



# JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

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Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Bowie Parents & Guardians,

As you know, Dr. Cruz announced on [April 3](#) that all campuses are closed indefinitely. Late in the evening of April 6, the AISD School Board approved modifications to the guidelines used to determine grades, award credit, and set rank and GPA for the rest of the school year. While the official resolutions can be viewed [here](#) and additional communications from the district are forthcoming, I would like to highlight a few decisions and explain their implications for our Bowie students. In doing so, I want to emphasize that these decisions were not easy to make and may not be ideal for every student but they do demonstrate equity, respect, and sensitivity for the wide range of circumstances in which our students and families now find themselves. I greatly appreciate the Board's thoughtful consideration in assessing the best way forward.

In light of the Board's most recent decisions, Bowie teachers will focus on two distinct responsibilities:

1. **Continuous Learning** - Bowie continuous learning is defined as our plan for exclusively online learning for the time period between 4/6/20 through 5/28/20. Bowie teachers are thoughtfully designing lessons that allow students to engage in important learning, feedback, and reflection in order to be successful in the next grade level and/or course. Any numeric grades awarded during continuous learning will be used for feedback purposes only and will not factor into the student's transcribed grade for the Spring 2020 semester. Teachers will continue to monitor student progress and communicate that progress to parents.
2. **Remediating and Finalizing of Spring Semester Grades** - The Board recognizes that for a host of reasons - access to technology, economic instability, the need to care for siblings or family members who may be ill - many students are no longer able to fully engage in the curriculum. Therefore, in the interest of equity, the spring semester grade for each course will consist exclusively of assignments and assessments given between 1/8/2020 and 3/12/2020 when all students had full access to classrooms, teachers, technology, and other important supports. For this single ten-week grading period, all courses will be transcribed with a "Pass" or "Incomplete" for the Spring 2020 semester. The "Pass" or "Incomplete" will be based on the numerical grades given to assignments and assessments between 1/8/20 and 3/12/20 and recorded in Teams by the teacher of record. It is important to understand that the Spring 2020 semester grades will never be calculated in the students' GPAs for the classes of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 since only a "P" or an "I" will be recorded. I realize that for some students who were off to a great start this semester and eager for their efforts to positively impact their GPAs, these changes are disappointing. Knowing that the semester was cut short, the Board has also directed teachers to work with their individual students between now and the end of the school year to help them demonstrate mastery of learning in order to improve their grade to a 70 or higher in order to earn a grade of "Pass" and recover fall semester credit through year-long averaging.

**For our Seniors, this is an especially difficult time.** There is a strong probability that the prom will be canceled, but in order to salvage some of the deposits paid by the Class of 2020, we are waiting to hear revised orders from local officials (more money would be refunded if the cancelation is caused by an official shelter-in-place order). Should the prom indeed be canceled, I will work with the class officers and sponsors to decide how to use the funds they've raised. With the Board's most recent decisions, Seniors are still positioned to successfully complete all their high school requirements and be graduated by 5/27/20 as previously scheduled. Counselors are currently reviewing each individual's personal graduation plan and will be contacting seniors about any deficiencies. Several ideas for the actual graduation ceremony have been proposed to district officials, including having a virtual event in May and/or postponing the ceremony until August, but there will be no formal decision until more direction from local health officials is received. As for other end-of-year Bowie traditions, our teachers are brainstorming how they might reimagine these activities in a virtual format while also considering how we might honor and celebrate our seniors when all of this is over. I am so proud of the resilience the Class of 2020 continues to demonstrate during this crisis.

I hope that this information helps you understand the focus of our teachers' efforts moving forward, even though there remains more details to work out and some decisions to be made in the days to come. Please encourage your student to ask their teachers any specific questions they have related to their spring semester grades or their continuous learning. Your child's counselor, administrator, or registrar is also available by email to answer questions you may have related to credits or GPA. Your patience during this time is greatly appreciated as our staff works to fully understand the decisions made by the Board this week.

What are some important things you would like Austin ISD to consider as we transition to continuous distance learning due to COVID-19 precautions? **The district is hosting an online [ThoughtExchange](#) to collect input** from parents, families, staff and students on how to better support continuous learning from home. Our families, staff and students face various challenges in adopting the new ways of teaching and learning required by COVID-19 precautions. Together, we are more creative and resourceful so we're asking you for five minutes today and another five minutes later in the week to help us better support you in our planning around COVID-19. Please share your thoughts and questions and come back into the exchange before it closes on April 10 to rate the thoughts shared in the exchange with 1-5 stars. After the exchange closes, we will use the collective knowledge of our AISD community to help us more accurately respond to your questions and meet your needs. Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this exchange in order to ensure we are doing everything possible to keep our staff, students, parents, and wider community engaged, healthy and safe.

Finally, in the whirlwind of changes in how we "do school," one thing remains the same: the Bowie staff's deep commitment and interest in your child's academic, social, and emotional well-being. I invite you to enjoy the ["I'll Be There For You" musical message](#) they created for Bulldog Nation.

Take care and GO DAWGS!  
Mark Robinson

Principal  
James Bowie High School  
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