



April 24, 2020

Hello, Scottsdale Unified Families!

Grading Practices

Thank you, parents, for your patience and support during this challenging time. We have heard from many of our stakeholders and reviewed the 4th quarter midterm data. As a result, this new guidance was developed in collaboration with principals, assistant principals, teacher input and the Student Advisory Board.

The social emotional well-being of our students and families is a priority to us. Knowing that families have different circumstances during these unprecedented times, it is our goal to bring clarity around the topic of student grades. It is key to know that students' grades should not reflect a negative impact due to inability to engage in virtual learning. Principals and teachers will address, on a case-by-case basis, situations that are beyond the student or family control to perform during the fourth quarter. From the beginning, we have articulated a need for flexibility for each student, and we thank teachers, guidance counselors, social workers and school administrators for their commitment to their students. Thank you for your support and understanding as we navigate this unprecedented situation.

Our commitment to providing academic opportunities continues while being mindful of the challenges many students and families face during this difficult time. We remain dedicated to keeping our students connected to their teachers and other support staff for their social-emotional support and to continue learning in preparation for next year.

Last week's midterm grades guided our decisions on determining grading practices for the fourth quarter. The following clarifies grading practices for high school, middle school and elementary school:

High School Grading

High school students (and middle school students taking high school courses) can continue to improve their second semester grades through the end of the semester. Given that new content has been taught beginning March 23, the student's final grade at the end of the semester cannot be lower than where the student's 3rd quarter grade stood on March 6, 2020 as long as the student has made an effort to participate in learning. It is important for students to continue learning and developing skills necessary for next year's coursework, college and career.

Teachers will continue to work with students, provide flexibility and reach out to those not completing assignments. Further, semester grades may increase for students who have demonstrated a commitment to their learning. Please reach out to your student's teacher or principal to answer your questions regarding

maintaining or increasing grades as teachers will use professional judgement and discretion.

Students enrolled in Scottsdale On-Line (SOL) and/or taking an eLearning course through the Genius/BUZZ platform prior to the school closures will receive clarifying communication on progress and grades.

Middle School (6-8) Grading

It is our goal to use 4th quarter grades as a way to honor the perseverance, determination and resilience of our students. The student's 4th quarter grade will be no lower than the student's 3rd quarter grade on March 6, 2020 as long as the student has made an effort to participate in learning. It is important for students to continue learning and developing skills necessary for next year's coursework.

Teachers will continue to work with students, provide flexibility and reach out to those not completing assignments. A student may earn a No Mark (NM) if the student is unable to participate or engage in learning due to extenuating circumstances beyond his/her control. NM means insufficient evidence to record a 4th quarter grade. Please reach out to your student's teacher or principal to answer your questions regarding maintaining or increasing grades, as teachers will use their professional judgement and discretion in determining final grades.

Elementary (K-5) Grading

It is our goal to use 4th quarter grades in elementary as a way to better understand proficiency as students are promoted to the next grade level. Quarter 4 grades will not be used in a punitive way, as we know students and their families have different circumstances.

Standards-based grades at the elementary level provide parents and teachers with a better understanding of student proficiency in the areas included in the report card. Students who earn a 4 or a 3 are demonstrating grade-level proficiency in those standards. Students who earn a 2 are students who are approaching the standard and students who earn a 1 need support when addressing the standard. The asterisk () marking will be used when there is not enough evidence to assess student proficiency or if the standard was not taught. This provides flexibility in our current virtual learning environment and enables teachers to be responsive to individual family circumstances without negatively impacting student grades.

*Cheyenne and Pima use a traditional grading system.

Graduation Update

High school principals, using feedback from our graduating seniors, are exploring ways to honor Scottsdale Unified School District seniors on May 21, 2020. Feedback we received from students favored of an in-person celebration in the summer if/when stay at home orders are lifted. We are continuing to plan for either or both of these options for our amazing seniors. The Governor's current "stay at home" order expires April 30, 2020, and we hope to have more guidance from his office after that time.

Meals for Students

Scottsdale Unified School District Nutrition Services Department is distributing meals on a weekly basis at six sites listed below. We continue to see a very strong need in the community for these meals. On April 15, we served more than 17,700 meals in one day to local children. This week's totals set yet another record at 20,800 meals.

The District will continue to distribute meals weekly on Wednesdays from 9 – 11 a.m. for children ages 1 – 18 years. This drive-up service allows adults to pick up five breakfasts and five lunches for each child at these locations:

- Mohave Middle School, 8490 E. Jackrabbit Rd., Scottsdale
- Navajo Elementary Oak Campus, 7501 E. Oak St., Scottsdale
- Redfield Elementary School, 9181 E. Redfield Rd., Scottsdale
- Tavan Elementary, 4610 E. Osborn Rd., Phoenix
- Tonalea K-8, 6720 E. Continental Dr., Scottsdale
- Yavapai Elementary, 701 N. Miller Rd., Scottsdale

To ensure that we continue to have enough meals for children in need, we ask that patrons only come through the line one time. We appreciate your cooperation in making sure that our food supply gets to as many families as possible. For more information, please call Scottsdale Unified's Nutrition Services Department at 480-484-6234 and visit www.susd.org/Meals.

Celebrating SUSD Employees

We also like to celebrate all of our employees who continue to report to their work site. This includes nutrition services, building services, security, business services and bus drivers who have helped deliver meals to distribution sites.

Be sure to stay in touch with your school and the District through our social media accounts that are all listed and linked at www.susd.org/Connect.

Thank you!

Scottsdale Unified School District Cabinet