



Student Engagement: Frequently Asked Questions Secondary Schools (Grades 6-12)

Education during the virtual learning environment created by the public health emergency of Covid-19 has raised questions about student engagement. DCPS views student engagement as the most critical element of learning. Here are answers to the most common questions raised so far in SY 20-21.

What is engagement during virtual learning?

Engagement refers to the following student actions:

- Students log in to Canvas in all scheduled courses, Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday
- Students join Teams for whole class instruction and collective work time (~45 minutes per class)
- Students contribute to class verbally, in writing in the chat, and visually by having their cameras on and making eye contact with teacher and peers in Teams video conference
- Students work on course tasks during direct instruction and independent work time (~80 minutes per class: 45 minutes collective & 35 minutes independent/partner/small group)
- Students return to collective class after work time for closure and clarity on assignment due dates
- Students submit work in progress, complete work, and revised work
- Students work a full day on Wednesdays: attend office hours, advisory sessions, tutoring, clubs, games, partner work, small group work, counseling, work week planning, grade reflection, progress monitoring, celebrations, or independent work time
- Students self-monitor, plan weekly tasks and activities, set goals, and advocate for themselves
- Students seek and/or accept assistance if they need it to succeed

What is the difference between attendance and engagement? How do each impact my grade?

- Attendance refers to the act of logging into Canvas once a day and does not mean a student is engaged.
- Engagement means joining Teams classes for live instruction, interacting with peers and teachers verbally and visually, submitting work in progress, submitting complete work, and submitting revised work (if applicable), and managing time effectively to pass and promote or graduate.
- While attendance is critical to learning and succeeding, attendance is not calculated in your grade.
- Engagement is calculated as 20% of your grade. With no engagement credit, you could not earn higher than a C+ in a course, even if you earned an A on every single assignment!

How can I earn a high engagement grade?

Take advantage of all ways to earn engagement credit, which is awarded in many ways, including:

- Logging in to Canvas
- Attending Teams classes



- Contributing to live class by speaking or writing in the chat
- Contributing to live class by keeping the camera on, showing expressions and reactions, and making eye contact in the video conference
- Interacting with peers in partners or groups during work time
- Submitting work in progress upon request
- Submitting complete assignments
- Submitting revised assignments (if applicable)
- Checking the Aspen gradebook
- Planning weekly work tasks and activities
- Setting daily and weekly goals
- Monitoring progress towards the highest possible grade in the course.

What are the expectations for Wednesdays? How should I spend my day?

- Wednesdays are a full work day, expecting the same total hours of work time as the other days of the week, with a variety of options for productivity.
- Independent work, partner work, small group work, joining teacher office hours, tutoring, organizing tasks, self-monitoring, attending advisory, taking assessments, practicing with online learning programs, counseling, postsecondary planning or enjoying enrichment activities are all ways to spend school time on Wednesdays.
- Students plan their use of Wednesday work time for themselves, or with assistance from teachers or advocates, and choose from many options.

I heard that there is no penalty for late work. What does that mean?

- Students may not be penalized for work that is submitted after the recommended due date.
- Students still need to organize, plan, and submit assignments steadily.
- Unsubmitted work and work in progress can be completed, submitted, and earn full credit.
- Students can earn engagement credit for submitting assignments, but cannot lose credit if an assignment is submitted after the recommended due date.

Can I wait until the end of the term and hand in all assignments right before grades close?

- No.
- During a grading term, a student has a minimum of 7-16 assignments per course, with a schedule of four courses. That means 28-64 assignments to be completed in 9 weeks!
- Most teachers add additional assignments to the minimum course requirements, creating an even greater number of tasks.
- It is critical to success for students to submit weekly assignments, and attend to their grades to raise the scores on any assignments that earn less than a C.
- Ongoing progress monitoring and regular short term goal setting are critical components of the organizational skills to succeed in virtual learning now and beyond.