**Grade Weighting and Senior Recognition Committee**

**Current Grade Weighting Overview**

* Provides an incentive to encourage students to take courses that will push them to be prepared for college-level rigor.
* We weight courses for students at all grade levels. All courses are currently weighted at the same level. (0.167 per course)
* Realize that there is an inherent difference in rigor between an AP course and a 9th or 10th grade honors course.
* Currently weighted courses:

**BUSINESS / ENGINEERING**

* Principles of Marketing
* Principles of Marketing/MKTG101 IVY (DC)
* PLTW: Principles of Engineering/DESN104 IVY (DC)
* PLTW: Civil Engineering & Architecture/DESN105 IVY (DC)
* PLTW: Engineering Design & Development

**SCIENCE**

* PLTW: Medical Interventions
* PLTW: Human Body Systems
* Anatomy & Physiology Honors
* Physics I Honors
* Chemistry I Honors
* AP Chemistry
* AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based
* AP Physics 2: Algebra-Based
* AdvSciCC/BIOLL100 IU (ACP)

**ENGLISH**

* English 9 Honors
* English 10 Honors
* English 11 Honors – CHAP
* AP English Language & Composition
* AP English Literature & Composition
* Advanced Speech/COLLP155 IU (ACP)

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

* AP World History
* US History US History/HIST102 IVY (DC)
* US History Honors-CHAP/HIST102 IVY (DC)
* US Government Honors – “We the People”
* AP Government & Politics
* AP Microeconomics
* Psychology/PSYC101 IVY (DC)
* AdvSSCC: Sociology/SOCI111 IVY (DC)
* Criminal Justice I/CRIM101 IVY (DC)

**FINE ARTS**

* AP Studio Art – Drawing Portfolio
* AP Studio Art – 2D Design Portfolio
* AP Music Theory

**MATH**

* Algebra II Honors
* College Algebra
* AdvMthCC:CollegeAlgebra /MATH102 VU (DC)
* Trigonometry
* Trigonometry/MATH104 VU (DC)
* Pre-Calculus / Trigonometry Honors
* CalculusI/MathM211 IU (ACP)
* FiniteMath/MATH111 VU (DC)
* AP Calculus AB
* AP Calculus BC
* AP Statistics

**WORLD LANGUAGE**

* French IV
* German IV
* Spanish IV

**Grade Weighting Suggestions**

* We studied several plans that provided two and three-tiered approaches. This would allow for differentiation of weight for the most rigorous courses.
* Any changes would have to be rolled out by graduation cohort. The more complicated the weighting the more challenges that it would cause for teacher gradebooks (multiple sections for the same class period) and scheduling.
* The more tiers would require “competition” between classes for different levels of weight. It would be important to have simple rules to determine which courses received weight and at what levels.
* We liked a simpler two-tiered system that rewarded AP course participation.
  + Tier 1- All current weighted classes would receive the current 0.167 per course taken.
  + Tier 2- All AP courses taken at PHS with a completed AP Test would receive an increased TBD per course and test completed.
    - If a student took an online AP class, or an AP class, but not the AP test, then they would receive Tier 1 weighting.
* This would only impact grade books and course scheduling for mixed AP courses (a mix of graduation cohorts in the same course) for a few years as we roll out the plan.

**Current Senior Academic Recognition Overview**

* Currently recognize the top 20 seniors based on their weighted GPA at the end of the 8th semester.
* Students point to the top 20 as the reason that they feel:
  + Pressured to take courses not because they are what they want to take or need to take based on what they want to study after high school. Students choose classes to maximize their grade weight and solidify their position.
  + Stressed to compete with their classmates for those coveted positions.
* We feel that competition is good (there would still be competition for 1st and 2nd) but in this case it has become more detrimental for students.
* Students play the “GPA game” with their classmates. They try everything to improve their grades and take more weighted classes.
* We have students during the summer retaking courses that they have earned an A- in middle school instead of taking new courses, having interesting summer experiences, or being a kid.

**Senior Academic Recognition Suggestions**

* We want to honor more students for outstanding academics.
  + Currently a student with a 4.4 GPA is not in the top 20 and would not receive any special recognition for their outstanding work
* We want to honor students with outstanding academics regardless of diploma type.
* We want there to be a fixed GPA that is necessary to be recognized. This would allow students to compete with themselves and their grades and not each other during their 4 years at PHS.
* We would create a 3-tiered Laude system:
  + Summa Cum Laude: Student graduating with an ***Honors or Technical Honors diploma*** and a weighted GPA of at least ***TBD***.
  + Magna Cum Laude: Student graduating with an ***Honors or Technical Honors diploma*** and a weighted GPA of at least ***TBD***.
  + Cum Laude: Student graduating with ***any PHS diploma*** and a weighted GPA of at least ***TBD***.

**More things to be considered**

* When do we begin a change to grade weighting?
  + Would need to be started with a class that has not yet had access to AP courses [Class of 2020].
* When do we begin a change to Senior Recognition?
  + Could begin next year in addition to Top 20 and then phase the Top 20 out.
* Exactly how much weight would AP Courses receive?
  + TBD
* Where should the GPA lines be drawn for each of the Laude level?
  + Study current senior class and previous classes.

**Next Steps**

* Meet with a group of students to get their feedback on the plan
* Create a formal proposal to the faculty
* Conduct the One Text process to receive the thoughts and feedback of the faculty
* Share formal proposal with Superintendents and the School Board
* Develop talking points to share with parents/students and a plan to share our proposed changes with the community
* Survey of the Top 20

We've formed a committee and met a couple of times.  No conclusions, yet, but we seem to all agree that the traditional way of doing things isn't working (we had 27 valedictorians last year -- all 4.0 GPAs -- seriously).  So, as we go through this process, I'll share if you will.

Here's what we've done so far:

The committee consists of our principal, an associate principal, counseling director (me), four teachers (science, world language, English, and math), a current senior, a school board member, a community member, and the technology director.

We're talking about changing our grade point scale (currently A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0 / we don't acknowledge + or - as a different value), weighting grades (currently we don't), and/or moving to some other recognition system (the Latin system you've listed or some other kind of commendation).

We plan to visit some schools that have changed recently to talk to stakeholder groups about the pros and cons.

We hope to have a decision to send to the school board by late winter, and the changes might affect next year's graduating class -- that part is yet to be determined.

We're going to a Latin system with the class of 2021. I wasn't there before this year, so I'm not sure how the transition worked other than it was made a policy before these students entered high school.

Beginning with the Graduating Class of 2021, Honor Graduates will be recognized through a special listing in the commencement program and commencement ceremony as outstanding graduates who meet the following criteria:

o summa cum laude - 4.0+ (currently recognized as Super G.P.A.)

o magna cum laude - 3.8-3.99

o cum laude -3.7-3.79 (currently recognized as 10.25+)

We went to a top 10. The students do not know what their final rank is. We use the Indiana Principal’s Association’s Academic All-Star calculation which takes GPA and SAT or ACT scores to give a rating.

To promote it we inserted the information into the handbook four years before it actually took effect, so the incoming 9th grade students knew it was coming before they reached their senior year. We also talked about it each year during our large group scheduling meeting, so all students would know.

During the past two years, we have spent time reviewing our grading system.  This has included evaluating our weighted grades, class ranking system, and alternative ways to honor student success.  Much of our research has included researching other schools’ systems for celebrating academic successes.  In addition, we have investigated what colleges and universities look for during the application and admissions process.

Our goal in reviewing our class ranking system was to develop ways of honoring students for meeting an academic standard and not merely for competing academically against their peers.  In doing so, we wanted to give students the freedom and ability to take courses of their choosing without concern for whether a peer was taking more AP or honors courses with weighted grades.  We are now excited to share our new system of honoring students that meets this goal.

Starting with the class of 2018, we will implement the “Latin” honor system described below that celebrates student performance based on an academic standard.

Summa Cum Laude – all students with a grade point average of 4.0 and higher will wear a gold cord during the commencement ceremony.

Magna Cum Laude – all students with a grade point average of 3.75-3.99 will wear a silver cord during the commencement ceremony.

Cum Laude – all students with a grade point average of 3.5-3.74 will wear a white cord during the commencement ceremony.

In addition, the class of 2019 will be the final class at Noblesville High School to honor a valedictorian and salutatorian.  After the class of 2019, we will honor our students using the above system and choose commencement speakers through an application and audition process.  Below is the transition timeline to this new system.

Class of 2018 (current juniors) – valedictorian and salutatorian and Latin honors (no class rank)

Class of 2019 (current sophomores) – valedictorian and salutatorian and Latin honors (no class rank)

Class of 2020 and beyond (current freshmen) – Latin honors, distinguished class representatives as commencement speakers (no class rank and no valedictorian and salutatorian)

We believe this new formula for honoring academic success encourages students to select courses based on a personal learning pathway that meets their academic and personal interests without being influenced by peer academic competition.  At the same time, it appropriately honors student academic success against a scholarly standard.