



3447 East Carson St. • Pittsburgh, PA 15203
Phone: 412-325-7305 • Fax: 412-325-7309
www.propelschools.org

April 2020

Dear Propel Families,

Since 2003, Propel Schools' mission has been to bring equity and excellence in education and to support communities and families in creative and inspiring ways. We are continuing to do this while assuring you that we do not bring additional stress or added complications to the lives of our scholars, families or Propel team. Our response to the challenges of Covid-19 has been intentional. This letter is to communicate important changes to our academic program as part of our next phase.

The following FAQs pertain to grades 9-11 only. Separate communication will be sent for grades K-8 and Grade 12.

What does the new phase include?

- ❑ With even greater intention and care, we now plan to transition forward with planned instruction as **Phase III** on **April 27**. This means that the learning opportunities our educators are providing will move from “enrichment and review” to “teaching and learning.” scholars will be given new learning opportunities that will receive grades. We will also begin to take attendance.

What were the previous phases?

- ❑ In **phase I**, we began by partnering with organizations that allowed us to offer nutritious ‘Grab and Go’ meals to scholars. We have surveyed our families and are working as quickly as possible to get needed technology and internet access to all who need it.
 - ❑ In **phase II**, we quickly began our program of “enrichment and review,” using an easy format that encouraged families to spend time learning together. We gradually brought more to the table, as we continue to assure that scholar technology needs are met. Our school teams were trained to provide remote learning as well as care and support in a welcoming virtual learning environment for our scholars. We now have either a Google Site or a Google Classroom for all of our scholar’s courses. They are all run by their teachers who are thrilled to be connecting back to our scholars.
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How will final course grades be calculated?

1. Each scholar may choose between different final course grading options for each course. Scholars will select one of two options earned course grade. Once Planned Instruction begins, the same gradebook and grading scales that were used prior to March 13 will resume. Under this option, the scholar may choose to keep the final course grade. Doing so would mean that the final course grade is included in Grade Point Average (GPA).

OR

2. Pass/Incomplete. Based on what the scholar's grade is at the end of the year, he/she can elect to have the course become a "Pass/Incomplete" course. Under this option, the scholar's final grade (Pass or Incomplete) would not be included in GPA.
 - a. *For Skyward Schools:* An average of the 2 semesters that are 70% or higher will earn a "Pass" and grades below 70% will earn an "Incomplete."
 - b. *For Jump Rope Schools:* A final course grade of a 2 or higher will earn a "Pass" and grades below a 2 will earn an "Incomplete."

More information on how and when this decision should be made will follow. If a scholar does not make a selection between these choices at the given time, all grades that are a 80%/3 or higher will fall under option 1 above. All grades that are 79%/2.9 or lower will fall under option 2 above.

Any scholar who receives either a failing grade on the previous grading scale or receives a "Incomplete" on the pass/incomplete grading scale may need to recover that credit via credit recovery over the summer. We will provide support for students in grade 12 who are failing a course as of March 13, 2020 and provide them every opportunity, to the full extent feasible, to demonstrate learning in the subject matter of the course in order to receive credit.

What will grading look like?

Assignments will be graded based on completion and given all or no credit. Grades will be added to existing grades (in either Skyward or Jump rope). Assignments will be posted by educators in Google Classrooms (3-12) by 8 AM on Monday mornings. Assignments are due by Friday at 3:30 PM each week. Scholars will receive new grades beginning April 27th and may revise/complete previous assignments within semester 2, as well.

How will attendance be taken?

Attendance will be based on the work that scholars complete.



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Are High School Graduation Requirements changed?

Graduation requirements and earned credit requirements are *unchanged* for all high school courses in grades 9-11. However, modifications to coursework will be made to account for current challenges and every opportunity for scholars to improve their grade will be provided.

Are scholars still going to take the PSSA/Keystone Exams?

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has cancelled the administration of all Keystone Exams for the 2019-2020 school year. PDE has not yet notified schools of what impact this will have on future graduation requirements.

How will scholars be promoted to the next grade?

Promotion to the next high school grade is unchanged from Propel's Course Catalogue, which reads, "In order for a scholar to be promoted to the next grade, they must have earned enough credits to be on track to graduate within the course of study offered at Propel High Schools during the school day. It is important to understand that these promotion requirements are set based on the scholar passing all of their subsequent coursework with a complete schedule each year. It is also important to note that scholars will not be placed in concurrent classes if one is a prerequisite for the other."

Regarding Academic Support:

We pride ourselves in the support that we offer our scholars. Though personalized support will be more difficult, we are still committed to supporting scholars in every way we can. Please visit our new site (<https://sites.google.com/propelschools.org/athomebackpack/home>) which contains office hours and contact information for all educators and counselors. There are also activities that we recommend to keep you in good social-emotional health. All the supports we normally offer will continue to be provided...virtually.

Advanced Placement Exams:

There is a lot of important information on AP exams here: <https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/scholars/taking-ap-exams>. Please visit this site to review how you will participate in an AP Exam this year. There are also online lessons to help you prepare. More specific information will be shared by the educator of the AP course via their Google Classroom or by contacting your College and Career Counselor.



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Regarding College and Career:

While we do not know many of the changes that various institutions may create based on the impact of Covid-19, there are some that you should be aware of. While some colleges do not accept high school credit for courses taken as pass/fail, we anticipate that this will be changed given our current circumstances. This is based on the knowledge that hundreds of colleges and universities have already instituted pass/fail for themselves for the spring semester. If you have questions regarding what impact Covid-19 has on your post-secondary step, please reach out to your College and Career Counselor. Please also understand that we are prioritizing support for the senior class at this time.

We are excited to take the next step forward and continue to provide our scholars with the very best educational experiences. Thank you for everything you are doing to help our scholars to continue to learn and grow. We are all in this together!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tina Chekan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Tina Chekan

Superintendent/CEO Propel Schools
