INSTRUCTION

Assessment and Grading – Computing Grade Point Averages

Information on approved courses shall be included in the High School Course Catalog published each year. These grading principles apply to transfers and Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) students during or after ninth grade.

Each high school counseling department, under the direction of the principal, has the responsibility for computing the grade point average (GPA) for all assigned students. The following procedures shall apply in arriving at a GPA for each student:

I. The standard Carnegie unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction. The minimum credit awarded in Prince William County Public Schools is one-half unit of credit requiring a minimum of 70 clock hours of instruction.

II. All courses involving a Carnegie unit of credit shall be used in the computation of the individual student’s GPA with the exception of a first attempt of a repeated course.

III. When students successfully complete Carnegie unit courses identified as ninth, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade subjects, credit shall be counted toward graduation.

IV. In computing the GPA, an “A” is awarded 4 points, a “B+” 3.4 points, “B” 3 points, a “C+” 2.4 points, a “C” 2 points, a “D+” 1.4 points, a “D” 1 point, and an “F” 0 points.

V. Students receiving grades in designated Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), qualifying career and technical education (CTE) courses, or college courses shall be awarded points for grades in those college level classes as follows: An “A” 5 points, a “B+” 4.4 points, a “B” 4 points, a “C+” 3.4 points, a “C” 3 points, a “D+” 1.4 points, a “D” 1 point, and an “F” 0 points.

VI. Prerequisite courses shall be designated on the transcript as “ADV, Pre-AP, Pre-IBDP, and IGCSE = Advanced Level Courses.”

VII. In certain designated prerequisite courses, students receiving grades shall be awarded points for grades as follows: An “A” 4.5 points, a “B+” 3.9 points, a “B” 3.5 points, a “C+” 2.9 points, a “C” 2.5 points, a “D+” 1.4 points, a “D” 1 point, and an “F” 0 points.

VIII. Courses shall be reviewed annually to determine if a course should be designated to receive grade weighting. The review process should be completed in time for this information to be included in the High School Course Catalog for the
subsequent school year. The list of designated courses is published annually in the High School Course Catalog.

IX. Students who transfer into PWCS from other school systems and who have completed designated AP, IB, AICE, qualifying CTE, or college courses shall receive weighted credit as defined above. If a course description is required, it shall be the responsibility of the student to provide course descriptions from the school granting credit to the reviewing department.

X. If the student and/or parent/guardian of a transfer student disagrees with the reviewing department’s findings regarding the course, the decision may be appealed to the Director of Student Learning, and if necessary, to the Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability. Courses taken in a non-accredited school shall not be eligible for consideration for weighted credit as defined in this regulation.

XI. Students shall be permitted to take college level courses, when appropriate. The permission of the principal (or designee) is required before a student is permitted to enroll in a college course(s) that the student intends to use for high school graduation credit. Successfully completed college courses which meet either the subject requirements for a high school diploma or which meet the required elective courses necessary for a high school diploma shall be entered on the high school transcript and computed in the student’s GPA and class rank.

XII. Only those college courses which the Board has approved for dual enrollment shall be entered on the student’s transcript or computed in the GPA/class rank.

XIII. Qualifying college courses shall be weighted if PWCS has an equivalent weighted course. The Director of Student Learning must approve such courses in advance. College courses shall also be weighted if the course requires a weighted course or equivalent as a prerequisite. The Director of Student Learning shall authorize such courses in advance. Students do not have the option to count college level courses as electives to gain weighted credit in lieu of those already completed in the high school setting.

Computation of GPA and Rank

For students entering the ninth grade for the first time during the 2017-18 school year or earlier the following shall apply:

I. The valedictorian, salutatorian, and the senior class rank for students achieving at or above a 4.0 GPA shall be based upon consideration of the GPA adjusted to reflect the student’s true standing. The adjusted GPA for valedictorian/salutatorian and senior class rank will be computed at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the second semester for the final adjusted GPA. The graduating class valedictorian(s) and
salutatorian(s) will be those students who have the highest adjusted GPA in each high school graduating class using the following procedures:

A. The valedictorian/salutatorian rank will be based on 22 credits that meets the minimum standards for graduation in PWCS.

B. Non-weighted courses in which students receive an “A” and which are above and beyond the 22 minimum credits shall not be included in the final GPA calculation.

C. The total quality points for the 22 credits will be divided by 22 (the minimum credits necessary for graduation) to yield the adjusted final GPA.

II. For students entering the ninth grade for the first time during the 2018-19 school year and beyond, the following shall apply:

A. A percentile rank in class will be computed for all students pursuing a standard or advanced studies diploma. This percentile rank will be computed for the first time at the end of the first semester of the student’s 10th grade year and each semester after that point leading up to graduation from high school.

B. The GPA will be computed by adding the total quality points for all credits attempted, except for the first attempt of a repeated course and dividing the sum by the total number of credits earned.

III. Students achieving a GPA from 3.50 to 4.00+ shall be recognized as honor graduates according to the following scale:

A. 3.50 – 3.79 cum laude;

B. 3.80 – 3.99 magna cum laude; and

C. 4.00 – + summa cum laude.

IV. Effective with courses taken in the 2018-19 school year, when a student fails a course and later repeats the course or passes a course but later repeats the course for a better grade, both attempts will be recorded on the transcript along with the grade earned, however only the grade for the most recent attempt shall be used in calculating the GPA.

V. Pass/fail grades awarded by other school systems shall not be used when computing the GPA unless the other school system can provide a grade corresponding to those awarded by PWCS.

VI. The school shall average the two semester grades to determine a final yearly grade in those instances of transfer students whose prior school awarded only semester grades.
VII. Classes taken for audit or no credit shall not receive a final yearly grade or unit of credit. These classes shall not be considered when computing the GPA.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS