



3447 East Carson St. • Pittsburgh, PA 15203

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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 K-8 grades only. Separate communication has been sent for grades 9-11 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 27th. 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.

### **How will course grades be determined?**

- ❑ All final course grades will be Pass/Incomplete for K-8 scholars. At the end of the year, a grade of either a “Pass” or “Incomplete” will be given based on our existing grade scale. Any work that was submitted before schools were closed will be updated in gradebooks **by April 24**. We understand that it is difficult to report grades with great accuracy based on our current circumstance. Scholars will be given every opportunity to improve their grade via our virtual learning platforms.
  - ❑ Final course grades are calculated in the following ways, depending on which grading platform your school uses
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- ❑ For Skyward: An average of the 3 trimesters that are 70% or higher will earn a “Pass” and grades below 70% will earn an “Incomplete.”
- ❑ For Jumprope: A final course grade of a 2 or higher will earn a “Pass” and grades below a 2 will earn an “Incomplete.”

### **How will grading assignments work?**

- ❑ Assignments will be graded based on completion and given all or no credit. Grades will be added to existing grades (in either Skyward or Jumprope). Assignments will be posted by educators on either Google Sites (K-2) or Google Classrooms (3-12) by **8 AM on Monday mornings**. Assignments are due by **Friday at 3:30 PM** each week.

### **How will attendance be taken?**

Attendance will be based on the work that scholars complete.

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

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has cancelled all Pennsylvania System of School Assessment exams, as well as the administration of all Keystone Exams for the 2019-2020 school year.

### **What determinations will be made in regard to promotion/retention of scholars in grades K-8?**

- ❑ Propel Schools will support our scholars and families to ensure access is available to complete all learning virtually. Propel Schools uses multiple factors including academics, attendance, and social emotional development to determine grade level promotion and retention. All requests for scholar retention must be approved by the Superintendent. For more specific information, please contact your building principal.

### **Will there be Promotion Ceremonies?**

- ❑ Any promotion/graduation ceremonies are currently on hold. While we want to celebrate the much-deserved success of our scholars, it is too difficult to predict what these would entail with certainty. We will do our best to schedule these celebrations when social distancing orders permit it. In the event of social distancing order preventing in-person promotion ceremonies, Propel is working on ways to create alternative celebrations of our scholars' accomplishments. More information to follow.
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**What resources do you suggest if my scholar is in need of Academic, Social, and Emotional Support:**

- ❑ If you or your scholar is in need of any support with the learning opportunities currently provided, please do not hesitate to reach out. Our new site (<https://sites.google.com/propelschools.org/athomebackpack/home>) 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.

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,

Dr. Tina Chekan

Superintendent/CEO Propel Schools

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