



May 22, 2020

Dear Excel High School Families,

We continue to miss you and our students here at Excel, and we are thinking of all of you as we all weather the challenges of this pandemic. Students across our school are continuing to move forward with their educational goals - taking Advanced Placement (AP tests) and beginning final projects. Our seniors are making plans for life after Excel in college and their careers, and we look forward to celebrating them as we can. We know that it is hard to feel like our goals move forward when so much about our world is standing still, but we continue to be impressed and inspired by the strength and skill of our students and your tremendous support as families.

We are also grateful to all of our teachers for their hard work and dedication, and we hope you have felt supported by them. And we are grateful for our counselors, who have shared videos, emails, and other tips for staying healthy mentally and emotionally during this time. Please take a look at our Excel Counseling website and Instagram (Excel_Be_Well). We have created this space to support students and families during the extended closure. Here you can contact your school counselor and access a variety of resources including information on managing stress, mental health and well being, and self-care. <https://sites.google.com/view/excelcounseling/home?authuser=1>

In this letter, we want to share a few new updates for the Excel community and remind you of key guidance for the rest of the school year.

New Announcements from Excel Academy Charter High School:

The last day of this school year will be June 12, 2020. This earlier end to the year is possible because students worked hard on curriculum and lessons on days that would otherwise have been Professional Development or testing days this spring. We are immensely proud of your students' accomplishments under such an incredibly challenging time and grateful to all of you for your partnership.

All Excel High School families will receive P-EBT benefits to support them with purchasing food during the pandemic. P-EBT, or Pandemic EBT, is a cash benefit provided by the Department of Transitional Assistance to eligible families of school-aged children, and supplements the meal distribution program Excel continues to provide. Families will be receiving a letter from DTA this month, and will receive their funds either on their EBT card, if they have one, or on a new P-EBT card being mailed out for this purpose. You can learn more about P-EBT here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/pandemic-ebt-p-ebt>

Students will be receiving their AP summer reading assignments and grade-level summer reading assignments during the week of June 8-12th. They will also receive important information that week about cleaning out their lockers and their final grades. Please make sure your student is in touch with their adviser the week of June 8-12th.

Reminders about teaching and grading for the remainder of the school year:

Teachers remain available to all students from 12-2 PM daily, Monday through Friday. In addition, all advisors are reaching out to contact families or students at least once per week to check in on how they are doing. If your student

has problems with his/her Chromebook, please ask your child to contact his/her advisor. Advisors can help with many issues and can get your child in touch with our technology team for more help or a replacement Chromebook if needed.

We have updated our meal distribution schedule. Excel Academy will continue to provide free breakfast and lunch. Families can now pick up multiple days' worth of meals at Excel Academy Chelsea and Excel Academy Charter High School. Our new schedule is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 10:00am – 12:00pm. If you need help locating food providers closer to your home, please reach out to Estevan Puerta at 617-466-9384 (Estevan speaks English and Spanish).

- View additional food distribution sites in Chelsea here: <http://healthychelsea.org/covid-19-food-resource-guide/>.
- View additional food distribution sites in Boston here: www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus.

Grading and Work Guidelines in Q4: Below are the grading policies in place during our closure.

- Students will continue to receive work in all their classes that they can access online while the school is closed.
- Students will be graded for the work they complete during our closure; the lowest grade a student can receive for work is a 70.
- If a student completes less than 25% of assignments in Q4, that student may receive a grade of “incomplete” and be assigned summer school to complete the work with the support of teachers in the building.
- If a student feels they cannot complete work for a particular class in light of other needs during this pandemic, the student should talk to their teacher or adviser. Teachers or advisers can either provide support with the work or excuse the work if that is appropriate.
- Students whose yearly average grade is between 60-70 in a class will also be assigned summer school, in line with Excel's policies. Summer school is a chance to raise their grade and GPA.
- Students whose yearly average grade is below 60 will either need to repeat the course or attend summer school; this will be determined in a meeting with administrators at the end of the year.

Update on Testing: DESE has cancelled MCAS this spring for grades 3-10. We are awaiting further guidance from the state on whether they will modify or waive the requirements of the competency determination for high school graduation and will be in touch as soon as we have more information. **AP make-up tests will take place June 1st-5th for any students who missed their exams.** If your student missed their exam or had difficulty submitting, they should check their email and plan to attend the make-up exam. Students can reach out to their AP teachers for more information.

Field Trips: All field trips this spring have been cancelled. If you had already paid for a field trip this spring, you should have received a refund. If you have not received a refund, please let your student's adviser know, and they can request a refund for you.

Senior Events: Now that we know that school will be closed for the year, we are working to plan alternative celebrations for our graduating seniors and are still determining which events we will hold virtually or reschedule for a later date. We will be in contact with senior families directly over the next few weeks to share updated information. Please reach out to your child's advisor if you have any questions.

Finally, I'd like to remind you to visit our webpage specifically dedicated to COVID-19:

<https://www.excelacademy.org/coronavirusupdates/> for the latest details on our preparedness activities, response to this evolving situation, and coordinated family resources (including more information on community resources such as food, internet access, and access to unemployment benefits).

Please continue to be well, and reach out with any questions. To all of our students and families: **We miss you!**

Thank you for all that you do,

Nina

Head of School, High School
Excel Academy Charter Schools