and support to ensure they can master course concepts and earn credit as appropriate.
- While students must continue to participate in remote and blended learning each day, attendance will not be a factor in student grades. Attending school, participating in class, and demonstrating understanding are all essential components of student learning, and school communities must make every effort to ensure that students attend school, with a goal of every student, every day.

Summary of Key Components of Grading Policy in 2020-21

| Grade(s) | Grading Policy Summary |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 3K & Pre-K | No change because students do not receive report cards or grades. |
| K – 5 th | Schools select their grading scales for marking period and final grades. Students will receive grades of “needs improvement” (N) in place of failing grades. Parents/guardians may choose to have any passing grade updated to a passing grade of “meets standards” (MT). |
| 6 th – 8 th | Schools select their grading scales for marking period and final grades. Students will receive grades of “course in progress” (NX) in place of failing grades. Parents/guardians may choose to have any passing grade updated to “pass” (P). Grades of “P” will not be factored into students’ GPAs. |
| 9 th – 12 th | Schools select their grading scales for marking period and final grades. Students will receive grades of “course in progress” (NX) in place of failing grades. Parents/guardians may choose to have any passing grade updated to a passing grade of “credit” (CR). Grades of “CR” will not be factored into students’ GPAs. |

If your middle or high school student receives a “course in progress” grade, their school will support them in continuing with their learning beyond the end of the term, as appropriate for the grade level and subject area. Teachers will target instruction to the individual needs of each student. Together, this will help your student make progress toward the learning outcomes for their courses.

If You Need More Information

You should reach out to your child’s teacher or principal for more information about your child’s progress and your school’s expectations and scales for grading. When your child’s school issues report cards, your child’s grades will also appear in your New York City Schools Account (mystudent.nyc). If you do not have a New York City Schools Account, visit schools.nyc.gov/nycsa or contact your child’s school for more information.

Blended Learning Opt-In Period: November 2 – 15, 2020

Please also note that fully remote families will soon have the option to opt-in to blended learning, meaning that students will learn in the school building for part of the week, and remotely at home the rest of the week. From Monday, November 2 through Sunday, November 15, families will have the option to fill out a [form](#) indicating their wish to change learning preferences. Students who change from remote to blended will begin in-person between the weeks of November 30 and December 7, and will be informed by their school their start date and schedule. Schools will make every effort to accommodate these requests based on programming and space capacity.

As always, we are grateful for your partnership in your child’s education. We remain focused on delivering a strong, supportive, engaging learning experience for your student, no matter where they are learning.

Our new grading policy honors their hard work—and yours—during this unprecedented time. We will continue to support you and your child every step of the way.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
 Chancellor
 New York City Department of Education

P.S.: If you would like to learn more or have questions specifically about health and safety in our schools, please join us this Tuesday from 6:30-7:30pm for an #NYCOfficeHours teletownhall. Just dial 1-800-280-9461 at 6:30pm to hear directly from the experts!

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