



Impact of School Closure on Leonard J. Tyl Middle School Grading Practices

Our faculty and staff are committed to providing high-quality instruction via the distance learning model for as long as the school closure persists. However, we recognize that students' academic performance may be affected by factors outside their control during this spring's extended school closure. It is our goal to use the grading process to provide students with feedback about their progress and offer comments that will help them to build skills in each of their classes. To that end, teachers are grading student work and providing comments and suggestions for improvements on assignments. It is also our goal to recognize students' successes during their distance learning, but not to allow these unusual circumstances to negatively impact students' year-end course grades.

We have made several changes to ensure we recognize not only students' academic progress, but also their effort, participation, and growth as effective distance-learners.

Teachers will work with students / parents to help them choose between two options for calculation of their trimester 3 course grades.

Option 1: Third trimester grades will be calculated in PowerSchool in the same way they have in the past, based upon formative and summative work completed and scores earned.

Students' report cards will not include standards-based grades for trimester 3 as teachers do not have the same level of specific detail about students' mastery of standards as they did in the first and second trimester.

Option 2: Third trimester grades will be reported as Pass, Fail or Exempt. Exempt will be used if the students' work for trimester 3 should not be recorded due to identified limitations.

Students' report cards will not include standards-based grades for trimester 3 as teachers do not have the same level of specific detail about students' mastery of standards as they did in the first and second trimester.

This choice can be made course by course; for example, a student may elect to earn a letter grade in their math course and a pass/fail grade for their science class. Students' teachers and school counselors are available to recommend the best option for students based upon their grades for the three trimesters.

Option 1 will be the default option for students who do not request Pass / Fail grading.

Option 1 – Details

- The student's trimester 3 grades will be averaged as communicated by the classroom teacher at the beginning of the year, and the trimester 3 average will count as the student's final grade for the year, except for the high school level of courses Algebra I and Spanish I.

Option 2 - Details

- The state has conducted research with college admissions offices, the NCAA, and other state departments of education across the nation and determined that earning a P or F grade in middle school will not harm students' future opportunities for success. This grade will show on the end of year report card under trimester 3.
- Grades for trimesters 1 and 2 will be unchanged.
- For trimester 3 grades will be recorded on report cards as
 - P Pass (average grade is a D- or above)
 - F Fail (average grade is an F)
 - Ex Exempt (used for students who, due to identified limitations to their access to distance learning, will not receive a grade for trimester 3)
- P indicates that students have satisfactorily completed the course work provided
- F indicates that trimester 3 work did not meet the course expectations
- Assignments will continue to be graded according to our current grade scale and these grades will be averaged to determine whether the student earns a P or F.
- Assignment grades and teachers' comments will be used to provide meaningful feedback to students to foster their academic growth
- Grades of Exempt will only be entered for students who have documented reasons why they were unable to complete their work during the school closure.

How does this impact Honor Roll?

There will be no honor roll calculated for the third trimester. Honor roll is calculated for local recognition only and we will use other methods to recognize student successes.

How does this impact Algebra I and Spanish I?

These are high school level classes for which students will receive credit for passing grades. Like Montville High School, trimester 3 grades will not be weighted as heavily as the first two trimesters. Trimester 1 will be weighted 35%, Trimester 2 which includes the mid-term exam, will be weighted 40% and Trimester 3 will be weighted 25% for the final grade. There will be no final exams. For students who opt for Option 2, a grade of P will earn credit. For students who earn an "F", year-end grades will be calculated based upon an F counting as a score of 50.

As a parent, how should I advise my student?

The intention of this revised grading plan is to encourage students to stay appropriately engaged and put forth their best effort while allowing them an option to reduce the impact of trimester 3 grades if needed. Specifically, a student might choose the Pass option if the distance learning model has posed an obstacle to their learning and is causing the student anxiety around grades. However, it is important that students put forth their best effort and spend a significant amount of time each school day on their distance learning endeavors. It is reasonable to think that students should work for roughly the amount of time they would normally have been in school and engaged in learning. We suggest that parents continue to support and encourage their children to do their best; if the third trimester grade is projected to be substantially lower than normal but still in the passing range, their teacher / counselor will suggest using the Pass option.

Without Standards-Based Grades, how will we be able to interpret what a student's course grade means?

Comments will be added to the report card this trimester to provide additional information about the student's work in trimester 3.