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Pampa ISD Communication, Feedback, and Grading Handbook for 2020 School Closure Period – Home Learning

The Texas Education Agency grants authority to local districts to adopt grading policies for teachers who will be continuing to review student work while they support the instruction being delivered off-site. “Educators should focus on getting sufficient information to determine levels of proficiency for students to ensure they are prepared to be academically successful moving into the next school year.” TEA, “*Guidance on Grading*” March 2020.

When it comes to grades, our goal is ***grace > grades*** as we help students master the remaining curriculum content with meaningful teacher feedback. It is an opportunity to dig deeper into the content of our core subject areas. We want to do all this while supporting the emotional well-being of each child during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIRST: UNFINISHED BUSINESS - GRADES EARNED PRIOR TO MARCH 13

Incompletes: First Semester

All incompletes that remain from the First Semester must be addressed and resolved. This will be done primarily at the district level. Principals and teachers will be contacted directly if changes/corrections need to be made to resolve this issue.

Incompletes: Fourth Six Weeks

All incompletes from the Fourth Six Weeks must be cleared by the classroom teacher by April 17. If a teacher is unsure how to resolve incompletes, guidance should be sought from the campus principal.

Incompletes/Missing Work: February 19 - March 13

Teachers need to review grades recorded in TxGradebook from Feb 19 – Mar 13. **Any grade that is at or below 50 will need to be adjusted to a 65.** Other adjustments for grades during this time period will ***not*** be necessary.

NEW GRADING POLICY AND PROCEDURES: BEGINNING APRIL 6, 2020

Grading Periods *Note: During the special circumstances brought on by the Covid-19 crisis, Grading Six Weeks and Attendance Six Weeks will not be the same dates.*

Fourth six weeks	January 7 - February 14
Fifth six weeks*	February 19 - until school closure/home learning ends
Sixth six weeks*	Dates from school reopening to May 21, if applicable

*If school does not reopen this school year, the period from February 19 to May 21 will be the fifth six weeks for grading purposes – no 6th six weeks)

Required Communication with Students

Teachers will provide documented two-way communication **at least two times per week** per student. Two-way communication is achieved when the teacher contact invites a response from the student and when the ability for students to respond is a feature of the mode of communication. Contacts with students concerning grades should include the performance level/numerical grade as well as appropriate feedback. Teachers should also be very aware of the social-emotional needs that our students are likely experiencing. This Covid-19 and Home Learning situation can produce great anxiety in students, and we are charged with addressing the needs of the whole child. Initiating appropriate, two-way communication with students with their well-being in mind should be our highest priority.

Student Assignments

Weekly assignments will be provided to students via the PISD Home Learning website at the beginning of each week. If, after all technological resources and support have been exhausted, the student is not able to access the HL website, other delivery options will be provided. This should be rare. Students are required to complete assignments labeled as “Must Do” (the first two columns on the assignment document). The completion of the Column 3 - Extension Activities - are highly recommended.

Academic Feedback

Feedback must be given to students for assignments labeled as “Must Do” (the first two columns on the assignment document). Weekly academic feedback that includes only a performance level is not sufficient. In general, effective feedback should include an affirmation, a recommendation for improvement, and a question for extended thinking. Feedback should be provided for extension activities and taken into consideration when determining a weekly performance level for each student. *(An example is provided in FAQ section.)*

Determining Weekly Grades (Performance Levels)

The Kindergarten pre-Covid grading method will continue throughout the Home Learning Period. Elementary PE and music classes will not report a grade, but these teachers are required to participate in weekly lesson preparation and to make the required contact with students.

All other courses at every level which traditionally report numerical grades to indicate student progress will now record a WEEKLY PERFORMANCE LEVEL using its corresponding grade. Performance Levels are divided into three broad levels of master.

Mastery - Making Progress (100)

Approaching Mastery—Making Limited Progress (75)

Not Mastered* – No Evidence of Progress (65)

At the end of each week, teachers will examine work submitted by students and determine a single WEEKLY Performance Level for each student. This should be reported to the student/parent as a part of the required weekly communications. (see “Communications with Students” section). Grades will be recorded in TxGradebook and reported to parents through the Parent Portal. Campuses must retain supporting grade documentation (Google classroom or sheets, Dojo, etc.) until otherwise notified.

No student may be assigned a weekly performance level of “Not Mastering – No Evidence of Progress - (65)” unless all of the following activities outlined below in the “Checklist to Prevent Failure” have been completed and documented.

Checklist to Prevent Failure

- ___ At least two documented check-ins with student and/or parent inquiring if there are any barriers for assignment completion for the week (i.e. lack of internet access, technology issues, inability to access resources to complete assignment, illness, limiting home situation, etc)
- ___ Sufficient time to complete assignment – at least 1 week (Mon – Sun)
- ___ Documented attempts by school to address barriers identified
- ___ Documented academic support provided to students/parents.
- ___ Discussion with / approval by principal

Incompletes During Home Learning

Weekly grades of “incomplete” will not be recorded. Work for the week should receive a performance level based on evidence of the demonstration of the mastery level.

Makeup Work (during Home Learning period)

Teachers should contact the campus principal for guidance on makeup work.

Determining Fifth Six Week Grades (Performance Levels and Corresponding Grades)

When the fifth six weeks comes to an end, grades from Feb 19 to May 21 will be averaged to determine the fifth-six grade grade. Grades entered in TxGradebook from Feb 19 - Mar 13 should not be lower than 65. Grades earned during the Home Learning period will be recorded in TxGradebook using Performance Levels and their corresponding numerical grades: Mastery - 100; Approaching Mastery -75; and No Mastery - 65.

Reporting Grades (Progress) to Parents

Schools are required to report student progress to parents at least once each 12 weeks.

Report cards will be issued as soon after May 21 as possible. In the interim, parents may access the Parent Portal to monitor grades. If we are allowed to return to school, there will be a fifth six week report card sent to parents when the home learning period ends. The sixth six weeks will consist of the weeks that are completed back at school. **However**, if we remain out of school until May 21, a fifth-six weeks and final report card will be sent to parents in May, and there will be no 6th six weeks.

Three Weeks Progress Reports (sometimes referred to as failing notices) All campuses are required to provide a written report to parents **every three weeks if a student is failing to make progress**. Progress Reports will be generated in TxGradebook/TxEIS. **Letters should be mailed** to parents of students who are in danger of failing credit-bearing courses (PHS) and who are under consideration for grade retention. All other parents will be notified of student progress through the Parent Portal. The district PEIMS Coordinator will share information with campus secretaries/registrars about publishing progress reports to the Parent Portal.

Three Weeks Progress Reports Dates:

Week of April 6-10: Grades earned between Feb 19 - Mar 13

Week of April 27-May 1: Grades earned between Apr 6 and Apr 24

Report Cards

5th Six Weeks (Feb 19-May 21) and Final Report Cards will be published to the Parent Portal and distributed to parents (method to be determined) as soon as possible after May 21.

Contact Hours for Teachers

Each teacher must designate a minimum of 2 hours per day that he/she will be available for check-ins, support services, and/or new instruction for students.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions:

1. What grades correspond with the Performance Level ratings?

For this Home Learning Period the following numerical grades correspond to each level: Mastery - Making Progress (100), Approaching Mastery - Making Limited Progress (75), and Not Mastered - No Evidence of Progress (65).

TEA Guidance for this period removes the emphasis on what we call traditional grades and moves it to monitoring student performance and determining students' preparation to be "academically successful moving into the next grade/school year." The performance levels that will be used during this period are designed to clearly articulate a student's status in terms of making progress.

2. What should be included in teacher feedback? Is assigning a performance level/grade sufficient?

Providing a grade alone is not sufficient to count as feedback. In general, effective feedback should include an affirmation, a recommendation for improvement, and/or a question for extended thinking.

For example: "Your insight on _____ is impressive. (affirmation) Please expand on your thinking on _____ so your reader can take their thinking deeper. (recommendation for improvement) What other ideas have you considered to expand on _____?" (extension question)

This example might be more difficult to apply to some content areas than others, and following it exactly is not mandatory. However, it is a great sample of providing feedback that meets all three criteria using only a few words. It is the responsibility of the teacher to determine what form of feedback applies to his/her content, keeping the three criteria in mind. The main takeaway from this FAQ and example is that weekly academic feedback to students must have more substance than simply writing "great job." Feedback/student contact should also include a way for students to respond to feedback.

3. Is there some guidance that can help me in selecting the appropriate performance level?

Home Learning Performance Levels Earned from Apr 6 to end of Home Learning period

Notes in blue are included as an example of the teacher's thinking that led to the choice of the performance level. These thoughts may or may not be

written anywhere, but teachers should be prepared to defend the weekly performance level with evidence and their rationale.

4/6 to 4/10 **Approaching Mastery: Making Limited Progress (75)** Student turned in everything, but quality was mediocre.

4/15 to 4/24 **Mastery: Making Progress (100)** Student turned in everything; student shows he/she “gets it” on these assignments.

4/27 to 5/1 **Not Mastered: No Evidence of Progress (65)** Student did not turn in any work despite numerous contacts - checklist completed; there is no evidence of progress made.

5/4 to 5/8 **Approaching Mastery: Making Limited Progress (75)** Student submitted incomplete work.

5/11 to 5/20 **Approaching Mastery: Making Limited Progress (75)** Student turned in almost everything; evidence of understanding is below average.

Secondary Level Questions:

4. Will PJHS/PHS have final exams? *No.*

5. PHS: Will students earn course credit for the classes they are taking during this spring semester?

Yes. If a student’s 4th and 5th six weeks grades average 70 or more, credit will be awarded. Second semester grades WILL NOT be used in the calculation of GPA for students currently in grades 9-12

6. PHS: Will students who did not earn credit during the fall semester because of excessive absences still be allowed to make up “time” in order to regain credit?

Yes. If no credit was awarded for the first semester because of excessive absences, students will be provided opportunities to make up attendance time during the spring semester. Counselors will communicate with students regarding their progress in making up the required hours.

7. **How will GPA and class rank be determined for graduating seniors?**

*GPA and class rank for seniors will be determined using grades earned from freshman, sophomore, junior years, and the first semester of the 2019-20 school year; however, **students must earn at least a 70 for the semester grade in order for credit to be awarded.** Spring semester grades will appear on the final student transcript and will be used for local honors; however, they will not be calculated as a part of the final GPA or class rank.*

8. **What about GPA and class rank for students who are currently freshmen, sophomores, and juniors?**

*Students currently enrolled in grades 9-11 will also earn credits during the 2020 spring semester, and these grades will appear on a student's transcript for the second (spring) semester. **Student performance during the spring semester must indicate mastery or approaching mastery in order for a student to earn credits for the semester.** 2020 second semester grades will also be used in determining local honors. However, the grades earned during the second (spring) semester will not be used in current or future GPAs and in determining the class rank for college application purposes.*

9. **How will students earn college credit for the dual credit classes that they are taking through Clarendon or other higher education institutions?**

Clarendon College has created a website that provides Covid-19 information for its students. The document is updated regularly. The CC March 20 entry addresses that addresses dual credit students appears below:

Your professors will be contacting you between March 23 through March 27 about updates and possible changes to your course syllabus. Please be patient with us as we are in uncharted territory. We are aware of the quickly changing nature of the pandemic and can / will make updates as needed or directed. Please email Mrs. Havens or Mrs. James if you are having issues with connectivity (lack of Internet access or lack of computer access).

<https://www.clarendoncollege.edu/CoronavirusUpdate>

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PHS TEACHERS who facilitate dual credit classes: *Facilitators must communicate with their students to determine if they have been contacted by their Clarendon College teacher as the update above indicates. If not, facilitators should contact the CC teacher to confirm what expectations are required of students. During required check-ins, facilitators should inquire how students are progressing and should offer assistance if any student needs it, including contacting Clarendon College for help.*

PHS is responsible for ensuring that students earn the high school credit component that is needed for graduation.

NEW! FAQs Added on Sunday, April 5, 2020.

10. What is the difference between feedback, progress reports, and report cards?

Feedback - During this Home Learning period, it is **vital** that teachers keep in touch with students by communicating with them **at least two times per week**. This is comparable to the daily interactions that teachers have with students during face-to-face learning, such as the return of assignments with grades/comments, class discussions where teachers pose questions and students respond, or conversations with students about how they are doing. This can be accomplished through virtual meetings, emails to classes or individuals which invite replies, communication using the campus-selected method, discussion message boards, phone calls, and other ways that you can think of to connect with students. This is not a state requirement, but it is a **Pampa ISD requirement** because it is in the best interest of our students - and is the right thing to do.

Required Progress Reports - (also known as three-week failing reports or failing notices) -This fulfills the **state requirement** to send notices to parents when students' performance is consistently unsatisfactory.

Progress Reports for February 19- March 13 - The reports for this period normally would have been sent during the week of March 23-27. It is very important that parents receive notices **as soon as possible (early in the week of April 6-10)** for students who are in danger of failing PHS credit-bearing classes for the spring semester and for students who are being considered for retention. The next three weeks progress report will be run and distributed after April 24.

Report Cards - Normally referred as six-weeks report cards, reports cards during this crisis will encompass a much longer period. The **state requires** campuses to provide progress reports at least once every twelve weeks, and Pampa ISD will send these **fifth six weeks report cards as soon after May 20** as possible. This report will also include semester grades for the fall and the spring. When it is time to run fifth six weeks report cards, the weekly grades from February 19 - March 13 will be assigned a weekly performance label and combined with weekly performance levels earned between April 6 - May 20. Teachers will use the preponderance of evidence to determine a final fifth six weeks grade. Detailed instructions for this final report to parents will be provided as the semester progresses and we receive guidance from the Texas Education Agency.

As new questions arise, these FAQs will be updated. Notices will be sent when updates are made.

