

School Closure Update

April 1, 2020

For the record, I wish this whole experience was a really bad April Fool's joke, but unfortunately it is not.

Good evening, hope all is well with you and your family. The admin and guidance staff met today to go over options regarding grading, assessments, etc. that we will continue to discuss over the next week. I wanted to give you a glance into what is being considered.

Before we review the options below, I hope and pray that all of our staff and their respective families are healthy and safe. However, I can tell you that there are quite a few Maywood families, and some with our students in them, that are not. We are educators so we are programmed to help, do good and focus on school which of course includes grades and attendance and discipline and communication to name a few. I have been clear though, that our number one priority right now is to be a calming and stable influence in what is an upside -down experience for so many. We will settle on a grading philosophy and we will make sure that the students who are not cutting it will eventually come around. However, we have to maintain what has set us apart from many other districts during this crisis, and that is our sense of compassion, unity and big picture mentality.

Grading

Regardless of the options presented below, the umbrella that our thoughts and decisions must fall under is that our goal is to ensure no student is negatively impacted by the closure and that no District decisions should widen the equity gap. We must remember that our students and their families may be experiencing varying mental and physical health challenges at this time, loss of employment, and deteriorating living conditions, and may have very different access to support and technology at home. Simply put, remote learning will only improve a student's academic standing. While schools are closed, grades will not be taken that may lower a student's averages.

Teachers will expect students to complete assigned work and return it for feedback and eventually record progress of meeting their learning goals. Our teachers will make every effort to continue to assess and record students' learning. Some assessments will be delivered via technology while others may occur through video conferencing and paper pencil tasks. Students will be graded based upon their completion, submission and understanding of their work, in combination with assessments.

While students are expected to complete assignments and teachers are able to grade work when necessary, grades will be counted only if they improve a student's grade and will not negatively impact any student's academic standing. Students who do not engage in academic work can be issued an incomplete and will be expected to make up incomplete assignments following the remote learning period or risk summer school and/or retention in extreme cases. Obviously exceptions will be taken into account.

We do not want this temporary transition to remote learning to hurt any student's academic standing as long as there is clear evidence that the student made an effort during the closure, "attended" classes, and completed required assignments..

Options being considered (in no particular order)

These two and a half weeks have been spring training. Everyone has worked tremendously hard to get used to this and therefore the new date for the end of the marking period of April 3rd is a perfect fit as the end of spring training. Upon return from the break we will focus on getting into a groove and the options below will begin to fall into place like it is the regular season.

Option 1

Use grades up to the day school closed and allow any work completed while home to only bring up a grade, not bring it down. In essence a "Hold Harmless" strategy.

Option 2

Meld the 3rd Marking Period and the 4th Marking Period together and make it a Semester instead of two separate marking periods. The final report card will have the grades for marking period 1, 2 and semester 3 (combo of MP 3 & 4) as one grade. For certain students a pass/fail option will be used.

Option 3

The rest of the year would be one semester of a combined marking period 3 and 4 and it would be Pass/Fail. The District went into this situation under the premise that the closure was two to four weeks and therefore grading and assessment would have been manageable. That timeframe is gone and we are now faced with May as the best case scenario for a return, and likely much later than that if at all for a return to school. Maywood would combine the pass/fall grades for the newly created semester (combination of 3rd and 4th MPs) with students' grades from the first and second marking periods to determine their final grades.

Example that is more relevant to MAS but could be translated to Memorial system

MP 1 = 90

MP 2 = 95

Semester = P

Final Average is 93

MP1 = 90

MP 2 = 95

Semester F (50)

Final Average is 78

****** Please note that we can decide whether 50 is the right number or not.**

Option 4

At the time of the closure, Maywood was near the end of the third marking period. However, due to these circumstances, the District moved the close of the 3rd marking period to April 3 for both schools.. The 3rd marking period grades may be slightly abbreviated and will include the limited information that we can gather up until April 3. Should the distance learning plan continue on to May, we will continue to assess and grade student work for fourth quarter progress reporting 4th marking period grades in the middle of June.

Regardless of what is decided upon, all report cards and progress reports will be annotated with a note about the COVID-19 school closure.

Lastly, we will also release info over the break noting to families that we will institute "Catch Up Days" upon our return. Kids need it to catch up, teachers need it to catch up and PARENTS need it to catch up. These days will be scheduled on a rotating basis, perhaps after every seven days of instruction, so that we do not land on the same day each time impacting one grade level, subject or special more than others. These days will begin with staff assigning a "Do Now" that will allow for us to capture attendance, get the kids started and then have them focus on catching up on whatever they need to. More info to follow.

Remember to wear BLUE tomorrow and take care.

Michael Jordan