



## Frequently Asked Questions: Term 4 Grading, Promotion, and Graduation *Updated September 2020*

DC Public Schools (DCPS) will continue learning at home through the end of the school year, now concluding on Friday, May 29 in response to coronavirus (COVID-19). This calendar shift will give us the opportunity to preserve time for the option of additional, targeted summer learning, as well as the start of the 2020-2021 School Year when health conditions are more favorable.

With this change to the current school year calendar, DCPS is updating our term 4 grading policies, providing clarity on student promotion, and giving guidance on graduation requirements for the class of 2020. During this unprecedented time, DCPS is committed to supporting students academically through at-home learning and flexible grading, promotion, and graduation policies.

If families have additional questions on these topics, please reach out to your school.

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### TERM 4 GRADING

#### **Q1. What is the timeframe for term 4?**

Term 4 began on Monday, April 27 and will last until Friday, May 29. A virtual Parent-Teacher Conference Day will take place on May 22. There will be no learning at home on Monday, May 25 for the Memorial Day holiday; DCPS will be closed for all teachers and staff.

#### **Q2. Will there be any changes to how learning at home is conducted in term 4?**

No. Our expectation remains that every student be engaged with their lessons during this learning at home period, either through a physical learning packet or online opportunities. Printed packets will be available for distribution the week of April 27 covering weeks 6 and 7 and once again in May for Weeks 8 to 10, and all student lessons will be available to download on Canvas at [bit.ly/DCPS\\_ICP](https://bit.ly/DCPS_ICP).

Students should continue to engage directly with their teachers on weekly activities on new material from the curriculum. However, given the various challenges that students are facing, we recognize there may be periods of time when you cannot participate in learning at home. Teachers will be responsive to this by ensuring that students can participate in learning asynchronously (recorded lessons you can access at your convenience) as opposed to only participating in a live virtual lesson with their class.

We want learning to continue in a way that best suits your family’s situation, and a student’s academic status will not be adversely impacted by the emergency closure of schools.

**Q3. How will term 4 learning at home student work be graded?**

Grading for elementary students (K-5) and secondary students (6-12) in term 4 is as follows.

Term 4 Elementary Grading

For Term 4, students 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.

Term 4 Secondary Grading

While teachers will not administer exams during this time, our expectation is that students will participate in learning at home as best as possible. 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. Students will receive term 4 grades on the A-F scale.

<i>Practice &amp; Application</i>	<i>Participation</i>
50% of grade will cover all packet work and other assignments.	50% of grade will be used for participation in learning at home. This could include activities such as watching a lesson in real time and engaging with the teacher, or it could take place on a student’s own schedule by completing a reflection afterwards.
Teachers will assign two assignments per week in term 4, each with the same number of points. One assignment should count as regular credit and the next should count as extra credit.	

**Q4. How will final grades be calculated for the 2019-2020 school year?**

The final grade calculation this year will be adjusted to act in the best interest of students by focusing on the work they were able to complete and awarding credit accordingly.

Elementary

Students in elementary school will not receive final grades. They will receive a Term 4 grade as outlined above.

Secondary

*Full Year Courses*

The final grade calculation will be the average of all term grades received. Should a student’s final grade in term 4 be greater than their terms 1-3 average, the overall final grade will increase<sup>1</sup>. However, should a term 4 grade be lesser than their three-term average, the term 4 grade will be ignored in the final calculation.

*Semester Courses*

The final calculation for second semester grades will be an average of term 3 and term 4 grades. However, if a student’s term 4 grade is lower than their term 3 grade, the final grade will simply be the term 3 grade.

*Note: if a student chooses to do no work in term 4, they could receive an “I” (incomplete) for the course and have to make up work for their final grade to reflect only the average of the other term(s).*

**Q5. How will final grades be recorded on report cards and transcripts?**

All final grades for SY19-20 will be published on report cards and transcripts as follows:

<b>Grade Earned on A-F Scale</b>	<b>Grade Published on Transcript</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
A	A	Students who earn an A or B will have the benefit of this grade published on their transcript and the associated GPA weight.
B	B	
C	P	Students who earn a C or a D will not be penalized for this lower grade being published. Instead they’ll be assigned a “P” (for passing) and it will be GPA neutral.
D	P	
F	I	Students who are earn a failing final grade will be assigned an “I” for incomplete. They have until January 2021 to earn a passing grade in the course.

Students who wish to have C and D letter grades published as is or wish to have A and B letter grades published as “P” s, may request this modification to their transcript. Students should reach out to their school counselor to request this modification.

**Q6. How will Opportunity Academy or Credit Recovery courses be graded in term 4?**

Opportunity Academy Grading

Teachers are expected to continue working with students to complete their courses on

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<sup>1</sup>Language corrected to properly explain the policy.



their learning platforms. Students who have not completed their courses by the end of the traditional school year will be given “I”s and will have the opportunity to continue working on those courses until January 2021. Teachers, in collaboration with school administrators, may exempt students from coursework assigned after March 13. Final grade values will appear on the transcript as shown above.

**Credit Recovery Grading**

Credit recovery courses may continue through the end of term 4. Because these classes are already designed to be competency-based and self-paced, the grading expectations will stay the same and will differ from the modified weights and calculations above. As always, grades should be based on the following:

- 50% Student Practice & Application
- 50% Assessment (students in credit recovery courses must sign an academic honesty pledge)

Final credit recovery grades will be published as follows and, as always, credit recovery course grades do not replace original credit course grades on a student’s transcript.

<b><i>Grade Earned on A-F Scale</i></b>	<b><i>Grade Published on Transcript</i></b>	<b><i>Rationale</i></b>
A	A	Students who earn an A or B will have the benefit of this grade published on their transcript and the associated GPA weight.
B	B	
C	P	Students who earn a C or a D will not be penalized for this lower grade being published. Instead they’ll be assigned a “P” (for passing) and it will be GPA neutral.
D	P	
Students who are unable to complete a credit recovery course will be assigned a “W” (withdrawn).		

**PROMOTION TO NEXT GRADE**

**Q7. What factors will determine if a student will be promoted in grades K-8?**

By May 15, schools will reach out to the families of students who are not meeting promotion criteria<sup>1</sup> to discuss what is in the best interest of the student for next year. 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.

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

<sup>1</sup> Per DC Municipal Regulations (5-E DCMR § 2201.6), in order to be promoted to the next level, students in pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade must receive proficient or advanced marks in core subjects and comply with the system’s



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attendance policy.



once should not be retained for another year even if the family and school agree that such a retention would be in the student's best interest.

**Q8. What student supports will be offered next year?**

We know that many students will need additional supports next year due to gaps caused by the extended closure. Schools are responsible for ensuring all students who are promoted without having met the promotion criteria have a robust support plan for next year. More information about support plans will be communicated to students and families directly from their school. In addition, DCPS is working on academic planning for a strong start next year that will include embedded supports for students with academic gaps.

**Q9. Are there any changes for promotion in high school grades?**

No. Promotion for grades 9-11 is based on graduation credit accrual.

**CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATION**

**Q10. Are the number of credits required to graduate changing for the 2019-2020 School Year?**

No. Students must still earn a total of 24 credits for a traditional DCPS diploma (and additional credits for specialty diplomas as defined by the program of study).

Schools should proactively reach out to all potential graduates who receive a "W" in credit recovery or an "I" in a traditional course to support them in accessing a forthcoming menu of options for course passage this summer. Potential graduates with between 0.5 and 3.0 credits remaining should have access to credit recovery and twilight courses this spring and forthcoming in the summer.

**Q11. Do students need to complete community service hours during learning at home?**

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. The full 100-hour requirement is expected to return for next year.

**Q12. When will graduation ceremonies take place now that school is ending on May 29?**

DCPS is committed to finding ways to celebrate the accomplishments of the class of 2020. More information is forthcoming regarding options for graduation ceremonies and other senior activities if these activities cannot take place in person this spring.