



May 4, 2020

Dear SOMSD Parents/Guardians,

Covid-19 Grading System Protocol

As of today, May 4, 2020, Governor Murphy has made the decision that all New Jersey schools will remain closed for in-person instruction for the remainder of the school year. Therefore, our District will continue with the distance learning instruction methodology that we transitioned to on March 18.

Covid-19 has prompted a shift in how K-12 instruction is normally delivered across the country. Additionally, this change has led the District to create a revised and temporary grading strategy for the fourth marking period. We understand that all students and staff members are working under challenging conditions (as are parents!). The adjustment to our grading system takes into consideration the emotional, social, and mental toll that students, staff and community are facing. It also observes the District's Access and Equity Policy while ensuring that students are meeting learning goals.

The District's new approach to the fourth marking period therefore focuses on the following priorities:

1. Engaging students;
2. Meeting learning outcomes for courses students are currently enrolled in;
3. Acknowledging circumstances that could perpetuate disparities among students and schools (please see the considerations discussed in the Course in Progress section found on pg. 3); and
4. Creating a learning environment that considers the needs of all students in the District.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a fluid, highly uncertain situation. For this reason, the District reserves the right to amend this temporary grading system, as necessary, to address the most currently available information including, but not limited to, new Executive Orders issued by the Governor of the State of New Jersey, guidance issued by the New Jersey State Education Department, and guidance issued by the United States Department of Education.

Please note, the District has decided that final exams for both the high school and middle schools will be canceled for the 2019 - 2020 school year. Below are charts and guidelines for the District's grading protocol by grade level.

Sincerely,




South Orange & Maplewood School District

Columbia High School – Grades 9-12

Grades for the fourth marking period will *only* take the form of letter grades *if they raise the student's overall course grade*. Otherwise, the student will receive either a "Pass" (P) or a "Course in Progress" (CIP). If the student's letter grade is a passing grade (D- or higher) but does not improve the overall grade, then the student will receive a "Pass." If the student does not meet the criteria for a passing grade, then the student will receive

a “Course in Progress” (CIP), and they will have the opportunity to make up the work for a new grade before December 1 of this year.

COVID-19 Grading System - 4th Quarter

Student	Course in Progress (CIP)	Pass (P)	Letter Grade
The fourth-quarter grade would raise the student's overall grade.			
Submitted assignments for the fourth quarter have earned the student a passing grade of 60 or higher, but the fourth-quarter grade would not raise the student's overall grade.			
Submitted assignments did not result in a passing grade of 60 or higher.			

Student Grade Point Averages (GPAs)

Student GPAs for the 2019-2020 school year will be calculated at the end of the fourth marking period. Since the only letter grades that students will receive in the fourth marking period will *improve* their overall grades, their GPA can only go *up* from the third marking period, not down. A grade of “Pass” will not affect the student's overall average. See below for the impact of “Course in Progress” grades.

For example:

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Q1 = *80 Q2 = 80 **X1 = 80 Q3 = 80 Q4 = Letter Grade (80 or higher) Final = 80 or higher	Q1 = *80 Q2 = 80 **X1 = 80 Q3 = 80 Q4 = CIP Final = CIP	Q1 = *80 Q2 = 80 **X1 = 80 Q3 = 80 Q4 = PASS (btw 60 - 79) Final = 80
Credit received *A # grade of “80” is equivalent to a B- **Midterm exams	No credit received (until course work is completed)	Credit received

Students with Disabilities:

Teachers will grade students based on the modifications and accommodations in their Individual Education Plan. An individual action plan will be developed in accordance with the Child Study Team if the marking period ends with a Course in Progress.

Students with Section 504s and I&RS Action Plans:

Teachers will grade students based on the accommodations in their 504/I&RS Action Plans.

Course in Progress (CIP)

The District believes that our students will have various reasons for being unable to complete the requirements during the fourth quarter. Some students may simply need more time to finish the assignments. Others may need more reliable internet access. Some may lack consistent use of technology if their siblings are sharing the one District Chromebook provided per family. Finally, Distance Learning may just not be the most effective way for particular students to learn. As a result, we are creating a plan and programs to support students during the summer of 2020 and, if necessary, through December 1, 2020. More information on this plan will be given in the next few weeks.

Students who receive Course in Progress (CIP) will have the opportunity to complete the requirements of the course to receive a grade of Pass. Incomplete assignments for each class that a student receives a Course in Progress grade will be due on December 1, 2020. Columbia High School Juniors should be mindful that the first round of transcripts will be sent out to colleges by guidance counselors during the second week in September.

Columbia High School Seniors should also be aware that they will not receive their diplomas if the grade of CIP has not been resolved.

Maplewood Middle School & South Orange Middle School – Grades 6 - 8

For each course they take, the District’s middle school students will receive one of the following three Q4 grades: “Pass with Distinction” (PD), if the average number grade for submitted assignments in the marking period would be 85 or above; “Pass” (P), if the average would be 60 to 84; or “Developing” (D), if the average for Q4 assignments would be 59 or below.


Students with Disabilities:



Teachers will grade students based on the modifications and accommodations in their Individual Education Plan. An individual action plan will be developed in accordance with the Child Study Team if the marking period ends with a Course in Progress.

Students with Section 504s and I&RS Action Plans:

Teachers will grade students based on the accommodations in their 504/I&RS Action Plans.

COVID-19 Grading System - 4th Quarter

The Student	Developing (D)	Pass(P)	Pass with Distinction (PD)
Fourth-quarter grades average 85% - 100%			

Fourth-quarter grades average 60% - 84%			
Grades for submitted assignments did not average 60% or higher.			

Elementary Schools – Grades K - 5

In each category of skills on the student's progress report for Q4, the student will receive either an "Introduced (I)," if the student has had a chance to exercise this skill, or a "Not Introduced (NI)," if the student did not have the opportunity to work on this skill in Q4.


Students with Disabilities:

Teachers will grade students based on the modifications and accommodations in their Individual Education Plan. An individual action plan will be developed in accordance with the Child Study Team if the marking period ends with a Course in Progress.

Students with Section 504s and I&RS Action Plans:

Teachers will grade students based on the accommodations in their 504/I&RS Action Plans.

COVID-19 Grading System - Grades K-5

Student	Introduced (I)	Not Introduced (N)
Concept or skill was Introduced		
Concept or skill was not Introduced		