Middle School Education
Alternative Learning Frequently Asked Questions

When do you expect our students will return to school?
Columbia Public Schools (CPS) is a member of the community’s incident command structure. The school district will continue to follow local and state directives and restrictions. We will keep families updated as pertinent information on this topic becomes available.

What about middle school courses for high school credit?
These courses will use the same plan as high school. These courses will be treated the same way high school courses are treated.

Since my child’s courses were not completed, will they be at a disadvantage in next year’s courses?
CPS will design the 2020-2021 curriculum to reflect the changes to the spring 2020 courses. No student should be at a disadvantage due to lost content.

How will a mark of P be determined?
A “P” will equate to 60% or higher on the March 10, 2020, IPR.

If there is evidence between the March 10 IPR reporting and March 13 that a student’s grade would have risen above or fallen below 60%, the teacher can make the determination. If a student’s grade has risen above 60% after the closure through March 31, the grade determination would be P.

For students whose grade is not a P before March 31, the remainder of the semester will be used to help the student reach a P. This can be done through the completion of work not handed in, if allowable by the teacher’s retake policies, engaging in reteaching and review, and showing mastery of the concepts presented and assessed prior to the March 10 IPR. These assessments can be determined by the teacher and could include, but not be limited to online quizzes and tests, oral quizzes and tests, writings, or other evidence of learning.

The elimination of letter grades concerns me. How do we justify this?
The attainment of grades at the middle school level is only for reporting purposes. There is no binding information tied to a middle student’s grades or GPA. While that reporting is important, the abrupt change to the education system in CPS, our state, and our nation due to the Coronavirus Pandemic has created a situation that make equitable opportunities for reporting those grades not possible.
What if my child is enrolled in an online course?
The middle school plan applies to online courses and the same rules apply. The extended learning for online courses includes continuing learning and completing the course. The online teacher will communicate the expectations for the student that would equate to the March 10 cutoff date.

What about honor roll?
There will be no 3rd or 4th quarter honor rolls at the middle school level for the 2019-2020 school year.

What happens when we return to school?
If we are able to return to school before the end of the school year, the current grading plan will remain in place. We will adjust the instructional plan to align with the regular school day.

What can I expect from School/Teacher communication with my child?
For all courses, teachers will have one day a week to instruct. The daily assigned content areas are:

- Monday: Math, Fine Arts, and English Learners
- Tuesday: Language Arts, PE/Health, Gifted & AVID
- Wednesday: Science, Practical Arts, Career Center, and Special Education District Classrooms
- Thursday: Social Studies, World Languages, & Special Education Non-Core Content Areas
- Friday: Fun Day Club Day (A time when clubs, athletics, and activities can check-in; this is not required!)

On the assigned days, you can expect to have communications about the course content and expectations. Zoom meetings, Google Hangouts, etc. might be used for real-time instruction and connection. On “off” days for any given course, teachers can have individualized communication with students and families. Teachers will also hold daily office hours for student support.

What about students who don’t engage in the course after they get a designation of P?
It is expected and highly encouraged for all middle school students to remain engaged with their courses through the end of the school year. We want teachers to maintain connections with students and facilitate connections among students. While it is our expectation and encouragement for students to remain engaged, there is no punitive action for those who choose not to.

If my family needs access to food beyond the Grab and Go, how do I get help?
A list of resources is available on the CPS COVID-19 website: www.cpsk12.org/COVID-19.

My child appears anxious and/or depressed. If my family needs mental health support, how do I get help?
A list of counseling resources is available on the CPS COVID-19 website. Families can also access the counseling resource guide directly here: https://www.cpsschoolcounseling.com/covid-19.html.
What else can I do to support my child’s learning during this time? There are online resources for families for enrichment activities offered on the CPS COVID-19 website: www.cpsk12.org/COVID-19.