*The following templates have been provided for districts to use in their communication with students and families and local school boards about Supporting our Students in Grades K-8. Districts should customize each template as appropriate for their local context. Areas that should be adapted for the local context are identified with [RED ITALIC TEXT].*

# Communication from Districts to students in Grades K-8 and their families

To: Elementary and Middle School Students and Families

Re: Supporting our Students in Grades K-8 During COVID-19 School Closures

Dear Students and Families,

As we navigate through this unprecedented time, our first concern is for your well-being. We understand that you may have questions about the future and how the current school closure may impact your learning and connections with teachers, friends, and others at the schools. We care about responding to your needs and questions in the best way we know how. We are with you.

We learned on April 8, 2020 students would not be returning to school for the remainder of the year, a decision made by Governor Brown to focus on the health and safety of all Oregonians.  *[District name]* is working to ensure that every student can access support for their well-being and ongoing learning through this time. We remain focused on you and your future.

In order to continue learning, we are providing you with opportunities for distance learning aligned to the state’s *Distance Learning for All Guidance*. We recognize that a distance learning model does not replace a full-school experience, and we continue to invest in our capacity to support you during this time.

*[Insert information about your district’s plan to provide distance learning along with SEL and counseling supports for the students in Grades K-8.]*

As parents and caregivers, we understand that distance learning causes significant changes in the home environment. Our partnership is more important than ever as we all navigate this new reality. Our commitments to you during school closure include:

* [Communication and partnership with family.  Insert information about how schools are engaging with families to communicate student learning outcomes, expectations, etc.]
* [Insert information about how students and families can access resources and additional supports; ensure access to information in the home language.]
* [Insert information about how learning activities are designed to meet diverse needs and leverage assets in the home environment.]

[District/school name] is focused on engaging with you in learning while also recognizing how the transition to distance learning in the COVID-19 context has disrupted learning and resulted in very different learning experiences. In order to provide you with feedback on learning while balancing these changes and disruption, you will see some changes in the report cards and assessments.

* Your report cards will just include two marks for the spring 2020 term instead of the full scale. [Insert district’s K-8 revised grading practices.]
* For students enrolled in high school courses, you will receive Pass/Incomplete [or insert local equivalent] marks for your spring term courses instead of letter grades (A-F). With these marks, you can continue learning and earning credit without impacting your GPA. (Public and private universities and colleges across the country, including Oregon’s colleges and universities, recognize the extraordinary nature of this event and are making temporary revisions to their admission requirements to accept changes to grading policies for Spring 2020.)
* You will not take the Oregon statewide assessments for this 2019-2020 school year. (This includes Oregon’s Statewide Summative Assessments (English Language Arts and Mathematics) for students in grades 3 through 8 and Summative Science Assessments in Grades 5 and 8.)

For those of you making the transition to middle school or high school, keep an eye out for [insert information about how your district/school will be supporting these transitions in new ways.]

If you have any questions, feedback, or just need to discuss how best to support your child’s learning or well-being, please contact [insert contact].  We care about you and are here to support you, to learn with you, and to partner with you during this time.

Thanks to each of you for supporting one another, for embracing uncertainty with grace and patience, and for finding strength in one another. We must remind ourselves that we’re part of a greater community, and that our purpose is to emerge from this with the tools to build a better world.

Sincerely,

*[Superintendent Name]*

*The purpose of this letter is to update school board members about changes to the graduation, grading, and credit requirements for students in grades K-8 and how your district will be supporting them.*

# Communication to school board members

To: Members of the Board of Education

Re: Supporting our Students in Grades K-8 During COVID-19 School Closure

We are grateful for your ongoing leadership and support during this time.  As you know, we continue to focus on the well-being of our students and community while building our capacity to engage students in ongoing learning during the school closures.

[Insert any updates for the Board on distance learning.]

As the situation rapidly unfolds, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) continues to release guidance. Here is the timeline of key [*Distance Learning for All Guidance*](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Distance-Learning-for-All.aspx) from ODE.

* March 30, 2020: ODE released *Distance Learning for All Guidance (Sections 1-3)*, requiring districts to provide distance learning for every student.
* April 8, 2020: ODE released *Graduation Pathways 2020 (Section 4)* which outlines graduation requirements and supports for our seniors.
* April 8, 2020: Governor Brown announced that our students would not be returning to school for the remainder of the year.  This decision was made to focus on the health and safety of all Oregonians.
* April 15, 2020: ODE released *Supporting our Students in Grades 9, 10 & 11 (Section 5)* that provides updated graduation, grading, and credit requirements for students in grades 9-11.
* April 22, 2020: ODE released *Supporting our Students in Grades K-8 (Section 6)* that provides information on grading, transition supports and promising practices for students in grades K-8.

**Key aspects of the *Supporting our Students in Grades K-8 (Section 6) Guidance***

**Grading and reporting requirements for spring term 2020**

* Districts shall use binary scores to report student knowledge and skills.
* Districts shall not issue letter grades (A to F or equivalent).
* Students who demonstrate evidence of essential learning should receive a “Pass.” Students who do not yet demonstrate evidence of essential learning should receive an “Incomplete” or local equivalent.
* Middle school students enrolled in credit-bearing high school courses will receive Pass/Incomplete marks and follow the guidance in *Supporting our Students in Grades 9, 10, & 11*.
* The Safeguarding Opportunity clause ensures that students’ learning paths are not further impacted from extended school closures. Students who were earning a passing mark in the subject area or course prior to school closure should not be academically penalized.

Based on these requirements, we are temporarily changing our grading systems and reports as follows: [Insert district recommendations and/or changes.]

**Grade Level Promotion and Access to Opportunity**

* Student promotion to the next grade level shall not be based on performance during the period of school closure; no child shall be held back or retained due to any impacts of extended school closure.
* Districts shall not make a decision for any student that limits opportunity to progress within a course sequence, grade promotion or retention, placement in an advanced course, access to clubs, sports, junior honor society, visual and performing arts opportunities, Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) such as FFA, or forecasting opportunities for the following school year based on performance during extended school closure.

**Assessment**

Statewide summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics in Grades 3-8 & 11 and science in Grades 5, 8, & 11 have been suspended.

ODE will be publishing additional information on how to address paused and incomplete assessments as well as assessment opportunities for students who are emergent bilinguals (English Learners) who have not completed or did not receive an opportunity to participate in the ELPA Summative assessment this spring.

**Transitions**

While transitions continuously occur, there are a few that represent the most significant changes for students in K-8.  These are:

* Transition to Elementary School
* Transition to Middle School/Junior High
* Transition to High School

[Insert district’s transition plan and/or examples of what schools are doing to facilitate these transitions.]

We recognize that a distance learning model does not replace a full-school experience. We must stay focused on the well-being and future of our students as we invest in rapidly building our distance learning capacity and responding to the needs of our students and families.

Thanks to each of you for supporting one another, for embracing uncertainty with grace and patience, and for finding strength in one another. We must remind ourselves that we’re part of a greater community, and that our purpose is to emerge from this with the tools to build a better world.

Please let me know if you have questions or need any additional information about our efforts to support our high school students.

Sincerely,

*[Superintendent Name]*