



## MANSFIELD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

*A Destination District Committed to Excellence.*

### COVID-19 Grading Policy Update

Mansfield ISD and school districts nationwide have been faced with unique challenges during the coronavirus (COVID-19) closure. As the education process continues through distance learning, MISD updated its grading policy in an effort to do what is best for students while following state guidelines.

The following grading policy will be implemented for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. The updates are broken down by grade level. Please contact your child's teacher and/or campus administration for further information.

#### **PRE-KINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE**

##### **Report Card and Grades**

Students are "graded" on a standards/skills-based report card. Teacher-assigned work and lessons will be geared toward improving student performance on the appropriate standards and skills. Any changes in commonly used assessments, or the intervals at which they are used, will be communicated directly by the teacher and/or campus administration.

Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade report cards are issued every 12 weeks. The last report cards were distributed prior to Spring Break. The final 12-week report card will be distributed the last week of school, as scheduled. Students will continue to be assessed using the following categories:

- Satisfactory: Student participated in lessons/activities and demonstrated satisfactory performance over the final 12 weeks.
- Progressing: Student participated in lessons/activities and demonstrated progression of skills during the final 12 weeks.
- Needs Improvement / No Grade: Student did not participate in lessons/activities during the final 12 weeks.

#### **GRADES 2-8: NON-HIGH SCHOOL COURSES**

*(Middle school students taking courses for high school credit will follow the grading guidelines listed under the "Grades 9-12" section below for those courses.)*

##### **Progress Reports and Grades**

Progress reports have been eliminated for the 5th six weeks. Report cards will be distributed electronically following the end of the 5th six weeks on April 9. Students are permitted to work with

their teacher to turn in work that was assigned prior to March 6, which was the last instructional day prior to Spring Break and the COVID-19 closure.

The 6th six weeks will run from April 13 through May 28, and progress reports will be issued after three weeks. Report cards will be issued at the end of the 6th six weeks.

Six weeks grades will be numeric, as usual. Semester Two (SM2) grades will be converted to a Pass/Fail (P/F) grade.

The requirements listed in the MISD Grading Guidelines requiring a certain number of grades to be taken each six weeks have been eliminated for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. Teachers and principals will work together to create meaningful assignments aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

### **Exemptions from Finals**

The current exemption policy will be suspended. All students in grades 7-12 will take a no-risk final in May. With a no-risk final, students have the opportunity to raise their grades with no risk of negative effects on their final grade. Taking the final can only raise their grade.

### **Questions**

- Q: Should my student be receiving work from the district or from the teacher?  
A: It is now the expectation that all instructional lessons and assignment come directly from teachers. At the beginning of the closure, MISD's Curriculum Department worked hard to quickly set up instructional resources on the Student Learning Plans page. Since that time, the district has been working toward moving the learning relationship back to where it belongs – between teachers and students.
- Q: What will final exams look like if we are not physically in school?  
A: More information on what final exams will look like and how they will be administered will be forthcoming.
- Q: What do I do if I have a question about my student's work?  
A: As always, your first point of contact is your student's teacher. If you need further guidance, please contact your student's campus administration.

## **GRADES 9-12**

### **Progress Reports and Grades**

Progress reports have been eliminated for the 5th six weeks. Report cards will be distributed electronically following the end of the 5th six weeks on April 9. Students are permitted to work with their teacher to turn in work that was assigned prior to March 6, which was the last instructional day prior to Spring Break and the COVID-19 closure.

The 6th six weeks will run from April 13 through May 28, and progress reports will be issued after three weeks. Report cards will be issued at the end of the 6th six weeks.

Six weeks and semester grades will be numeric, as usual.

The requirements listed in the MISD Grading Guidelines requiring a certain number of grades to be taken each six weeks have been eliminated for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. Teachers

and principals will work together to create meaningful assignments aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

### **Exemptions from Finals**

The current exemption policy will be suspended. All students in Grades 7-12 will take a no-risk final in May. With a no-risk final, students have the opportunity to raise their grades with no risk of negative effects on their final grade. Taking the final can only raise their grade.

### **GPA's and Transcripts**

Semester Two (SM2) grades for the 2019-20 school year will not be included in the grade point average (GPA) and class rank calculations for the classes of 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The same is true for middle school students taking high school credit-bearing courses.

MISD is conferring with higher education, major scholarship institutions and the NCAA to determine how semester grades will be represented on student transcripts. We will communicate this information when a final decision has been made.

Students who had less than a 70 average in a Semester One (SM1) course still have multiple opportunities to capture credit for that course. Students and parents are encouraged to contact and work with their teacher and campus administration to explore their options and set a plan to successfully gain credit for the course.

## **GRADE 12 ONLY**

### **Class Rankings**

Class rankings for 2020 seniors will be calculated using the final first semester (SM1) grades, which ended in fall 2019, for the determination of valedictorian, salutatorian and other honors. This is how rankings have been calculated in previous years.

This school year was the first year GPAs were going to be calculated through the 5th six weeks to determine class honors. MISD is proud of the effort and dedication students have shown in selecting challenging courses for their final high school semester, but the district feels it is most equitable to delay the change until next school year.

### **Questions**

- Q: How did you arrive at these decisions?  
A: MISD staff is in close contact with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and about a dozen successful districts that we benchmark ourselves against on a variety of measures to help determine our academic progress and organizational health. While each district's circumstances and approach vary, we are in alignment with other high-performing districts.
- Q: Will a student still be able to average both semester grades together to gain a full year's credit if they scored less than a 70 in SM1?  
A: Yes. One method of regaining credit for a Semester One (SM1) failure is to average the two semesters together. Example: A student scores a 68 in SM1 and a 72 in SM2. The average of SM1 and SM2 is a 70. While the SM1 grade is not changed on the transcript, the student is awarded credit for both semesters.

- Q: Is it appropriate to take numeric grades during this time?  
A: We recognize that teachers, students and parents are most comfortable with the use of numeric grades. Grades are used as a signal for all of how students are progressing. While we do not believe it is appropriate to use Semester Two (SM2) grades for the calculation of GPA and class rank, we do recognize their use as guideposts for student performance and will continue to record grades.
- Q: What will final exams look like if we are not physically in school?  
A: More information on what final exams will look like and how they will be administered will be forthcoming.
- Q: If students know SM2 grades are not going to be included in their GPA and class rank calculations, why should they put in their best effort?  
A: All MISD students are expected to work to the best of their ability each and every day. It is our role as educators to work with students to make that best a little better every day. That will not change during the closure. As a district, we are trying to strike a balance between advancing the curriculum and learning while serving students who are operating in very different environments across the district. Walking into the school building and having face-to-face instruction sets a much more level baseline each day that distance learning cannot equal.
- Q: If a student had a failing grade for SM1, what should he/she do?  
A: The student should immediately contact his/her campus administrator for further guidance. The administrator will work with the student to find the best path forward for gaining credit for the course.
- Q: Is it fair that students enrolled in SM2 AP, Dual Enrollment, or other advanced coursework this spring do not get to take advantage of these 'weighted' courses to potentially increase their GPA and class rank?  
A: We encourage students to challenge themselves, and it is certainly a priority to incentivize this effort. It is also important to remember that it is not fair to punish students who are now without the resources provided by their daily attendance at school. Many of these students are ranked very highly in their class. In making decisions concerning instructional delivery during the closure, we are driven by two main priorities:
  1. The continuation of new learning.
  2. The creation of as equitable a learning system as possible and the continual improvement of the system when inequities present themselves.

It is incredible that technology and the herculean efforts of our MISD faculty, staff and families allow for all of our students to continue to grow and learn. MISD continues to make equity progress as we issue additional electronic devices and help more students connect to the internet.