OEA Value Statement
The emergency closure of Oregon schools through this academic year demands a different approach to tracking and monitoring student learning and progress and considering how to assign grades to student work. Since the announcement of the Oregon Department of Education’s Distance Learning for All plan, OEA has advocated aggressively for a statewide approach to grading, awarding credit, and student learning that operationalizes equity, honors family circumstances, and promotes connection with students.

We are in a global crisis. Students are not in ideal learning conditions for teachers to make summative judgements of student learning and those judgements are not culturally responsive or trauma informed and can cause undue stress on students already under extreme stress and pressure. Further, many students will not have access to learning materials, support from a caregiver and/or resources; therefore, to judge their work with a letter grade is to end up grading their home circumstances during a global emergency. At the same time, we all remain educators. Our passion is to help students learn and feed their natural curiosity and creativity. We still want to do that even if we are doing it from afar.

This document is intended to provide information about ODE’s guidance and share best practices to ensure equity and care for students during this time.

Key Documents and Websites:
- Oregon Education Association: OEA’s landing page with resources and news related to COVID-19, Oregon’s school closure, and how to support students and colleagues.
- ODE COVID-19 Resources: All guidance and documents related to education and the school closure including a regularly updated FAQ.
- Distance Learning for All Plan: ODE continues to update and add sections to the overall K-12 guidance. Sections include graduation pathways, supporting students with disabilities, and a number of tools for schools and educators to use.
- Distance Learning for All website: This website includes the plan and links to tools, resources, a regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions section, information on student privacy concerns, and much more.
ODE Guidance

ODE has put out specific guidance on tracking student learning and grading practices for grades K-8; grades 9, 10, and 11; and for high school seniors. There are key differences for each of the grade bands, but as a whole, ODE has directed school districts to cease the use of letter grades for the final spring term of the 2019-20 school year. The ODE guidance carries the weight of a directive under Gov. Kate Brown’s executive order 20-08 and a temporary Oregon Administrative Rule – 581-022-0103 – passed by the State Board of Education on April 16, 2020. As of April 22, 2020, the Distance Learning for All plan is divided into six sections. The sections related to tracking student learning and grading practices are:

- Section Four: Graduation Pathways 2020 and Supporting our Seniors
- Section Five: Supporting our Students in Grades 9, 10 & 11
- Section Six: Supporting our Students in Grades K-8

Class of 2020 Guidance

Graduation Pathways 2020 and Supporting our Seniors (pp. 31-54) addresses how to support the class of 2020 in earning their diploma. Students who were passing their courses as of March 13 will receive a Pass for that course and earn the credit associated with that course. Students who were not passing a course as of March 13 will receive an Incomplete and be given an opportunity through distance learning to improve their performance to the level of Passing. Students are only required to show proficiency at the same level as students who were considered passing as of March 13. Students will have until Aug. 31, 2020 to earn a passing grade.

The full Graduation Pathways 2020 guidance includes several scenarios, an extensive FAQ, and guidance on students eligible for special education. Districts do not have flexibility and must use a Pass/Incomplete (or local equivalent) system. Schools should not issue a mark that indicates the student failed (a grade of F or the equivalent). ODE has suspended the Essential Skills and the Personalized Learning requirements for the class of 2020.

Classes of 2021, 2022 and 2023

Supporting our Students in Grades 9, 10 & 11 (pp. 55-73) addresses how to support students in grades 9, 10, and 11. These students (including students enrolled in high school courses) will be expected to engage in distance learning through the end of the academic year. As with the class of 2020, districts must use a Pass/Incomplete system (or local equivalent) for the final term of 2019-20. Schools should not issue a mark that indicates the student failed (a grade of F or the equivalent).

Schools will partner with students who earn an Incomplete in any courses this spring to develop a Credit-Earning Assurance Plan in September 2020. Students will have through the end of the 2012-22 school year to earn a passing grade if they receive an incomplete during this closure. ODE is elevating creative approaches for students to demonstrate proficiency in their courses. As with the class of 2020, schools can only require students who earned an incomplete to show proficiency at the same level as students considering passing at the end of the term. The full guidance includes several scenarios for
Distance Learning for All: Monitoring Learning

Schools that use semesters and trimesters, students’ ability to access learning supports, and supporting students eligible for special education. Additionally, ODE will suspend the Essential Skills and Personalized Learning graduation requirement for the class of 2021, though districts can choose to add Personal Learning Requirements for the Class of 2021 only.

The guidance for students in grades 9, 10, and 11 also includes a “Safeguarding Student Opportunity Clause (p. 61).” This clause allows schools who cannot reach or locate a student to award a Pass/Incomplete based on the mark the student had earned at the time of the closure. OEA believes clause can help mitigate some of the inequities inherent in the Distance Learning for All Plan.

**Dual Credit Classes, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, CTE Coursework**

For Dual Credit courses offered in partnership between a high school and an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), high schools may award letter grades where the IHE partner has maintained letter grades. In these cases, teachers may award letter grades to share with the IHE, but the high school transcript should reflect either a Pass/Incomplete mark. The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission has published an FAQ answering questions about dual credit courses.

Advanced Placement will offer modified exams for students to complete at home. Students should visit the Advanced Placement website for details. High schools are allowed to use scores earned on AP exams to award course credit to students under the Distance Learning for All plan.

The International Baccalaureate program has suspended exams for the 2019-20 school year. Students in this program will be awarded an IB diploma or course certificate reflecting their standard of work. Students should visit the IB website and connect with their local IB teachers.

Career and Technical Education coursework (CTE) can be difficult to recreate through distance learning. ODE has developed guidance to support CTE education during the school closure.

**Students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade**

Supporting our Students in Grades K-8 (pp. 74-89) addresses how to support students in grades K-8. These students will be expected to engage in distance learning through the end of the academic year. Districts are required to move to a Pass/Incomplete system (or local equivalent) and may not issue letter grades or a mark that means “fail.” The terms a district uses will be at the district’s discretion. However, the district must determine one common mark to indicate Pass and one common mark to indicate Incomplete. Schools will continue to issue a report card or a local equivalent of end-of-year reporting but can modify those reports to best reflect student learning during the closure.

Further, placement decisions for students for the 2020-2021 school year should be based on student proficiency documented at the time of the school closure or new information gathered Fall 2020. This includes any decisions about retaining a student in a grade. The ODE plan includes several examples for districts to review.
**OEA Best Practices for Reporting Student Learning**

Reporting progress on student learning to families and students should not look like a traditional grading model during this time of remote learning. OEA encourages educators to think creatively and innovatively on how to monitor, report and record progress. For example, “monitor, report, and record progress” could mean monitoring student engagement within a grade level or with a PLC or teacher team for discussion. A progress report to a parent could include the number of times a student interacted with a resource, logged into a chat or online classroom space, or a personalized letter from the teacher. Or students could self-track and self-assess on their learning.

**Considerations for Monitoring Student Learning**

**Focus on Care & Connection**

- Assess student’s basic needs first including food, water, shelter and access to medical care and connect families with resources that they may need. Work collaboratively with all peers (classified staff, specialists, TOSAs, and classroom teachers) to reach the broadest number of families possible.
- Prioritize connecting with students over assignment or task completion.
- Recognize what is beyond a student’s control and approach learning activities with a gracious perspective.
- Incorporate self-care lessons (see OEA Webinar for ideas)

**Support Continuity of Learning**

- Draw from what students know already, their experiences, strengths, and assets. Deepen understanding of what was instructed prior to the closure over brand new content.
- Provide a clear purpose for learning activities. Be explicit with students on what you want them to learn and focus on the intended learning not the activity.
- Give students a clear picture of what success will look like including exemplars and/or rubrics. Involve students in defining success criteria or tracking their own growth.
- Allow students to demonstrate knowledge through a wide variety of modalities (e.g. taking photos of work, oral reports, phone messages or video recordings). Avoid making judgements based on a single piece of evidence.
- Let students create projects based on their environment and circumstances. For example, if students are caring for younger siblings, they could create and share lesson plans. Or, if students are taking on household responsibilities (cooking, cleaning, etc.), incorporate standards into those tasks (e.g. fractions in cooking or determining portions; verbal communication skills; time management, etc.)
- Move to project-based learning, quality performance assessments, and/or cross-discipline content and projects that draw upon students’ strengths.
- Promote peer-to-peer learning for students to co-create meaning and practice collaboration and problem solving.
Tracking Progress

- Determine what information would benefit students if you tracked it (e.g. mastering a previously taught skill or concept, growth in specific standard, improvements in dialog/discourse skills).
- Focus on descriptive feedback to students over corrective action. (See tips below)
- Consider the big picture of student learning and focus on making a judgement of a student that incorporates the totality of learning opportunities from the academic year.
- What information can students track themselves to share with educators?
- Use information on student progress within a collaborative PLC to identify what learning is easiest for students to access right now, which students may need social service support/interventions, and to share what is working among teachers in order to spread innovation.

Resources to Shift from “Grading” to “Feedback”

A best practice to move to during this time is to move away from grading work summatively. Teachers should move to providing quality feedback that causes thinking or reflection on the part of the student.

Five Characteristics of Quality Feedback:

1. Directs student attention to the intended learning, pointing out strengths and offering specific information to guide improvement.
2. Occurs during the learning and a student has the opportunity to act on the feedback. In this time of emergency remote teaching, focus on giving students the opportunity to act vs. giving “in the moment” feedback as you would in a traditional brick and mortar classroom setting.
3. Addresses partial understanding, meaning where a student has grasped some parts of a concept but not the entire concept.
4. Does not think for the student. Ex. You did this problem wrong. Here is how to do it right vs. asking, “What do you notice?” “What step did you miss?” “How could you do this differently?”
5. Limits corrective action to the amount of advice a student can reasonably act on. This is a vital component in a distance learning environment.

Tips for Effective Feedback:

1. Feedback can worsen performance when it focuses on the person rather than the task (ego-oriented vs. learner oriented). Ex: “You’re a great writer” vs. naming specific writing techniques the student uses well.
3. Use the simplest language possible to clearly communicate with students.
4. Avoid overwhelming students to limit the emotional impact (especially when students are also interacting with content in ways that could overwhelm them).
Grading/Feedback Resources:

- Alfie Kohn -- The Case Against Grades: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfRAleA3mdU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfRAleA3mdU)
- Giving Quality, Learning-Related Feedback: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7Ox5aoZ4ww](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7Ox5aoZ4ww)
- “Good feedback causes thinking.”
- Providing Feedback to Move Learning Forward: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdIk9ysWJXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdIk9ysWJXQ)
- What is Formative Assessment?: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYdVe5O7KBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYdVe5O7KBE)
- Grading Students During the Coronavirus Crisis: What’s the Right Call?
- California Department of Education guidance on grades
- NEA micro-credential “Descriptive Feedback for Student Learning” (written by OEA member)
Feedback in Action
These three examples use the characteristics of quality feedback to provide the support each student needs in response to an assignment. This assignment asked elementary students to read an article called “Heads Up!” about wearing helmets while playing sports and to write a short opinion about the article. They were provided a rubric for self and teacher assessment.

Student #1

**Heads Up!**
Hits case a serioyes brain dameg.

Opinion Paragraph

- Introduction sentence states your opinion.
- 3 reasons that support your opinion
  - At least one reason is support by evidence from the text
- Conclusion restates your opinion

**Teacher Feedback**
You found a great fact about concussions. Remember to start with an introduction that states your opinion. One example is, “Football should be safer for younger players.”

Student #2

**Heads Up!**
To begin hits can cause a seryis brain injery. Called a concussion. Concussion is especially dangerous for kids. Also because their brains are still growing. Aduolts and coaches are teaching kids to reeognize concussions.

Opinion Paragraph

- Introduction sentence states your opinion.
  - 3 reasons that support your opinion
  - At least one reason is support by evidence from the text
- Conclusion restates your opinion

**Teacher Feedback**
You stated strong reasons to make football safer. Remember to state your opinion in your introduction sentence.

Student #3

**Heads Up!**
Football should be safer for younger players. To begin I think the nine feet apart rule is a good way to make football safer. Also in the article it said that they are teaching kids to recognize the symptoms of a concussion. For example David Grundy dunning one practice he got tackled very hard and after that had happened he felt dizzy. As you can see people shoud be making football safers.

Opinion Paragraph

- Introduction sentence states your opinion.
  - 3 reasons that support your opinion
  - At least one reason is support by evidence from the text
  - Conclusion restates your opinion

**Teacher Feedback**
You added a good example from the text of a kid who got a concussion. Can you explain more about the nine feet rule?