

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2020

TO: School Principals and Instructional Staff

FROM: John Riddle (GILA) & Dave Casey (SHS)

SUBJECT: Grading Guidance for Spring Semester 2020

During this unique and unprecedented time in education, the Galena City Schools have created special guidance for grading in response to the extended school closure due to Covid-19. **Nothing in this guidance supersedes federal or state requirements for grading of students with IEPs or 504s.** The intent of this guidance is to mitigate negative impacts on student performance records in an equitable way. It is the hope of The Galena City Schools that students and their families will remain actively engaged in learning during the fourth quarter.

For the spring semester of 2020, the following directives will apply:

High School Grades:

- Students will be awarded semester credit and semester grades based upon work completed up to the closure. The third quarter grade will be recorded as the final semester grade with the following exceptions:
 - Teachers will work with students who want to increase their third quarter grade by identifying work that can be submitted and which will positively affect a student's grade. The work should reinforce essential learnings or provide enrichment on third quarter skills. Teachers should take into consideration the circumstances of the student and their learning needs.
 - Students enrolled in eLearning classes prior to closure should continue to finish classes.
 - TBD: Eligibility for participation in ASAA activities will be revert to ASAA requirements for the first semester of fall 2020.
- No final exams for high school semester 2 or end of course exams in math will be administered with the exception of eLearning classes.
- Spring semester 2020 grades will be excluded from a student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA).
- For graduating seniors, their cumulative GPA, class rank, or other academic distinctions will be based on their cumulative GPA through 3rd quarter.
- Seniors may request to withdraw from any class they do not need for graduation and, in doing so, will receive a "W" not a "WF" on their transcript. The request should be made through their high school counselor by Thursday, April 16th.
- Students may take challenge exams for core classes where available to earn semester credit with grades of A or B.
- All teachers are expected to provide continual learning options for students based on the essential learnings identified for 4th quarter. Any assignment or assessment submitted to a teacher should be returned with feedback with the goal of improving

student learning and understanding. Teachers provide feedback, and may choose to grade student work, if the grade is not detrimental to the student's gpa, on assignments that are returned during remote learning instructional weeks. Completed assignments, with feedback, will be returned either by email or the USPS. Teachers will attempt to contact all students by phone to acknowledge receipt of work and to provide closure, for the student, for the 2019-2020 school year.

The Galena City Schools and students are not alone in responding to the challenges created by extended school closures. All evidence indicates that both public school systems and higher education institutions are adjusting to the nationwide reality that schools will be reporting differently this spring.

We realize that the closure, the shift to remote learning, and changes in grading practices are stressful for school staff, students and parents. As a district our goal is to ensure that, as much as possible, students are not penalized for school and class work missed for circumstances beyond their control.

Administration will disseminate this information to teachers, students, and parents and guardians today.

FAQs regarding Grading for High School Spring Semester 2020

1. My child is in high school, what kind of grades will they get?

For high school, students will be awarded semester credit and semester grades based upon work completed up to the closure. The 3rd Quarter grade will be recorded as the final Semester 2 grade with the following exceptions:

- Teachers will work with students who want to increase their 3rd Quarter grade by identifying work that can be submitted and will positively affect a student's grade. The work should reinforce essential learnings or provide enrichment on 3rd Quarter skills. Teachers should take into consideration the circumstances of the student and their learning needs. This may include re-doing previous assignments or engaging in new activities or assignments.
- Students should contact their teachers to create a plan for submitting additional work to raise their grade.
- Students enrolled in eLearning classes prior to closure should continue to finish classes.

2. How will this affect my student's GPA?

Spring semester 2020 grades will be excluded from a student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA).

3. Will Semester 2 grades still go on a transcript?

Yes. Credit will be awarded and a letter grade will be indicated. However the cumulative GPA will not include spring 2020.

4. My child is a senior, will it affect them?

For graduating seniors, gpa, class rank, or other academic distinctions will be based on the end of first semester grades. In addition, seniors may request to withdraw from any class they do not need for graduation and have a “W” not “WF” on their transcript. The request should be made through their high school counselor by Thursday, April 16th.

5. If students aren’t being graded, why should they do the work teachers are sending?

School is still in session, and schools have a responsibility to provide educational opportunities to students. That being said, we need to realize that not all families are able to fully engage in learning. As a district, our hope is that teachers are providing a variety of options for learning and that students will participate as they’re able. While grades are motivators for many students, our larger goal is that students can continue to practice skills they’ve learned and reinforce essential concepts. The more students can stay engaged, the easier their transition will be when traditional classes resume.

Remember also that there are many ways students engage in learning during a traditional school day, that are not graded. While school is closed we still want to provide opportunities for students to engage their minds in math, reading, writing, reasoning and creative thinking. With a full understanding for the many reasons a student might not be able to participate in a class session or finish an assignment, there will be no deduction for incomplete assignments. However teachers are expected to provide students feedback on assignments that are submitted.

Our goal remains supporting students’ current learning and helping them transition to the next grade level in August.

6. My student has a Special Education IEP. Will my student receive an IEP report card at the end of the 4th Quarter?

Yes. Regardless of the district’s decisions around reporting grades, the IDEA requires that parents be informed in writing of their child’s progress towards meeting their IEP goals and objectives. The frequency for reporting progress is indicated in each student’s IEP. In our district, this is typically done quarterly and those progress reports are still required.

8. My child is applying to college, how is this going to affect their applications?

Our closure and changes to how we record grades are not unique to Galena. The entire country, K-12 and postsecondary education alike, is dealing with similar situations. We believe colleges will understand the widespread effect of the Covid 19 closure.

Students applying to colleges should be reminded that many postsecondary institutions have traditionally recalculated student GPA’s based on their own practices around equalizing diverse systems. Colleges will be adapting to the variety of ways high schools have recorded grades for spring 2020.

9. How will Semester 2 grades figure into eligibility at high school?

This has yet to be determined. Our Activities Director is in touch with ASAA and information will be disseminated as soon as possible.

10. How will NCAA eligibility be impacted by school closure and grades this semester?

High school grades posted on the spring 2020 transcript will be used for fall NCAA eligibility. Be sure to contact NCAA directly with specific questions or circumstances regarding your student's eligibility.

11. We're moving out of state this summer. Can the District give me an explanation to show my students' new school?

Yes. Bear in mind that schools across the country are in the same situation as our students here in Galena. Unusual or non-traditional grades will be the norm across both K-12 and postsecondary education for the spring of 2020.

The Galena City Schools is very grateful to the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District for allowing us the use of this document. Minor changes have been made to reflect the needs of our district.