

Re: No Graduation, No Grades But Raises Abound
1 message

Melisse Mossy
To: sduhswatchdog@gmail.com

Fri, Apr 24, 2020 at 8:38 AM

Dear SDUHSD Watchdog,

Thank you very much for taking the time to keep our district accountable. Our superintendent, Dr. Haley, has explained to us he is doing his best to implement the best policy for the most students, and there is no perfect option. He said he is still continuing to monitor the situation and in our recorded board meeting on Tuesday, I asked for data on the following:

PROS & CONS:
I asked our superintendent to provide a list of credit/ grading options and the pros and cons of each. I asked especially about the hold harmless grading system where a student's grade begins with what they earned prior to the closure of campus, and their grade can only go up from there (with required attendance). San Diego Unified Implemented this policy starting today.

COLLEGE DATA:
I also asked we contact the top 100 colleges and universities our students typically attend, and make a spreadsheet giving us direct knowledge of how they plan to evaluate student transcripts during this time. In addition to UC CSU it is imperative know what they would like to see on a transcript regarding credit/ no credit or letter grades. We should also ask them if they have lowered their standards for merit based scholarships and how Covid 19 will affect students who are receiving credit/ no credit VS. Grades when determining scholarship eligibility. We could also encourage families to individually reach out to potential colleges where their students might apply and ask for reassurance and information.

AP CREDIT:
I asked if there is a way to allow students to earn weighted points for taking AP classes.

TRANSCRIPT LETTER:
I asked if we could provide a letter of explanation on transcripts to ensure students are not at a disadvantage.

STUDENT INPUT:
I asked for a survey to be completed by all students indicating
1) If they are able to learn at home
2)The grading policy they believe is most fair given the situation.

TEACHER INPUT:
We could give the same survey to the teachers:
1) If they are able to teach from home
2)The grading policy they believe is most fair given the situation.

MORE COMMUNICATION:
A weekly video from the superintendent explaining what we are doing, why we are doing it, and why it's the best decision we have available for kids. I believe our families and our board and staff DO want what is best for kids, all kids. We need to make sure our community is educated on what we are doing and why and we also need to allow for their vital feedback.

MAKE SURE SENIORS ARE CELEBRATED

VIRTUAL PROM

BOARD VOTE:
I believe our board must meet again next week and vote on a grading system. I do not believe we need facts and accurate unbiased data in order to do this. I believe we need to communicate with our families better. I believe principals should also have weekly video emails sent to families. I believe we need humans answering the phones at the district office and school sites so parents and students can get the help they need as fast as possible.

I am one person, basically a volunteer, who is trying to do my best to advocate for children. Our board is compromised of 5 members and if you believe we need more data and we need to have a vote please join me in sharing this with the district staff and additional board members. Because of the Brown Act we are not allowed to discuss this as a board unless we have an official meeting. I believe we should schedule one for next week.

Thank you for Caring,
Melisse Mossy

HERE ARE THE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES:



April 1, 2020
Joint statement from the California State Board of Education, California Department of Education, California State University, University of California, California Community Colleges and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities:

California’s K-12 and higher education communities are committed to helping high school and community college students overcome university admissions and placement challenges presented by the suspension of in-person instruction.

The State Board of Education (SBE), California Department of Education (CDE), California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), California Community Colleges, and independent nonprofit colleges and universities have been working together to understand and address the heightened concerns of students and families and the difficult conditions of this time.

As described in guidance from each of the sectors, the State Board and CDE have identified means to support:

- A range of distance learning
- Strategies for flexibility in grading
- Guidance for adjustments of local graduation requirements

The higher education community has offered assurances regarding:

- Re-evaluation of the financial needs, as well as the eligibility for federal and college financial aid, for families whose circumstances have changed;
- Acceptance of Credit/No Credit grades in lieu of letter grades for A-G high school courses completed in winter/spring/summer 2020;
- Flexibilities associated with the receipt of official transcripts and confirmation of admissions offers, including deferments of deposits or fees, where needed;
- Flexibility and support for students currently enrolled in dual enrollment course offerings;
- For community college students seeking to transfer to a four-year university: Acceptance of Credit/No Credit in lieu of letter grades in “Golden Four” and General Education/prerequisite courses completed at a community college in winter/spring/summer 2020.

These are represented in guidance from each of the sectors, available <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp>. We also encourage interested parties to contact university admissions offices with specific questions.

As educators, we understand the anxieties triggered by the many uncertainties students now face and trust these accommodations provide a measure of relief. We look forward to the days far past this pandemic when we can welcome back our students and greet new ones with a handshake or a hug.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES GIVEN TO US FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT: PLEASE READ

Guiding Documents & Resources

- [Crescendo Education Group Grading Recommendation during COVID-19](#)
- Joint statement from the California State Board of Education, California Department of Education, California State University, University of California, California Community Colleges and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/documents/jointk12highereducation>
- University of California (UC) [The University of California’s Response to COVID-19: Admissions and Financial Aid](#)

UC Admissions FAQ

- California State University (CSU) [COVID-19 Interim Impacts on CSU Undergraduate Admissions Policies and Practices](#)
- Community College letter [California Community Colleges Guidance Letter](#)
- Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) [AICCU Institution Activities to Serve High School Juniors and Seniors](#); [Harvard](#) & [Stanford](#) adjusted admissions policies
- [NCAA guidance on COVID-19](#)
- [Challenge Success](#)
- [Harvard University](#)
- [Stanford University](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRADING DURING COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURES
(2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR)

In the interests of protecting the health and safety of our communities from the coronavirus, schools are closing their doors, not only through the end of spring break, but beyond, some even until the end of this school year.

Among other issues, this brings up the question of grading. Because the grades students receive are used for many high-stakes decisions—course placement, graduation, scholarships, college admission, and more—policymakers and district leaders are looking for expert guidance on whether, and how, to grade students during this very challenging time.

The grading recommendations below are grounded in research on effective evaluation, culturally responsive teaching and learning, and Crescendo Education Group’s work since 2013 in multiple geographic and socioeconomic contexts. They also incorporate feedback from teachers, schools, and district leaders.

These grading recommendations (that follow) are based on [three principles](#):

1. Stress related to COVID-19 will negatively impact student academic performance.

Everyone is affected by the stress of the global pandemic, and this stress is expected to grow as the number of people infected, and become sick or die, increases. It will become more likely that each of us will know someone or have family members with the coronavirus. Plus, the economic impact of this crisis will become more severe, with more people out of work and requiring financial assistance. Not only has research directly linked parents’ job losses to lower student performance, but economic strain within a family adds stress and anxiety, which creates additional adverse consequences.¹

While schools often provide some measure of mental health services, students are now unable to access them. Additionally, the health- and economic-related stress caused by the coronavirus will likely be disproportionately felt by students in lower-income families, who are more vulnerable to economic downturns and more likely to experience food and housing insecurity. We also know that grades themselves are a

significant source of stress to students and will only exacerbate the pressure they already are experiencing.

Finally, stress and anxiety hampers cognition, particularly with higher-demand tasks involved in learning.² Students will be unable to process new material or demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of course content. Their performance on quizzes, tests, or other assessments will assuredly be compromised and will not accurately reflect their learning. This impact will be more acutely felt by lower-income students and those with special needs.

2. Student academic performance during school closures is more likely to reflect racial, economic, and resource differences.

Schools have entirely shifted to remote instruction, and never in the history of our country has a student’s learning been so dependent on home technological resources—a situation that has exposed glaring inequities.³ Many students do not have consistent access to technology because of a lack of computers or internet access in their homes. In addition, families with several school-age children may require multiple computers and higher bandwidth.

We also know that parents who have a higher education background or who have more resources are able to provide more academic supports for their children, immediately and over the long haul. During school closures, parents (including teachers) have been asked to assume more responsibilities to support and even teach their children, which means that the capacity of parents to support remote instruction will now have a greater influence on students’ learning.

And there is another complicating dynamic: Parents who are in the health or medical professions or who provide other “essential” products or services—including hourly employees in public transit, sanitation, grocery stores, and pharmacies—are less available to their children than parents in other professions during this critically important time.

Schools always strive to provide sufficient supports to students in order compensate for differences in family resources and level the playing field. But in this new context, most schools are unable to do that as effectively, thereby exacerbating these disparities. The inequitable result is that students’ academic performance will reflect their home environments more tightly than ever.

3. Teachers are being asked to provide high-quality instruction remotely, for which most are inadequately prepared.

Even among our most dedicated teachers, most have received little, if any, preparation to provide remote or distance learning instruction. Effective online learning requires

carefully tailored instructional design and planning, using a specialized model for design and development.⁴ It is more than using online learning applications (which, for some teachers, pose a very steep learning curve), it’s not simply having students progress through their school class schedule in virtual classes all day long, and it’s not just posting worksheets and readings on a website. Yet these rudimentary translations of in-class teaching may be the best that most teachers can do, given that they themselves are also likely grappling with the significant stress and anxiety of physical distancing and the health and safety of their families.

In addition, with students doing all of their work outside the classroom, it is impossible for a teacher to ensure that any work submitted is entirely the student’s; it could be the performance of an older sibling, a parent, or even a peer.

GRADING RECOMMENDATIONS

We are all living in difficult, unprecedented times, and educators are working hard each day to do the best for their students and provide learning in adaptive ways. Based on the three principles just described, our grading recommendations for school districts in this time of crisis are as follows:

Because grades describing student knowledge and understanding of course standards will assuredly be inaccurate during this time, *no grades should be awarded as of the date schools were closed due to the coronavirus*. This is especially important for lower ages (kindergarten through 9th grade), during which grades have far less consequence.

Use Only Pass/Incomplete Grades

If grades do need to be awarded—such as at the high school and postsecondary levels—the only grades for the second semester of the school year should be either “Pass” or “Incomplete” instead of the traditional 0-100 percentages and A-F letter grades. Schools use percentages and letter grades primarily to distinguish among students and suggest precise distinctions of course content knowledge, but this specificity is impossible when such significant doubts exist about the integrity or fairness of student performance data. Letter and percentage grades also can add stress and anxiety to students, and Pass/Incomplete grades give students some relief during this extremely stressful time.

A student should receive a “Pass” for second semester if, at the time her school was closed due to the coronavirus, she was meeting minimum standards in a course. Any student who was not meeting minimum standards in the course up to that point should have the opportunity to fulfill the requirements remotely and receive a “Pass” for the course. If a student is unable to meet the requirements for whatever reason, they should receive an “Incomplete” for the course and, when schools reopen, be provided sufficient opportunity to fulfill requirements. Yearlong courses in which semester grades are normally combined should be bifurcated into two separate reports—a letter grade for first semester and a Pass/Incomplete for second semester.

If Grades Are Necessary, Make Them Temporary

If the school or district context requires that an A-F letter grade must be assigned, schools should explicitly frame the grade as a *temporary description* of what a student has demonstrated based on incomplete information. The district should provide opportunities, once schools reopen, for a student to learn the course content and improve the grade assigned during the school closure period.

Don’t Leave the Choice of Grading to the Student

Several universities and colleges are allowing students at the end of this semester to decide whether a course should be Pass/No Pass or graded A-F. This apparently reasonable compromise actually perpetuates inequity: it gives students with access to technology and resources the advantage of being able to earn the letter grade, while the less-resourced student cannot realistically exercise that choice. And, for reasons stated above, “Incomplete” is preferred to “No Pass”; “No Pass” connotes a final evaluation of a student’s performance, which during school closures is based on flawed information and disproportionately disadvantages low-income and other less resourced students. “Pass/Incomplete” is a more accurate grade and allows all students, regardless of circumstances, to complete course requirement when they have this opportunity.

Have Students Sign an Integrity Agreement

Districts and schools should ask students to sign a “remote academic integrity agreement” in which they promise that all work submitted was completed without any additional assistance, unless specified by the teacher. This agreement helps the school or district reaffirm its expectations for students and increases students’ investment in their learning. It also builds teachers’ confidence that the work students submit is their own. Of particular importance during this crisis is that educators consider and use these agreements not as “gotcha” traps to disqualify student work but rather as a tool to build responsibility and trusting relationships.

Continue Providing Feedback on Performance

Teachers should continue to give detailed feedback to students on their performance to support learning. Teacher feedback could be communicated through online meetings or web-based applications, and will give students valuable insight into their understanding, guidance on how to improve, and motivation to learn and grow. Research supports the impact of non-graded feedback to focus students on learning rather than performance,⁵ and when the psychological and intellectual “load” on students and their families is so significant, it is important that schools lean on the side of support and learning rather than competition and high-stakes performance.

* * * * *

Students, Not Grades, Come First

Once a grading policy is decided on, districts and schools should issue a statement to families that explains the policy and how it aligns with their overarching beliefs about

learning, equity, and children. Several policymakers and superintendents are already implementing these policies. For example, the Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia announced that because some children are not able to access technology or complete assignments, teachers cannot require or evaluate any remote work. Both Virginia and Kansas schools, which are physically closed for the remainder of the school year, have also stated that student work should not be graded during this time. If parents and others are concerned about whether or not awarding traditional grades will make their children less competitive or eligible for opportunities (e.g., scholarships and college admission), it is a certainty that institutions that make decisions based on grades—such as colleges, NCAA, and others—will make adjustments and allowances because of the global upheaval caused by COVID-19.

During this challenging and stressful time, it is important to act in the best interests of children. The only way schools can properly recognize the almost unimaginable stress and anxiety that the coronavirus has and will have our communities is to *not evaluate and assign grades* for remote learning during the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. In this way, we affirm that all grades must be accurate, that they must be equitable and, most of all, that they support learning.

Learn more about equitable grading and assessment at gradingforequity.org.

For more information, contact Joe Feldman [joe@crescendoedgroup.org]. He has worked in education for over 20 years as a teacher, principal, and district administrator, and is the founder and CEO of Crescendo Education Group (crescendoedgroup.org) and the Equitable Grading Project. He is the author of [*Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms*](#) (Corwin, 2018). Follow him on Twitter [@joecfeldman](#).

¹ “[D]omestic violence increases whenever stress increases, particularly financial. We’re going to see increased rates of child abuse, physical and also neglect as well,” predicted Victor Carrion, director of the Stanford Early Life Stress and Pediatric Anxiety Program. Hoge, P., 2020. [Coping With Stress Of Coronavirus Crisis A Challenge For California’s Students](#). [online] EdSource.

² Vogel, S. (2020). [Stress affects the neural ensemble for integrating new information and prior knowledge](#). PubMed - NCBI. [Online]. Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

³ Sonali, K., (2020). [Coronavirus-caused LAUSD school shutdown worsens inequities as many students go AWOL](#). [online] Los Angeles Times. [Accessed 3 April 2020]; Reilly, K., (2020). [The achievement gap is ‘more glaring than ever’ for students dealing with school closures](#). [Online] Time.

⁴ Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T. & Bond, A. (2020). [The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning](#). [Online] Educause Review.

⁵ Butler, R. & Mordecai, N. (1986). Effects of no feedback, task-related comments, and grades on intrinsic motivation and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology* (78)3: 210.

The University of California’s Response to COVID-19: Admissions and Financial Aid

The following systemwide measures are being taken to address the educational disruption of students affected by the COVID-19 crisis (as of April 1, 2020)

FALL 2020 FRESHMAN ADMITTED STUDENTS

UC will temporarily suspend the letter grade requirement for A-G courses completed in winter/spring/summer 2020 for all students, including UC’s most recently admitted freshmen.

Freshman decisions have been released at all campuses: admissions offers have gone out to students. The deadline to accept the offer of admission is May 1; campuses plan to provide maximum flexibility to students who request extensions and deferment of deposits. Individual campuses may consider extending a campus’ deadline beyond the systemwide date and will communicate this information directly with admitted students.

UC requests submission of final transcripts by July 1. If schools are unable or unsure about their ability to issue transcripts by this date, we request that they notify UC at AskUC@ucop.edu and include a date when transcripts are expected to be available. No rescission of student admissions offers will result from students or schools missing official final transcript deadlines, and students will retain admission status through the first day of class until official documents are received by campuses.

The College Board recently announced changes to the AP exam content and format for spring 2020. UC recognizes the effort that students have already applied in these challenging courses and will continue to award UC credit consistent with previous years for 2020 AP exams completed with scores of 3, 4, or 5.

FALL 2020/WINTER 2021 TRANSFER STUDENTS

UC will temporarily suspend the cap on the number of transferable units with Pass/No Pass grading applied toward the minimum 60 semester/90 quarter units required for junior standing.

The systemwide Academic Senate is making efforts to request departmental faculty and campus admissions offices to exercise flexibility with transfer students applying for admission for 2020-21 academic year.

The deadline for transfer students to accept offers of admission to fall 2020 is June 1. Campuses will provide maximum flexibility to students who request extensions and deferment of deposits.

FINANCIAL AID

The University understands that families’ financial circumstances may have changed or may change in the coming months. UC campuses will work with families over the summer to review their eligibility for financial aid and, where allowable, to adjust financial aid packages to reflect their new financial circumstances. Follow-up to students will be handled by email responses, or telephone calls or virtual meetings as needed.

FALL 2021 ADMISSIONS

The temporary suspension of the letter grade requirement in A-G courses completed in winter/spring/summer 2020 extends to all students currently enrolled in high school who may apply to UC for admission to fall 2021, 2022 or 2023. For admission purposes, UC will continue to calculate a GPA using all A-G courses completed *with letter grades* in grades 10 and 11, including summer terms following grades 9, 10 and 11. Courses completed with Pass or Credit grades in winter/spring/summer 2020 will not be used in the GPA calculation but will meet A-G subject area requirements. No student will be penalized in the campus admission review processes for earning Pass grades in A-G coursework during the winter/spring/summer 2020 terms.

Additionally, the University recognizes the challenges that students are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, in response, is suspending the standardized test requirement for students applying for fall 2021 freshman admission.

On Apr 23, 2020, at 8:17 PM, Laura True <laura@truegroup.com> wrote:

MARCH 26, 2020

Faculty Senate approves academic policy changes in response to COVID-19

At a special emergency meeting on March 26, the Faculty Senate approved a variety of new academic policies, including implementing a Satisfactory/No Credit grade for spring quarter.



BY KATHLEEN J. SULLIVAN

In a special meeting Thursday, the Faculty Senate approved several new academic policies designed to give students and instructors some flexibility during the extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances – and disruption – caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

Under one of the new policies approved at the March 26 meeting, all university courses will be graded Satisfactory/No Credit for spring quarter of 2019-20, except for those offered by the Graduate School of Business, School of Law and the School of Medicine MD program.

Since the state of California remains under a shelter-in-place order, the Faculty Senate held the meeting using a video conferencing service – a first for the senators.



Members of the Faculty Senate met virtually Thursday to consider academic policy exceptions requested by the Academic Continuity Group. (Image credit: Andrew Brodhead)



Harvard Gazette

College adopts grading policy changes for spring term



pay, benefits amid coronavirus disruptions



Temporary shift maintains educational mission while adapting to pandemic challenges

BY **Jill Radsken**
Harvard Correspondent

DATE March 30, 2020

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From taking notes in the classroom to helping the front lines
- 2

Dancing with myself

Harvard College will adopt an Emergency Satisfactory/Emergency Unsatisfactory (SEM/UEM) grading policy for the spring semester, a shift announced Friday by Claudine Gay, Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

“We of course remain committed to academic continuity, but we cannot proceed as if nothing has changed. Everything has changed,” said Gay in a letter to the FAS community, recognizing unanimous endorsement from Faculty Council.

Peer institutions, such as Dartmouth, Stanford, Yale, Columbia, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology , have moved to similar grading policies for their spring terms. Factoring equity as a prime motivator, Gay said: “[F]or some students the challenges have been more severe. Some have seen parent job losses, or have had to take over child care and other household responsibilities, as health care and other essential workers in their families continue to provide

On Apr 19, 2020, at 7:31 AM, sduhsd-watchdog <sduhsdwatchdog@pb03.ascendbywix.com> wrote:

Can't See This Message? [View in a browser](#)

NO GRADUATION, NO GRADES
BUT RAISES ABOUND

Posted: April 18, 2020

2012-2018 Pay Analysis KPI	San Diego County	SDUHSD
Employee Median Pay Raise \$	\$19,814	\$31,859
Employee Median Pay Raise %	32%	48%
Average Growth Rate Per Year	4.78%	6.76%
Median Total Pay – Administrators*	\$125,089	\$149,468
Median Total Pay – Teachers*	\$88,291	\$115,708
* includes only base pay (not total pay for SDUHSD)		

On April 8th - an opinion piece ran in Voice of San Diego titled: [Districts Couldn't Stop Raising Employee Pay – Now Kids Will Pay the Price](#)

The opinion piece laid out some very interesting statistics for those in San Diego County Education as a whole. At Watchdog, we were curious what it looked like specifically for San Dieguito Union High School District.

Story Continues...

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