



May 18, 2020

RE: IMS Grading Approach—Trimester 3 (Spring 2020)

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are writing to explain the grading approach at IMS for the third trimester of the current academic year. We know you have been eagerly awaiting such news, and we are grateful for your patience as we worked to incorporate guidance from regional and national officials and as we deliberated in order to be as fair as possible under these challenging circumstances.

In brief, only for the third trimester of 2019-2020, students will receive grading designations of “High Pass (HP),” “Pass (P),” or “Incomplete-Alternate (I-A).” These will appear on students’ report cards—to be distributed on or about June 12, 2020—for **mathematics, literacy, and select other subjects** (as appropriate for specific grade-levels and schools). We intend these categories to provide an overall picture of the students’ progress in learning during the third trimester. In addition, teachers will have the opportunity to share brief, written comments on students’ achievement and growth.

Please note that a designation of “Incomplete-Alternate (I-A)” is not equivalent to a failing grade. *This category is assigned to students without judgement, because we understand that students may not be able to submit online work for reasons beyond their control. Also, an “I-A” does not mean that students must submit missing work before the beginning of next year. Students will be promoted to the next grade for school year 2020-2021.*

Students in Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten will also receive brief, written feedback on the work submitted in the third trimester. Because of the impossibility of observing young learners while they work, and the necessity that students’ family members assist them with schoolwork, teachers will not be using the skills-checklists that were used in previous terms. Likewise, for students in Grades 1-8, checklists for “Effort, Study Skills, and Social Growth” will not be utilized in the third trimester, as teachers are not able to reliably assess these skills without observing students in person. Teachers may provide written commentary on these skills, to the extent possible.

Yearly grades (sometimes understood as the “year-long GPA”) will not be calculated for 2019-2020. Computing an average that is based solely on grades from Trimesters 1 and 2 could misrepresent students’ learning progress, because they may not have the same opportunities, as they otherwise would, to improve their yearly grade in the third trimester.

Next, please be assured that the IMS Central Office will communicate actively with secondary school admissions counselors and scholarship committees, to help them understand our grading approach for the 2019-2020 academic year. Specifically, IMS will convey that students receiving an “I-A” should not be treated any differently than other students as a result of this designation. Secondary schools and scholarship committees have also acknowledged the need to adjust their selection procedures as a result of this unexpected crisis. To clarify our approach for these key stakeholders, we are providing a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) document and a “Grading Profile.”

We understand you may have questions as you review this material. For additional questions beyond those outlined in the FAQ, please contact your school principal who will collaborate with the Central Office team to provide answers. Finally, in the face of these unexpected and unprecedented challenges, we are reminded of the timeless values of love, community, and honoring God’s providence. We maintain our extraordinary esteem of and gratitude for your partnership and patience at this difficult time. And we offer you many heartfelt blessings as the school year begins to come to a close.

Sincerely,

Joshua A. Taton, M.S.Ed., PhD.
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