



May 1, 2020

Dear LEARN Community,

In the past several weeks, we have partnered together to enter into a new world of online education. We have all been learning to navigate this new reality while striving to do the best for every child and family. Through the feedback of students, families, and educators, we have continued to improve our approach. Thank you for your contributions toward our improvement efforts.

We now turn attention to grading and feedback for our online learning opportunities. While we do not yet know when we will return to school, we do know that the vast majority of this final marking term will be conducted virtually. Discussion of how to grade student work in this time has varied across the country and in our own state.

At LEARN, we are guided by our agency goals. Our first agency goal is “to provide exemplary, innovative, and equitable school-based programs that advance achievement for all students and nurture the cognitive, physical, and emotional well-being of students in safe, respectful, rigorous, and diverse learning communities.”

To that end, we are prioritizing our instruction and feedback on the students’ habits of success as learners, key learning outcomes, and the development of skills that are most critical to our students’ growth as learners and as people. As an agency, we continue to be concerned that any online learning format is amplifying longstanding equity issues such as the inability of many students to access and engage in online learning due to a variety of factors. We want to assure that our grading practices encourage meaningful learning while not reinforcing negative outcomes for students due to factors outside of their control.

Based on these factors, LEARN will be making the following adjustments to grading in grades 9-12:

- Teachers will identify priority content and skills they will use to focus instruction for the remainder of the closure.
- Teachers will respond to student work with feedback to support ongoing participation and to encourage growth in these priority areas.
- Teachers will view student work during the closure as a portfolio of learning for the priority content and skills for the course.
- Teachers will use the attached rubric to assess this portfolio of work in determining a “Pass” or “Incomplete” for the final marking term on the report card.
- Students will not have final exams.
- Final course grades will be calculated based on quarters 1-3. In some circumstances (such as when course credit is in jeopardy), students and teachers may need to collaborate on ways to improve this final grade through individualized learning plans.

Ongoing learning is important during this time of closure. Teachers are working hard to provide focused instruction on what is most important and in the best interest of students’ ongoing growth. Moving forward, we strive to provide a grading and feedback approach that does the same.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us or to your building principal.



Respectfully,

Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director, LEARN

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