

# Distance Learning

@Trumbull Public Schools

## Phase 2 Details, April-May 2020

### Background

- Distance learning cannot totally replicate what would happen if schools were in session. However, it can keep students academically active by both reinforcing earlier learning and introducing new content.
- Phase 1 of distance learning (March 19 through April 24) has focused on maintaining continuity of educational opportunities for students. Based on the April 2020 survey, 66.0% of parents/guardians said that the distance learning to date had met the stated goal to a high or moderately high degree.
- **Phase 2** of distance learning (April 27 through, at least, May 20) will continue to focus on maintaining continuity of educational opportunities for students. However, Phase 2 will include the adjustments below to take into account the longer school closure. We appreciate the community feedback that has guided several adjustments.

### Grading and Reporting Frameworks

- **For Phase 2**, we have responded to the Commissioner's request that we consider changes to grading and reporting frameworks to equitably support students during this school shutdown and to fairly represent their performance. Additional discussion, by grade level band, begins on page 3 of this document. An April 24 Trumbull Community Television broadcast with Central Office and building administrators will discuss these changes in more detail.

### Assessment Feedback

- In Phase 1, student work has been assessed and recorded consistent with the practices that were in place at the time school was closed.
- **For Phase 2**, grades K-2 students will receive additional assured weekly opportunities to present their work and to receive feedback from their teachers. In other grades, assessment feedback will be linked to the changes in grading and reporting frameworks discussed on the next pages.

### Recorded Video as a Teaching Tool

- Recorded video for distance learning has emerged as a useful teaching tool, particularly to allow teachers to present new learning to a class.
- In Phase 1, 62% of TPS teachers used recorded video to enhance distance learning. Over 30 professional development sessions offered teachers the opportunity to learn about this useful teaching tool. Teacher and parent feedback has been positive.
- **For Phase 2**, all teachers who have not yet used recorded video will attend professional development to learn about this useful teaching tool and expand its integration where possible.

## Live Video as a Teaching Tool

- Live video for distance learning has emerged as a useful teaching tool, particularly to allow teachers to connect individually or in small groups with students.
- In Phase 1, live video was limited. Parents have noted the strong role that live video could play in enhancing students' social and emotional development and connectedness within the classroom and school communities.
- **For Phase 2**, the potential advantages of live video will be highlighted for teachers via professional development and expanded integration where possible. Feedback from teachers and parents will inform its integration into the life of the district during the extended school closure. Please note that, as teachers implement this option, student participation would be optional, and parents will need to sign a Consent Form for their children to participate; more details will be forthcoming as teachers integrate this option.

## Student Support by Teaching Specialists

- Student support teaching specialists include literacy consultants, math specialists, interventionists, special education teachers, and related PPS personnel.
- In Phase 1, specialists supported the engagement of all students and teachers in distance learning to the greatest extent possible.
- **For Phase 2**, all specialists will support targeted students whose performance in distance learning does not meet standard. They will receive professional development on the use of live video for this purpose.

## Student Support by Paraprofessionals

- **For Phase 2**, Kindergarten paraprofessionals and Reading paraprofessionals will participate in supporting individual students and/or implementing supplemental learning activities. They will receive professional development as appropriate.
- **For Phase 2**, PPS paraprofessionals, on a student-by-student basis, may support struggling students via e-mail or phone under the direction of certified PPS staff.

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*Additional discussion of the revised grading and reporting frameworks follows on page 3 of this document.*

## Grading and Reporting Frameworks – Extended Discussion

Knowing that the school closure that began on March 13, 2020, has been extended per order of the Governor through at least May 20, 2020, the Trumbull Public Schools has transformed into distance learning for all students. While nothing can replace the live interaction of teacher and students in classrooms and school buildings, we are very pleased with the work of our teachers and administrators during this time that is challenging for them and their families as well; we all appreciate the community's support of distance learning and its evolution over time.

Due to the many differences between in-person learning and distance learning, in early April, Connecticut Commissioner of Education Miguel Cardona asked all districts to consider changes to grading and reporting frameworks to equitably support students during this school shutdown and to fairly represent their performance.

As Commissioner Cardona and others have explained, the rapid transition of in-person learning to distance learning has challenged the education system in several ways. In Trumbull specifically, confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to rise, affecting directly the lives of several families. As Trumbull students engage in distance learning, they do so in diverse ways, including, through no fault of their own, with uneven Internet access. And as key caregivers are called to essential work including health care, and to telework, Trumbull students participate in distance learning with a very wide range of support from adults.

Trumbull's staff, too, participates in distance learning from a myriad of perspectives. As they work from their homes, they meet the same challenges as Trumbull families, including, in some cases: being personally affected by COVID-19; having uneven Internet access; and being responsible for members of their own families while they are working.

From a teaching and learning perspective, distance learning also challenges our typical assessment routines. While our teachers typically include regular formative and summative assessments to gauge student performance and to provide feedback on students relative to their peers, distance learning has challenged both the frequency and the type of assessments teachers can provide. That in itself would pose challenges when it comes to assigning a cumulative grade for work completed.

Since Commissioner's Cardona's request, we have met with administrators at all levels, PreK-12, to reflect on our previous grading and reporting frameworks and to consider shifts necessary based upon distance learning. Our administrators have met, in turn, with department chairs and teacher-leaders to solicit their input. We have also participated in conversations with the Southern Fairfield County Superintendents' Association (SFCSA) and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE).

As guiding principles, we determined that changes in grading and reporting frameworks should:

- Be equitable, serving the needs of all students;
- Respect the social and emotional health of students for whom distance learning poses unique academic challenges;
- Not disadvantage our students relative to students from other districts to which our students are often compared;
- Recognize the differences of each grade level;
- Respect students' and families' efforts to engage in distance learning, in several cases in challenging circumstances;
- Reflect best practices in relation to instruction, assessment, and feedback;
- Be aligned where appropriate to trends in the State and in the region.

Grade-level-specific details follow.

## Pre-Kindergarten

The typical standards-based report card for our Pre-Kindergarten program at TECEC assesses student performance in every subject area on a scale of: M (met standard); P (progressing towards meeting the standard); & NY (has not yet met the standard).

However, because distance learning for our Pre-Kindergarten students emphasizes literacy, mathematics, and science, those areas will be the focus of this year's Trimester 3 report card. Additionally, because our teachers are not able to assess students in the typical fashion, the scale has been narrowed and adjusted. Thus, a student will receive one score each for literacy, math, and science based on the following rubric:

| <b>A</b><br><b>Approaching Standards</b>  | <b>M</b><br><b>Meets Standards</b>   |
|---|--|
| The student has approached grade-level standards for content taught during this period of time. | The student has met grade-level standards for content taught during this period of time. |

Each student will also receive a narrative comment from his/her teacher that includes remarks about the student's work this trimester in literacy, math, and science. The teacher may also include remarks about the student's overall work this trimester and this year, including in other subject areas such as social studies, gross and fine motor skills, and social skills.

## Grades K-5

The typical standards-based report card for our elementary school program assesses student performance in every subject area, and on a scale of 1-3 (1-4 for Grades 3-5) to represent each student's performance relative to each standard.

However, because distance learning for our elementary students emphasizes literacy, mathematics, and science, those areas will be the focus of this year's Trimester 3 report card. Additionally, because our teachers are not able to assess students in the typical fashion, the scale has been narrowed and adjusted. Thus, a student will receive one score each for literacy, math, and science based on the following rubric:

| <b>A</b><br><b>Approaching Standards</b>  | <b>M</b><br><b>Meets Standards</b>   |
|---|--|
| The student has approached grade-level standards for content taught during this period of time. | The student has met grade-level standards for content taught during this period of time. |

Each student will also receive a narrative comment from his/her teacher that includes remarks about the student's work this trimester in literacy, math, and science. The teacher will also include remarks about the student's overall work this trimester and this year, including in other subject areas such as social studies.

## Grades 6-8

The typical report card for our middle school program assesses student performance with a traditional letter grade in every subject area.

However, because of the many challenges to typical assessment routines at this level, this trimester's letter grades will be replaced by a Pass / No Pass grade for each class, based on the following rubric:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Pass</b>    | The student has met performance standards on major assessments, and the student has also satisfactorily completed other assigned work. |
| <b>No Pass</b> | The student has not met performance standards on major assessments, and/or has not satisfactorily completed other assigned work.       |

As the trimester proceeds, students will still receive typical grades or scores on their work. Additionally, students whose work does not approach the "Pass" level will be supported by teachers in their work to attain the standards.

## Grades 9-12

The typical report card for our high school program assesses student performance with a traditional letter grade in every subject area.

Our students and teachers at the high school level are facing the same challenges as are students at our other levels. At the same time, our high school population has unique complexities. For example, high school students and families must earn credit for a given course to achieve graduation requirements, and in some cases to meet a prerequisite for a subsequent course. They also have a legitimate interest in strongly presenting their work to colleges and employers beyond high school.

Because of those complexities, each student, working with his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), will be asked to choose one of these two options for each course in which he/she is enrolled.

### **Option 1**

#### Fourth Quarter

For any class, a student may choose to receive a Pass / Incomplete for fourth quarter. The following rubric will be used:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Pass</b>       | The student has met performance standards on major assessments, and the student has also satisfactorily completed other assigned work. |
| <b>Incomplete</b> | The student has not met performance standards on major assessments, and/or has not satisfactorily completed other assigned work.       |

As the quarter proceeds, students will still receive typical grades or scores on their work. Additionally, students whose work does not approach the “Pass” level will be supported by teachers in their work to attain the standards.

Any student receiving an Incomplete may be administratively assigned a date by which work must be completed to satisfy a prerequisite.

#### Course Grade on High School Transcript

If a student exercises Option 1, then the course grade recorded on the high school transcript will be based on:

- for a full-year course, a calculation of the previously published grades for the first quarter, the second quarter, the January exam, and the third quarter.
- for a second-semester course, the previously published grade for the third quarter.
- for a fourth-marking-period course, the Pass/Incomplete for fourth quarter.

The course grade recorded on the high school transcript will be used for GPA calculations and weighted grade calculations per existing BOE policy.

### **Option 2**

#### Fourth Quarter

For any class, a student may choose to receive a traditional letter grade for fourth quarter.

#### Course Grade on High School Transcript

If a student exercises Option 2, then the course grade recorded on the high school transcript will be based on the typical calculations:

- for a full-year course, a calculation of the previously published grades for the first quarter, the second quarter, the January exam, and the third quarter, plus the grade for the fourth quarter.
- for a second-semester course, a calculation of the previously published grade for the third quarter, plus the grade for the fourth quarter.
- for a fourth-marking-period course, the grade for fourth quarter.

The course grade recorded on the high school transcript will be used for GPA calculations and weighted grade calculations per existing BOE policy.

Please note that, for all students, final examinations will not be administered this year due to the complexities of distance learning.

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### **Additional Grades 9-12 Q&A**

**Q: For which reporting period can a student choose the Pass/Incomplete option?**

A: Students can choose Pass/Incomplete only for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

**Q: Does a student have to make the same choice for all of his/her courses?**

A: No. Each student will make the choice separately for each course in which he/she is enrolled.

**Q: When will a student need to make the choice to receive either a Pass/Incomplete or a traditional letter grade for each course?**

A: The deadline for student choice will be Mon., June 1, 2020.

**Q: How will a student actually choose whether to receive a Pass/Incomplete or a traditional letter grade for each course?**

A: Each teacher will collect that information from each student using an “Assignment” in Google Classroom. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their choice with their families and teachers during the month of May before making a decision.

**Q: What will happen if a student does not make a choice between Pass/Incomplete and a traditional letter grade?**

A: Students who do not choose will be assigned “Pass/Incomplete.”

**Q: Will the amount of credits earned for a course change based on a student’s choice between Pass/Incomplete and a traditional letter grade?**

A: No. All course credit will be awarded as stated in the *THS Program of Studies* for each course. The amount of credits earned will not change if a student chooses the Pass/Incomplete option.

**Q: If a student chooses Pass/Incomplete and gets an Incomplete, will the student need to make up the work?**

A: This will be determined on a case-by-case basis taking into account the student’s academic, social, and emotional needs and circumstances. Priority will be given to cases where work is deemed necessary to satisfy a prerequisite for future learning. Administrators will make this case-by-case decision based on input from the student’s teacher, content-area department chair, and school counselor. In cases where work for an Incomplete must be made up, the student will be administratively assigned a date for completion of that work.

**Q: If a student chooses a Pass/Incomplete, what will be the calculations used to determine the course grade recorded on the high school transcript?**

A:

| Full-year Course with Pass/Incomplete (P) for Quarter 4 |         |                     |
|---|---------|---------------------|
| Quarter 1   | 28.572% | 71.43%              |
| Quarter 2   | 28.572% |                     |
| Sem 1 Exam  | 14.286% |                     |
| Quarter 3   | 28.57%  | 28.57%              |
| Quarter 4   | Pass    |                     |
| Sem 2 Exam  | ---     |                     |
|   |         | 100%<br>1.0 Credits |

| Semester Course with Pass/Incomplete for Quarter 4 |      |                     |
|--|------|---------------------|
| Quarter 3  | 100% | 100%                |
| Quarter 4  | Pass |                     |
| Sem 2 Exam   | ---  |                     |
|  |      | 100%<br>0.5 Credits |

**Q: If a student chooses a traditional letter grade, what will be the calculations used to determine the course grade recorded on the high school transcript?**

A:

| Full-year Course with Traditional Letter Grade for Quarter 4 |        |                     |
|--|--------|---------------------|
| Quarter 1  | 22.22% | 55.56%              |
| Quarter 2  | 22.22% |                     |
| Sem 1 Exam   | 11.11% |                     |
| Quarter 3  | 22.22% | 44.44%              |
| Quarter 4  | 22.22% |                     |
| Sem 2 Exam   | ---    |                     |
|  |        | 100%<br>1.0 Credits |

| Semester Course with Traditional Letter Grade for Quarter 4 |     |                     |
|---|-----|---------------------|
| Quarter 3   | 50% | 100%                |
| Quarter 4   | 50% |                     |
| Sem 2 Exam  | --- |                     |
|   |     | 100%<br>0.5 Credits |

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*Questions may be directed to any building principal or to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.*