



Washington Township Public Schools

Central Administrative Offices

Curriculum Department

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ADDITIONAL GRADING CONSIDERATIONS

Dear Elementary Staff,

We hope your break was relaxing, enjoyable, and healthy! We all needed some time to decompress and detach from technology as much as possible, and we hope you feel rested and rejuvenated! As our instructional landscape continues to change, our goal is to continue to respond to your questions by clarifying information and providing you with remote learning supports. Attached to this letter is a release from the NJEA regarding grading, and we are excited to recognize that our elementary approach is in alignment with the NJEA suggestions and guidance. In order to provide clarification on final averages for students receiving numeric grades, kindly review the information below.

Grades 3-5 (Grading)

When considering third marking period final averages, we should reflect upon the statement in the NJEA attachment, which reads: "In these unprecedented times, instead of focusing on heavy accountability for our students, we must refocus our energies toward empathy, grace and understanding." In our situation, students didn't have an opportunity to improve the heavily weighted categories, which include summative and formative assessments. Our remote learning grading approach was designed to support students; however, it is challenging to combine grades from when school was in session with grades from remote learning. This combination leads us to consider the implications this will have on students who needed more time to achieve mastery and/or needed more grades in a specific category. As a result of this combination, overall averages may be suppressed for some students. Our grading policy has been designed to benefit students due to the impact the pandemic is having on the overall mental health and development of students. Therefore, the following considerations should be made when reviewing final averages/letter grades:

- Reflect on each student's past performance. Students shouldn't receive a marking period grade lower than when they were in school for a full marking period. The most common reason for a lower grade would be the result of a mixed instructional environment, and this would be unfair to our students.
- Carefully review the grades of students who are on the cusp of a grade level change and err on the side of the student (e.g., 92 - 93, 84 - 85, and 76 - 77). As noted above, our goal is to provide the student with the benefit of doubt.
- Keep in mind that grading during this period is unprecedented; as noted by the NJEA, "Grading attempts under COVID-19 will be more a reflection of the family's level of privilege than a true reflection of student learning, progress or performance." Therefore, if you are unsure of why a student didn't do his or her work, please check with your building principal to ensure that the student had a working device and/or internet prior to determining a weekly summary grade.
- When reviewing the attached document, take note of the appendix, which provides information regarding the mental health implications for our students. The data is alarming.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding a student's grade or the information provided above, please contact your principal or supervisor.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Gerber