



MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Since the closure, our administrative team has collaborated with our teachers, administrators in surrounding districts, and each other, about the needs of our students and how we can best support and educate them during these unique times.

Instructional activities, emotional supports, and grading have been at the forefront of our conversations. With a short-term closure, maintaining the traditional grading system at all levels was appropriate; however, now confronted with the distinctive challenge of our schools remaining closed through June, consisting of 14 weeks of remote instruction, the decisions regarding grading of our students must shift because we are not learning in the brick-and-mortar environment.

We need to be attentive to the many challenges that our students and their families are facing in this different learning environment, such as a family member becoming ill, a parent losing a job, a family-owned business that is struggling, or increased and ongoing social isolation. While we all find comfort in maintaining the status quo and continuing with continuity of what once was, the traditional practices are not sufficient or appropriate during this unprecedented time.

We must be thoughtful in adjusting our grading system, keeping in mind the factors listed above, and the importance of maintaining our decisions are rooted in age-appropriateness and circumstances.

Mahwah is a district that is committed to supporting our students' social, emotional, and mental wellness. We feel that the system below not only supports that important goal, but honors the learning, hard work, and accomplishments of our students, parents, and educators.

Below, please find the thoughtful grading adjustments made by our administration, for the final "marking period/trimester" of the 2019-2020 academic school year.

For our elementary students, grades PreK-5:

"Meets Expectations" will replace our traditional standards-based report card grades (1, 2, 3, or 4 on report cards). The standards-based grading system is highly effective in normal circumstances; however, right now, our circumstances are not. In order to be fair and consistent with all of our students, while acknowledging the work that is being done, **"Meets Expectations"** is the most appropriate criteria for reporting.

We will assess students based upon their completion, submission, and understanding of their work for the third trimester. Teachers will continue to teach students their curricula using Google Classroom, Zoom videoconferencing, and other platforms. Additionally, using formative assessments, such as “Do Nows,” entry/exit tickets, and quizzes, teachers will grade our students. Summative or final assessments, such as tests and end-of-unit projects, will be utilized only when appropriate. Students who complete their assignments and meet these expectations will earn a grade of **“Meets Expectations”** for the third trimester.

Ramapo Ridge Middle School:

“Remote Pass” will replace traditional Marking Period 4 grades on students’ report cards. In order to receive **“Remote Pass”** for Marking Period 4, students are expected to continue to attend remote classes, engage learning activities planned by teachers, and submit completed work. Students will continue to receive feedback and accompanying traditional grades for the remainder of the fourth marking period on individual assignments/assessments. Traditional grades for individual assignments/assessments will continue to be posted in the Realtime Parent Portal for students and parents to review.

If students earn a **“Remote Pass”** for Marking Period 4, respective year-end Final Grades will be calculated by averaging the student’s first three marking period grades. If a student requires a traditional Marking Period 4 grade for eligibility for acceptance into another school or program, a traditional grade will be provided upon request. In situations in which there is a student that requires additional grading accommodations, the staff and administration will address them on an individual basis.

Teachers will continue to teach students our curricula using Google Classroom, Zoom videoconferencing, and other platforms. Short, formative assessments will continue to be employed. It is important for students to engage their classes and work to prepare for future coursework.

Mahwah High School:

Existing Grading Model will remain, with an option for **“Remote Pass,”** as needed. In order to receive a mark of **“Remote Pass,”** students are expected to continue to attend remote classes, engage learning activities planned by teachers, and submit completed work. **“Remote Pass”** will only be considered after consultation with teachers, guidance counselors, and families. The existing grading model remains, recognizing the grading impact on various external criteria (e.g., sports eligibility, scholarship qualification, college acceptances).

Teachers will continue to instruct students in their content using Google Classroom, Zoom videoconferencing, and other platforms. Short, formative assessments will continue to be employed. Students’ progress during Marking Period 4 will continue to be determined by class participation, submitted assignments and projects, and assessment performance. It is important for students to engage with their teachers and work to prepare for future coursework.

We sincerely believe that the uncharted territory we are now navigating requires us to rethink standard grading expectations that were designed for typical times. We will continue to meaningfully teach our curricula while supporting the whole child. The revision in our grading practices is the most appropriate course of action to support our students during these challenging times and serve to acknowledge students' efforts while recognizing the range of potential hardships in each of our students' lives and homes.

We thank you for your continued partnership and understanding. If you have any other questions, please contact your building principal.

Regards,

Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction