

Dear Parents,

A few parents have asked for additional information and clarification regarding the District's amended policy on grading for the 4th nine weeks.

As I shared with you last night, our District's commitment to equity and ensuring all students have an equal chance at success along with our core beliefs has guided us as we have reached student-centered decisions.

The District's focus during our response to Covid-19 has centered around protecting the physical and emotional health of our students, employees and families while encouraging student participation in continued, distance learning at home.

It has not focused on grades. My correspondence with parents has not indicated that grades would be considered or given for completed work. It is my hope that parents have encouraged their children to continue to learn at home because ultimately you know your children will need to master this content to succeed at the next grade level or the next course level when school resumes in August, not because of a grade you or your child expected to receive. I believe we have an incredible opportunity during this very difficult season to embrace learning without grading.

I also think it is important for all of us to understand the difference between equity and equality. Equality is giving everyone the same thing. Equity is when every student has what they need to succeed based on individual needs. The reality is we cannot provide an equitable education to every child in our care through distance learning, especially not digitally.

Our teachers are working really hard to connect with their students and to support learning at home, but our students and families are diverse, and learning from home looks very different for very different situations. Some students are sharing computers. Some students have their own computer. Some do not have a computer or a device of any kind. Some households have unreliable internet. Some do not even have internet. Some have accessible wi-fi from every room. Some have a library of books. Some do not have a book. Some have a fully-stocked refrigerator and pantry. Some receive meals for four days of the week from our school district. And some are hungry when those meals are not available. Some have older students who are taking care of their younger siblings. Some have parents who are working from home. Some have parents who are not at home because their jobs require them to work even longer, more difficult hours as our community responds to this pandemic. But whatever their situation, we want to continue our students' learning momentum as best as possible based on individual circumstances.

For all of these reasons, we are focusing on LEARNING rather than GRADING. And yes, our school district has decided the exception should be to allow students who are failing the

opportunity to pass because we believe that failure should not be the result of the unforeseeable circumstances of the COVID-19 school closure.

I have asked teachers to share grace and flexibility with their students and parents as they facilitate learning from home, and I have asked parents to extend that to themselves and to their child's teacher(s). Now, I ask you to do that for me as our school district continues to navigate our response to Covid-19. We will get through this together.

Take care,

Eddie Peasant

Dear Parents,

The Mississippi Department of Education met on March 26, 2020 to grant school districts the flexibility needed to educate our students without the constraints of state assessments and other mandated requirements. Due to the extraordinary circumstances created by extended school closures for the 19-20 school year the SOCS D has approved several changes to our board policies around instruction, promotion and retention. Our goal is to enact policies that err on the side of the individual students. Appropriate Placement for Students with an IEP will be considered by the student's IEP committee, who will review need for retention, promotion, and/or compensatory services.

We hope that intent is evident in these policy changes. If you have any questions about your child's progress, please email your teacher, counselor, or principal. They will be glad to help you through this process. Our students are always our number one priority, and we believe these policy changes demonstrate our commitment to serving students and families during these challenging times.

Kindergarten:

Assessments:

- *The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (post-test) will not be administered.*
- *The English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) will not be administered.*

Instruction and Grading:

- *Students will be promoted based on mastery of the standards taught during the first three nine weeks.*
- *Before any student is retained in kindergarten, a back to school screener will take place followed by a conference between the parent, teacher, and administrator indicating need for retention. **(These students MAY be required to attend summer school sessions.)***

First Grade:

- *Students will be promoted based on mastery of the standards taught during the first three nine weeks.*
- *Before any student is retained in first grade, a back to school screener will take place followed by a conference between the parent, teacher, and administrator indicating need for retention. **(These students MAY be required to attend summer school sessions.)***

Second– Fifth Grades:

Assessments:

- *The Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) and MAAP-Alternate will not be administered.*
- *The English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) will not be administered.*

Instruction and Grading:

- *Students who have an average of 60 or higher in mathematics and English/language arts for the first three nine weeks will be promoted to the next grade.*
- *If a student’s average is a 59 or below in English/Language Arts or Mathematics, satisfactory completion and submission of paper packets will allow for an additional 5 points added to final grade. If a student’s average falls between 45-59, the course grade will be looked at individually by the principal before finalizing END OF YEAR GRADES. Teachers are working with these students individually to determine mastery of standards. **(These students MAY be required to attend summer school sessions.)***
- *Science and Social Studies will not be considered for promotion or retention.*
- *During the school closure, teachers are working to contact each student, the district is providing paper packets at each school site, and the packets are posted on the district website.*

Sixth – Eighth Grades (Non-Carnegie Unit Courses):

Assessments:

- *The Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) and MAAP-Alternate will not be administered.*
- *The English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) will not be administered.*

Instruction and Grading:

- *Students who have an average of a 60 or higher in English/Language Arts and Mathematics for the first three nine weeks will be promoted to the next grade.*

- *If a student's average is a 59 or below in English/Language Arts or Mathematics, satisfactory completion and submission of paper packets will allow for an additional 5 points added to final grade. If a student's average falls between 45-59, the course grade will be looked at individually by the principal before finalizing END OF YEAR GRADES. Teachers are working with these students individually to determine mastery of standards. **(These students MAY be required to attend summer school sessions.)***
- *If a student has an average below 45 for first three nine weeks in English/Language Arts or Mathematics, it is mathematically impossible for that student to meet the required 60 average; therefore, that student will be retained.*
- *Science and social studies will not be considered for promotion or retention.*
- *During the school closure, teachers are working to contact each student, the district is providing paper packets at each school site, and the packets are posted on the district website.*

Seventh – Eighth Grades (Carnegie Unit Courses)

- *Students who have an average of a 60 or higher will receive a Carnegie Unit for the following courses.*
 - Spanish 1*
 - Mississippi Studies*
 - CC Compacted Math 7*
 - CC Math 8*
 - CC Compacted Math 8 with Algebra*

- *If a student's average is a 59 or below, submission of paper packets will allow for an additional 5 points added to final grade. If a student's average falls between 45-59, the course grade will be looked at individually by the principal before finalizing END OF YEAR GRADES. Teachers are working with these students individually to determine mastery of standards. **(These students MAY be required to attend summer school sessions.)***
- *All students will be given every opportunity to successfully pass the core content in all semester, full-credit courses in which they are currently enrolled. Grades for fourth nine weeks will be utilized as learning opportunities and can only improve a student's average, not hurt it.*

- *If a student has an average below 45 for first three nine weeks, it is mathematically impossible for that student to meet the required 60 average; therefore, that student will not be given credit for the Carnegie unit course.*
- *During the school closure, teachers are working to contact each student, the district is providing paper packets at each school site, and the packets are posted on the district website.*

Ninth – Twelfth Grades:

Assessments:

- *The U.S. History, Biology I, Algebra I, and English II end-of-course assessments will not be administered.*
 - *If a student is currently enrolled in one of these four classes and he or she passes the course, the student will not be required to pass the assessment for graduation.*
 - *If a student has previously passed the course, but not the assessment, he or she will not be required to pass the assessment in order to graduate.*
- *The English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) will not be administered.*
- *The Career Planning and Assessment System (CPAS) will not be administered.*

Instruction and Grading:

- *Students who have an average of a 60 or higher will receive a Carnegie Unit for the course.*
- *If a student's average is a 59 or below, submission of paper packets will allow for an additional 5 points added to final grade. If a student's average falls between 45-59, the course grade will be looked at individually by the principal before finalizing END OF YEAR GRADES. Teachers are working with these students individually to determine mastery of standards. **(These students MAY be required to attend summer school sessions.)***
- *All students will be given every opportunity to successfully pass the core content in all semester, full-credit courses in which they are currently enrolled. Grades for fourth nine weeks will be utilized as learning opportunities and can only improve a student's average, not hurt it.*

- *If a student has an average below 45 for first three nine weeks, it is mathematically impossible for that student to meet the required 60 average; therefore, that student will not be given credit for the Carnegie unit course.*
- *During the school closure, teachers are working to contact each student, the district is providing paper packets at each school site, and the packets are posted on the district website.*

Seniors

- ***Seniors enrolled in a .5 credit course during the fourth nine weeks, will be required to meet modified course requirements (digital learning/paper packets) in order to meet requirements for Traditional Diploma.***
- *Freshmen – Juniors enrolled in a .5 credit course for fourth nine weeks, will be dropped from the course and required to take it next school year.*
- *All dual credit courses have transitioned to online courses. Students enrolled in these courses must continue to complete the assignments online and meet the requirements outlined by East Mississippi Community College.*

SOCSD Temporary Grading Outline: Revised April19-20

These guidelines will be effective for the 19-20 school year only. These guidelines will take precedence over any suspended policy that provides different guidance.

K/1 st Grade	Students Promoted based on skills learned during the first three nine weeks
T4 /A4 Fourth Nine Weeks Grade Calculation	T3/A3 Grade will be used for T4/A4 (Students with grades between 45-55 will be given additional assignments by teachers in an effort for them to raise their average to a passing grade. These grades will be recorded in T4/A4)
S2 - Semester 2 Grade Calculation	Average of (T3 + T4) ALL students exempt from S2 Exam
A4 - 0.5 Courses Only (Courses that were scheduled to begin last 9 weeks)	Seniors enrolled in a .5 credit course during the fourth nine weeks, will be required to meet modified course requirements (digital learning/paper packets) in order to meet requirements for Traditional Diploma. Freshmen – Juniors enrolled in a .5 credit course for fourth nine weeks will be dropped from the course and required to take the course in an upcoming school year.
End of Year Grade 4x4 Courses	Average of (A3 + A4) + Bonus Points Earned (maximum 5, IF AVERAGE IS BELOW 60) = Final End of Year Grade
End of Year Grade Year Long Courses	Average of S1+S2 for AMS or F1 Average for SHS + Bonus Points Earned (maximum 5, IF AVERAGE IS BELOW 60) = Final End of Year Grade
Bonus Points that can be added to Final End of Course Grade (if Average is below 60)	Failing students can earn an additional 5 points to their Final End of Course Grade by successful completion and submission of packets. IF AVERAGE IS BELOW 60 Week 1: April 17th packets 2.5 points. Week 2: April 29th packets 2.5 points

S1/S2=Year Long Courses A3/A4=4x4 scheduled courses T3/T4 = Term 3/Term 4

For Students in Grades K-8 (Non-Carnegie Unit Credits, End of Year Grade will be recorded as P(Passed) / NP(Not Passed)

Carnegie Unit Grades will be reported as numerical grades