



RESCUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Educating for the Future Together"

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Good Afternoon RUSD Families,

To say that things have been changing rapidly would be the understatement of the year! We know how confusing things are for everyone right now, and we wish we could answer all of your questions about what the future holds for us. We know that in times of crisis and uncertainty, we tend to hold on to what feels "normal", but our response to the coronavirus pandemic requires new and creative approaches. With that said, We'd like to provide a little more clarity around a few topics that are on many parents' minds: **grading, report cards, advanced placement courses, and end of the year activities.**

To begin, we are fortunate to live and work in an incredible community, but we cannot ignore the fact that even in relatively affluent towns like Rescue, Cameron Park, and El Dorado Hills, inequities still exist. Some of our children are now home alone, perhaps taking care of younger siblings or aging grandparents while parents go to work. Other parents are working demanding jobs from home, making it challenging to assist with distance learning. Others live in remote areas where the Internet is not reliable or available. And, in some extreme cases, children may be in homes where family members are losing their jobs or getting sick.

Grading

In light of the aforementioned, we have now moved to a distance learning program that will not penalize any student who cannot participate. Specifically, we are asking teachers to provide academic feedback to students in the form of praise and constructive suggestions rather than traditional letter grades. When appropriate, percentages or points could be part of a student's feedback, but no points, percentages, or grades will be entered into the gradebook in such a way as to influence a child's overall grade or become part of the student's permanent academic record. Grading our students during this time would really be grading what home life is like, not necessarily what our students are capable of achieving.

Report Cards

Because so much of the learning and work completion must now happen away from our classrooms, and because we will no longer be generating overall grades or standards based scores, we have made the decision to suspend the full use of the report cards for this last trimester. We will still provide report card comments to students as appropriate, but the letter grades and standards-based portions of the report cards will not be used this trimester. We know this is a big shift - a really big shift. However, given the necessary changes to our grading system and the fact that children are now completing all work at home, traditional grades on a report card would not serve as a reliable indicator of a child's ability or proficiency.

Advanced Placement Courses

With all that is going on, we will still be making decisions regarding which students should be enrolled in advanced placement math courses for next year. Typically, we use letter grades, standardized test scores, end of year finals, etc. to help inform our decisions. In our current situation, those measures would be unavailable or unreliable. Therefore, we will use existing academic data from Trimesters 1 and 2, along with teacher recommendations, to build these classes.

Cheryl Olson, Superintendent

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End of the Year Activities

Finally, we are still waiting to see what options might be available for end of the year activities such as promotion events, awards ceremonies, the return of student materials, etc. Much of this will depend on when social distancing requirements are lifted and we are able to come back together. We may explore alternative activities, and as we know more, we will share this information with all of our families.

We know these changes may seem unsettling, and to be honest, we never thought we'd write a letter detailing such significant shifts in practice. However, we appreciate everyone's flexibility, suggestions, and support. We look forward to returning to normal operations just as soon as it is safe to do so.

With that, we wish for you to have a safe and happy spring break. Try to relax and enjoy your family. We will start up again with our distance learning program on Monday, April 13.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Olson, Superintendent