

May 3, 2020

Dear Friends and Families of ER9:

The principals have developed a plan for grading and assessment that covers Distance Learning and the end of the 2020 school year.

Our thinking has been guided by two principles: (1) to acknowledge the impact of Distance Learning on a student's ability to perform while taking emotional wellbeing into account; (2) to validate the work of our students and teachers during this unique situation. We want the approach to honor the achievements and contributions of our students while at the same time not penalize any student whose situation has been adverse to some degree.

There will be different approaches at elementary, middle and high school levels that reflect the needs of students of different ages. We have consulted with our counterparts in neighboring districts to determine how to coordinate practices while also meeting our own needs.

The purpose of this email is to provide an overview of our approach. The Principals/Head of School will follow up with details via email over the next few days.

Joel Barlow High School

Here is what the teachers will do:

1. Assign Q3/Q4 grades in keeping with traditional grading protocols. The grades will include +/-, e.g. A+, A, A- and so forth;
2. Offer students/families an option of a 'Pass' for Q3/Q4 (to replace letter grade);
3. Eliminate final exam schedule and exam grade weighting toward average;
4. Full Year courses will receive an end-of-year grade, although students may choose a 'pass' for Q3/Q4.

Here is what students and families will do:

In June, before the final instructional day, the grades will be shared with the high school students digitally. The students and families will have a window of several days to review the assigned grades and communicate as needed with teachers about the grades they choose to convert to 'Pass.' Students and families will be able to accept some teacher-assigned letter grades and convert others to a pass. The details on how this will be done will be shared by the Head of School in a subsequent email.

John Read Middle School and Helen Keller Middle School

Here is what the teachers will do:

1. Assign a letter grade of A, B, C, or pass/fail for the final quarter or final trimester. The grades will include +/-, e.g., A+, A, A- and so forth;
2. Offer students/families an option of a 'Pass' for the final quarter or trimester;
3. There will not be final exams although teachers may give unit exams as warranted;

4. Full Year courses will receive an end-of-year grade. If a student or family opts to receive a pass, the grade will be determined based on the balance of the school year.

Here is what students and families will do:

In June before the final instructional day, the grades will be shared with the middle school students digitally. The students and families will have a window of several days to review the assigned grades and communicate as needed with teachers about the grades they choose to convert to 'Pass.' Students and families will be able to accept some teacher-assigned letter grades and convert others to a pass. The details on how this will be done will be explained by the principals via email when we get closer to the end of the school year.

Redding Elementary School and Samuel Staples Elementary School:

Here is what the teachers will do:

1. Write narrative statements that address their assessment of where students are performing;
2. Provide comments about the degree of engagement during Distance Learning;
3. There will not be use of the standards-based report card for the spring.

Here is what parents and students will do:

Read and review the teacher narratives and follow up with teachers or administrators as appropriate.

I want to close by reaffirming our intention to provide feedback and assessment of student learning while also seeking to recognize the unprecedented nature of the final four months of the school year.

I expect that you will have questions about enrichment or recovery opportunities for this summer and how we will seek to assess, diagnose and remediate our students' needs in the fall. The Administrators will be taking up these issues as part of our transition planning and we will communicate with you in future emails.

In gratitude,

Tom McMorran
Superintendent of Schools
Easton, Redding & Region 9 School Districts