



April 14, 2020

Dear Excel High School Families,

As we enter our fifth week of school closure, I wanted to reach out to say how amazed and impressed I am with how our students are handling this incredibly difficult time. Staying home and being separated from our community is so hard for us as educators. We know it is just as painful for students to be separated from their friends, teachers, advisors, and others.

We are grateful that during this closure, we have been able to stay connected - over 90% of Excel students are connecting with their advisor every week, ensuring they have access to their high school coursework and teachers. Excel's teachers and staff continue to work hard to meet the challenge of educating in this new environment. This includes getting our Arts students' kits sent to their homes so they can continue their work, sending out videos, and organizing class "meetings" through Google classroom, and making decisions on their post-secondary plans.

As families, we want to make sure you know how to reach us at Excel and know what to expect for your child's education during this uncertain time.

We will be closed over April break, the week of April 20-24th. Meal service will still be provided, but teachers will not be available that week and students are not expected to complete assignments on Google classroom. We will resume teacher check-ins and work posted on Google classroom on Monday, April 27th.

Outside of this time, teachers remain available 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.

Quarter 3 Family Conferences: This week, Excel Academy Charter High School will be hosting Quarter 3 family conferences virtually. All advisers will be reaching out to families to schedule a phone call for the conferences. If you have not heard from your student's adviser, please ask your student for their contact information to schedule this conference.

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 tests will continue to take place**, but at home online, and students who take AP classes should connect with their teachers for more information about specific tests.

Field Trips: All field trips this spring will be cancelled, even if we are back in school, out of caution for students' health and safety. 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.

Meal Service: We are currently serving around 1,000 meals per week and will continue doing so between the hours of 10am and 12pm. You can come get a "grab-and-go" package with breakfast and lunch from Monday through Friday from two sites: Excel Academy - Chelsea and Excel Academy Charter High School. 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).

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