



Dr. Brian Otott  
Superintendent

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 15, 2020

# PCSD Announces Second Semester Grading Plan

## Student Grades Will Not Be Negatively Impacted by Digital Learning

In consideration of the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus, including Gov. Kemp's executive order closing schools to in-person instruction for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, the Paulding County School District has announced a grading plan that determines ongoing digital learning will be able to enhance final second semester student grades, but cannot negatively affect final grades.

The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) has approved a series of waivers allowing the school district to determine content mastery, course completion, and final grades as appropriate for students. Digital Learning Days (DLD) has provided online instruction, formative assessment, and feedback for students to master state standards in core and elective content areas. This instruction has included online/digital learning elements, as well as a component for those without internet access.

"Digital Learning Days has proved to be a valuable platform that has allowed our teachers to continue teaching, and our students to continue learning, during this pandemic," said Superintendent Dr. Brian Otott. "The extraordinary efforts of our teachers and instructional team have made it possible for learning to continue online. We believe our grading plan is supportive of our students and addresses student and parent concerns arising during these difficult times."

The new grading plan also addresses promotion and retention of students, Dual Enrollment, and testing/assessments. Details are included in the attached document which we encourage parents and students to read carefully. Here are some highlights:

- Following GADOE guidance, digital instructional opportunities **will not adversely impact students' grades.**
- **For elementary students**, work will be used as evidence to measure continued progress on state standards on the student's standards-based report card.
- **For middle and high school students**, student work submitted since beginning digital learning on March 16<sup>th</sup> will only be included in the student's second semester course final average if it positively impacts a student's overall grade as it was recorded on March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- **For high school nine-week courses that began on March 16<sup>th</sup>**, the average of the formative grades assigned will be the course final average.
- **High schools will not administer final exams**; a student's semester grade will be the final grade.
- **PCSD will continue to provide digital learning** for the remainder of the school year and will provide feedback on students' work to assist them in meeting the performance standards.
- We encourage students to continue to **work digitally and complete assigned work** so a student may continue on their learning path.
- Teachers are not taking daily attendance, however, they are **monitoring which students are participating** in Digital Learning and are reaching out to offer assistance to students who are not completing assignments.
- **Schools will be working on updating their end-of-the-year processes** and will communicate to families when those procedures are finalized.

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Paulding County School District

# Digital Learning Update

April 15, 2020

As we experience unprecedented times and the closure of school, we continue to work through issues impacting our schools. Some decisions have been made regarding a number of topics that we will share in this document. More information will be sent as further decisions are made and plans finalized.

## Instruction/Grading

Digital Learning has provided instruction, formative assessment, and feedback for students to master state standards in core and elective content areas. Instruction is being administered based on the PCSD Digital Learning Guidance which can be found at [DLD Days](#). Our DLD experiences included online/digital learning elements, as well as a component for students without internet access.

The GADOE has approved a series of waivers allowing us to determine content mastery, course completion, and final grades as appropriate for our students. Following GADOE guidance, digital instructional opportunities will not adversely impact students' grades. Therefore, a student's final average will be held harmless during digital learning.

- **For elementary students**, work will be utilized as evidence to measure continued progress on state standards on the student's standards-based report card.
- **For middle and high school students**, student work submitted since beginning digital learning on March 16<sup>th</sup> will only be included in the student's second semester course final average if

## CONTINUING DIGITAL LEARNING

*We do hope our students and families value the learning and, therefore, understand that there is great benefit to our students in continuing digital learning for the remainder of the school year. Our staff will continue to provide digital learning through the end of the school year to assist them in meeting the performance standards. Please consider that students who do not participate in digital learning may find they are at a disadvantage when, as anticipated, we return to normal classroom instruction this fall.*

it positively impacts a student's overall grade as it was recorded on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

- **For high school nine-week courses that began on March 16<sup>th</sup>**, the average of the formative grades assigned will be the course final average.
- **High schools will not administer final exams**; the student's course final average will only be comprised of their semester average.
- **Course final average** for high school courses impact both GPA and class ranking.

Teachers are providing feedback and recording student work in Infinite Campus as appropriate. Teachers will work with students to provide opportunities if needed to review student work prior to school closure. We strongly encourage the completion, or re-submission, of any assigned work as any grades taken after digital learning began will only be utilized to improve student averages.

**This does not apply to Dual Enrollment courses.** Dual Enrollment students will follow the guidance of their post-secondary institution.

## Assessment

Assessment is a critical element of teaching and learning that has been impacted by COVID-19. Per the GADOE, all state testing windows including GKIDS 2.0, GAA, Georgia Milestones EOG and EOC, and EOPA are cancelled. Here's an assessment overview to answer some of the questions you might have:

### Advanced Placement (AP) Exams:

College Board has announced that AP testing will take place online. Students will take a 45-minute exam online at home for each AP course exam for which they are registered. The exam questions will be designed and administered in a way to protect the integrity of the exam, incorporating a range of digital security tools. The full update can be found at <https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/students>

### Georgia Milestones/End of Course Tests:

All state-required spring testing — including GKIDS, Georgia Alternate Assessments, and the Georgia Milestones End of Grade and End of Course tests — have been cancelled for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. The State Board of Education has approved a waiver requirement that End of Course Tests count 20 percent toward a student's grade for second semester and summer of 2020.

### SAT/ACT:

Currently, the next SAT exam administration is scheduled for the first weekend in June. The College Board continues to assess whether it can safely hold that administration. A firm decision from the College Board will be shared with families as soon as it is feasible to do so. For up to date information access: <https://pages.collegeboard.org/collegeboard-covid-19-updates>

When ACT postponed the April 4 test date, registered students received an email from ACT providing instructions for rescheduling on a future ACT test date at no charge. The next test dates are June 13 and July 18. More information can be found at <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/covid19.html>

## Promotion/Retention

PCSD wants to be sure that the move to digital learning does not have a negative impact on students. Therefore, the school district will use the following promotion criteria:

### K-5:

PCSD will base promotion on a student's understanding and mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence for his or her grade level. If a student is recommended to repeat a grade, the school or teacher will discuss it with the student's family.

### 6-8:

To be promoted from grades 6, 7, 8 a student must pass at least five of six subjects. Connection courses will be combined to count as one course.

### 9-12:

Grades continue to be important in determining students' understanding and mastery of the curriculum; therefore, high school teachers will continue to provide instruction, graded assignments and feedback, and students must pass their courses to earn Carnegie units to meet Georgia graduation requirements. To be promoted from grade 9 to grade 10, a student must earn at least five (5) units. To be promoted from grade 10 to grade 11, a student must have earned at least eleven (11) units. To be promoted from grade 11 to grade 12, a student must have earned at least seventeen (17) units. Requirements for graduation from high school are governed by Board of Education Policy IHF.

