

# **Grade Scale Changes at Greeley High School Final Report**



*May 24, 2017*

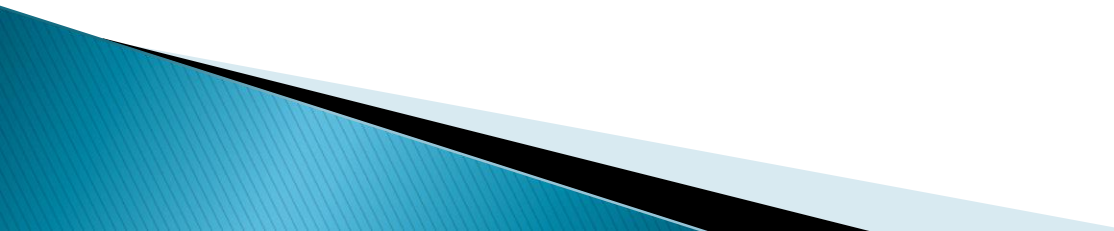
**Dr. Daniel McCann  
Interim Superintendent of Schools**

# The Guiding Principle

- ▶ Do no harm

# The Building Planning Team

May 2015 Parents, teachers, students and administrators

- ▶ Students were not being graded fairly
  - ▶ *Parameters*
  - ▶ No student was to be harmed by any change
  - ▶ Not to create an environment that increased competition between students
  - ▶ No students GPA was to go down
  - ▶ BPT was advisory; School administrators would make the final decision
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# The Grade Scale

## Grade Code

Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%
4.0	$\geq 94.50$	2.8	82.50-83.49	1.6	70.50-71.49
3.9	93.50-94.49	2.7	81.50-82.49	1.5	69.50-70.49
3.8	92.50-93.49	2.6	80.50-81.49	1.4	68.50-69.49
3.7	91.50-92.49	2.5	79.50-80.49	1.3	67.50-68.49
3.6	90.50-91.49	2.4	78.50-79.49	1.2	66.50-67.49
3.5	89.50-90.49	2.3	77.50-78.49	1.1	65.50-66.49
3.4	88.50-89.49	2.2	76.50-77.49	1.0	64.50-65.49
3.3	87.50-88.49	2.1	75.50-76.49	0.0	0.00-64.49
3.2	86.50-87.49	2.0	74.50-75.49	P	Pass
3.1	85.50-86.49	1.9	73.50-74.49	F	Fail
3.0	84.50-85.49	1.8	72.50-73.49	W	Withdrawn
2.9	83.50-84.49	1.7	71.50-72.49	WF	Withdrawn Failing

# The Princeton Model

Letter Grade	Grade Points	Numerical Grade
A+	4.0	97-100
A	4.0	94-96
A-	3.7	90-93
B+	3.3	87-89
B	3.0	84-86
B-	2.7	80-83
C+	2.3	77-79
C	2.0	74-76
C-	1.7	70-73
D+	1.3	67-69
D	1.0	64-66
D-	0.7	60-63
F	0.0	0-59

# Grade Scale Change

- ▶ In the fall of 2016, the Grade Scale was changed to include tenths (3.9,3.8,3.7 etc.) between each of the grade scales. 83% of students benefited from these added distinctions in grading.
- ▶ Adding 4.1 to 4.5 was not included. The Planning team determined that adding these measures to the grade scale would lower the significance of a 4.0 achievement and change the academic standard of the school “mid-stream” for students. Rising juniors had worked under the this system for three years – it would be unfair to now raise the standard.

# Grade Scale Changes: “Fine Tuning”

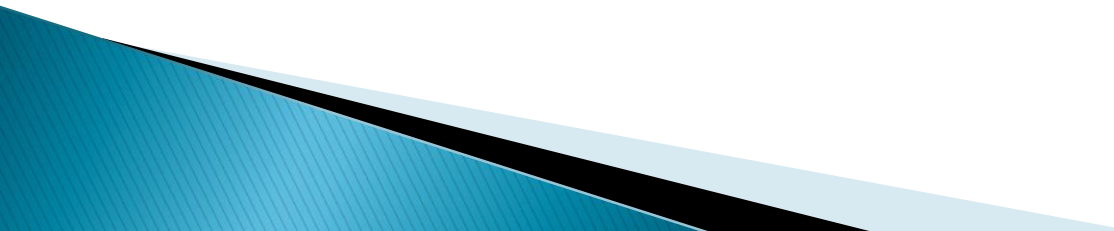
- ▶ A numerical grade next to each course on the transcript – confusing, so
- ▶ Numerical grades next to all courses\*
- ▶ Cumulative Numerical Grade added / removed – numerous problems and confusing – rounding raised some, and lowered some students GPA – DO NO HARM
- ▶ 0 errors in 18,000 grades entered
- ▶ \*Acknowledged performance above 95

# What do other schools do?

District /Calculation of GPA	Weighting	
	YES	NO
<b>Bedford</b> Numerical		X
<b>Briarcliff</b> Letter to Numerical	AP, College, Honors 1.1 AP, SUNY, SUPA 1.05 Honors Science Research: 1.1 for Grades 11 & 12; 1.05 for Grade 10	
<b>Byram Hills</b> Numerical to Letter Grade to GPA (4.6 - 0.0)		X
<b>Chappaqua</b> Numerical to GPA (4.0 – 0.0) Before Weighting	AP only; .4 on GPA	
<b>Eastchester</b> Letter Grade to Numerical GPA	AP 1.1, Honors 1.05	
<b>Edgemont</b> Letter Grade to GPA (6.3 – 0.0)	Honors/AP Scale Conversion i.e.: A+ 6.3 for Honors & AP; 5.3 Regular Classes)	
<b>Katonah-Lewisboro</b> Numerical	AP and Honors weighted 5 points	
<b>Irvington</b> Numerical to GPA (4.33 – 0.0, Before Weighting)	Honors, AP, SUPA, all 1.10; 100 point scale converted to GPA 4.33 scale)	
<b>Rye Neck</b> Numerical	AP 5 points added to final grade to calculate GPA. Honors, AP, 4 <sup>th</sup> year Italian, Spanish, French & Advanced Theater Arts are weighted 5 points.	
<b>Rye</b> Numerical	Honors & AP 5 points added to Honors & AP	
<b>Scarsdale</b> Letter Grade to GPA (4.4 – 0.0)		X



# How do colleges make admissions decisions?

- ▶ Admission decisions are not based on any one achievement or score – Perfect SATs, 4.0 GPA, taking and performance on rigorous exams
  - ▶ Highly Competitive schools will examine a high performing schools applicants across a range of GPA (~3.8 – 4.1) or 92–98 and compare for rigor of courses taken, uniqueness of applicant and other achievements
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# Fall 2016 Open Meetings Dr. Byrne and Mr. Rhodes

- ▶ Open to parents, teachers, and students
- ▶ Many opinions, no consensus
- ▶ Superintendent asked by the Board of Education to make a decision and or plan going forward


# Snapshot of Feedback from Colleges About the Change in Grading Scale

- ▶ Duke University
  - ▶ Hamilton College
  - ▶ Northwestern University
  - ▶ Washington University
  - ▶ Vanderbilt University
  - ▶ Loyola University Maryland
  - ▶ Williams College
  - ▶ Colgate University
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# Did our change in the Grading Scale harm or disadvantage our students during the college admissions process? **NO**

- ▶ *No. I've been reading Greeley transcripts for a long time and I look for "top A's and low A's." I could still figure that out by looking at the new transcript.*
  - ▶ *No, students who apply from Greeley are generally strong and decisions are not made based on incremental differences in grades.*
  - ▶ *We compare students to each other within their own schools so the transcript changes didn't negatively impact that.*
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# Did our change in the Grading Scale harm or disadvantage our students during the college admissions process? **NO**

- ▶ *The change definitely didn't affect the way we read, evaluated, and admitted your students. I think the profile is straightforward and informative, as well!*
  - ▶ *We don't read into the numbers as deeply as people think and we have a lot of applicants with top A's. We look for the more interesting parts of the application.*
  - ▶ *No, we recalculate your students on a 4.0 unweighted scale anyway.*
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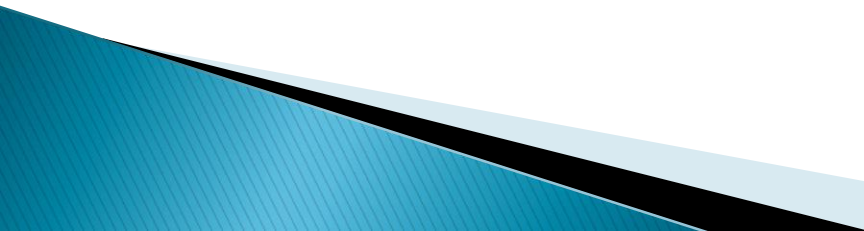
# Did our change in the Grading Scale harm or disadvantage our students during the college admissions process? **NO**

- ▶ *The changes did not affect admission rate or review since we are still able to see the grade distribution of the grades. (Distribution of cumulative averages). We did have to adjust how we looked at transcripts in comparison to historical data but you provided us the information to do so correctly.*
  - ▶ *No, I've been reading Greeley transcripts for years and I am comparing the Greeley transcripts to other Greeley kids.*
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When reading our transcripts, do you look at the 4.0 scale or the percentages next to them?

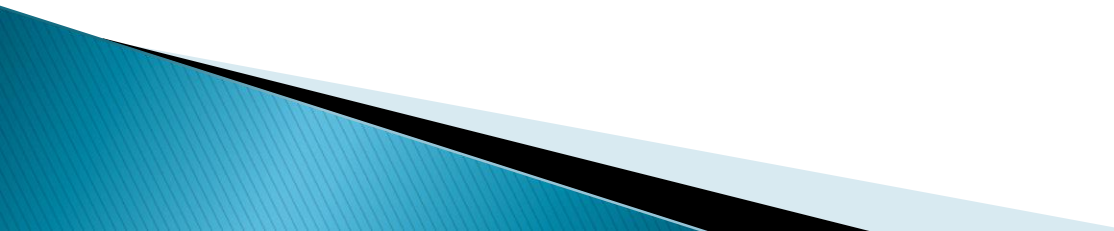
- ▶ *No, it helped to have the percentages next to the grading scale so I could refer back to them while reviewing the transcript.*
  - ▶ *We do not recalculate GPA in our admission process, so are happy to read transcripts on either a 4.0 or 100 scale.*
  - ▶ *We look at both scales on the transcript but rigor of courses is much more important.*
  - ▶ *We rounded the percentages up and down when we looked at them for clarity.*
  - ▶ *Both columns say essentially the same thing so we didn't look at the information differently.*
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# Other

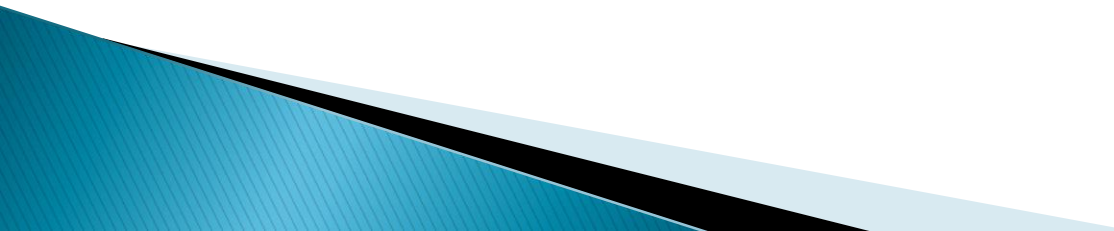
- ▶ *Our preference is always for a grading scale on a true 4.0 scale. (2)*
  - ▶ *Significance assigned to grades within certain curriculum matters more than the overall GPA.*
  - ▶ *We would prefer a GPA on the percentage scale as that is what most NY schools use.*
  - ▶ *Your transcripts and profile clearly layout the 4 point to % conversion, which is helpful in interpreting student performance.*
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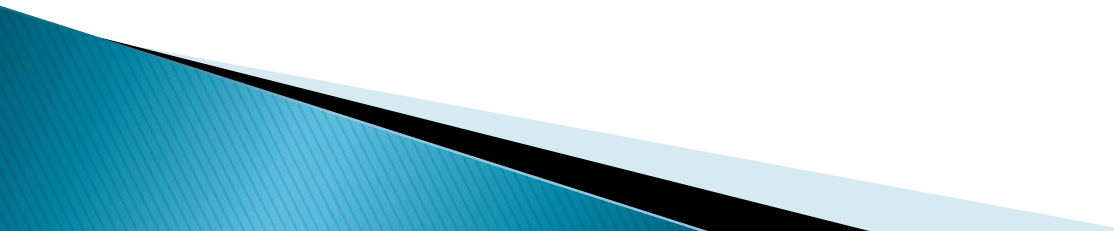
# Going Forward

- ▶ For the next three years we will keep the current system with both GPA Scale (4.0 – 0. w/o weighting) and numerical grades appearing on the transcript.
  - ▶ Entering freshman, Class of 2021 (Fall 2017) will receive both Grade Scale and numerical average. Their final senior transcript will only include numerical grades.
  - ▶ AP courses will be weighted + 5 points
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# Do no harm

- ▶ *Parameters*
  - ▶ No student was to be harmed by any change
  - ▶ Not to create an environment that increased competition between students
  - ▶ No student's GPA was to go down
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# Additional Recommendations

- ▶ Increase access and opportunity for students to take AP courses
  - ▶ Provide additional funding for the Guidance Faculty to visit colleges throughout the United States
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# Contributions

- ▶ Special thanks to Dr. Eric Byrne, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Mr. Robert Rhodes, Principal of Horace Greeley High School, Mrs. Laura Dubak, Horace Greeley High School Assistant Principal, Ms. Rebecca Mullen, Horace Greeley High School Guidance Department Chair, Ms. Tinuke Colpa Guidance Department Co-Facilitator, and the Horace Greeley High School Guidance Department for their research and counsel.
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