

Dr. Brabrand Facebook Live – April 3, 2020 Transcript

We'll be answering some of the frequently asked questions you've sent us earlier today, and we'll be answering some additional questions throughout this Facebook Live.

As a reminder if you're just tuning in, please know you can go to our website, www.fcps.edu, to get additional frequently asked questions answered.

One of the questions I've been asked:

Q: Do I have to do the new schoolwork that's been assigned to us?

A: While the work in fourth quarter isn't being graded, it is going to impact your final grades. We are following the VDOE recommendations not to have the work graded during the fourth quarter. Fourth quarter transcripts for our high school kids will be issued with a no mark, but the work during the 4th quarter will help show mastery of learning of the new content and will impact your final grade.

I encourage all of you to do your best during this time to continue to improve your final grade and to continue to enjoy learning for the sake of learning and not just for the grade itself.

One of things that we've been asked about is about support for our English Language Learners. We have thousands of English language learners here in FCPS and are proud to have them as part of our Fairfax county schools family. We are working with our EL teachers to make sure that we're communicating in multiple languages to our parents now and to our students as we get ready to start our distance learning programs. They will be checking in on a regular basis as we begin to do distance learning. We also have our parent liaisons that are available and are reaching out. We have parent information lines in Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Urdu, Arabic, Farsi and Amharic for families who can just call in and ask questions and get support for the information they need to get answered.

Our ESOL teachers will be reaching out to our EL students as they work through this new distance learning program.

Q: How are we supposed to check our student's math and will teachers be providing direction to us?

A: Well I certainly experienced that as a parent even as early as second and third grade for help on math. But first I'd encourage your children go to their teachers as we go to this new distance learning. Many of you know as part of this distance learning plan, teachers will have office hours. Time for kids to check in. I encourage that time for kids to check in. If you need to, check in and talk to that teacher about how you can better support and check their math work. Hopefully you will learn and we will all learn about the kind of instruction that our kids are getting week to week in FCPS and you'll have an opportunity to be an even stronger partner with us in the education of your children.

Several questions around AP. I know there's a lot going on with **AP and IB**.

A lot of those questions are already answered on our FAQ. I do want to share a little bit of information. The College Board did delay the AP test window to May 11 – 22. Makeup dates are going to be June 1 -5. There will be a lot of opportunity. College Board is providing some daily supplemental instruction that

you can learn more about on our FAQ site and of course all of our AP teachers will be providing new instruction as distance learning starts after spring break.

Our IB continues to be an important part of FCPS and they will also be providing additional information. IB will not be administering exams but will be doing supplemental and finishing up of work to show mastery of course content in IB classes. We hope that you'll work with your IB teachers with any questions you have there.

As far as **dual enrollment**, we will provide more information in about another week as we get started.

One of the things with dual enrollment, we are working with a lot of colleges each who have slightly different policies. We're really trying to get a comprehensive set of guidelines to share with you. We know how important it is for our students to finish the year with dual enrollment and we will be providing that information very shortly. We will also be providing information about families who are interested in dual enrollment for the upcoming year as well.

Some folks had questions about our learning packets. As you know K- 8th grade, while we are providing distance learning, our primary mode will be through learning packets.

Q: Will there be learning packets for advance mathematics?

A: Learning activities and materials for advance mathematics for grades 3 -6 will be in the mailing. By the way, there will be an opt-out process for learning packets if you plan to access information online. We hope you take advantage of that process.

One of the other questions that was asked is:

Q: When will the 3rd quarter grade book be closed?

A: It will be closed April 24th. There will be plenty of time so that if you were not able to complete work during the 3rd quarter, you can do that work so you can get a third quarter grade. I want to be clear with you because it's been asked, there's an expectation that no 3rd quarter grades will be lower than they were on the last day when schools were opened on March 12.

Q: Will I be able to improve my grades in 3rd quarter grades?

A: The answer is yes. As I said, you will have until the 24th of April be able to turn in work that you had not yet completed for grades up until April 24. I want to remind you that all of 4th quarter, that doing that work will impact your final grade. We shared our approach for 4th quarter with the School Board last Friday and this is in alignment with our existing Fairfax County Public Schools grading policy.

We encourage you, if you have any questions specific to your child's specific class, to talk with your son or daughter's teachers during their virtual office hours.

One of the questions is about when will we get the 3rd quarter report cards be distributed?

We just announced again the date for turning in grades on the 24th of April and we'll be doing report cards as soon as possible after that April 24th date.

Again, we are following the VDOE that while the fourth quarter grade is no mark, the 4th quarter work will impact your final grade.

I do think as much as we've had questions around grading, that it's important to use this moment in time, to use this COVID crisis, to make sure that we're putting our focus maybe deeper than we ever had before on the love of learning and learning for the sake of learning.

Grades are important; they've always been a part of our school culture, but we really want to have the opportunity during this time to encourage learning for the sake of learning.

Q: Will there be final exams for the final quarter?

A: I'll have more information on that in just the week ahead.

Q: Can I get retakes for tests under 80% from 3rd quarter?

A: Anything in 3rd quarter you will have until April 24, and we'll keep our existing policies. As I said on grading that if you have specific questions, work with your child's specific teacher.

The next question was around **changes to grading policy**.

As I've said already, we have our existing grading policy and our distance learning plan and our grading in fourth quarter is in alignment with our grading policy. We are following the VDOE guidance and we are following our FCPS policy.

If you've just joined us, we are taking questions, your questions here on FB Live. I want to be sure that I provide an answer to the first two questions at the beginning that you may not have heard which is...

Q: Do I have to do the new schoolwork assigned to us?

A: And as I shared at the beginning, while the new work is not graded it is important to complete these assignments because they will impact the student's final grade. It will be able to show mastery of the learning of new concepts, that we're moving on and doing here in the 4th quarter. It's really an opportunity for students to have a positive impact on their final grades.

Q: When will we be getting our daily schedules?

A: Schools will individually be sending out through teachers, staff and principals the specific school schedule. We had a general school outline that we provided that is on our website about what the school day will look like for elementary, middle and high, but the se specific times for face to face virtual instruction will be provided by the individual schools themselves.

Q: We had a question about Driver's Ed. How will that be handled now that we have this new environment for distance learning?

A: We're working with our high school principals and instructional services department to finalize guidance on driver's education. We are going to work to try to create schedules so that we can meet the state requirements and we'll have more information on that soon. I know a lot of folks interested in Behind-the-Wheel and right now that is cancelled until further notice. That's following state guidance that has asked all school districts to stand down on the Behind-the-Wheel training until we have further notice from the state.

Q: Is it too late to register for summer online summer campus?

It is not. Registration ends June 12 for summer courses.

Q: There's a question about, "What about summer enrichment summer enrichment opportunities?"

A: We offer so many wonderful programs here in Fairfax County Public Schools. We have not gotten final decisions for on those summer programs and we will certainly update you soon. Registration is currently not going on for those. I know these are very popular programs. We'd love as much as possible to follow and provide these opportunities. We will be monitoring the governor's guidance. As you know, his stay-at-home order has now extended. He added a stay-at-home order this week, and it's been extended to June 10, and we're going to have to re-look at things at that time.

Q: Are we hiring?

A: It's our intent to continue to fill our classroom vacancies. We need great teachers to join us here in Fairfax County Public Schools. Learning is not stopping. Teaching is not stopping.

So, while we are not able to have our job fairs that we love to do face to face here in the spring, we do encourage those who are interested in teaching. Frankly, now more than ever, our young people need you all to become first responders for them. As we watch our own medical care folks go out and be the first responder to this COVID-19 crisis, this is an opportunity for folks who never thought before about wanting to be a teacher and to connect with kids. Our kids need us more than ever now. They need trusted adults to connect to and to learn from. We hope you'll look at Fairfax County Public Schools to begin or to finish your teaching career.

There are questions about **Credit Recovery**.

Registration begins in late April. No decision has been made yet about whether we'll be able to hold those classes or the format in which we'd hold those classes, but we'll update you soon.

As far as the crisis impact on the **FCPS budget**, it is certainly true that the COVID-19 crisis has impacted federal state and local budgets. We are looking early next week to see a new budget forecast for the county and later in week for a new forecast likely from the governor. And we will be, the School Board will be meeting in a virtual meeting on April 9, Thursday, at 10 a.m. that will be on Channel 21 and live streamed to look at the revised plans of the county.

And I will begin to share my initial thoughts about how our budget may need to be adjusted. We are going to continue to focus of course on our core mission of teaching and learning and protecting the FCPS classroom. I'm hopeful that we will be able to do everything we can to continue to move forward and provide a world class school system for all of our students and for this community. We have to recognize the tight budget times that have now confronted us, but we've been through tight times before and Fairfax County Public Schools has moved forward even during those times to continue to deliver a world class education and I know all of us are committed to making sure that happens even in more challenging financial times.

There was a question about a **FAQ about AP classes and dual enrollment**.

I've actually already mentioned some of that and go to our FAQ website if you have more questions about AP, IB, or Dual Enrollment.

Q: One question is, "How are we identifying students for compensatory services in the future?"

We know that our goal remains every child by name and by need here in Fairfax County Public Schools. It's clear that even as we make this transition to distance learning, while we will work and strive to meet every child by name and by need, we may see that some of our children, especially our special needs children, will need additional services after this COVID-19 crisis. We're committed to identifying during this distance learning process using our teachers, talking with them, to identify students who we know not only will need additional support during this distance learning plan, but who will need additional support after the plan as early as the summer and into the next year. We already have a work group formed, led by Dr. Duran, our chief equity officer, to make sure that we're going to provide the necessary services and supports for those students. And we're also continuing to look at federal and state guidance to help us as we construct these proactive plans.

Q: Will homebound teachers continue to provide services?

A: Yes. Every homebound teacher will continue to have a regular check in with students. And we will again work with every child by name and by need to determine the level of services. Teachers will not be doing direct in-home visits following state directives, but we will be providing homebound support to children.

Q: Do I need to bring my child to get breakfast and lunch?

A: You do not need to bring your child to get breakfast and lunch. We've been able to work with the federal government to get greater flexibility, so a parent does not have to bring their children out. I'm so proud of our Food and Nutrition Services for the amazing job. We are doing over 15,000 meals a day to Fairfax County residents. We are doing it through school sites and also through bus delivery. And I want to remind all of you that even during spring break next week, we will be providing meal distribution and delivery every day next week Monday through Friday. So please be sure you know that, it will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and you do not need to bring your child to pick up that food.

There have been some questions about **SAT testing** and FCPS locations for this school year have been cancelled. Students will get information directly from the College Board about rescheduling. I know some of them have already been cancelled. There were some questions about the June dates and all those have been cancelled. The College Board will be following up. And I know that is something of course for lots of kids, including my own, who were scheduled to take the SATs that it's frustrating. But we will work with the College Board very closely, and provide additional opportunities as soon as possible for kids to be able to take the SATs and be able to take them in Fairfax County Public Schools when we are able to provide them.

There were some questions about **being able to get into the schools to get essential items**. We have been providing limited access for essential item pickup. But please understand that our schools are closed at this time because of the COVID-19 crisis. If you have an essential item around medication or some special education equipment, in fact our teams are actually finishing the guidelines for equipment that we know students absolutely have to have for distance learning, and we will be working with those individual families through school staff reaching out in the days ahead, and we will make sure that those items get to be provided. We know that there are a lot of items in school that folks will want, especially our students. When the time is right, following state guidance, that we can get more folks back into our schools we will certainly do that.

Q: What about graduation ceremonies?

A: I was sharing that I just sent out a letter to seniors. We know that this is an unprecedented time and I share the sense of loss that our seniors have about losing things like prom, some of the picnics that were planned at the end of the year, choral assemblies, fine arts assemblies and drama plays. We are committed, my high school principals and I, to doing everything we can to continue to have some kind of graduation for our seniors, and appropriate year-end celebrations. Our non-virtual graduation ceremonies are not ruled out at this time, however if the governor's timeline of June 10 remains in place the graduation schedules will be impacted. We have some flexibility in those graduation schedules, but we may need to think out of the box about what graduation looks like. But, I and the School Board, our principals and our Leadership Team, are committed to finding a way to have an appropriate ceremony that recognizes 13 years of education for students. So, my pledge is we will work very hard and work with you and listen to you as we approach these key dates. I am hoping and praying for the COVID-19 situation to get better as I know all of you are, and we will keep you posted.

Q: I didn't get a laptop and I still need one, how do I get one?

A: We are still in the midst of our laptop distribution process. If you need a laptop, please contact your school principal. If you do not have internet access at home, I encourage you to do the same. We have a very limited amount of mi-fi's now. We've distributed thousands. We've distributed thousands of laptops and we want to do everything we can to close the digital divide here in Fairfax County Public Schools.

Q: What about missed and future IEP meetings?

A: IEP rescheduling questions should be referenced to the special education case manager. They are the primary point of contact and will be reaching out to families very soon.

There are no plans at this point to change the **2020-21 calendar**. That calendar was approved by the School Board almost a year ago. There are no plans currently to change that calendar.

We are looking of course, as I shared earlier, about how we are going **to meet student needs post-COVID-19**. Which could be ideas like enhanced summer programs (video glitch) and how to support students during the closure. This is such an important question because one of the issues here is not just the academic impact COVID-19 has had on our students, but also the social-emotional impact. And we really, really need to listen more than ever to student voices around these issues. I want you to know that student counselors remain the first point of contact for any of our students' issues around social-emotional as well as academic and personal needs. I also want you to know that any FCPS parent can schedule a 30-minute phone consultation with a school psychologist or school social worker either for themselves, or for their middle or high school student. That will give them the opportunity to get the guidance or support necessary. Go to our website, www.fcps.edu, and click on the Mental Health and Resources page to schedule that phone consultation. I think that's an opportunity, an awesome opportunity, for a 30-minute call for your child or for you to check in, with someone who is skilled in this area, to really help with the social-emotional impact that we are all experiencing in different ways. And it's okay to reach out and ask for help whether you are a child or an adult.

Q: I'm a senior. How can you make sure I'm going to graduate?

A: I want every senior to know if you are in good standing, and you have been passing all of your required classes, you are going to graduate on time. It's important to stay engaged as you learn new material in the fourth quarter so that you can improve your grade, but you will be graduating on time. We have maximum flexibility from the state. If you were not passing your classes or passing a class before the closure we are going to do everything we can, working with you, to get that grade up so that you can pass and that you can graduate with your class in June. Your teachers will be giving you more information about how you can do that work so that you can impact your final grade.

Again, as I said there was another question about seniors not doing well. You will have an opportunity to put in extra time to get that grade from failing to passing, and we are ready, all of our teachers know and understand that they are going to reach out to you, and say that while schools may be closed, we have not closed the opportunity for you to pass that class, even if you were not experiencing success on March 12.

Q: Will seniors be refunded for parking and senior dues?

A: We are looking at all of our refund regulations and all of our refund policies and will be sharing information out soon on that.

Information about prom and graduation I have already shared, and again as I said, high school principals and I, and our School Board and Leadership Team, all of us at Fairfax County Public Schools are committed to celebrating your accomplishments here at the end of the year, and providing a graduation opportunity in some shape or form. We know we have to make a decision soon, but we have time before we have to make a final decision as to the type and format of how we will be able to do it. And we want to honor the opportunity to have as much flexibility as we monitor this COVID-19 crisis as possible.

Q: Can I register my student for the coming school year?

A: Yes, you can register your students for the coming year, or if you know folks who are just coming in now, moving in in the middle of this challenging time, we are accepting registrations for next year even if you don't have all of the necessary paperwork. We will work with you to complete the registration process. Go to our website for more information. I hope that was helpful.

We've come to the end of another 30 minutes of Facebook Live. I'm committed to working to communicate with you on a weekly basis as we go through the time ahead. I appreciate you reaching out and engaging all of our staff on your questions. They need to be answered, they deserve to be answered, and continue to work with us and have patience with us as we try to do the best we can to support your children and all of you and your families. You all are the backbone of this community and we want to be here with a servant's heart to serve you and serve your children as best we can even in these challenging circumstances.

I know that next week is officially our spring break. I saw that earlier this week a doctor, who sent me an email saying, "You know Dr. Brabrand all the discussion about spring break or not, while we are not going to be able to do our spring break plans that we had prior as a family, we are going to spend time together as a family during spring break."

I'm hoping to do a little bit of that myself as a parent, as a father, as a husband, and I hope you will too. We need to take a moment to give grace, grace to each other, grace to our community, grace to ourselves, and really be thankful for what we have. I know that right now it feels like so much has been taken, but there is so much to be thankful for. I'm thankful to be part of Fairfax County Public Schools, and I'm thankful that you are part of the Fairfax County Public Schools family. These bonds are strong, and we are not going to let the COVID-19 crisis break those bonds. Thank you for listening today. Go on to our website, again at www.fcps.edu and we have more FAQs being updated each day. Thank you very much and have a great weekend and a great spring break.