

March 3, 2020

TO: All High School Principals

FROM: Rita M. Vasquez, Ed.D., Executive Director

RE: Exam Exemption Attendance Policy

High School Principals,

3-3-20

Our district continues to prepare and plan for all contingencies that could result from the coronavirus in the coming weeks.

The policy highlighted below (PCS policy 5420.03) is specific to high schools and the final exam policy. It is our recommendation to temporarily suspend a portion of the policy. In 2009, when the H1N1 (or Swine Flu) virus was identified, the School Board took a similar action and used provisions allowable in statute to suspend just the attendance requirement portion of this exam policy.

We believe that the current situation with the coronavirus (or COVID-19) merits the same proactive action. This second semester only, temporary suspension of the attendance requirement in PCS Policy letter c. below, would not impact the provision that students wishing to exempt final exams must earn an A or B in the class to do so - that provision will remain. However, we feel our proactive, approved action to temporarily suspend the attendance portion of this policy will help ensure our families and students stay home if not feeling well, in accordance with guidance from our own PCS communications and those of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Our School Board will formally agree to this temporary change at the next board meeting in March. Please communicate this temporary change in our PCS Exam Exemption policy to your school community on Wednesday, 3/4/20.

**FROM PCS POLICY 5420.03 (under Final Examinations, Letter C)**

C. Final Exam Requirement

With the following enumerated exceptions, students who have a course grade of "A" or "B" in the 1st quarter and a provisional course grade of "A" or "B" in the 2nd quarter are not required to take the final in that course. Except for second semester seniors, this provision shall apply to no more than three courses each semester, regardless of the number of periods in a student's schedule.

The provisional 2nd quarter grade will be based on the grades earned for the first seven weeks of the 2nd quarter. The student must maintain the "A" or "B" grade through the remainder of the 2nd quarter.

Exceptions:

- a. The student is enrolled in the same course during two (2) terms of the same school year. In such cases, the student is required to take at least one (1) final exam in that course.
- b. The student has been enrolled in a District public high school for less than the entire term. In such cases, the student is required to take all exams.
- c. The student has five (5) or more absences per semester in any class. If so, the student is required to take the final exam in all classes. Regardless of the number of minutes in a class period, an absence from the class is only counted as one (1) absence in the class for purposes of this policy. For purposes of this policy a student who is not present in class at least one half of the class period shall be counted absent. Preapproved absences for school sponsored activities, religious holidays, and college/post-secondary visitation shall not be counted in calculating the five (5) or more absences specified above. Absences for college/post-secondary visitation are limited to three (3) days per year for seniors and one day per year for juniors.
- d. The final exam is a State-required End of Course exam. Students not required to take a final exam may elect to take their final examinations to improve the final grades. A final grade shall not be reduced as a result of the examination grade, should the student elect this option.
- e. The final exam is an Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) exam.

Students are required to take the first semester exam for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Advanced International Certificate of Education courses.

An Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Advanced International Certificate of Education will be taken in lieu of a teacher developed final (semester 2) exam in those designated courses. In such case, the student must still attend his or her regular subject area classes for structured activities and/or projects until the end of the grading period.

In the event that the student does not sit for the AP, IB, or AICE exams accompanying the coursework during the school year, a final exam grade of zero (0) will be entered. For AP, IB, or AICE exams administered after the last day of the school year, final grade for the course will be determined within one day of the exam date.