Dear Episcopal Families,

When Episcopal shifted to distance learning in March, we very intentionally chose to continue using numerical grades rather than adopt a pass/fail system. We retained grades in order to identify students who are struggling in the online environment as well as those who are thriving.

From the outset, we approached distance learning with a spirit of patience, generosity, and flexibility. We determined that while students could boost their cumulative semester grade through improved scores in distance learning, we would not let students’ performance in the fourth marking period hurt their overall semester grade if they have worked hard, completed assignments, and participated in class.

To encourage students to finish strong as we near the end of the fourth marking period, we have outlined our grading policy for the second semester.

1) **Students whose cumulative semester average is higher than their third marking period grade will, as typical, earn that average for the semester.**

   **Scenario A:** Parker had an 81 in Chemistry after the third marking period. During distance learning, Parker completed all assignments and took advantage of opportunities for retakes on assessments, boosting the overall semester average to an 89. Parker’s final grade will be an 89.

2) **Students whose cumulative semester average has dropped but remains within 10 points of the third marking period will earn a grade equivalent to their third marking period score.**

   **Scenario B:** Robin earned a 90 in Algebra 2 for the third marking period. During distance learning, Robin completed all homework assignments but did not perform quite as well on assessments. Robin’s cumulative average at the end of the semester is an 83. While Robin’s semester average was lower than the third marking period grade, it was within 10 points of that grade. As a result, Robin’s final grade will be a 90.

3) **For those students whose cumulative semester average is a) more than 10 points lower than their grade in the third marking period, or b) below an average of 75, we will determine, taking into account any extenuating circumstances, whether the student**
should receive the cumulative average for the semester, the equivalent of their third marking period grade, or an average of the two. The teacher, academic dean, and assistant head for academics will make this determination.

Scenario C: Taylor had an 85 in Biblical Theology after the third marking period. During the fourth marking period, Taylor is not completing assignments and performing poorly on assessments. Taylor’s teacher alerts the academic dean, the assistant head for academics, and the advisor that Taylor currently has a semester average of 73. With the academic dean and the assistant head, the teacher creates a plan for support and sets a deadline of May 22 for Taylor to turn in past due assignments, make test corrections, and demonstrate sustained meaningful engagement in class. At the end of the semester, Taylor has a cumulative average of 79. The teacher, academic dean, and assistant head then determine, based on the circumstances, that Taylor will earn a final grade of 82, the average of grades for the two marking periods.

The vast majority of students are doing well in distance learning and achieving grades equal to or higher than their third marking period grade. At present teachers are developing a plan of support for the few students who are struggling — specifically, those whose current rolling average in a class is 10 points or more below their third marking period average OR below an average of 75. The supports will be designed in consultation with Academic Dean Nate Ebel, myself, and the student’s advisor. Parents also will be notified and asked to play a role in supporting the student.

Throughout this marking period, faculty have sought to be generous and flexible as we all adjusted to distance learning and adapted to changing environments at home. We believe this grade policy is in keeping with that approach, supporting and encouraging our students’ academic growth during this unprecedented situation.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Mary Fielder
Assistant Head for Academics