

Dear NC 2015-16 High School Parents,

For high school students, grades and other competitive measures become very important as they plan for their next steps after graduation. Over the past few years, North Carolina parents, students and local superintendents have petitioned the State Board of Education to require a statewide standard 10-point grading scale for all high school students. Those advocating for this change in state policy noted that North Carolina school districts differed in their grading scales and that students would benefit from having a standard 10-point scale. This transition to a 10-point scale helps students who move from one district to another and may put North Carolina students in a more competitive position as they apply for admission to out-of-state colleges and universities.

In October 2014, the State Board agreed and approved a standard 10-point grading scale to begin with the 2015-16 school year. This scale will not include “pluses” or “minuses” and it will be applied for coursework beginning with the 2015-16 school year for students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. There will not be any attempt to retroactively alter grades from prior years.

Local school districts are required to follow the new scale at the high school level (grades 9-12), and they may use it in lower grades, if desired. It is not required in lower grades, however.

Under the new scale grades and grade point average calculations will be applied as follows:

- A: 90-100 = 4.0
- B: 80-89 = 3.0
- C: 70-79 = 2.0
- D: 60-69 = 1.0
- F: < 59 = 0.0

In addition to the grade scale change, another change is beginning in the 2015-16 school year. New standards for quality points will take effect for the ninth graders in the fall of 2015-16 and all students entering high school after that year. This change will not affect students who will be in grades 10, 11 or 12 in 2015-16.

The new quality points standard will provide an additional .5 quality point to Honors courses and a 1.0 additional quality point to Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses, community colleges courses, or four year university or college courses taken in high school. This eliminates discrepancies between AP/IB and community college or college/university courses and quality points and provides the same additional quality point to all college-level coursework.

For example, a student who earns an A in an AP course would receive a weighted 5.0 grade for that particular course.

Also, student transcripts will now include numerical grades, in addition to the GPA and letter grade.

The North Carolina State Board of Education is committed to helping all students graduate high school prepared for success in college and careers. This recent policy change is in line with this goal as it will make grading scales more consistent across the state and will enable North Carolina students to better compete for admission to colleges and universities across the country.