

Beginning the conversation

- The connection between *Challenge Success* and GPA
- Why consider the change?
- Why *not* consider the change?
- Implications of a change in GPA reporting
- Rollout over time

Challenge Success
supports the
elimination of
weighted GPA

Reexamine what's in the best interest of students.

Eliminating a weighted GPA is one of the three strategic objectives in the 2018-19 School Improvement Plan:

Strengthen educational practices to promote intellectual stretch, engaged learning, equitable access, and excellence for every student, every day.

Why consider the change?

1

Students will be able to take courses of interest to them without worrying about lowering their GPA.

2

Students will take courses at an appropriate level of challenge without GPA value influencing their choices.

3

As a community, we will value all students equally – literally.

Taking the “right” courses

With Weighted GPA

- Students with weighted GPAs above a 4.0 choose not to take a College Prep course because it will lower their GPA, even if they want to take the course for content. *Examples: Economics, Engineering, Anatomy & Physiology.*

Taking the “right” courses

With Weighted GPA

- Students enroll in honors or AP courses in which they know they may struggle, justifying it by saying, “At least I will get a GPA boost.” Often they resort to tutors and spend excessive hours only to be disappointed with the final grade and a lower GPA. *Example: A student earning a C in an Honors course (2.7) would have been better served in GPA by earning a B+ in a CP course (3.3).*

Such circumstances often lead to unnecessary stress for a student due to misplacement. In addition, the lower letter grade appears on the transcript.

Taking the “right” courses

Without Weighted GPA

- Students will be free to take any course of interest to them, without feeling that they are weakening their GPA.
- Students will find success in the appropriate level of challenge.
- Students will continue to take appropriately placed advanced courses.
- **The rigor of the Weston curriculum won't change.** We will continue to offer challenging courses at all levels.

Valuing all students

With Weighted GPA

- We are telling students that they are quantitatively of less value to the school community by being in a College Prep course. *Students often express they they are only “CP kids” and feel that they are not as important to the school as their peers taking Honors and AP courses.*

Without Weighted GPA

- The school community will be telling students that they ALL matter, recognizing that students who work hard to succeed in College Prep courses are just as important as those in Honors or AP courses.

Why *not* consider the change?

Students are not disadvantaged in the college admissions process.

1

Colleges stress that the primary *academic* factors considered are contained on the transcript, specifically the strength of the curriculum and grades earned. Rigor is not affected by eliminating weighted GPA.

2

Because there is no standard way of calculating GPA and there are almost as many ways of calculating GPA as there are high schools, **the majority of colleges recalculate GPA on an unweighted college prep scale.**

No disadvantage in college admissions

According to the NACAC 2017 State of College Admission report, the top four factors in admissions decisions for first-time college students are the following:

	<i>considerable importance</i>	<i>moderate importance</i>	<i>combined top importance</i>
Grades in all courses	77.1%	13.8%	90.9%
Grades in college preparatory classes	76.9%	12.5%	89.4%
Strength of curriculum	51.8%	35.3%	87.1%
SAT or ACT scores	54.3%	27.9%	82.2%

Impact on admissions if no weighted GPA?

This question was posed to a number of highly selective colleges and universities, as well as several regional schools that WHS students have traditionally attended. Consistent themes from nearly 40 respondents included:

- There would be no negative impact to eliminating a weighted GPA, in large part because of the vast variance of systems used by high schools.
- Colleges focus on the academic information on the transcript – **courses taken, rigor of course load, and grades** – instead of the numerical GPA.
- Students are evaluated in the context of their own high school, taking into account course offerings, **knowledge of the school**, etc.

A majority of colleges recalculate GPA

In a survey of representatives visiting Wayland High School last year, almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of colleges recalculate GPA on an unweighted scale based on transcript grades.

Weston is currently having all college representatives visiting the school complete the same survey and is finding similar results.

Implications of a change in GPA reporting

Naviance

The scattergrams can be changed to display unweighted GPA capturing historical data. *(Both GPAs are stored in Naviance.)*

We are investigating using a “strength of program” feature within Naviance to enhance the scattergrams. *We will capture current data for “historical” use in the future.*

The scattergrams use two data points -- GPA **and** test scores (SAT or ACT). The test scores generally correlate with weighted GPA. *We are currently doing a data analysis of the correlation.*

Implications of a change in GPA reporting

National Honor Society

The current GPA cutoff to receive an invitation to apply to NHS is 3.7, **either** weighted **or** unweighted. **51%** of the Class of 2019 met this mark.

If the GPA cutoff were 3.7 and **only** unweighted GPA was considered, **35%** of the Class of 2019 would meet this mark.

(Weston's current percentage of students eligible for NHS is higher than many other schools. Criteria is reviewed and modified periodically, and could change whether or not there is a change in GPA reporting.)

Rollout over time

Current WHS Students

There will be no change in reporting for current high school students. Both weighted and unweighted GPAs will be reported on transcripts. *This means that Honors and AP courses taken with the knowledge of a GPA “bump” are not changed retroactively.*

Future Classes

Beginning with the Class after any change goes affect, only an unweighted GPA will be reported on transcripts. *This allows students to make course selections with the knowledge that there is no GPA “bump” for Honors and AP courses.*

Questions & Discussion

