

DCPS Community,

As we continue to adapt learning to take place outside of the classroom, I am writing today with an update on DC Public Schools' (DCPS) grading guidance for term 4, as well how we will handle student promotion and graduation for the current school year. Our expectation remains that every student be engaged with their lessons and teachers during this learning at home period. However, we recognize there may be periods when you cannot participate in learning at home, and a student's academic status will not be adversely impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.

Since our schools closed in March, we encouraged maximum participation in learning at home while creating a safety net for students that are facing difficult circumstances. We served a quarter-million free meals to young people throughout the district and are now [offering free groceries](#) at 10 school sites each week. We are distributing thousands of technology devices and mobile hotspots to students in need of a computer or reliable internet at home, and our [philanthropic partners](#) are [helping expand](#) this commitment. We are providing care packages for Pre-K families in need that include books, art activities, and health and cleaning supplies for the home; and local employers are hosting virtual internship interviews for high school students in our career-ready CTE programs.

In addition to leading lessons each day, our teachers are regularly reaching out to their students, helping families navigate the challenges of our current situation, and sharing their [talents](#) as [educators](#) with the [world](#). And to support staff as they provide instruction to our students from home, DCPS has provided all teachers with e-gift cards to purchase teaching supplies for remote learning. To all of our teachers and staff, thank you for your incredible work during these extraordinary times.

During this unprecedented and difficult time, DCPS is committed to supporting students academically through learning at home and flexible [grading, promotion, and graduation policies](#). In establishing the guidance outlined below we took into account equity of learning at home, with a focus on ensuring that students furthest from opportunity will not be additionally disadvantaged. This guidance was informed by national best practices and incorporates feedback from key stakeholders, including students, parents, community members, educators, and college admissions officers.

Term 4 Grades for K-5 and 6-12

Term 4 began on Monday, April 27 and will continue through the last day of school on Friday, May 29. A virtual Parent-Teacher Conference Day will take place on May 22, and there will be no learning at home on Monday, May 25 for the Memorial Day holiday.

Families can pick up learning at home packets today at their school from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm, or access materials online at bit.ly/DCPS_ICP. We'll have another round of packet distribution in May to cover the last three weeks of learning at home.

Term 4 Elementary Grading

For term 4, elementary school students in Kindergarten to 5th Grade will receive a "P" (pass) in content areas where they were able to consistently engage (a minimum 2 times per week) in learning at home assignments and activities. Students will be assigned a "NM" (no mark) in content areas where they were unable to engage in learning at home assignments and activities. Students in elementary school will not receive final grades.

Term 4 Secondary Grading

To give all 6th to 12th grade students chances to improve their academic standing, term 4 grades will be weighted equally between Practice & Application and Participation; there will be weekly opportunities to earn extra credit; and work may be turned in at any time without penalty. While teachers will not administer exams during this time, we expect that students will participate in learning at home as best as possible. Students will receive term 4 grades on the A-F scale. If a student chooses to do no work in term 4, they could receive an “I” (incomplete) for the course.

Click here to read more about term 4 grading in our [FAQ for families](#), including calculation of final grades for full-year and semester courses, as well as, guidance for Opportunity Academies.

Student Promotion and Retention

No student will be penalized from progressing to the next grade due to the absence of in-person intervention supports available during this period of extended school closures. By May 15, schools will reach out to the families of K-8 students who are not meeting promotion criteria to discuss what is in the best interest of the student for next year.

For school year 2020-2021, no student should be retained unless the family and school agree that it is in the student's best interest. In addition, students who have already been retained once should not be retained for another year even if the family and school agree that retention would be in the student's best interest.

Class of 2020 Graduation Requirements

While we are still finalizing what graduation ceremonies may look like this year, including talking to our high school seniors about what they want, students must still earn a total of 24 credits to graduate with a traditional DCPS diploma.

Per the COVID-19 Response Supplemental Emergency Amendment Act of 2020, the 100-hour community service requirement has been waived for this school year's prospective class of 2020 graduates only. Schools are closely monitoring grades of potential graduates and will connect with students who may need to complete graduation requirements through summer school courses. Read more about student promotion and graduation in our [FAQ for families](#).

DCPS is committed to finding ways to celebrate the accomplishments of the class of 2020, and I hope you will join me in recognizing our college-bound seniors this Friday, May 1 for College Signing Day. We'll showcase our DCPS pride online and our students' journeys at [@DCPublicSchools](#) on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

As always, I wish you and your family the best of health. Please continue to utilize the resources provided to all District of Columbia residents at [coronavirus.dc.gov](#), visit [dcps.dc.gov/coronavirus](#) for learning at home information, and don't hesitate to reach out to your school or email ceo.info@k12.dc.gov with questions you may have.

With appreciation,

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DC Public Schools