

Grades and Grading

At WCHS and WACC

Mission In Mind

Changes to the traditional grading structure at WCHS/WACC are a result of our strategic planning initiative. Warsaw Community Schools believes strongly in our district mission:

“Our mission is to inspire and equip all students to continuously acquire and apply knowledge and skills while pursuing their dreams and enriching the lives of others.”

Our current grading structure does not match our district mission in many ways. Competition for grades and class rank have often led students to take classes that come with weighted grades instead of taking classes that allow each student to follow their personal dreams and goals.

An inflated grading scale has also been misleading to our students as they plan for their post-secondary futures. To counter this concerns and others, the following changes are occurring. Please note that these changes have come after 2 years of study and research into best practice.

1. Moving from a 12.0 point scale to a 4.0 scale
2. Removing weighted grades
3. Moving from valedictorian/salutatorian to the Cum Laude system
4. Quarter grades cannot be lower than a 50 percent

12.0 to a 4.0 Scale

The current 12-point scale is not in line with most colleges and universities

- Colleges and Universities convert our student’s GPAs into the 4.00 scale
- Applications for scholarships often convert GPAs to 4.0 scale

Implications for Students:

- Students in the graduating classes of 2017, 2018 and 2019 are not affected by this change.
- Any changes at this point would change class rank and could potentially harm 21st

Century Scholarship recipients, making the change unfair to our students.

- Students in the class of 2020 and subsequent classes will be on the 4.0 scale from the beginning of their freshman year so they are never entered into the inflated scale.

Weighted Grades

- Since the inception of weighted grades students often made decisions on what classes to take to play the “points game.” At WCHS/WACC we want students to experience the diverse course selection we have to offer and honor them for high achievement regardless of their course of study.
- After extensive research we found that colleges and universities use a variety of metrics to determine student eligibility for entrance and scholarship; only one of which is class rank. In fact, the student’s body of work (evidence of a rigorous course of study) was the single largest factor behind SAT and ACT scores.
- When colleges and universities convert our current student’s GPAs they often disregard all weighted grades so that they are comparing students from school to school as fairly as possible.
- With the explosion of diverse course offerings in the past years students were only able to accumulate weighted grades in certain classes, deterring them from exploring other areas of interest they may have.

Implications for students:

- Following the 2016-17 school year, students will no longer be able to accumulate honors points but will retain accumulated honors points prior to 2017-18 school year.
- All transcripts will denote that WCHS/WACC moved away from weighted grades after the 2016-17 school year.

Cum Laude System

- WCHS/WACC will begin using the Cum Laude System starting with the graduating class of 2018-19 as well as awarding a Valedictorian/Salutatorian
- Starting with the graduating class of 2020 a Valedictorian/Salutatorian will not be selected and the Cum Laude System will be the mode for recognizing scholarship at a high level
- The Cum Laude Recognition Distinctions are as follows:

CUM LAUDE RECOGNITION DISTINCTIONS:

Cum Laude	3.5 to 3.69 GPA
Magna Cum Laude	3.7 to 3.89 GPA
Summa Cum Laude	3.9 to 4.00 GPA

Percentage Scale

- Much research has been done in the last decade surrounding the traditional 100 point scale. A score of 0-50 equals an F. All other grades (A, B, C, and D) are on intervals of 10. Because an F carries with it an interval of 60 points, students are often not able to recover from failing grades even when they show tremendous growth.
- WCHS/WACC will post no quarter grades lower than 50 percent (which equals an F). This makes it possible for students who show growth in future grading periods to recover from the F.