GUILFORD
County Schools
SOAR TO GREATNESS

MEMORANDUM

TO: High School Principals

FROM: Whitney Oakley, Ed.D.
          Chief Academic Officer

DATE: April 14, 2020

RE: Senior Grading Guidance during COVID-19 Pandemic

Since Governor Roy Cooper took the unprecedented action of closing North Carolina's public schools effective March 16, 2020, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has encouraged LEAs and Guilford County Schools (GCS) to provide remote learning opportunities to engage students, continue academic growth, and respond to students' social and emotional needs. However, NCDPI reminds us that given the condition students are learning in, as educators, *we must focus on engagement more than evaluation*. NCDPI has provided guidance for grading. It is imperative that we provide our seniors with every opportunity to graduate on time through careful planning, on-going support, and timely and accurate communication.

Grading Guidelines for Graduating Class of 2020
Fall Courses: Students will receive grades for fall courses as already stored, yearlong and semester. Fall grades will count toward students' GPAs. For year-long courses, the fall term grade will be counted into the student's GPA weighted as a .5. For example, a student earning a 4.0 in a year-long course will receive a weighted 2.0 in their GPA for the fall term because only half a credit is earned.

Spring Courses: The third quarter grade will be a Pass "PC19" if the grade earned is 60 or higher. The Pass "PC19" will not count in GPA but will be awarded as a full credit. Students whose earned grade is less than 60 will receive a Withdrawal "WC19", which will not count in his/her GPA. In such cases, the student will not be awarded a credit. Students who receive a Withdrawal "WC19" in a course needed to meet the 22-credit graduation requirement will receive support and guidance from their counselor to develop a plan to recover the grade.

Year-long Courses: The third quarter grade will be a Pass "PC19" if the grade earned is 60 or higher. The Pass "PC19" will not count in GPA but will be awarded a half credit. Students whose earned grade is less than 60 will receive a Withdrawal "WC19", which will not count in his/her GPA. In such cases, the student will not be awarded a credit. Students who

receive a Withdrawal "WC19" in a course needed to meet the 22-credit graduation requirement will receive support and guidance from their counselor on a plan to recover the grade.

Seniors participating in College and Career Promise who are able to complete their college course(s) will receive a Pass "PC19" like all other high school seniors. Students will receive the appropriate grade on the college transcript, which is the authoritative source for college grades.

March 13, the last day GCS was in session prior to school closure, has become the revised ending date for third quarter. All grades for the third quarter should be entered into PowerSchool by Friday, April 17. **Grades should only reflect work that was completed prior to March 13.**

If a senior has an F as of March 13 in a course needed to meet graduation requirements (first semester course, yearlong course, or in quarter three), teachers must provide remote learning opportunities for the student to improve to a Pass. Opportunities for students to meet graduation requirements can include any of the following options:

- Continue to receive remote learning instruction, support and feedback from the classroom teacher in Canvas; **or**
- Enroll in NC Virtual Public School or Apex Virtual Courses for all courses applicable.

The class of 2020 cohort should work directly with school counselors to determine the best plan for meeting graduation requirements during remote learning. **Counselors should be meeting virtually with each student of the class of 2020 cohort to determine the best course of action beginning with those who are most at risk for not graduating on time.**

Counselors will conduct the class of 2020 cohort audits and will report students not meeting graduation requirements to principals no later than Friday, April 24. Counselors will contact parents of students not meeting graduation requirements by Wednesday, April 29 to develop a plan of action to meet the 22-credit requirement.

Students working towards service learning diplomas will be awarded credentials based on prorated service hours completed.

Students in the graduating class of 2020 cohort who need to complete credit recovery for graduation should be permitted to do so even if they had not yet begun credit recovery prior to school closure. Students will complete assigned modules to recover credit in classes required for graduation. Students must complete all of the coursework for assigned credit recovery modules (60% overall average is passing) and will have until the end of the school year to complete. Counselors should work with the class of 2020 cohort to determine the best course of action for credit recovery completion.

Guidance for Students Enrolled in Early and Middle Colleges:
Students enrolled in Early and Middle Colleges with the exception of UNCG Middle College completed the third quarter prior to school closure and will therefore receive a third quarter grade.

Guidance for Students Enrolled in IB Programs:
The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) has issued clear guidance on completion requirements for students enrolled in IB programs International Baccalaureate COVID-19 Guidance.

Since IB exams will not be administered in May, **IB diplomas and certificates (and potential college credit) will be awarded based upon internal assessment components for each IB content area. These assessments are due to the IBO by April 20**. <u>This is a hard, fast deadline and failure to submit student work will prevent students from receiving the IB Diploma</u>. These internal components are typically work that was started much earlier in the year (lab research, recorded language interviews, research papers and art portfolios) that students are refining for final submission. These items will not be counted as grades but will count towards assignment completion for a grade of Pass. **Teachers and students must adhere to the deadlines announced by the IBO. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

Guidance for Students Enrolled in AP Courses:
Students will take **online, secure AP exams from home** and will earn college credit for passing scores **consistent with the processes used by each college or university**. AP teachers are authorized to provide the necessary instruction to prepare students for these exams and to address major concepts that colleges will assume have been mastered. **AP exam grades will not be part of students' final grades.**

Guidance for Students enrolled in Occupational Course of Study
If an OCS student completes 157 hours of the 225 hours of "paid work hours" graduation requirement, the student will receive a Pass "PC19". **OCS students who have not completed 157 hours of the 225 hours of "paid work hours" can work directly with teachers who will provide opportunities for students to complete required hours to receive a Pass "PC19".**

Guidance for Students with Individualized Education Plans and 504 Plans
Meeting the needs of all students remains a priority during remote learning, and we have staff ready and available to help students succeed during this unusually difficult time. Teachers should continue to focus on students meeting IEP goals and should provide modifications, adaptations and support to the fullest extent possible for all students who receive modifications, considering the challenges of distance learning. We recognize this will be challenging for some of our students, particularly those with more significant and profound disabilities. Students with IEPs should receive support from both content teachers and special education teachers. Assignments may be modified as appropriate to ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to complete the major concepts of the course and earn a Pass grade. **Please be sure to record and document all modifications to instruction, attempts to engage with the student and parent and other efforts to provide services.** Because every child with an IEP has goals that are unique to that student, the IEP team must regularly monitor the student's progress toward their IEP goals.

Evaluating English Language Learners and Students with Individualized Education Plans
English language learners and students with disabilities who are not receiving services or who are receiving decreased services, cannot be penalized. These students should be receiving necessary modifications and supports to the extent possible in order to be successful during the remote learning period.

Digital Divide
Students who still need a device are asked to contact their school to ensure that a laptop or tablet is issued immediately. GCS teachers who have had no contact with a student or intermittent contact should contact their student(s) immediately and continually inform his/her principal. GCS will continue to work with families who do not have internet connectivity to make

certain all students have an equitable opportunity to participate in lessons, complete assignments and receive social-emotional supports.

Our students are facing stress and anxiety that they have never experienced. Additionally, many parents are stretched thin and overwhelmed. And while we are attempting to prevent extensive learning loss and the widening of achievement gaps, disparities in technology access and internet connectivity are persistent and glaring.

As we receive additional information from NCDPI, we will continue to update grading guidance accordingly.

We are incredibly grateful for your leadership. We will get through this. We are GCS.

Attachment(s):
Advanced Placement Coronavirus Updates
APEX and NC Virtual Guidance
College and Career Promise (Dual Enrollment) Guidance
International Baccalaureate COVID-19 Guidance
State Board of Education Guidance for Remote Learning, Evaluation of Student Progress and Graduating Seniors