



Grading And Promotion Policies During Health Crisis

To: School Committee Members

From: Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D Superintendent

Date: April 13, 2020

Re: Grading and Promotion Policies During Covid-19 Public Health Crisis

Request for action, pursuant to Policy BGF of the Lowell School Committee, to suspend all Lowell School Committee Policies and relevant provisions of the Lowell Public Schools Parent & Student Handbooks, including but not limited to School Committee Policies IKE and IKE-R, authorizing the Superintendent to direct all Lowell Public Schools teachers to assess student work completed via remote learning instruction via a credit/no credit system and to make other accommodations as necessary with regard to student grading, promotion and recognition for the duration of the ongoing public health emergency, consistent with the recommendation of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

On March 26, 2020 the [Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education issued recommendations](#) to all public school districts regarding how student work should be assessed during the course of the current public health crisis. The transition to remote learning instruction has required an abrupt, multi-faceted and unprecedented shift in how we operationalize the delivery of academic content to our students. While the remote learning methodologies currently being employed by our dedicated staff are by no means ideal, we are continuing to provide high-quality learning experiences to all LPS students in ways that should instill a great deal of pride throughout the Lowell community. The teachers, school leaders, and staff at each of our schools have my continued gratitude, as do the parents and family members who are supporting our students under these very trying circumstances.

In order to continue to support our students across all grade levels, it is imperative that we modify the manner in which we evaluate and assess student work. Our traditional system of grading student work on a 0-100 scale is simply impossible to implement in ways that are either equitable or practicable given the circumstances under which that work is being disseminated by educators and completed by students. Consistent with Commissioner Riley's March 26th recommendation, we are seeking your authorization via the suspension of School Committee Policies IKE and IKE-R (and the associated provisions of the Student and Parent Handbooks) to immediately transition our grading regimen to a

credit/no credit assessment system. Importantly, and again consistent with DESE's guidance, we will continue to emphasize the importance of providing meaningful and substantive feedback on all school work to students and families. Through our robust and continuous effort to sustain an ongoing dialogue with our LPS families, we intend to mitigate to the greatest extent possible the disruption this situation has caused to our students.

While the conversion of our grading system to a credit/no credit system will allow us to provide educational services in a manner consistent with our principles of equity to which we have legal and moral obligations, it will create a need to accommodate a variety of other challenges related to grade promotion, GPA calculation at Lowell High School, summer school eligibility, and student activity participation. It will also affect various student recognition programs contemplated by existing School Committee Policies and Handbook provisions governing LPS academics, including determinations of LHS valedictorian and salutatorian, honor roll inclusion, and eligibility for both the National Honor Society and certain scholarships. Should this body grant the requested policy suspension and authorization, we will make accommodations as necessary given the extenuating circumstances, communicate to the greater LPS community regularly, and return as needed to seek additional guidance from the School Committee should we arrive at any unanticipated decision points in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you for your consideration.