



PARAMOUNT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

GREAT THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN PARAMOUNT SCHOOLS



Board Study Session – April 28, 2020 Graduation Requirements/Grading

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PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS

Key Question

on

Graduation Requirements

How do we ensure the graduation progress of all students is not adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to the best of our ability?



Board Policy 6164.4 High School Graduation Requirements State vs. District

Subject	State Mandated Requirements	Paramount Unified School District – Class of 2020
English	3 Years (30 credits)	4 Years (40 credits)
Math	2 Years (Including Algebra 1) (20 credits)	3 years (Including Algebra 1 and one “higher” course) (30 credits)
Social Studies	3 Years (Including World History, US History, Government, and Economics) (30 credits)	Same (30 credits)
Science	2 Years (Including biological and physical science) (20 credits)	Same (20 Credits)
Foreign Language/VAPA/CTE	1 Year (10 credits)	Same (10 Credits)
Physical Education	2 Years (20 credits)	Same (20 Credits)
Electives	N/A	65 Credits
Health	N/A	5 Credits
Total Credits	130	220



State Mandated Graduation Requirements/130 Credits

- Aligns with CDE guidance
 - “It is expected that LEAs (districts) will enable students to complete state graduation requirements with needed flexibilities.....”
- Ensures every student has the greatest chance to graduate on time (in addition to foster youth, migrant students, homeless and formerly incarcerated students, as per Ed Code).
- Equity
 - Doesn't penalize students for not being able to participate in distance learning.
 - Doesn't penalize students who have challenges with learning remotely
 - Accounts for the most vulnerable of our students – Students with Disabilities, English Learners



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Neighboring Districts applying State Grad Requirements for Class of 2020

- ABC Unified School District
- Compton Unified School District
- Downey Unified School District



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Recommendation

Apply the state-mandated graduation requirements to the Class of 2020 to provide equity and “do no harm” to students during these unprecedented times.



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Grading



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Purpose

To provide a grading process that is equitable for students during the school closures due to COVID-19 and the use of distance learning.



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Current PUSD Grading Policy

Board Policy 5121

Our policy states...

*"The Governing Board believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians understand performance expectations and identifying the student's areas of strength and those areas needing improvement. Parents/guardians and students have the right to receive course grades that represent an **accurate evaluation** of the student's academic performance."*



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Current PUSD Grading Policy Board Policy 5121

Our policy states:

K-5 students receive marks in a rubric format (4,3,2,1 mark based on proficiency of the standard.)

6-12 students receive grades A-F

To determine these marks and grades teachers use:

- Class assignments
- Student work
- Class participation



Initial Guidance to teachers when School Closures began

When schools initially closed, it was assumed it would be for a short period of time. The following was shared with our teaching staff:

- Student grades “frozen” to whatever they were as of March 13, 2020 *with an initial* focus of distance learning to review and reinforce previously learned concepts and skills
- Work collected from students to be used to improve their grades. Students’ grades were not to be lowered and students were “held harmless” (not negatively impacted)



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Shift in Focus of Distance Learning

Once it was announced that Distance Learning would continue until the end of the school year, the focus shifted from review of instructional concepts to teachers presenting new academic content and continuing with the grade level curriculum.



Current Policy: K – 5th Grade

Current policy states that criteria for academic performance will be based on the following rubric:

Rubric Score	Meaning
4	Consistently exceeds grade level standards
3	Consistently meets grade level standards
2	Making progress toward grade level standards
1	Little or no progress toward grade level standards



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Proposed Change: K – 5th Grade

- TK-5 report cards are given three times per year; students have already received two grades this school year (November, March).
- Grades issued in June would not reflect progress that many students would have made the last trimester; this is especially true for literacy in the early grades.
- Recommend grades are suspended and only “Teacher Comments” are included for June, 2020 report cards in grades TK-5th.



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Current Policy: 6th-12th Grade

Current policy states that criteria for academic performance will be based on the following:

Grade	Meaning
A	Excelling at District course standards
B	Significantly proficient at District course standards
C	Proficient at District course standards
D	Minimal proficiency at District course standards
F	Not proficient at District course standards - No credit (9-12)
I	Incomplete - No credit (9-12)



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Proposed Change: 6-8 Grades

Recommend using students' March 13 grades with any improvements that the student has shown during distance learning to provide a Pass/Fail Mark.

- **Pass**
Students who have an ending grade of A,B,C, or D will receive a Pass Mark.
- **Fail**
Even after intervention and support, students who have an ending grade of an F will receive a Fail Mark.



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Research on High School Grading

Information was gathered from the following resources to determine how to develop an equitable grading practice during school closures and the use of Distance Learning:

- California Department of Education (CDE)
- Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE)
- Review of actions taken by local districts
- Review of actions taken by **districts** across the state and nation
- Guidance from advocacy groups (e.g. The Education Trust)
- Guidance from college admissions advisory groups (e.g. College Wise)
- Perspectives from the UC, CSU, and CA Community College systems
- Perspectives from in and out of state colleges and universities
- Perspectives from the NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse
- Feedback from principals
- Feedback from site teacher leadership teams



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Preface

Due to the circumstance of sudden school closure and the use of Distance Learning, an examination of alternative grading needs to be discussed. When making a transition to a modified grading practices for High School Students during this time, we need to make sure our District's grade policy is equitable to students, as Distance Learning has its challenges.

We know that when decisions are made, not all will be satisfied with the decision but know that we make decisions that are beneficial to our students.



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**Option #1:
(Current District Practice)**

Letter Grades: A, B, C, D, and F



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Option #1

Letter Grades: A-F

Pros

- No action required by the Board
- Familiar to students, parents, and teachers
- Students are given the grades they had in March or better in accordance with district guidance



Option #1: Letter Grades: A – F

Cons

- **Equity Issues:**
 - Students' mid-March grades may not reflect what the student could have achieved by June
 - Since instruction is not delivered in the same manner, grade accuracy is difficult
 - Harms students (e.g. GPA and Graduation) who are unable able to fully participate in distance learning or have challenges learning remotely
 - Students with Disabilities, English Learners receive grades as usual without their usual supports
 - Students with Ds or Fs at the time of closures have will have a difficult time improving their grade
- **Some students will receive Ds or Fs on their transcript, affecting graduation and possibly college admissions**



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Option #2:

ABC Grades + Credit/No Credit



Option #2

ABC Grades + Credit/No Credit

Description

- Students with grades of **A, B, or C** keep grades in each of those courses
- If a student has a **“D”** issue ***Credit***
- If a student has an **“F”** issue ***No Credit***

<i>Sample:</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>A</i>
	<i>Algebra</i>	<i>A</i>
	<i>History</i>	<i>B</i>
	<i>English</i>	<i>No Credit (Had an F)</i>
	<i>Science</i>	<i>No Credit (Had an F)</i>
	<i>Art</i>	<i>Credit (Had a D)</i>



Option #2

ABC Grades + Credit/No Credit

Pros

- Students with As, Bs, or Cs in courses as of March 13 get to “keep” those marks in those classes
- Students who improve a D or F grade as of March 13 via distance learning in any of their courses to an A, B, or C will get keep that mark
- No student receives a D or F
- Credit/No Credit marks will not affect GPA



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Option #2: ABC Grades + Credit/No Credit Cons

- **Equity Issues:**
 - Students' mid-March grades may not reflect what the student could have achieved by June
 - Since instruction is not delivered in the same manner, grade accuracy is difficult
 - Harms students (e.g. GPA and Graduation) who are unable able to fully participate in distance learning or have challenges learning remotely
 - Students with Disabilities, English Learners receive grades as usual without their usual supports
 - Students with Ds or Fs at the time of closures have will have a difficult time improving their grade
- **Colleges and universities *may prefer* a consistent and uniform approach**
- **Likely affect on college admissions**
 - Admissions officers will likely infer why some grades were A, B, or C while others Credit/No Credit
- **Possible logistical challenge**
 - Teachers and staff would have to carefully track student choices and act accordingly



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Option #3:

Credit/No Credit with Grade Opt In



Option #3: Credit/No Credit with Grade Opt In

Description

- All students are given credit/no credit
- Student/Parent selects to get a grade in a class

<i>Sample:</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>A</i>
	<i>Algebra</i>	<i>A</i>
	<i>History</i>	<i>Credit (Had a B)</i>
	<i>English</i>	<i>Credit (Had a B)</i>
	<i>Science</i>	<i>A</i>
	<i>Art</i>	<i>A</i>



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Option #3: Credit/No Credit with Grade Opt in

Pros

- Accounts for changes to curriculum and instruction as a result of shift to distance learning
- Does not put any student who has not been able to fully participate in distance learning at a disadvantage
- Does not put any student who has challenges with learning remotely at a disadvantage
- Students with Disabilities, English Learners are able to get credit for courses even though they may not have their full supports during distance learning
- Allows for choice of high achieving students to keep high grades



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Option #3: Credit/No Credit with Grade Opt in Pros (continued)

- Credit/No Credit is accepted for admissions by:
 - CSU
 - UC
 - Community Colleges
 - AICCU network of colleges and universities
 - NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse
- Out-of-state colleges and universities accept it too. Examples:
 - Harvard
 - MIT
 - Tulane
 - University of Chicago
 - Amherst
- No "Ds" or "Fs" are given



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Option #3: Credit/No Credit with Grade Opt in

Cons

- **Equity Issues:**
 - Students' mid-March grades may not reflect what the student could have achieved by June (grade inflation)
 - Gives advantages to high achieving students
- **Likely affect on college admissions**
 - Admissions officers will likely infer why some grades were A, B, while others Credit/No Credit
- **Possible logistical challenge**
 - Teachers and staff would have to carefully track student choices and act accordingly



Option #4: Credit/ No Credit

<i>Sample:</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Credit</i>
	<i>Algebra</i>	<i>Credit</i>
	<i>History</i>	<i>Credit</i>
	<i>English</i>	<i>Credit</i>
	<i>Science</i>	<i>Credit</i>
	<i>Art</i>	<i>Credit</i>



Option #4: Credit /No Credit

Pros

- **Equity Issue:**

- Best representation of student achievement under the circumstances
- Accounts for changes to curriculum and instruction as a result of shift to distance learning
- Does not put any student who has not been able to fully participate in distance learning at a disadvantage
- Does not put any student who has challenges with learning remotely at a disadvantage
- Students with Disabilities, English Learners are able to get credit for courses even though they may not have their full supports during distance learning
- Makes helping students with "Ds" or "Fs" earn Credit more manageable



Option #4: Credit /No Credit Pros (continued)

- College admissions officers will read transcripts uniformly
- Credit/No Credit is accepted for admissions by:
 - CSU
 - UC
 - Community Colleges
 - AICCU network of colleges and universities
 - NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse
- Out-of-state colleges and universities accept it too. Examples:
 - Harvard
 - MIT
 - Tulane
 - University of Chicago
 - Amherst
- GPAs unaffected
- No "Ds" or "Fs" are given



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Option #4: Credit / No Credit

Cons

- Some students and families with the best grades may not like this approach



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What approaches are local districts taking or considering?

District	Approach
Long Beach Unified	MS: Pass/Fail HS: Credit/No Credit
ABC Unified	Credit/No Credit with Opt-In Grades
Bellflower Unified	HS: Letter Grades
Compton Unified	A/B – Keep Grade C/D – Pass F – No Pass
Downey Unified	Credit/No Credit with Opt-In Grades
Lynwood Unified	MS: Pass HS: 12 th – Pass/No Pass; 9 th -11 th HS: 9 th -11 th – Pass/No Pass with Opt-In Grades
Norwalk-La Mirada	Credit/No Credit with Opt-In Grades

Pass/No Pass is equivalent to Credit/No Credit



Summary Options

- Option #1 Letter Grades: A, B, C, D, or F
(current practice)
- Option #2 ABC Grades + Credit/No Credit
- Option #3 Credit/No Credit with Opt-in Grade
- Option #4 Credit /No Credit



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Recommendations

Based on our research, discussions, and feedback:

Suspend BP/AR 5121 for Spring, 2020 and Summer, 2020

TK-5

“Teacher Comments” Spring, 2020 only



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Recommendations

Grades 6-8

Issue Pass/Fail marks to middle school students.



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Recommendations

Grades 9-12

Option # 3

Credit/No Credit with Grade Opt in

OR

Option #4

Credit /No Credit



Next Steps

- Place Board decision on agenda for action at May 11, 2020 Board meeting.