



PALO ALTO
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

25 Churchill Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Office of the Superintendent

March 25, 2020

Dear PAUSD Students, Staff, and Community,

All PAUSD schools will remain closed through a minimum of May 1 in alignment with school districts across all Bay Area counties. The extension guarantees PAUSD will move into Phase III, meaning an increase in our distance learning program expectations following Spring Break. The plan has been in development for several weeks and will be completed and shared by Friday, March 27.

PAUSD will transition all secondary students to credit/no-credit grading for the second semester of 2019-20. The decision included input from principals, instructional leads, District-level administration, consultation with university admissions officials, and Santa Clara County superintendents. We are thankful for our partnership with our teachers and the Memorandum of Understanding signed earlier today to memorialize the temporary shift in grading practices to complete this year.

Moving to credit/no-credit grading will benefit our staff and students without negative consequences for students with collegiate aspirations. Universities across the country have made it clear that students will not be penalized for missing traditional standardized tests or for posting credit/no-credit transcripts for this semester. One of the most clear explanations of the assurances our students should expect comes from Harvard University – their complete letter can be found [here](#).

PAUSD has created a one-semester change in practice to post accumulated credits without positively or negatively impacting grade point averages. Colleges lean heavily on an official document called the School Profile. School Profiles explain circumstances to colleges, including graduation requirements, grade point average calculations, honors courses, average SAT/ACT scores, and other elements that make schools unique. In this case, the shift to credit/no-credit grading in the face of a national pandemic will be described and accepted without penalty. The move is temporary and will be discontinued when students and staff return to school in the fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Austin".

Don Austin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools