

FRIDAY BLAST 4/17/2020



Dear Bell Families,

In response to a notice that Jeffco sent out to all families on April 13 about new grading guidelines during the period of remote learning (*refer to the bottom of this correspondence), we have customized those guidelines for Bell students, per the direction of that correspondence.

Grades posted as of March 11, 2020, the last day of 3rd quarter, will serve as the lowest possible <u>final</u> grade a student can receive for spring semester **as long as students continue to participate.** Students will also be able to improve their grades from this point in time, as long as they continue to engage and participate in the class. Bell Middle School's criteria that qualifies a student as participating in a class is defined here.

Bell Middle School's Definition of Participation

- Students make a good faith effort to attempt and/or complete at least 60% of all the required work a teacher assigns in a class, starting on March 12 and ending May 22, 2020. In addition, students and/or parents consistently communicate with the teacher throughout that period.
 - Attempt/complete is defined as having done something that leaves a digital footprint that demonstrates the student engaged in the work assigned.
 - <u>ALL Work assigned</u> is defined as everything the teacher grades or marks as complete/incomplete put together, including documentation used for attendance, per each teacher's policies.
 - Assignments must be turned-in / submitted to the teacher by the deadline (ideally), or no later than May 20.

Grading

- 1. Teachers will continue to grade assignments per their individual policies. Students' work will be measured based on progress towards mastery of content standards, with the understanding that the <u>final grade</u> for the semester will not drop below the grade a student was earning as of March 11, if the student meets the Bell criteria for continued participation in the class.
- a. The final grade for the semester will be based on an average of 3rd and 4th quarter's grades. If the averaged grade is lower than the 3rd quarter grade, then the student's grade will be changed to what they had earned as of March 11 (end of 3rd quarter), as long as they meet the Bell criteria for continued participation in the class as of March 12.
- b. Grades will continue to be documented into Infinite Campus, the online gradebook.
- c. Depending on students' performance on the assignments, the overall grade will fluctuate and may appear to drop on a day-to-day basis in Infinite Campus. However, as long as the student meets the criteria for participating in the class, that final semester grade will be adjusted to be no lower than the grade the student had earned as of March 11.
 - 2. Students' grades can also increase based on the grades they earn on their assignments.
 - 3. As of April 20th, late work will be accepted until May 20. Individual teacher policies regarding late work apply before this date. Still, students should make every effort to meet deadlines and avoid turning-in late work.
 - 4. As of April 20th, no points will be deducted for late work in any classes for the rest of 4th quarter.
 - 5. No additional work will be assigned the week of May 18-22. This week will be set aside for make-up work, community building, and community closure to the school year.

6th grade Wheel Classes (World Cultures, Composition, 21st Century Skills, and pre-engineering)

In 6th grade, one of their electives is referred to as a "wheel" elective. These are quarter-long classes where each 6th grader engages in a different elective (all four are listed above) each quarter. These are the only quarter-long classes offered at Bell. Because of this, 6th graders entered a new class on March 12, with new teachers; they only had two class periods that were face-to-face. Because of the challenges that transitioning to remote learning under these circumstances presents, we have decided that 6th graders will earn a pass/no credit grade for the wheel class they are taking during 4th quarter.

<u>Individual Considerations</u> - When students are having troubles accessing the learning due to illness, personal crisis, lack of access to technology (Internet connectivity, broken devices, etc.), *it is critical that they communicate this to their counselor and/or teachers.* When assessing students' abilities to participate in the learning, we will take into

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consideration these extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis. We *will not count these types of challenges against students meeting the participation criteria set forth here.* Furthermore, accommodations for students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504s will continue to be followed in the remote learning environment.

Keeping the Eye on the Prize - Most importantly, we know that eventually we will be back at school, and students will be moving into the next grade level. In a time of crisis, research has shown that kids lose ground in their academic progress. After Hurricane Katrina, studies showed that students impacted by that crisis lost 1-2 years of academic progress. At Bell and in Jeffco, we are attempting to minimize that backwards slide during this pandemic crisis, while also not being punitive in honoring the situations our students and families are experiencing.

Our greatest priority is that **students continue to progress and learn the skills they will need to be successful next year (and in following years).** While we live in a society that puts a lot of emphasis on <u>the grade</u>, our staff feels strongly about emphasizing the importance of the learning and students making progress toward meeting content standards so they are prepared for their futures.

*Jeffco's Grading Guidance during the Period of Remote Learning (sent April 13, 2020)

Middle Schools: Student engagement with teachers and academics during this time is the foundation of remote learning practices at the middle school level, and we know students will continue to engage in remote learning for the remainder of this school year. To that end, the grade a student earned as of the grading period concluding prior to March 13, 2020 (the day before our first week of remote learning), will serve as the lowest possible grade a student can receive for this semester as long as the student continues to participate (*see below for more on participation). The specific determination of this grading period (examples include quarters, trimesters, semesters) will be a school-based decision. Students will be able to improve upon this grade for the remainder of this semester by participating in remote learning. Definitions of participation should include demonstrating progress towards mastery of content standards



Just a reminder to please check in with your students to be sure they are doing well. We often think to make sure they are doing will with their new remote learning, make sure they are eating well, and make sure they are physically well. But do we check on their mental and emotion state? This is a hard, confusing time for all of us. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has released some guidelines, tips, and valuable information to help you and your children navigate this unfamiliar time in our lives.

Guidelines for Parents & Caregivers during the COVID-19 Outbreak



Our Financial Secretary, Joanne Dynes, will be in the office on **Monday morning, April 20**th **from 9:30am-12:00pm**. If you paid for the the Fiske Planetarium Field Trip that was scheduled to take place back in March, please call her on Monday during that time frame to receive a refund. Some of you may have already done this, but for those who haven't, call Joanne at **303-982-4285** between 9:30 and noon on Monday to get reimbursed!



Just a heads up that **Staff Appreciation Week** is coming soon! It will obviously be different this year, but we are working on fun, creative ways to show our staff how grateful we are for all they do for our students. Now more than ever, you probably have a better understanding of how much work our incredible Bell staff does on a daily basis. We will be offering you a variety of ways that you can participate! More information will be coming your way next week! Thank you in advance for helping us out.

Have a great weekend!