



## NUSD REVISED GRADING POLICY FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS SPRING 2020

**Vision:** NUSD will provide an innovative and personalized learning experience for every student in a caring and supportive environment to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful and productive citizens.

**Values:** Innovation, Equity, Caring, Inclusion, Collaboration

With equity and collaboration as our guiding principles, NUSD engaged in efforts to review the Spring 2020 Credit/No Credit grading policy for secondary students. On May 5, 2020 the Novato Unified School adopted a revised COVID-19 grading policy for secondary students (grades 6-12) for the 2019-2020 second semester. Students have two options to choose from.

### Table of Grading Options:

<b>Option 1 March 13, 2020 Grades</b>	<b>Option 2* Credit/Incomplete</b>
Request March 13, 2020 grades as final semester grades	Request Credit/Incomplete for the semester
<p align="center"><b>For students who had an F on March 13, 2020</b></p> <p align="center">If a student has an F on March 13, 2020, and is able to earn a passing mark (grade or Credit) prior to the end of the semester, this mark will then be reported on the final transcript.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome:</b> All earned March 13, 2020 grades are reported as the final grade on the transcript for the second semester of 2019-2020. Overall GPA will include 2019-2020 second semester letter grades.</p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> All the courses a student has earned a passing grade (A,B,C,D)* will be reported as Credit on the final transcript. Any student who had an F on March 13, 2020, which does not advance to a passing grade by the end of the semester will receive an Incomplete. Overall GPA will not include Credit and Incomplete reporting. Choosing this decision will not impact a student's overall GPA.</p>



	<p>*It should be noted that NUSD interprets California State Department of Education “hold harmless” language to mean that no student passing a course on 3/13/20 can be issued anything less than “Credit”.</p>
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Students with AP classes or straight A’s could be harmed if their grade is not reported.</p>	<p><b>Rationale:</b> Students will be able to report completing A-G courses without reporting their grade. Rather than failing students, an Incomplete will give a student the summer and the first 3 weeks of the fall 2020-2021 semester to pass the course. If a student is unable to achieve a passing grade within this window, the Incomplete grade becomes a No Credit.</p>
<p><b>Who most benefits:</b> Students with high marks on March 13, 2020. This enables high achieving students to retain their high standing as the marks will affect their cumulative grade point average.</p>	<p><b>Who most benefits:</b> Students with middle to low marks on March 13, 2020, who could have received an even lower grade due to severe challenges during this remote learning time. This could keep bad grades from affecting a student’s standing as the marks don’t affect grade point average.</p>

### Clarifications

- NUSD will use these models with an eye toward protecting those who need it, while incentivizing students to work.
- Teachers will continue to grade as they did before the school closure. Grades will be used to determine the best model for the student and for future student placements.
- Students will have the opportunity to inform NUSD of their interest to choose their March 13, 2020 grades instead of Credit/Incomplete. Students and families will hear from their school principal or counselor soon about making a grading choice.



- Teachers are in the process of ensuring that March 13, 2020 grades are accurate and up to date.
- The teacher-reviewed and final March 13, 2020 grades will be published in Aeries by May 22, 2020.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### How do I notify the school of my selection of Grades vs. Credit/No Credit?

Students will have the opportunity to inform NUSD of their interest to choose their March 13, 2020, grades instead of Credit/Incomplete. Students and families will hear from their school principal or counselor soon about making a grading choice.

#### Why not just use one model?

NUSD feels it is important to give students choice and to give students the opportunity to report a GPA reflective of the trend of their academic achievement for the second semester.

#### Why did NUSD choose to revise credit/no credit?

NUSD believes that a credit/no credit model would harm some students' GPAs and in doing so would harm their college applications.

The UC and CSU systems have messaged that they will view a mark of credit as neutral, but we were concerned that even a neutral grade could hurt our best students if they are competing with students from other districts who received an A in an AP class. It is also unclear how colleges outside of UC and CSU will view a credit mark. "Hold harmless" is a guideline that applies to all students, including those who are competing to enter the best colleges.

#### What's wrong with just having grades for everything?

Continuing to provide grades during the school closure does not protect those who are negatively affected by remote learning.

#### How does this solution impact student motivation?

Student motivation is a challenge in school systems across our country during this difficult time. For some, it was a challenge before we recommended a credit/no credit model and it continued to be after we made that decision. Some students will be upset by this decision. We hope that, after processing their feelings, students will recommit to



their learning and remember that we do not only go to school to earn grades. Students, teachers and families will play a large role in maintaining motivation moving forward.

Does that mean they no longer need to do work?

This would be a mistake. Learning is a progression. We continue to maintain grades for internal accountability and future placements. Beyond this, next year's courses are built upon this year's learning. A failure to continue to access learning opportunities will negatively affect future performance. Additionally, there is a benefit in shifting one's thinking about learning from doing it for a grade to doing it for the sake of learning.

All of this is confusing. How do I decide what grading model is best for my student?

For most students, the best option will likely be to choose the grade model. We anticipate that any student with a D or an F on March 13, 2020, will be better served by selecting the credit/incomplete model. In the end, students and their families will decide which grading model to use.

Please see the Table for Grading Options for a concrete explanation of what model a student will likely choose. In each case, we recommend calculating the impact of the cumulative GPA, as the most important guide.

The [College Wise Guide](#) is a valuable resource in this decision. Their specific advice can be seen here:

### **What do I do if my school is allowing me to opt into Credit/No Credit (Pass/Fail) grading?**

Collegewise is aware of some high schools where this is now a choice – opt for a letter grade or opt for Pass/Fail. If that's the case, here's our honest answer: you should opt for the letter grade with the following caveats: If you have connectivity issues or a technology impediment, a mental health concern, or a significant family situation that's impacting your ability to do schoolwork, you should absolutely feel good about opting for Pass/Fail. And you will be able to convey that broader context in your eventual applications (there's typically space in most apps for exactly these details)

But, for those students who don't have such impediments, we'd consider this choice as something you're opting out of – as in, if an admissions counselor asked why you chose not to have grades this term, what would you say? If you don't have one of those reasons we suggested above, our advice would be to stick with



the grade. And, this all comes back to context: if a district makes this choice, admissions offices will read it uniformly. But if an individual makes this choice, colleges will want to understand the individual reasoning to do so.

### How is GPA calculated?

Here are some links to GPA calculation tools and formulas:

[High School GPA Calculation tool.](#)

[UC GPA Calculation formula.](#)

[CSU GPA Calculation formula.](#)

It is important to check with each college admissions counselors for clarity. Your high school counselor can also advise you. Remember that most colleges recalibrate a student's local GPAs and remove district designed GPA "inflators" (like local Honors courses), and only give grade increases for Advanced Placement or college courses.

### What about sports?

*Option 1 (GRADES):* Students who choose grades will be held to the same eligibility requirements that govern MCAL/NCS sports.

*Option 2 (CR/INC):* Students who earn Credit in all classes will be eligible for fall sports. Students who earn an Incomplete will need to complete their course work by Friday, September 11, 2020 to be eligible for fall sports. Students who are unable to meet this requirement will meet individually with the school's Athletic Director to determine eligibility.

### Will grades still be available in Aeries?

Yes, teachers will continue to grade and input grades into AERIES. Teachers will record the student's final marks in accordance with the student's choice of grades or Credit or Incomplete.

### **NHS Counselors:**

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If a student chooses grades, and one of those grades is an F, can they raise that to credit or are they stuck with the F?

Yes, students will be able to raise that grade. While each case is unique, it is highly likely they will only be able to raise it to a D.

My child won't do the work if it isn't graded. Why won't you grade the work?

Teachers, parents, and students all play a role in motivation. NUSD has developed a system that continues learning and assessing performance, but also takes into account the various contexts of our students. Not all of our students have devices or internet access. Not all students are receiving the required interventions. Still more students are struggling with various other factors which limit these students' ability to perform in a manner consistent with their abilities and past performance. We believe it is important for students to continue learning and to get feedback from their teachers but giving



grades will negatively impact our neediest students. If your child is not getting feedback on assignments submitted, please email your child's teacher to request a phone call and discuss your concerns.