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ACTION REQUIRED

Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

March 1, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Secondary School Principals

From: Erick J. Lang, Associate Superintendent 

Subject: ACTION: Changes to Regulation IKC-RA, *Grade Point Averages (GPA)* and *Weighted Grade Point Averages (WGPA)*: High School Courses in Middle School

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information about recent changes to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Regulation IKC-RA, *Grade Point Averages (GPA)* and *Weighted Grade Point Averages (WGPA)* (Attachment). The regulation has been revised to reflect changes to the way a grade earned for a high school course taken in middle school is calculated into the high school cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Summary

- This revision responds to a longstanding request from stakeholders to review the practice of including high school courses taken in middle school in the calculation of the high school cumulative GPA. Stakeholders have also expressed concern about the variance in practice that exists for students repeating a course in high school in order to replace the grade earned in middle school.
- As a result, after collaboration with stakeholder groups, data analysis of previous graduating classes, and benchmarking with other school districts and colleges and universities, Regulation IKC-RA was revised to reduce perceived barriers to taking high school courses in middle school. The revisions respond to a particular interest in expanding participation in high school world language courses in Grade 6 and beyond.
 - Beginning with students entering middle school in the 2018–2019 school year, grades and credit earned for high school courses taken in middle school will continue to be included on the high school transcript, but the grade points will not be automatically calculated into the cumulative GPA unless requested by students or parents/guardians.

- The revised procedures only apply to students entering middle school in the 2018–2019 school year and will phase-in with subsequent cohorts of students thereafter.
- For students who entered Grade 6 prior to the 2018–2019 school year, the final grade and credit for high school courses successfully completed in middle school will be reported on the high school transcript and included in the calculation of the student’s cumulative GPA, in alignment with the regulations in place at the time students entered middle school.
- Students and parents/guardians will be notified annually of procedures to follow in order to include such courses in the cumulative GPA, through an annual communication published by the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs. The option to include such courses in the cumulative GPA will take place after completion of the course, no earlier than the 2020–2021 school year.
- The 2018–2019 Middle School Program Guide has been updated to reflect these changes and is posted here: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/curriculum/middleschool/2018-2019MiddleSchoolCourseBulletin.pdf.pdf>
- Additional communications for students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders will be published before the start of the 2018–2019 school year.

Action

- Please share this information with school staff members.

Questions

- Questions should be referred to Mr. Scott W. Murphy, director, Department of Secondary Curriculum and Districtwide Programs, at 301-279-3350 or via e-mail, or to your director of school support and improvement.

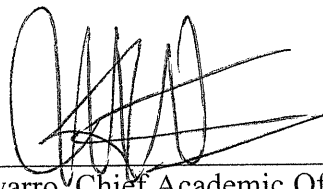
EJL:jpm

Attachment

Copy to:

- Executive Staff
- Mr. Boddy
- Dr. Crews
- Mr. Murphy
- Secondary Directors of School Support and Improvement
- Secondary School Administrative Secretaries
- Mr. Koutsos
- Mr. Lloyd

Approved: _____



Maria V. Navarro, Chief Academic Officer

IKC-RA

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: IED, IKA, IKA-RA, IOA, IOA-RA, ISB-RA, JNA, JNA-RA, JOA-RA
Responsible Office: Chief Academic Officer

Grade Point Averages (GPA) and Weighted Grade Point Averages (WGPA)

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for determining grade point averages and weighted grade point averages and for reporting them to current and prospective employers and postsecondary institutions that require the information as part of the application and admissions process

II. DEFINITIONS

A. *Advanced Level* courses are those high school courses based upon high level achievement in a sequence of study. There are no corresponding honors level courses of the same title. Advanced level courses are designated in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) *High School Course Bulletin*, and include Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.

B. *Credit* is a completed unit of study.

C. *Grade points* are the numeric equivalent of a student's grade in a credit-bearing course according to the following scale:

A = 4

B = 3

C = 2

D = 1

E = 0

D. The *grade point average (GPA)* is the average number of grade points earned in high school courses. Courses are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA and reported on the student's transcript as set forth in section III.A. The GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of course credits included in the computation. The GPA should be rounded to two

decimal points by rounding the second decimal position upward if the third decimal position is greater than four.

- E. *Honors* courses include the same content as corresponding non-honors high school level courses; however, honors courses require greater use of abstract and higher-level thinking skills, and require research and projects of a more rigorous and challenging nature. Honors courses are designated in the *MCPS High School Course Bulletin*.
- F. A *transcript* is a report of final grades and credits indicated by course.
- G. *Weighted grade points* are similar to grade points except that weighted grade points differentiate between regular courses and honors courses, and all courses designated advanced level courses. Weighted grade points are the numeric equivalent of a student’s grade in a credit-bearing course according to the following scale:

Grade	Grade Points	
	Regular	Honors/Advanced Level
A	4	5
B	3	4
C	2	3
D	1	1
E	0	0

- H. The *weighted grade point average (WGPA)* is a recalculation of the GPA substituting weighted grade points for regular grade points earned in courses designated as honors or advanced level. The WGPA is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of course credits included in the computation. The WGPA should be rounded to two decimal points by rounding the second decimal position upward if the third decimal position is greater than four.

III. PROCEDURES

A. GPA and WGPA Computations

- 1. In order to receive credit for high school courses completed while in middle school, middle school students must meet the same requirements as high school students and earn a final grade of A, B, C, or D.
 - a) For students who entered Grade 6 prior to the 2018-2019 school year, the final grade and credit for high school courses successfully

completed in middle school are reported on the high school transcript and included in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA.

- b) For students who enter Grade 6 during or after the 2018-2019 school year, the final grade and credit earned for high school courses successfully completed while in middle school will be reported on the high school transcript, but will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA unless requested by the parent/guardian or the student if 18 years old or married (eligible student). Students/parents/guardians will be notified annually of procedures to follow in order to include such courses in their cumulative GPA.
- 2. Courses offered during extended day and extended year programs are included in the computations when they meet other requirements for inclusion.
 - 3. Credits granted for approved courses offered by institutions other than MCPS (classroom, correspondence, or online courses), work study, and transfer courses, if used for graduation credit, are included in the GPA/WGPA computations. These courses must be entered separately into the centralized student database. (See MCPS Regulation ISB-RA, *High School Graduation Requirements*.)
 - 4. Grades and credits for dropped courses will be treated for computing the GPA and WGPA as follows:
 - a) Courses from which a student withdraws
 - (1) If a student withdraws from a course on or before the 25th school day of the semester in which the class begins, no notation is made on the student's permanent record, transcript, or report card.
 - (2) If the student withdraws after the 25th school day of the semester in which the class begins, a notation of "W," or "Withdrew," the date of the withdrawal, and the average grade at the time of withdrawal will be entered on the permanent record, transcript, and report card.
 - b) Should the student, with prior approval, transfer to a course in the same subject area, appropriate credit is awarded for those courses completed successfully.

5. Any student who completes a high school course may retake the course for a replacement grade. Grades and credits for courses retaken will be treated for computing the GPA and WGPA as follows:
 - a) A course may be retaken, no matter the final grade.
 - b) The highest of the grades received shall be entered on the student's transcript and shall be used for the purpose of computing weighted and unweighted grade point averages.
 - c) Students only may replace a course with a course of the same or comparable course code, as authorized by the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs.
 - d) If space in a class is limited, students taking a course for the first time have priority for placement in the class over students retaking the course.

6. Transferred credits and grades from other school systems shall be converted by the principal/designee into appropriate MCPS credits and are included in the computations.
 - a) Courses in subject areas not traditionally taught in MCPS, such as religion or driver education, are not included unless the course objectives meet the objectives of an approved MCPS course.
 - b) Advanced level courses not taught in MCPS, but in subject areas taught in MCPS, are included.
 - c) For transferred credits (non-MCPS courses) to which marks such as "O" (Outstanding), "S" (Satisfactory), and "U" (Unsatisfactory) or numeric grades or percentages have been assigned, the school must secure or translate such marks to a scale of A, B, C, D, and E. These courses must be entered into the computerized student database separately.

B. Student Transcripts

1. Transcripts shall include the following:

- a) Any MCPS course completed or dropped after the end of the 25th instructional day of the semester, showing the date of withdrawal from the course and the grade at the time of the withdrawal;
 - b) Only the highest grade and credit of a course completed and retaken;
 - c) Any course completed during an extended day or extended year session or any completed course offered by an institution other than MCPS that was preapproved as defined in MCPS Regulation ISB-RA, *High School Graduation Requirements*;
 - d) Designation of honors, MCPS certificate of merit, and advanced level courses;
 - e) Grades and credits earned for each course;
 - f) Cumulative grade point average and the weighted grade point average; and
 - g) Graduation date.
2. The principal/designee is responsible for the following:
- a) Ensuring that each student's grades have been verified and accurately reflect the record of the student, including courses offered during extended day or extended year sessions, approved courses offered by institutions other than MCPS (classroom, correspondence, or online courses), transfer courses, and high school courses successfully completed in middle school;
 - b) Furnishing transcripts to schools to which the student seeks enrollment, including high schools and postsecondary institutions; and
 - c) Furnishing transcripts to scholarship foundations, technical institutions, and current or prospective employers provided that the release of this information is approved by the student's parents/guardians or by the eligible student.
3. The Office of the Chief Technology Officer is responsible for ensuring that the GPA and WGPA appear on the secondary transcript.

4. Access to transcripts and other student record information shall be in accordance with MCPS Regulation JOA-RA, *Student Records*.
5. The school system shall provide up to three transcripts for each student without charge, consistent with Board Policy JNA, *Curricular Expenses for Students*.

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 340-3, August 20, 1980; revised February 1986; revised December 1986; revised June 10, 1988; revised June 24, 1993; revised May 23, 2000; updated office titles June 1, 2000; revised May 20, 2008; revised May 12, 2010; revised August 22, 2013; revised June 27, 2016; revised January 30, 2018.