

Date: April 3, 2020

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

Board Agenda: Yes

No

**FROM:** Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director, Secondary Instruction  
Marya Runkle, Director of Technology Services, Education and Business Systems  
Darrell Sampson, Director, K-12 School Counseling  
Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives

**THROUGH:** Terri Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer  
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and  
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Proposed Changes to Grading [Policy IKC](#) and [Regulation IKC-R](#) for SY 2019-2020  
(Q4) in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic School Closure

**ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

**SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

**FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Specialized Instruction  
English Learner Services  
Gap Group Achievements  
Academics

**SUMMARY:**

Adjustments to the ACPS grading policy and regulations are proposed to address the “cessation of all in-person instruction at K-12 schools, public and private, for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year” as ordered by Virginia Governor Northam’s [Executive Order 53](#) (March 23, 2020) and are aligned with [recent Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\) guidance](#).

The proposed adjustments are of limited duration and would only apply to the third and fourth quarters of SY 2019-2020. They are intended to ensure maximum flexibility and benefit for ACPS students, as they have all been impacted by the school closures.

## **Proposed Changes: Elementary (Grades PK-5)**

### **Third Quarter Progress Report Grades**

- Elementary student progress reports would be based on work completed on or before March 13.

### **Fourth Quarter Progress Report Grades**

- Following new VDOE guidelines, students would not be formally assessed on standards taught during the fourth quarter. Therefore each standard on the fourth quarter progress report would be designated as either “Introduced but Not Assessed” (INA) or “Not Taught” (NT).
- Students will continue to receive support from their teachers as they progress through distance learning.

## **Proposed Changes: Secondary (Grades 6-12)**

### **Third Quarter Report Card Grades**

- Secondary students would receive a letter grade average for third quarter work originally due on or before March 13 and completed by April 24.

### **Fourth Quarter Report Card Grades**

- Secondary students would have the opportunity to earn either a “Pass” (P) or “No Grade” (NG) for their fourth quarter work. No letter grades would be assigned for the fourth quarter.
- In line with VDOE guidance, these two options would allow students the maximum flexibility and opportunity to improve their grade during the fourth quarter by continuing to engage in instruction, without negatively impacting students who might receive an NG.
- A Pass (P) would be recorded as a 100 for the fourth quarter. Any student who completes at least 60% of their distance learning assignments during the fourth quarter would receive a “P.” A No Grade (NG) for the fourth quarter would not be factored into the student’s final grade for the year.

### **Final Exams**

- There would be no final exams during the 2019-20 school year.

### **Final Grades**

In the absence of final exams, teachers would calculate final grades based solely upon quarter grades:

- If a student earns a “P” during Quarter 4, it would equate to a 100 for that quarter. It would then be averaged with the other three quarters, each counting as 25% of the final grade.

- If a student receives an “NG” during Quarter 4, it would not factor into the final grade calculation. The other three quarters would be averaged, each counting as approximately 33% of the final grade.

**BACKGROUND:**

On Friday, March 13, 2020, ACPS closed all schools due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic in order to promote physical distancing and the safety and wellness of school staff, students, and their families. On the same day, Governor Northam ordered all Virginia schools closed for a period of two weeks. On March 23, 2020 the Governor ordered all Virginia schools to remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

On March 23, 2020, the Virginia Department of Education released guidance to division Superintendents that included recommendations on grading for the remainder of the school year beyond March 13. These recommendations included information on providing for the continuation of instruction on content standards, consideration of Pass-Fail grading, and consideration of not grading work for the remainder of the school year.

Upon the release of the March 23 VDOE Superintendent’s Memo, ACPS convened a cross-disciplinary core team of central office administrators to consider the state’s guidance and develop a proposal for grading for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. The ACPS core team collaborated over multiple weeks with elementary and secondary principals to review and refine the proposed adjustments. The proposal also reflects the Superintendent’s Leadership Team’s (SLT) input and continues to be shared with all school staff to obtain additional insight.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the proposed changes to ACPS [Policy IKC: Grading](#) and [Regulation IKC-R: Regulations Governing the Grading Policy](#) for the third and fourth quarters of SY 2019-2020. Board action on the changes is scheduled for April 17, 2020.

**IMPACT:**

The changes to [Policy IKC: Grading](#) and [Regulation IKC-R: Regulations Governing the Grading Policy](#) will align ACPS with the grading guidelines set forth by the Virginia Department of Education on March 23, 2020. They seek to help mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 school closure on students’ academic instruction, assessment, and record-keeping.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Proposed Revisions to Policy IKC and Regulation IKC-R

**CONTACT:**

Dr. Gerald R. Mann, Jr.  
[gerald.mann@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:gerald.mann@acps.k12.va.us)