

**BOARD AGENDA ITEM**  
**March 22, 2011**

**SUBJECT:**

Revision of Policy IKA Grading/Assessment Systems – First Reading

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

State Board of Education Regulations, 43-232, Defined Program Grades 6-8 (6/27/97) allows students in the seventh or eighth grade to take courses for high school credit. Our district has been limiting this opportunity to eighth graders.

The state has been recommending that we reduce the number of introductory computer classes taught in high school in favor of more rigorous coursework.

State regulation and current district policy states that the criteria and cut-off dates for the determination of honors graduates is a local decision. The recommended change will give the benefit of including all grades earned during a student's high school career for purposes of these computations.

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:**

Permitting some seventh graders to take exploratory courses, such as Keyboarding, provides much needed flexibility in scheduling. It will allow the middle schools to offer the required introductory computer classes to most of their students.

Specifying the criteria and cut-off dates for graduation honors will ensure consistency within the district, as well as giving full benefit of all grades earned.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Approve the proposed revisions to Policy IKA Grading/ Assessment Systems on First Reading.

**ATTACHMENT:**

- 1) Summary of policy changes (for additional background).
- 2) Policy IKA Grading/Assessment Systems with proposed revisions.

**PREPARED BY:**

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The current policy:

- All eighth grade students will be offered the opportunity to earn three Carnegie units. All eighth grade students will be offered the opportunity to enroll in Honors Algebra I or Transitional Algebra and/or Honors English I or Transitional English. The third credit opportunity will be afforded through a combination of exploratory offerings. Physical education and band will be excluded as high school credit course offerings at the middle level.

Proposed policy

- A student promoted to the seventh or eighth grade may take units of ninth grade or higher work for high school credit. All eighth grade students will be offered the opportunity to earn three Carnegie units. All eighth grade students will be offered the opportunity to enroll in Honors Algebra I or Transitional Algebra, and/or Honors English I or Transitional English, and a The third credit opportunity will be afforded through a combination of exploratory offerings. When students take a foreign language in middle school for credit, they may earn up to three and a half units. Physical education and band will be excluded as high school credit course offerings at the middle level.

The current policy:

The establishment of criteria for determining honors graduates, including the valedictorian or salutatorian, is a local decision. Local boards may establish earlier cutoffs (e.g., the seventh semester of high school, the third nine weeks of the senior year) when ranking students for any local purpose. However, class rank for LIFE Scholarships is determined at the conclusion of the spring semester of the senior year.

Proposed wording

~~The establishment of criteria for determining h~~ Honors graduates, including the valedictorian or salutatorian, is a local decision. ~~Local boards may establish earlier cutoffs (e.g., the seventh semester of high school, the third nine weeks of the senior year) when ranking students for any local purpose. However, and~~ class rank for LIFE Scholarships ~~is~~ will be determined at the conclusion of the spring semester of the senior year. Schools using the Latin honors system, or their English equivalents, will designate a GPA of 3.5 or above as cum laude, 4.0 or above as magna cum laude, and 4.5 or above as summa cum laude.

Alternate wording.... will be determined after seniors' grades are finalized at the end of the school year.

## Policy IKA Grading/Assessment Systems

Issued ~~9/08~~ 3/11

Purpose: To establish a basic structure for assessment of student instruction.

### Grading system

Student performance should be evaluated based on state grade-level standards, academic plans, IEPs, textbook and teacher-made tests, and other available methods. Student conduct will be excluded from consideration in determining a student's grade.

Provisions in this policy will supersede all other rules pertaining to class rank, course weightings, course levels and sections.

### Grading scales

#### Kindergarten

In kindergarten a checklist reflecting academic achievement standards will be used each nine weeks.

#### Grades one through 12

In grades one through 12, numerical grades as specified will be used to report student progress for each reporting period. Report cards will reflect the academic achievement standards.

Numerical grades will be used on report cards, transcripts and permanent records in reading and mathematics for grade one. Numerical grades will be used in all subject areas for grades two through 12 except as noted in the following paragraphs.

- Meeting standards (MS), making progress towards standards (MPS) and not making progress towards standards (NMP) will be used in art, physical education and music in grades one through five. MS, MPS and NMP will be used in ELA, social studies and science in grade one and handwriting in grades one and two. Health will be included with science in grades one through five.
- In grades one through five, the ELA grade will be a composite of spelling, English and composition, with reading being a separate grade. In grades six, seven and eight, the ELA grade will be a composite of English, reading and composition.
- A student promoted to the seventh or eighth grade may take units of ninth grade or higher work for high school credit. All eighth grade students will be offered the opportunity to earn three Carnegie units. All eighth grade students will be offered the opportunity to enroll in Honors Algebra I or Transitional Algebra and/or, Honors English I or Transitional English, and a The third credit opportunity will be afforded through a combination of exploratory offerings. When students take a foreign language in middle school for credit, they may earn up to three and a half units. Physical education and band will be excluded as high school credit course offerings at the middle level.

Eighth grade students qualifying for Honors Algebra I and/or Honors English I

For consistency across the district, the following criteria or combination of criteria should be used to determine an eighth grade student's eligibility to take Honors Algebra I.

- RIT band percentiles corresponding to exemplary for the year
- algebra prognosis test
- seventh grade math yearly average
- exemplary on the state achievement test
- teacher recommendation - may not be used as an excluding criterion

For consistency across the district, the following criteria or combination of criteria should be used to determine an eighth grade student's eligibility to take Honors English I.

- RIT band percentiles corresponding to exemplary for the year
- seventh grade ELA yearly average
- exemplary on the state achievement test
- teacher recommendation - may not be used as an excluding criterion

At the principal's discretion, students not meeting the above criteria may be placed in Honors Algebra and/or Honors English I with a signed parent waiver form. The principal or his/her designee would accept the responsibility to monitor the student's progress. Students needing to be placed into Transitional Algebra and/or Transitional English must be transferred no later than the 45th day of school.

Conduct

Grades will not be used for conduct assessment. Student behavior may be reported as comments.

Letter grade/numerical grade

<b>Letter grade</b>	<b>Numerical grade</b>
A	93 - 100
B	85 - 92
C	77 - 84
D	70 - 76
F	Below 70

## State uniform grading policy

### Grades nine through 12

The state board of education adopted a uniform grading policy for South Carolina's public schools in December 1999. That policy, which applied to all students who first enrolled in the ninth grade in the 2000-01 school year, has now been revised. The particulars of the state's revised uniform grading policy are set forth in the pages that follow here.

The new uniform grading scale and the system for calculating grade point averages (GPAs) and class rank were effective for all students in the 2007-08 school year. Recalculations will be limited to the use of the three decimal-place conversion factors specified in the South Carolina uniform grading policy's grade point conversion chart. Increased quality points for dual credit courses and full credit for dual credit courses will not be figured into recalculations.

<b>South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions</b>				
<b>Numerical average</b>	<b>Letter grade</b>	<b>College Prep</b>	<b>Honors</b>	<b>AP/IB/Dual credit</b>
100	A	4.875	5.375	5.875
99	A	4.750	5.250	5.750
98	A	4.625	5.125	5.625
97	A	4.500	5.000	5.500
96	A	4.375	4.875	5.375
95	A	4.250	4.750	5.250
94	A	4.125	4.625	5.125
93	A	4.000	4.500	5.000
92	B	3.875	4.375	4.875
91	B	3.750	4.250	4.750
90	B	3.625	4.125	4.625
89	B	3.500	4.000	4.500
88	B	3.375	3.875	4.375
87	B	3.250	3.750	4.250
86	B	3.125	3.625	4.125
85	B	3.000	3.500	4.000
84	C	2.875	3.375	3.875
83	C	2.750	3.250	3.750
82	C	2.625	3.125	3.625
81	C	2.500	3.000	3.500

80	C	2.375	2.875	3.375
79	C	2.250	2.750	3.250
78	C	2.125	2.625	3.125
77	C	2.000	2.500	3.000
76	D	1.875	2.375	2.875
75	D	1.750	2.250	2.750
74	D	1.625	2.125	2.625
73	D	1.500	2.000	2.500
72	D	1.375	1.875	2.375
71	D	1.250	1.750	2.250
70	D	1.125	1.625	2.125
69	F	1.000	1.500	2.000
68	F	0.875	1.375	1.875
67	F	0.750	1.250	1.750
66	F	0.625	1.125	1.625
65	F	0.500	1.000	1.500
64	F	0.375	0.875	1.375
63	F	0.250	0.750	1.250
62	F	0.125	0.625	1.125
0 - 61	F	0.000	0.000	0.000
61	FA	0.000	0.000	0.000
61	WF	0.000	0.000	0.000
---	WP	0.000	0.000	0.000

### **Courses carrying Carnegie units**

The uniform grading scale and the system for calculating GPAs and class rank will apply to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle or junior high school level.

All report cards and transcripts will use numerical grades for courses carrying Carnegie units. Transcripts and report cards will specify the course title and the level or type of course the student has taken (e.g., English 1, Algebra 2 honors, AP U.S. History). The grading scale must be printed on the report card.

### **Honors courses**

Honors courses, which extend and deepen the opportunities provided by courses at the high school level, are designed for students exhibiting superior abilities in the particular content area.

The honors curriculum places emphasis on critical and analytical thinking, rational decision making and inductive and deductive reasoning.

School districts may designate honors courses and give the assigned weighting under the following conditions.

1. An honors course must have a published syllabus that verifies rigor sufficiently beyond the college preparatory (CP) requirements.
2. Textbooks and other course materials must be differentiated and more rigorous than those used in CP courses.
3. Honors courses may be offered in English, mathematics, science and social studies. Honors weighting may be designated in other content areas for the third and fourth level of the courses, provided that the two above standards are met.

Honors weighting may not be designated in any physical education courses.

One half of a quality point (.5) is added to the CP weighting for honors courses that meet the three criteria listed above. These criteria apply to all courses, including those offered online and in other nontraditional settings and those recorded on a transcript from an out-state-school that is accredited under the regulations of the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency: the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Northwest Association of Colleges and School (as specified in State Board Regulation 43-273, Transfers and Withdrawals).

### **Dual credit courses**

Dual credit courses - whether they are taken at the school where the student is enrolled or at a postsecondary institution - are those courses for which the student has been granted permission by his/her home school to earn both Carnegie units and college credit for those particular courses.

One quality point is added to the CP weighting for dual credit courses that are applicable to baccalaureate degrees or to associate degrees offered by accredited institutions (see State Board of Education Regulation 43-234, Defined Program, Grades 9-12 and Regulation 43-259, Graduation Requirements).

College orientation courses offered by postsecondary institutions carry CP weighting and do not receive honors or dual credit quality points.

### **Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses**

The following criteria apply to the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) courses and to International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, including those offered online and in other nontraditional settings and those recorded on a transcript from an out-state-school that is accredited under the regulations of the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency: the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and

Schools, or the Northwest Association of Colleges and School (as specified in State Board Regulation 43-273, Transfers and Withdrawals).

1. Only AP or IB courses can be awarded a full quality point above the CP weighting. Seminar or support courses for AP or IB may be weighted as honors but not as AP or IB courses.
2. An AP course can carry only one quality point.
3. A standard-level (SL) IB course can carry only one quality point. However, two quality points of IB credit can be granted for higher-level(HL) courses in the IB program that require a minimum of 240 hours of instruction.

### **End-of-course examination program (EOCEP) courses and the credit recovery option**

Students who are enrolled in courses requiring state end-of-course examinations must take the examinations and fulfill all requirements outlined in Regulation 43-262.4.

Students will be allowed to take the examination only once, at the end of the regular course duration and not at the end of an extended period granted through the credit recovery option.

Students who repeat the course must be treated as though they are taking the course for the first time and all requirements will apply.

### **Computing grade point averages**

GPA's already earned by students will be recalculated on the basis of the revised policy's three-decimal-point scale.

All South Carolina public schools will use the following formula to compute all GPA's.

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{sum (quality points x units)}}{\text{sum of units attempted}}$$

#### Student example

<u>Course taken</u>	<u>Numerical average</u>	<u>Quality points</u>	<u>Unit</u>
English 1	91	3.750	1
Algebra 1	87	3.250	1
Physical science	94	4.125	1
World geography, honors	83	3.250	1
Physical education	92	3.875	.5
French 1	84	2.875	1



Computation

Quality points		Units			
3.750	x	1.0	=	3.750	
3.250	x	1.0	=	3.250	
4.125	x	1.0	=	4.125	
3.250	x	1.0	=	3.250	
3.875	x	.5	=	1.9375	
2.875	x	1.0	=	2.875	
sum of units attempted		<b>5.5</b>		<b>19.1875</b>	sum of quality points x units

sum of quality points x units divided by sum of units attempted		$19.1875 \div 5.5 = 3.488636$	student's GPA

Computations will not be rounded to a higher number.

The establishment of criteria for determining ~~h~~onors graduates, including the valedictorian or salutatorian, is a local decision. Local boards may establish earlier cutoffs (e.g., the seventh semester of high school, the ~~third~~ nine weeks of the senior year) when ranking students for any local purpose. However, and class rank for LIFE Scholarships is will be determined at the conclusion of the spring semester of the senior year. Schools using the Latin honors system, or their English equivalents, will designate a GPA of 3.5 or above as *cum laude*, 4.0 or above as *magna cum laude*, and 4.5 or above as *summa cum laude*.

**Converting grades on transcripts**

When transcripts are received from accredited out-of-state schools (or in state from accredited sources other than the public schools) and numerical averages are provided, those averages must be used in transferring the grades to the student's record. If letter grades with no numerical averages are provided, this conversion will apply.

A = 96

B = 88

C = 80

D = 73

F = 61

If the transcript indicates that the student has earned a passing grade in any course in which he/she had a numerical average lower than 70, that average will be converted to a 73 numerical grade on the new scale (see State Board of Education Regulation 43-273 for complete information on transfers and withdrawals). The criteria for accepting transcripts from homeschools are a local decision.

If the transcript shows that the student has earned a grade of P (passing), that grade will be converted to a numerical designation on the basis of information secured from the sending institution as to the appropriate numerical value of the P. If no numerical average can be obtained from the sending institution, the student's cumulative transfer GPA will be calculated and the corresponding number equivalent will be assigned to replace the P. (For example, if a student transfers with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 on the CP scale, the grade of P would be converted to an 89. A grade of P, in other words, will neither positively nor negatively impact the student's transfer GPA.)

### **Withdrawing from a course**

With the first day of enrollment in the course as the baseline, students who withdraw from a course within three days in a 45-day course, five days in a 90-day course or 10 days in a 180-day course will do so without penalty.

Students who withdraw from a course after the specified time of three days in a 45-day course, five days in a 90-day course or 10 days in a 180-day course will be assigned a WF and the F (as a 61) will be calculated in the student's overall grade point average.

The three-, five-, and 10-day limitations for withdrawing from a course without penalty do not apply to course or course-level changes approved by the administration of a school. Withdrawal limitations for distance learning courses will be established by local districts.

Students who drop out of school or are expelled after the allowed period for withdrawal but before the end of the grading period will be assigned grades in accordance with the following policies.

1. The student will receive a WP if he/she was passing the course. The grade of WP will carry no Carnegie units and no quality points to be factored into the student's GPA.
2. The student will receive a WF if he/she was failing the course. The grade of WF will carry no Carnegie units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 61.

If a student fails a course due to excessive absences, an FA will be recorded on his/her transcript. The grade of FA will carry no Carnegie units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 61.

### **Retaking a course**

Students in grades nine through 12 may retake a course at the same level of difficulty if they have earned a D or an F in that course. The student's record will reflect all courses he/she has taken and the grades he/she has earned.

The student may retake the course either during the current school year or during the next school year but no later than that second year. In addition, the student must retake the course before

he/she has enrolled in the next sequential course (unless the student is granted approval by school administration to do so).

A student who has taken a course for a Carnegie unit prior to his/her ninth-grade year may retake that course regardless of the grade he/she has earned. In such a case, only the retake grade will be used in figuring the student's GPA and only the retake attempt will show on the transcript. This rule will apply whether the retake grade is higher or lower than the grade the student previously earned.

Adopted 6/10/75; Revised 5/24/83, 4/28/87, 12/12/88, 3/23/99, 5/9/00, 1/8/02, 9/23/08  
Legal references:

S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

Section 59-18-310(B) - Development or adoption of statewide assessment program to measure student performance.

Section 59-18-320 - Review of field test; general administration of test; accommodations for students with disabilities; adoption of new standards.

Section 59-5-68 - Uniform grading scale.

State Board of Education Regulations:

R-43-262 - Assessment program.

R-43-262.4 - End of course tests.

R-43-274 - Student attendance.

R-43-234 - Defined program, grades 9-12.

The School District of Aiken County