



Southbridge Public Schools

Jeffrey A. Villar, Ph.D.
Receiver / Superintendent

May 12, 2020

Re: Position on Grading

Dear Southbridge Public School families,

Remote learning is difficult for students, parents, and teachers. The pandemic has made it very clear that not all students have equal access to technology and that has limited learning opportunities. Our top priority is to keep students and their families connected to their schools. The health and wellbeing of students is our top priority. We know the pandemic has been very stressful for everyone and remaining connected during this time of physical separation is important.

I appreciate that our teachers have developed paper-based remote learning activities for our students and we have distributed them at our meal distribution sites and at Big Bunny market. I know many families have used these resources and are now curious about the district grading policy for this period. In response to your questions, I'd like to share the following grading policy, which applies for the remainder of the school year.

Grades K-5

All teachers have been asked to focus first on reaching out to students and families by telephone calls, email, and video conferences. We ask that you do your best to facilitate this contact. We believe it is very important for your children to remain connected to the school and to check in with their teachers regularly.

We also ask that you do your best to support your child as they work to complete the packets that have been developed, or if you have the technology, utilize our online learning activities. The district will collect remote learning packets but teachers will not grade these assignments in terms of right or wrong. We are most interested in keeping your child engaged in learning so that they are as prepared as possible for the next grade level.

Some parents are concerned that their children might be retained in their current grade level because they were unable to complete all of the remote learning packets. The decision to retain a child in their current grade level will not be made based on their academic performance during the school shutdown. Therefore, nearly all students will be promoted to the next grade level at the conclusion of this school year. At the start of the next school year, the district will assess students' math and literacy skills so that we can adjust instruction based on their needs and address any learning loss that may have occurred. I am confident that our teachers will work hard to help your children catchup. This will take time but we are all in this together.

Parents also want to know about when they will receive their students' report cards. We plan to make student grades available electronically through a web-based portal. The district is currently configuring this program and we expect to provide you with more information about it in the coming weeks. Elementary grades (K-5) will be based on the first and second trimester. There will be no grades recorded for the third trimester. The

third trimester will continue to be focused on preparing students for the next school year, that is why it is important for students, and families to remain engaged in remote learning activities.

Grade 6-12

Students enrolled at Southbridge Middle and High School have earned normal grades for the first two quarters (semester 1). Quarter 3 grades closed in March just after school was shut down and will be listed as credit or no credit (this does not apply to students enrolled at Southbridge Academy). In order to have earned credit in the third trimester a student needed to attend the majority of school days in the third quarter and had a passing grade at the time of school closure.

Students who receive a passing grade in two out of the three quarters (including a score of credit in quarter-three) will receive credit for the year in each course. Fourth Quarter grades will not lower a student's final grades. Assignments completed in the fourth quarter will allow students to improve upon their final grade for the year. Many of our high school students have been working very hard to take advantage of these opportunities and are improving their academic standing. I congratulate them on this work and commitment.

Southbridge Academy

Students enrolled at Southbridge Academy received numerical grades for Quarter 3. Quarter 4 lessons will focus on skills students need to move to the next grade. Grading for Quarter 4 will consist of Credit/No Credit. Students who earn Credit for Quarter 4, will receive additional points towards their final grade.

Final Note

I know that remote learning has been difficult for everyone involved, students, parents, and teachers. We are all struggling. I encourage you to continue to do your very best to help your child remain engaged in school activities. Practice with academic work is very important, our children need to continue learning and remain prepared for the next school year. Working together, we can accomplish this. Thank you for your questions. I'd like to remind you that you can ask questions at any time by using help@southbridgepublic.org, ayuda@southbridgepublic.org, or by calling (774) 318-1696.

Regards,

Jeffrey A. Villar, Ph.D.
Receiver/Superintendent
Southbridge Public Schools