

## C19 Policy Review for School Committee Rev. April 9, 2020

The Program of Studies and the Student Handbook note some specific details and expectations regarding grading practices, expectations, and graduation requirements. In light of the extended school closure, we will need to make revisions to some of these expectations. In particular, we see a need for flexibility regarding:

- Final Exams
- Term Weights for for credit and grades
- AP Exams
- Attendance Policy
- Community Service
- PE Requirement

In general, the Program of Studies grants the Principal the authority to make “Waivers & Substitutions” where necessary. However, we seek support and clarification for that authority from the School Committee in this unprecedented situation.

POS p. 4

### **Waivers & Substitutions**

Requests for relief/substitution of a graduation requirement must be made in writing to the Principal who has final decision-making authority on local requirements for graduation.

<b>Final Exams</b>	
	<p><b>EXPLANATION:</b> We propose to halt Final Exams this year as students time to complete the curriculum and review has been interrupted. We do not believe that these exams would be a good assessment of student learning or a good use of our remaining time. This will also relate to the weighting of Year-Long and Second Semester course grades.</p> <p>Request: Grant the Principal the authority to adjust or waive Final Exam requirements in response to the extended closure.</p>
POS p.10	<p><b>Final Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For full year courses, final examinations are scheduled at the end of the year.</li> <li>● For semester (1/2 year) courses, final exams will be administered at the end of each semester</li> <li>● The final examination counts for 11% of the final year grade for full year courses; 20% for semester courses.</li> </ul>

SH p.11	<p><b>Final Examinations</b></p> <p>The final examination is the instrument used to evaluate the student's knowledge of the course material presented over the length of the course, whether a semester or full-year course.</p> <p>A final assessment will be given in all courses. The final examination for all courses will be one and one-half hours in length. The final examination grade will be recorded on the student's final report card.</p> <p>The final examination for full year courses will be weighted as 1/9<sup>th</sup> of the final course average with each quarter weighted as 2/9ths. Final examinations for semester courses will be weighted as 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the final course average with each quarter weighted as 2/5ths.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Senior Final Examinations Exemptions</b></p> <p>Seniors who have maintained a B+ or better average are exempt from senior final exams. The B+ must be the grade for the entire year, not just the 4<sup>th</sup> term. Teachers have the final say on whether a student is carrying a B+ or better average.</p>
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<b>Term Weights</b>	
	<p><b>EXPLANATION:</b> On March 12, Term 3 work was ended with only 2/3 of the Term completed on April 3, when the Term had ended we issued the plan below (Grades and Credits for the Year 2019-20) to weight Term 3 as only 2/3 of a term. Given that the plans for Term 4 and Finals were still undetermined, this was left open.</p> <p>Request: Grant the Principal the authority to adjust grade weighting and credits in response to the extended closure.</p>
POS p.11	<p><b>Weighted GPA</b></p> <p>...</p> <p>Students receive credits for each quarter or term grade. The credits are factored in as part of the weighted GPA. The final credits awarded for the course, however, are based on the student's' Y1 grade, i.e., the student's grade for the year. Students who receive a passing grade for the year in a course, will receive full credit for that course.</p>
	See sections above relating to final exams and weighting grades.

<b>Advanced Placement Exams</b>	
	EXPLANATION: Due to social distancing, the College Board has postponed the

	<p>Advanced Placement Exams and is going to issue a modified exam. The exam will be administered remotely (online), take 45 minutes, and have reduced content. Given that not all families have equal access to a good testing environment and that access to the AP content has been interrupted, we propose to waive the requirement that students in AP courses take the AP exam. We will encourage, but not require participation. This has never counted as part of their course grade as AP scores are not released until after grades are calculated.</p> <p>Proposal: Request: Grant the Principal the authority to adjust or waive testing requirements where appropriate.</p>
<p>POS p.18</p>	<p><b>Levels:</b> English courses are offered at two levels in the freshman and sophomore years. At the eleventh and twelfth grades, an Advanced Placement course is also offered. All students enrolled in AP courses must take the AP exam in May.</p>

<b>Attendance Policy</b>	
	<p>EXPLANATION: Due to social distancing and concerns due to COVID 19 prior to the school closure, there were a large number of legitimate reasons for absences in the beginning of Term 3. Given the challenges of seeking documentation and determining which causes were more or less appropriate, the Deans have sought to be lenient and waive the issuing of Failures due to Attendance in Term 3. We believe that the authority to excuse absences due to emergencies warrants this decision.</p> <p>Proposal: Request: Affirm the decision to forego the issuing of Failures due to Attendance in Term 3 and grant grades based on teacher assessment of Term 3 work.</p>
<p>SH p.13</p>	<p>Attendance Policy Massachusetts's statute does not enumerate specific exceptions to the school attendance law. It is the feeling of the Arlington High School faculty and administration that <b>extended illness</b> (verified by a physician if appropriate), <b>family emergencies</b> (crisis, unforeseen happening), and <b>religious observances</b> would qualify as acceptable reasons for absence.</p>
<p>SH p.14</p>	<p>FA (Failure due to Attendance) Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Students who have seven or more unexcused absences in a quarter in a given subject will receive an FA, or Failure due to Attendance, for that term even if the earned average is 60 or higher.</b> A grade of 59 will be recorded when the student's earned grade point average is over 60 and the comment "Failure due to attendance" will be noted on the report card.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Seniors who have five or more unexcused absences during term 4 in a given subject will receive an FA for that term even if the earned average is 60 or higher.</b></li> <li>● A FA will count as a failing grade and be equivalent to 0 (zero) credits earned in determining academic eligibility for any extracurricular activities including MIAA athletic eligibility.</li> <li>● A student who earns an FA due to the attendance policy for three quarters will receive no credit for the year. Required courses would need to be repeated in the following school year.</li> <li>● Students will not be allowed to change or drop classes to avoid the consequences of poor attendance. Those students who change classes for legitimate reasons will have their attendance record follow them to the new class.</li> <li>● House Deans may excuse absences for reasons of illness, incapacity, or serious family problems, if the student provides the proper written documentation. It is requested that the student (and parent/guardian) present the proper documentation for all absences within 3 days of the student's return to school.</li> </ul>
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<b>Graduation Requirements</b>	
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	<p>Explanation: The Principal has the authority to make waivers and substitutions on graduation requirements. Given the extended closure, we have to make a number of adjustments to avoid long term negative consequences for students. These include requirements for Community Service and Physical Education.</p> <p>Generally, a significant number of Seniors finish 10-20 hours of their 40-hour Community Service Requirement in the last two terms of their senior year, given the challenges of social distancing, we have provided opportunities for remote Community Service, but to keep expectation reasonable and manageable we are waiving 20 hours of the 40-hour requirement.</p> <p>Sophomores and Juniors enrolled in Term 4 Physical Education classes, in order to meet the grade-level requirements for Physical Education may not have an opportunity to complete those credits, if we do not return to granting credit in Term 4. Making up this term will substantially reduce opportunities for them to explore other academic offerings and will require them to take more than the usual amount of PE in one year.</p> <p>Proposal: Affirm the authority of the Principal to waive or substitute local requirements for graduation.</p>
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POS p.4	<b>Waivers &amp; Substitutions</b> Requests for relief/substitution of a graduation requirement must be made in writing to
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	the Principal who has final decision-making authority on local requirements for graduation.
POS p.3	<p><b>II. Graduation Requirements</b></p> <p><b>Graduation Requirements</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pass MCAS exam in ELA, Math and STE (further explained below)</li> <li>2. Pass four years of English</li> <li>3. Pass three years of History/Social Science (to include World History, US History I and US History II)</li> <li>4. Pass three years of Science (to include Physical Science to pass Introductory Physics MCAS)</li> <li>5. Pass three years of Mathematics (to include Algebra &amp; Geometry)</li> <li>6. Pass four years of Physical Education (*see below for further information)</li> <li>7. Pass one year of Fine Arts (5 credits) (*see below for further information)</li> <li>8. Pass two years of World Languages (three years of the same language is strongly recommended)</li> <li>9. Demonstrate competency in Computer Technology</li> <li>10. Perform and document 40 hours of community service</li> <li>11. 106 credits minimum</li> </ol> <p>....</p> <p><b>Definition of the Four Year Physical Education Graduation Requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Grade 9:</b> Students are required to take the 9th Grade Program.</li> <li>● <b>Grade 10:</b> Students are required to take two different quartered electives (preferably in the same semester). Students are not allowed to take electives marked for Grade 11 and 12 only. (each course is one quarter long)</li> <li>● <b>Grades 11 and 12:</b> Students are required to take two quarter electives by the time of their graduation. This may entail taking two quartered electives during your junior year, or one junior and one senior year. Spaces may be limited in some electives. Seniors are given preference. Grade 12 students cannot not enroll in Quarter 4 electives.</li> <li>● <b>There is a 4 absence allowance for all Quarter Elective classes. If a student surpasses the 4 absence allowance they must enroll in another elective in a different quarter to earn PE Graduation requirement credit and may require changes to their schedule in order to complete this requirement.</b></li> </ul>

MEMO FROM APRIL 3, 2020

This is our current plan for addressing grades and credits for the 2019-20 school year. Given the uncertainty about the end of the year, we wanted to assure everyone that they will be able to receive full credit for the year, whether we are able to return to instruction for Term 4 or not.

The details of grading can be complex, so we will update these practices as we have more information.

<b>Grades and Credits for the Year 2019-20</b>	
<b>Q</b>	<b>How will we calculate grades and credits for the year?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>Year-Long Courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For Year-Long Courses, the final grade will be computed based on the grades for Terms 1-3 and any academic work if we return to instruction for Term 4. Year-Long Courses will earn 5 credits whether or not there is a Term 4. Term 3 will be weighted as <math>\frac{2}{3}</math> of a Term. Any work done after we return to instruction will be appropriately weighted.</li> <li>● For example, If we do not return to instruction in SY 2019-20 Year-Long grades will be a weighted average based on the length of the Terms (37.5%, 37.5%, 25%)</li> <li>● For students failing Year-Long Courses (Terms 1-3), they may make a contract with the teacher and Dean for credit recovery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Semester 2 Courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For Semester 2 Courses, These will earn 2.5 credits.</li> <li>● For Semester 2 Courses, the final grade will be computed based on the grade for Term 3 and any academic Term after we return to instruction. Semester 2 Courses will earn 2.5 credits. Term 3 and any work done after we return to instruction will be appropriately weighted.</li> <li>● For students failing Semester 2 Courses, they may make a contract with the teacher and Dean for credit recovery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Term 3 Courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For Quarter 3 Courses, the final grade will be the Term 3 grade and will earn 1.25 credits.</li> <li>● Students failing Quarter 3 Courses have had from March 16 to April 3 to make a contract with their teacher and the Dean for make-up work, credit recovery, or incompletes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Term 4 Courses (TBD)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For now we are moving to structured enrichment. Students in Term 4 courses (primarily PE) will have the opportunity to join those groups for enrichment.</li> </ul>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What arrangements are being made for Seniors and graduation requirements?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>For Seniors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seniors who meet graduation requirements based on the credits granted above, will be on track for graduation. Graduation is currently scheduled for June 6. We</li> </ul>

recommend they continue to participate in enrichment activities for the purposes of engagement and community.

- Senior Community Service. Seniors will have their community service requirement dropped to 30 hours. Any senior who has not yet met that requirement should contact their Dean and make a contract for completing community service through remote activities.
- PE requirement. If a senior is failing PE in Term 3 and needs a PE credit to graduate they should make a contract with the teacher and Dean for credit recovery.
- Seniors who are failing courses required for graduation should make a contract with the teacher and Dean for credit recovery.