

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### REMOTE LEARNING, GRADING K-11 and SENIORS

All documents released by SBE/NCDPI supporting the COVID-19 grading policies are available at the following URL:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/covid-19-response-resources>



Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

Deputy Superintendents Dr. Emory and Dr. Stegall have made [a series of short YouTube videos](#) addressing some of the typical questions received from students, families, and the field.

### POWERSCHOOL DOCUMENTATION

All of the documents and quick reference guides for implementation of COVID-19 grading systems in PowerSchool/SIS are [available here](#).

### GENERAL QUESTIONS ON REMOTE LEARNING and GRADING

***Q: Does an LEA have to provide the same remote learning experience for all students?***

**A:** No. This will depend on the home environment and needs of the students. Just like schools/teachers differentiate for learning during the typical school experience in the building, that will need to happen in this remote learning environment as well and will need to consider diverse learning needs, including those of EC, EL, AIG, etc.

***Q: Should an LEA/Charter stop teaching if one student in the LEA/Charter does not have access to a device?***

**A:** No. It is paramount that remote learning continues. LEAs/Charters are encouraged to use all resources and equipment at their disposal to ensure learning during this public health crisis.

- NCDPI is pleased to hear that some LEAs/Charters are loaning out their school-based laptops for student use; feeder elementary schools' laptops are also being considered for use by upper grade levels.
- For some students, remote learning may be individual sessions over the phone and for for others, a zoom class may work, and for others, an assignment via email may work. It is SBE policy that no grades be given if learning is not accessible for all students involved in the class; this does not include extenuating circumstances like illness of a student or refusal of a student to complete work.

***Q: Does 'accessible by all students' mean providing school-owned laptops or other devices to the students for remote learning at home?***

**A:** Not necessarily. NCDPI encourages LEAs/Charters to provide a variety of remote learning opportunities to engage all students, continue academic growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. Remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems. NCDPI does encourage the use of all available devices possible for student use. And use of print materials or other differentiated assignments may be required to support individual student needs.

**Q: What are some examples of schedules or an advised amount of time children should spend online for remote learning?**

**A:** Please visit the NCDPI Remote Learning website for [instructional resources](#) and [parent resources](#) that address this topic. The experience should include accommodations/modifications commensurate with the student's unique needs identified in any specialized educational plan.

**Q: Does remote learning content allow for instructor-based decisions? Could this expectation include new content? Make-up work? Alternative assignments?**

**A:** Yes. This is instructor-based with district guidance. Even though buildings are closed, school is still on. Be responsive to remote learning factors based on the individual student needs, especially those related to the home environment, and continue student learning.

**Q: The guidance from NCDPI states that if the critical factors for remote learning cannot be met, student grades will not be negatively impacted. Can it be inferred, that students' grades may be improved under these circumstances?**

**A:** School is still on for learning. Student grades can improve and the content can be new content. It is important to consider the critical factors for remote learning in determining how grading will occur locally. Remote learning can be differentiated in the same classroom. For example, if a teacher has 20 students in her biology class and knows two students who do not have internet access, in some cases, she can differentiate the assignment so that those two students have another reasonable way to complete it via paper/pencil, phone, etc. If one of those two students simply refuses to do it and could reasonably have been expected to complete the assignment, that does not prevent the other 19 students from getting a grade. An instance where a teacher should not grade an assignment at all would be if the teacher really cannot be sure that it was reasonable to expect completion by the whole class considering the critical factors for remote learning.

**Q: How will NCVirtual report final grades?**

**A:** NCVirtual's final grade reports for Spring 2020 and Yearlong 2019-20 courses have been modified to provide schools with the necessary data to implement the temporary statewide grading policy due to COVID-19. For all students grades 6-12, the final grade report will contain the numerical grade from the March 10th progress report and the numerical grade representing the cumulative course average.

- Schools are responsible for looking at the two numerical grades to determine whether seniors should be given a PC19 or WC19 for the course. For 9-12 students and middle school students taking high school courses, schools are responsible for using the reported grades to help advise students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) on whether to take the highest numerical grade or a PC19/WC19. For middle school students enrolled in middle school courses, schools will use the reported numeric grades to determine whether a PC19 or WC19 is given. All middle school students, no matter what course they are enrolled in, will also have comments on their academic needs/strengths and social-emotional perspective to be used by schools to add in transition to the next course. As always, schools are responsible for inputting grades for NCVirtual courses into PowerSchool.

- Final grade reports will be available via the NCVirtual registration system on:
  - May 14, 2020 for Early Start calendar courses
  - June 4, 2020 for Traditional calendar courses

Additional information on NCVirtual's grading response to this period of school building closure is located at <https://ncvps.org/coronavirus-updates/>.

**Q: How will post-secondary institutions view student grades from COVID-19?**

**A:** Post-secondary institutions are in the same scenario as K-12 public schools. They are adapting to the situation as the pandemic continues and understand the widespread impact of COVID-19. NCDPI continues to work closely with the UNC System Office, NC Independent Colleges and Universities and NC Community College System to ensure the most effective transitions possible to support student success. NCAA guidelines for eligibility have also been adapted as a result of COVID-19 for graduating seniors and other high school students as this will impact their overall high school transcripts.

**GRADES K-11:**

**EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS and GRADING QUESTIONS**

[See Also: End of Year Grading and Promotion Summary Document \(Grade K-11\)](#)

**Q: How do we assign final grades in grades K-11?**

**A:** School is still on for learning and final grades are not to be resolved until each LEA/charter's end date for this year. Based on remote learning critical factors, LEAs/Charters may assign grades for individual assignments as discussed throughout this document and in documents adopted by the SBE as a result of this crisis. For FINAL COURSE GRADES for students in grades K-11, all NC school districts and charters will follow the [SBE approved grading policy approved on April 23, 2020](#) and the [one-pager overview](#) with additional technical or implementation documentation issued from PowerSchool/SIS to support data entry and logistics:

**GRADES K-5:**

- Students will receive no final grade in grades K-5.
- Instead of a final grade, teachers will provide year-end feedback for students regarding learning from the full academic school year, using a format determined locally.
- Teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.

**GRADES 6-8:**

- Students will receive a Pass "PC19" or Withdrawal "WC19"\* for the final course grades for all middle school courses.
  - A student's grade will be held harmless for learning after March 13.
  - PC19 will be assigned to any student who was meeting expectations and passing the course as of March 13 or who worked to improve to the point of passing after March 13 through remote learning.

- WC19 will be assigned to any student who was not passing the course as of March 13 and who was unable to improve to the point of passing the course through remote learning opportunities. A middle school course grade of WC19 does not equate to a failing course grade nor does it indicate that a grade retention should occur or that the course must be repeated. The grade WC19 simply indicates a lack of evidence of mastery of standards addressed in the particular content area.
- Teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.
- High school courses taken in middle school will follow the grading options presented below for high school students, with the understanding that if there is a numeric grade on the transcript it will not be calculated in the high school GPA per SBE policy, Course for Credit, CCRE-001.

**GRADES 9-11 and non-graduating seniors:**

**Current Spring 2020 Courses:**

- Students will be given a choice for how each final course grade will appear on the transcript for both year-long and semester courses currently in progress.
  - Students will have two options for each final course grade:
    - Numeric grade, the highest grade representing learning as of March 13 or as improved through the semester as remote learning continued or
    - PC19 or WC19.
  - Students will determine how each final course grade will appear on the transcript at the end of the semester after advising from the teacher/school and in consultation with the parent/guardian.
  - When students choose to report a numeric grade as the final grade on the transcript, the numeric grade will be calculated into the cumulative GPA, following the guidelines in SBE policy GRAD-009.
  - When students choose to report a PC19 or WC19 as the final grade on the transcript, there is no GPA impact when using these grades.
  - When students in a yearlong course choose a PC19 or WC19 for the spring portion of the course, the fall term grade will be counted into the GPA.

***Q: What about students in grades 9-11 currently in year-long courses?***

**A:** Students will maintain the grades for fall courses as already stored, year-long and semester. Fall 2019 final grades will be calculated into a student's GPA, independent of the Spring 2020 semester choice for grading. PowerSchool/SIS has released detailed instructions just as they did with the Senior Quick Reference Guide showing how to implement these policies in both year-long and semester courses for high schools [available here](#). If a student chooses a numeric grade for a year-long course for the Spring semester, two half-credit grades will be entered. If a student's cumulative grade is higher than that of the fall or spring semester grade, change those grades to represent the cumulative grade. This will ensure that all year-long and block semester credit courses receive the same parity, if numeric grades are chosen.

**Q: Will students in grades 9-11 who are able to complete the course receive Honors, AP/IB/CIE, and/or CCP added weight for their GPA?**

**A:** Students in grades 9-11 are still receiving regular grades for the courses they are in, dependent on the remonte learning factors. At the conclusion of the semester, each student will have a choice with each high school course as to whether they choose to report a final grade on their transcript reflecting EITHER the highest numerical grade earned or PC19. If the student reports the traditional, numeric grade the additional quality point system for honors and college-level courses still applies.

**Q: How will CCP students' grades be handled for students in grades 9-11 and non-graduating seniors?**

**A:** In the same manner as all other high school courses. If a student completes the course, the earned college grade will appear on the college transcript and the student's choice of either the numeric final grade or PC19 will appear on the high school transcript. If the student does not have the opportunity to access or is unable to access college coursework, NCDPI will "separate out" the dual enrollment. The college transcript is the authoritative source for college grades but SBE policies on grading apply to high school transcripts, even for CCP courses. [Please see CCP COVID-19 Guidance for more information.](#)

**Q: What about promotion / retention of students for the 2019-2020 school year?**

**A:** School is still on for learning. Continue to follow best practices to ensure student success. Based on the SBE approved policy:

- Student promotion and retention will remain the decision of the school principal and staff.
- NCDPI recommends that districts/schools only consider retention of students if the retention consideration process was already well underway for a student prior to March 13, 2020 and that there was well-documented communication with the student's family discussing the possibility of retention prior to that date.
- If a student was being considered for retention prior to March 13 and is still being considered for retention, NCDPI strongly encourages the development of a local plan to ensure effective communication and collaboration between the school and family to determine the most effective path forward for the student, especially given these extraordinary circumstances that students/families find themselves in as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and extended school closure.

**Q: Does the Graduating Senior grading policy apply to Grades 12 and 13 in a Cooperative Innovative High School?**

**A:** No. The Graduating Seniors Grading policy is only intended for those seniors who are graduating in June 2020. Non-graduating seniors would follow guidance the SBE adopted from Grades K-11 and non-graduating seniors.

**Q: What about credit recovery and other options for high school students in grades 9-11 who do not have a passing numeric grade or PC19 at the end of the semester but instead received a final course grade of WC19?**

**A:** The SBE has made clear that students will not receive a failing grade. LEAs/Charters will advise the use of WC19 for any student who is failing as of March 13 and was unable to improve through remote learning opportunities. WC19 does not equate to a failing course grade but indicates a lack of evidence of mastery of standards addressed in the particular course and that the school is unable to award a unit of credit.

NCDPI encourages LEAs/Charters to use all means possible to support student learning that has been impacted by COVID-19 in the future, such as Credit Recovery and Repeating a Course for Credit (SBE-CCRE-001). Issuing a temporary grade of Incomplete may be used locally in instances when the student, parent/guardian, teacher, and school administration determine it is appropriate and develop a clear, time-bound plan to complete all course requirements.

**Q: *What documents are required for K-8? Can you provide further guidance and examples?***

**A:** Based on SBE policy, the following documents are required:

- For K-5, (1) student/parent feedback instead of final grades and (2) a transition document for the next year's teachers.
- For 6-8, (1) a transition document for the next year's teachers.

**For K-5 students**, instead of a final grade, teachers will provide year-end feedback for students/families regarding learning from the full academic school year, using a format determined locally.

**For students in K-5 and 6-8**, teachers will document individual student strengths and needs from both an academic and social/emotional perspective to ensure an effective transition from the spring 2020 remote learning process to the 2020-21 academic year.

**Parent/Student Feedback for K-5:**

- Locally determined. Consider developing consistent documents for use across an LEA/Charter appropriate to each grade level. Involve a team approach in the development.
- Audience: Students/parents/guardians
- May be part of the transition document.
- Recommend comments for all content areas and other applicable programs.

**Transition Documents for K-8:**

- Locally determined. Consider developing consistent documents for use across an LEA/Charter appropriate to each grade level. Involve a team approach in the development to ensure effective communication.
- Audience: Next year's teachers/school
- Must address the student's strengths and needs from an academic perspective:
  - Recommend information regarding all content areas or courses

- Intent is not to address every standard for every course; but overall thoughts to support successful re-entry into schooling in Fall 2020.
- Must address the student's strengths and needs from a social/emotional perspective:
  - Recommend teachers sharing student social/emotional context during remote learning across varied learning experiences, especially because some may have different situations to share.
  - Encourage teachers to share observations and interventions that had positive impact and to be careful not to diagnose mental health disorders.
  - For an LEA/Charter implementing a focus on SEL competencies and MTSS, consider possible integration.
- NCDPI recommends LEAs/Charters to store the transition documents in cumulative folders to ensure effective student transitions for Fall 2020, especially if a student moves from your LEA/Charter to another school.
- **LEA/Charter SAMPLES:** NCDPI will provide an online space to share templates.
  - To submit contributions and view contributions, see this google folder: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OzfcFPxLXEWv17uFkvrXoMbTzmNxo fgO>

***Q: Are non-graduating seniors at Cooperative Innovative High Schools/Early Colleges following the same grading guidance as juniors?***

**A:** Yes.

***Q: What happens if a student is unreachable to make the choice for the final grade in grades 9-11? When students make their choice of final reporting of spring grades at the end of the school year, can that decision be changed when 20-21SY begins during the 45 day grace period?***

**A:** If a student is unreachable by the end of the school year to make a choice for the final grade in high school courses, students will be given a PC 19 if they were passing the course and a WC 19 if they were failing the course as of March 13 and were not able to improve the grade. Once school buildings re-open, these students will have 45 days to change their grade to a numeric grade, if he/she chooses. This 45-day grace period is intended to allow for changes necessary because a student was unreachable at the conclusion of the 2019-20 school year and not for whole scale changes. However, if there are unique circumstances for a student situation that arise, a grade may be changed during the 45-day grace period. NCDPI recommends to document any changes for future reference.

***Q: Do we have any guidance on issuing diploma endorsements?***

**A:** The requirements for earning diploma endorsements are unchanged. If the student earns the credits and meets the various requirements for earning a diploma endorsement, even using a mark of PC19, then the endorsement is to be awarded.

***Q: For middle school students taking Math 1 or other high school courses in middle school, if students select the numeric grade, will that show up on the transcript even if it is not factored into GPA?***

**A:** Yes, in keeping with the normal reporting guidelines for such courses.

***Q: For grades 9-11, if students are unreachable should the school assign a PC19 with a 45 day grace period when we return to school - even if they were failing on March 13?***

**A:** No. If a student is unreachable and unresponsive at the conclusion of this school year, the district/school should assign EITHER PC19 if the student had a passing grade OR WC19 if the student had a failing grade. The grace period at the beginning of next fall could be used to resolve outstanding issues if there is a need to change the mark from WC19 to PC19. However, if the student simply must do more work to get to the point of passing, credit recovery done over summer or during next school year would be the best option.

***Q: We use Standards Based Grading rather than a traditional report card. Can we still use SBG with comments?***

**A:** Yes and take into consideration the intent of the policy. Traditional report cards will use “NG19” in place of a final grade in K-5 for PowerSchool entry. For non-traditional report cards, including Standards-Based Report Cards, it is not necessary to enter the “NG19” for a final grade. The intent is for students to be held harmless during remote learning for any type of grading when they were not in the school building, so as a result, we would not want parents/students to receive numerous “not progressing marks” for standards during remote learning due to issues of access which may be misinterpreted.

***Q: Does this guidance also pertain to quarter grades entered into PowerSchool?***

**A:** No. This guidance is specific for final grades only. LEAs and charters have flexibility as it pertains to grading before the final grades. Final grades must follow the SBE approved policy. PowerSchool guidance documents provide additional information.

## **GRADUATING SENIORS:**

### **EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS, GRADUATION & GRADING QUESTIONS**

[See Also: Senior Grading & Graduation Summary](#)

***Q: My LEA/Charter has additional course requirements beyond the SBE 22 credits. Can a student graduate with only the SBE minimum 22 credits?***

**A:** Yes. The SBE approved policy indicates that any student meeting the SBE graduation requirements will graduate, even if there are local additional course requirements. All local graduation requirements are optional and cannot keep a student from graduating.

***Q: Now that grades are determined, can we go ahead and graduate seniors?***

**A:** No. NCDPI encourages that remote learning opportunities be available for seniors to engage students, continue student growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. This is inclusive of all student populations on the Future Ready Core and Occupational Course of Study pathways. School is not over; graduation will occur at the end of the school year. PowerSchool



has clear directions for grade entry and graduation procedures. For students who have completed graduation requirements and are enlisting into the military, NCDPI does support early graduation for those students.

***Q: Do we go ahead and give seniors who are failing a WC19? Do we work with them to pass the entire course or just content to March 13?***

**A:** No. Seniors who were passing a course as of March 13 will be issued a final course grade of “PC19”, but those who were not passing as of that time shall be given an opportunity to work on improving their grade to a passing mark. The scope of content to be addressed is only up through that content addressed in the course by March 13, not the entire course. The grade of “WC19” could be used for a course that is no longer needed for graduation requirements OR at the conclusion of the school year for a student who was failing as of March 13 and did not take any action to remediate content despite the LEA/Charter’s best efforts to support the student with remote learning opportunities during the extended school building closure period.

***Q: Are seniors who were passing courses as of March 13 able to continue working via remote learning to improve their grade?***

**A:** Yes. LEAs/Charters are encouraged to provide remote learning opportunities to engage seniors, continue student growth, and respond to social and emotional needs. School is not over for students. For all courses currently in progress, seniors will receive a grade of “PC19” or “WC19” on their transcripts, not the typical numeric grade. The priority is for schools to provide an opportunity for those seniors who were failing to get to passing status. LEAs/Charters may consider adopting an invitational approach to the learning opportunities for seniors during the school closure period. This could present a unique learning opportunity for seniors if approached realistically and strategically. NCDPI fully supports options for students that allow them to improve their learning and grades, including grades from the fall semester of year-long courses still in progress. [The PowerSchool senior quick reference guide](#) describes how that works.

***Q: How does this new policy ensure that all seniors across the state are treated equally in the calculation for GPA?***

**A:** All NC public school seniors are being treated equally in that the same grading system is being applied for all high school courses on transcripts using the “PC19” or “WC19” grades. Even if a senior completes a course through CCP, AP, NCVPS, those final grades will still be a “PC19” or a “WC19” on the high school transcript. This includes CCP courses taught in a mini-semester format or any other courses within the spring 2020 semester.

***Q: How will Pass/Withdraw work for graduating seniors in year long courses?***

**A:** Due to the variety of high school schedules represented in North Carolina, NCDPI will be proportionally calculating fall grades into the GPA. For seniors in yearlong courses, the actual grade entered at the end of the first semester will be included in GPA calculations in parity with students in 4x4 block courses. The year-long course will essentially be divided into two half-credit courses determined by the semester break. [The PowerSchool quick reference guide document released in early April provides additional technical information.](#)

**Q: Will seniors lose any quality points (honors, AP/IB/CIE, CCP) that go towards their GPA?**

**A:** Seniors will only receive a course grade of “PC19” or “WC19” for spring courses on the high school transcript. Spring courses will not be calculated in the GPA. All fall courses will receive traditional grades and will be calculated into the GPA with appropriate weighting.

**Q: If college course grades are not on the high school transcript, will this impact the student’s ability to obtain or transfer their degrees or credits?**

**A:** No. The college transcript has always been and remains the authoritative source of grades for college courses.

**Q: Can seniors earn traditional grades through NCVPS, CCP, a virtual academy, or Charter school if they complete the course?**

**A:** No. Seniors will only earn a “PC19” or “WC19” for spring courses on their transcripts. There are no exceptions.

**Q: In your discussions with the UNC System, how will students be impacted?**

**A:** NCDPI is having continued discussions with the UNC System and NCICU Admission Directors/Enrollment Managers. Both IHE groups see the plan for seniors to be reasonable and do not foresee any impact on students who have already been admitted to their IHEs. For students who are waitlisted, NCDPI and the IHEs are having discussions on how to gather further information regarding a student’s achievement and growth. NCDPI has brainstormed with the IHEs on different ways to do this and IHEs are committed to work with students. The UNC Board of Governors has also responded to COVID-19 by approving new Minimum Admissions Requirements effective immediately in light of the current public health crisis. A student may meet MAR by either the high school GPA “or” standardized test score to be considered for admissions rather than “and” which was the prior policy. For more information, see the [UNC System Office policy manual](#) and go to Chapter 700.1.

**Q: Will seniors graduating in spring 2020 be required to meet the CPR requirements?**

**A:** No. Both the State Board of Education and the General Assembly have waived this graduation requirement for the class graduating in May/June 2020.