

Dr. Dana Fall, Superintendent

Cherokee County School District
Office of the Superintendent
P.O. Box 460
Gaffney, S.C. 29342
Telephone: (864) 206-2306

April 2, 2020

IMPORTANT COVID-19 UPDATE

Dear Employees, Parents, and Stakeholders,

In my last correspondence, I provided an update on the South Carolina Department of Education Academic Plan, letting you know that SCDE would be releasing the next step in this process. The SCDE Academic Plan was released to Superintendents on Tuesday. Since then, the district has been formulating a process that keeps the safety of our students, employees, and community a priority. I will be providing you with a summation and outline of this academic plan and other informational updates through April 30 below:

CCSD Academic Plan - The State Department of Education has issued guidelines for grading, particularly as they relate to high school courses that grant credits. SCDE has determined Pass/Fail is not an option for South Carolina's high school students. However, in recognition that learning from home is very difficult for some students, 3rd quarter grades earned while school was in session will influence semester and final grades more than those earned during the school closure. Cherokee County School District is working with SCDE to develop a framework that aligns with the direction given by the state, and puts a priority on ensuring seniors are able to complete all necessary coursework to graduate with their class. This process will be evolving for the long term. I have included an outline of our process on the second page of this update, expanding our eLearning process until the end of April, in keeping with Governor McMaster's order to close of South Carolina Schools until April 30.

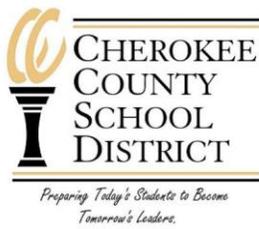
2020 Graduation and Prom Celebrations– This is not what our seniors had in mind for their senior year and is a source of frustration for so many. Due to this pandemic, we are looking at Prom and Graduation as potentially postponed events. I am committed to making every effort to celebrate our students by providing a memorable platform for the graduating class of 2020. In the event this pandemic lasts until the end of our school year, I am currently looking at other options to hold online/virtual events. I will continue to keep you updated on our options if the social restrictions remain in place for the long term.

Feeding Program Operations and Waiver Approval – The Cherokee County School District USDA regulation waiver has been approved. This means that a parent/guardian will be able to pick-up meals without the presence of student(s) beginning April 6. The parent/guardian will need to list the students/children served through our program and sign for the meals. We are feeding the children of the community, 18 years old or younger (21 years old or younger if special needs). The availability to keep this feeding program ongoing through this pandemic is our priority. I know that this service is needed by many in our community and is an essential necessity.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we strive to continue to put our students and staff first in these unprecedented times. We will continue to keep the public informed as more developments become available. I cannot stress enough how important it is for our employees, students, parents, and stakeholders to only refer to Cherokee County School District's official district information that is released via our AlertNow system and our website and social media channels. Please stay safe!

Sincerely,

Dr. Dana Fall
Superintendent



Cherokee County School District COVID-19: Second Semester Updated Grade Reporting Guidance April 2, 2020

The purpose of this outline is to provide updated guidance related to grading, instructional deadlines for seniors, reporting information in PowerSchool, and waiver of specific provisions in regulations relating to minute requirements for instructional time in light of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

During the second semester, students will have the opportunity to:

- complete the courses in which they are currently enrolled (to include any previous make-up work);
- complete the courses in which they would have enrolled in during the fourth quarter (i.e. Economics);
- demonstrate mastery in an effort to improve a course grade; and
- finalize dual credit courses offered jointly with higher education institutions.

For 2nd Semester Grading, CCSD will adhere to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) guidelines as follows:

- Second semester grades will be a single grade that is determined by combining the 3rd and 4th quarter grades
- Second semester grades will reflect work completed and mastery demonstrated during the 3rd and 4th quarters combined, but will not be reported as two separate grades; grades currently stored for the 3rd quarter should be considered interim reporting
- Second semester grades will be composed of all 3rd quarter grades and grades assigned by the teacher that assure competency or provide remediation.
- Quarter long credit-bearing courses scheduled for the 4th quarter will be directly reported in the 2nd semester grade.
- The one final semester grade will be applied for any student enrolled in a credit-bearing course.
- All credit-bearing courses should follow the requirements of the Uniform Grading Policy (UGP), with numerical grades recorded. This will help to maintain equity across our schools and district for scholarship considerations.
- **For High School Seniors:**
 - While all students have been impacted by COVID-19 related school closures, every effort will be made to ensure that high school seniors have the opportunity and adequate period-of-time to earn the necessary credits for on-time graduation.
 - Teachers and administrators will continue to utilize the CCSD Distance Learning Guidelines to ensure that students are provided comprehensive communication, appropriate instruction, and sufficient instructional supports in order to help ensure on-time graduation for all CCSD seniors.
 - The period-of-time for course completion, demonstration of mastery, and course remediation will be finalized by May 15. All grades for seniors will be entered into PowerSchool by May 22.
- Unless further guidance is provided by the SCDE, deadlines for all other students will follow the current district calendar.
- For a student whose eligibility under special education terminates due to graduation with a regular diploma, or due to exceeding the age of eligibility, the district will provide the student with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance (SOP), which includes recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her post-secondary goals (§Sec. 300.305(e)(3)).

- If a student is failing (prior to the school closure on March 16), he/she will be given the same opportunity provided to all similarly-situated students (SCDE guidance will be coming out soon in this area).
- If the student will be able to graduate, an SOP must be provided.
- If the student will not meet graduation requirements even with the additional options provided in the forthcoming guidance, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team will conduct the annual review, when appropriate, and continue providing services as per the IEP.

The IEP team does not need to meet to provide the SOP to the student, but a conference will be scheduled with the teacher and student to go over the SOP and to answer any questions.

Regulation Waivers

Due to the various facets of distance learning taking place during this unprecedented situation, several specific provisions related to seat time/minute requirements and assessments within Chapter 43 (State Board of Education) of the South Carolina Code of Regulations **have been waived**. Please refer to the state's released documents for additional details.

Because of these specific waivers, teachers and administrators are asked to be very thoughtful when planning schoolwork that may in fact take our students through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Our families are continuing to experience many uncertainties and hardships during this time, and everyone's physical and emotional well-being are the utmost priority for the Cherokee County School District.

Please be reminded that April 6-10 is Spring Break week. District administration will continue to take advisement from the State Department when making instructional decisions. We will also continue to communicate with our students and families on a regular basis in order to keep everyone well informed.

District administration strongly supports the need for students to continue learning at home, but at the same time realizes the burden that this may be placing on many of our students, parents and guardians. We hereby request that our teachers propose future assignments that may be completed by students in a very reasonable amount of time, on any given day. The daily 200-minutes of instruction mandate is waived, which means that we may drastically reduce the amount of daily work expected of our students, with the emphasis shifting from "quantity to quality." While the district is hesitant to impose specific time requirements, we trust our teachers and administrators only assign appropriate work to our students that is purposeful, meaningful, and engaging to them as learners. Additionally, the district administration is exploring the potential for deploying devices such as laptops and iPads to our elementary students, in order to enhance our eLearning program. The decisions made by the state department in regards to school closing beyond the current April 30 deadline will certainly guide us in the decision-making process related to the deployment of devices.

Again, we encourage everyone to concentrate on total well-being during these times of uncertainty. We love our students and want nothing less than the best for them, and for their families. As always, thank you for your continued support of Cherokee County School District.