



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Chicago Public Schools Releases Equity-Focused Guidance on Grading, Graduation Requirements and Promotion Policy

Updated Guidance Provides Families with Flexibility While Providing Equitable Options for Students Experiencing Hardship

Key Takeaways of the Plan:

- Students cannot receive a grade that is lower than their 3rd quarter grade.
 - Students can maintain or improve their letter grades, earn a “pass” or earn an “incomplete.”
 - This ensures students are rewarded for their hard work during remote learning, while ensuring students’ grades and GPAs are not negatively impacted due to circumstances beyond their control.
- The district is proposing a modified elementary promotion policy that advances all elementary school students (K-8) to the next grade level in the fall.
- Certain requirements will be waived to eliminate barriers to graduation.

CHICAGO - Following Governor JB Pritzker’s order suspending in-person instruction for the remainder of the school year, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) today released updated guidance on grading, graduation requirements and elementary school promotion for schools. The updated guidance recognizes students who are working to raise their grades while ensuring the grades of students experiencing hardship are not negatively impacted due to circumstances beyond their control.

“With remote learning taking place for the remainder of the academic year, the district created an equity-focused grading plan that allows students to improve their grades while ensuring their academic standing isn’t harmed due to circumstances beyond their control.” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “While nothing can replace the time spent in the classroom with dedicated educators, I am truly inspired by the motivation, creativity and persistence we’ve seen at schools across the district as they continue to educate Chicago’s children.”

Elementary Grading and Promotion

Given the unprecedented circumstances and hardship families may be facing during this time, the district is recommending the Board of Education approve a modification to the promotion policy that ensures all elementary school students (K-8) will be promoted to the next grade level in the fall and will receive academic supports.

While student work will be graded to allow them to strengthen their third quarter grades, no student will receive a fourth quarter grade that falls below their third quarter grade. Students who receive an incomplete will be prioritized for summer school, if it is determined that summer school can be held this year.

Quarter 4 (Q4) Transcript Grade	Qualification
Letter Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved a Q4 grade that met or exceeded student's Q3 grade
Pass (P) <i>GPA is not impacted.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in digital instruction and earned a Q4 grade below Q3 grade No access to digital instruction but completed printed work packets
Incomplete (I) <i>GPA is not impacted. Student is prioritized for Summer School if it is determined that Summer School can be held this year.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to digital instruction and did not complete printed work packets or engage with teacher Had access to digital instruction and earned an F in Q4

Grading and Graduation for High School Students

High schools will continue to use a semester-based grading system that considers all work submitted in the third and fourth quarters to determine a cumulative semester grade. The district's revised grading approach will allow students to improve their grades and earn letter grades and a GPA for the semester — which is crucial for students who are pursuing postsecondary education. This plan also ensures students do not earn a final semester grade below their third quarter grade, which mostly took place prior to the suspension of in-person learning. At the high school level, grades will be determined in the following ways:

Semester 2 (S2) Transcript Grade	Qualification
Letter Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved a cumulative S2 grade that met or exceeded student's Q3 grade
Pass (P) <i>GPA is not impacted. Student earns credit.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in digital instruction and earned a cumulative S2 passing grade below Q3 grade No access to digital instruction but completed printed work packets
Incomplete (I) <i>GPA is not impacted. Student does not earn credit and is offered the opportunity to engage in credit recovery to meet graduation requirements.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to digital instruction and did not complete printed work packets or engage with teacher Had access to digital instruction and earned a cumulative F in S2

Proposed Changes to Graduation Requirements and High School Promotion

Pending approval from the Chicago Board of Education, the district will temporarily waive the non-credit bearing high school promotion requirements, including the service learning requirement to be promoted to eleventh grade and the state assessment requirement to be promoted to twelfth grade. Credit-bearing requirements will remain for high school promotion.

“We are waiving certain promotion and graduation requirements for our seniors and juniors, who are particularly impacted by the uncertainty of this crisis as they continue striving to achieve their postsecondary goals,” said Chief Education Officer LaTanya D. McDade. “No student prepared to have their school year end in this manner but with these measures, we hope to eliminate barriers to graduation for students who have worked hard for the past four years.”

To ensure students do not face barriers to earning a diploma due to circumstances beyond their control, pending board approval, the district is waiving the service learning requirement, SAT, Constitution test, computer science, and financial literacy for any senior who has not yet met these requirements. Because individualized postsecondary planning and support is especially important during this crisis, the district is proceeding with Learn.Plan.Succeed., but has expanded the types of evidence students can submit to account for extenuating circumstances and will be issuing waivers for students experiencing hardship.

Students who have already met these requirements will still receive credit, but seniors who have not yet taken these courses or exams will still be able to graduate if they meet the other requirements.

Chicago Public Schools serves 355,000 students in 642 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school district.

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