



Committed to Excellence

***Improving College
Acceptance, Strengthening
Academic Culture and
Expanding Opportunities for
All Students***

December 12, 2019

Summary of Plan

Through inquiry and investigation, school officials believe they can better position Kingsway students to compete for college acceptance to schools of their choosing, strengthen academic culture and enhance scholarship opportunities for all students; and, streamline high school-to-college transitions when necessary and specific changes to ranking and grading policies are made.



Effective September 1, 2020

1. Eliminate Class Rank
2. Shift from our current 8-Point grading scale to a 10-Point grading scale
3. Realign grade point average (GPA) from current 100-Point Scale to the more traditionally used 4.00 Scale for 'unweighted' GPA purposes
4. Utilize a 5.0 Scale to report 'weighted' GPA. Half point increment awarded for rigorous Honors and AP courses (4.5, 5.0)
5. Eliminates Valedictorian in favor of Latin Honors Program

Why make these changes?

We believe the current system...

- 1. Is archaic and may potentially penalize students during the college admission process**
- 2. Creates a false reality, driving students to make decisions to boost class rank by avoiding unweighted classes that mathematically penalize them**
- 3. Underscores a misguided belief that the higher one is ranked the greater the chances they are accepted into the college of their choice**
- 4. Creates a stressful environment and undue competition for students**

- “Most small private and competitive schools have done away with class rank because they feel it penalizes many excellent students who are squeezed out of the top ten percent of the class and then overlooked by elite colleges.” – College Board**
- The West Chester Area School District eliminated the practice when it was reported to them by a University of Pennsylvania Admissions Officer that a student ranked 15th out of 320 students “would have gotten in” had she not been ranked, according to a statement released by the school superintendent.**



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- In a phone interview with Garnet Valley School District, school officials reported that they are eliminating class rank practices beginning with the Class of 2020. Their decision stems from of a University of Delaware admissions officer noting that the practice of ranking students from best to worst is disadvantageous for high school graduates, hurting the chances of students' acceptance, when compared to students from other schools who are not ranked in this manner.**



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- 4. Creates a stressful environment and unhealthy competition between students to take as many “weighted” classes as possible**

- As a select group of students progresses through high school, class rank becomes the largest motivator behind their course selection process, exposing a rivalry among students as they vie for the top spot. Throughout the competition to outperform one another, the process of learning, exploring and challenging oneself gives way to calculated efforts to boost rank.**
- Alfie Kohn, author of Beyond Measure, writes: “The vicious rivalry and inevitable resentment on display as a handful of overachievers battle it out over tiny differences in GPA has led some schools to stop ranking... a tiny step in the right direction.”**



Why make these changes?

We believe the new system will...

- 1. Improves college acceptance and scholarship opportunities for our students**
- 2. Generates a stronger academic culture focused on learning rather than strategic course selection to boost class rank**
- 3. Streamlines student transition to college through use of a common language and achievement measures**

“We no longer rank at all, but we have seen a small increase in percentage of students admitted since we have gone away from rank and the biggest plus has been the scholarship money has seen a double digit percentage increase!” – School Official from Cherry Creek High School, Denver, Co.



When will this take effect?

On September 1, 2020, this proposal will take effect for students entering grades 7 through 12.

We will...

- 1. Amend historical grades for current students to reflect grading scale and weights**
- 2. Amend policies, regulations and procedures accordingly**
- 3. Retroactively award high school credits to all historical grades between 60-64**
- 4. Update our school profile and communicate in advance to colleges, universities & the NCAA**
- 5. Update Renaissance, honor roll, and Honor Society measures accordingly**



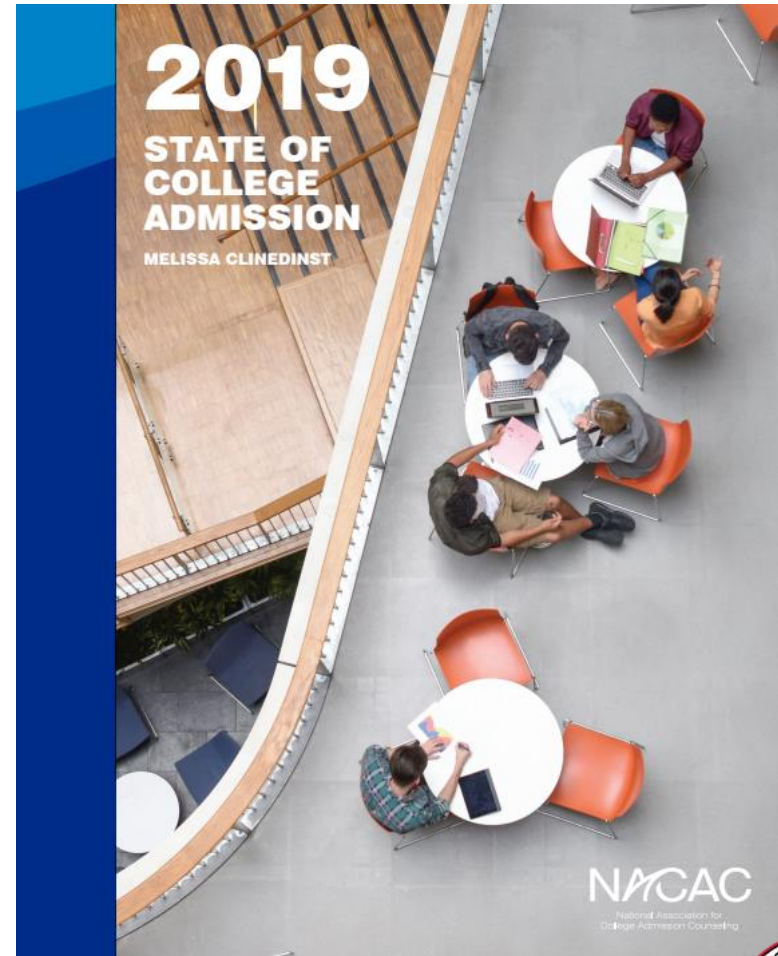
What will grading scale look like?

Grade	Current 8-Point Scale	Proposed 10-Point Scale	Proposed "Unweighted" GPA	Proposed "Weighted" GPA (Honors = +0.5)	Proposed "Weighted" GPA (AP = +1.0)
A+		97-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
A	92-100	93-96	4.0	4.5	5.0
A-		90-92	3.7	4.2	4.7
B+		87-89	3.3	3.8	4.3
B	83-91	83-86	3.0	3.5	4.0
B-		80-82	2.7	3.2	3.7
C+		77-79	2.3	2.8	3.3
C	74-82	73-76	2.0	2.5	3.0
C-		70-72	1.7	2.2	2.7
D+		67-69	1.3	1.8	2.3
D	65-73	63-66	1.0	1.5	2.0
D-		60-62	0.7	1.2	1.7
F	64 and below	59 and below			



Class Rank

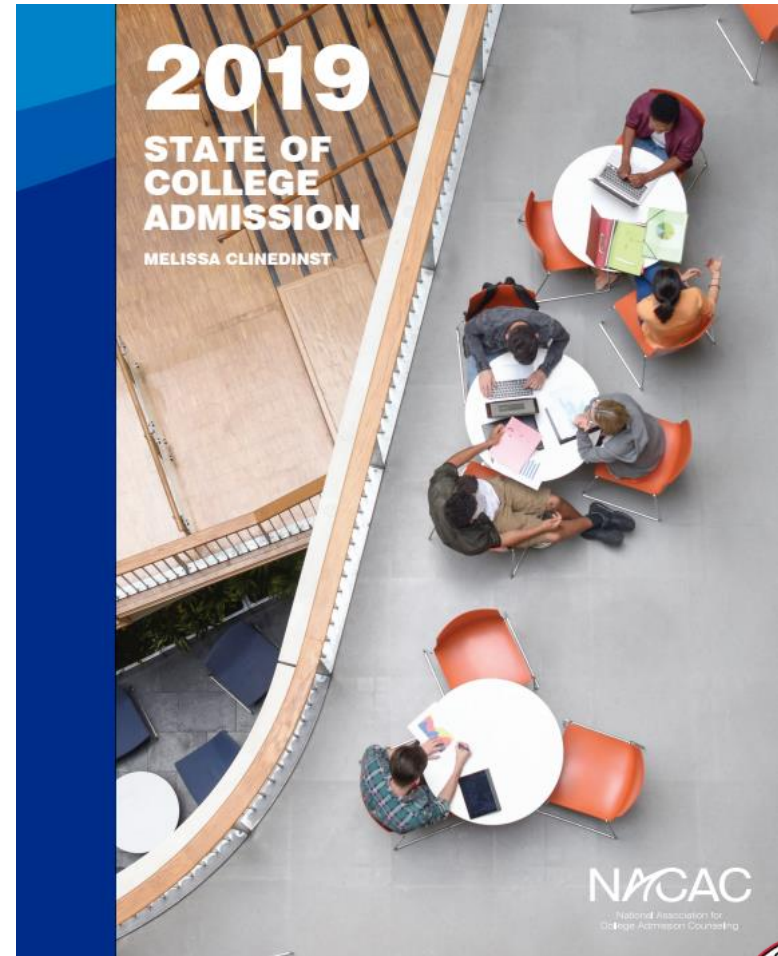
- According to NACAC's [2019 State of College Admission](#) report, a student's high school record remains the primary consideration of colleges when reviewing applications.
- In fact, Class Rank has become less important over the past decade. For each admission cycle from fall 2016 to fall 2018, only 9% of colleges rated class rank as considerably important, compared to 23% in 2007 and 42% in 1993.
- More than half of all high schools nationwide do not report student rankings.



Class Rank

It is widely reported that class rank is not a priority factor for college admissions and, in fact, gives way to the following in admission decisions

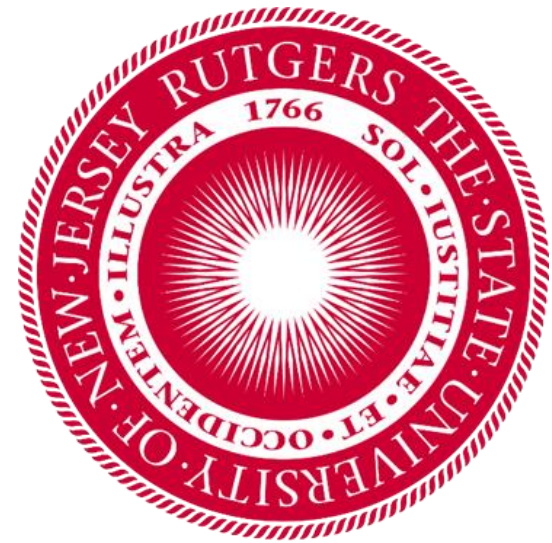
1. Grades in all courses/overall high school GPA (75% of colleges)
2. Grades in college preparatory courses (English, math, science, history & foreign language) (73% of colleges)
3. Strength of curriculum at the applicant's high school (60% of colleges) as evidence by rigorous course choices
4. Admissions test scores (ACT, SAT) (>50% of all colleges)



Class Rank

“This (elimination of class rank) will not negatively impact your (Kingsway) students. Many schools have eliminated class rank and our primary focus is on overall GPA and the level of courses and grades a student achieves. That combined with standardized test scores and supplemental information (activities, leadership, essay) provide the necessary information for us to review a student for admission to Rutgers.”

**Melissa Welch
Director of Campus Programs
Rutgers University-New Brunswick**



Class Rank

“Half our applicants now come from schools that don’t have rank.” – Brown Univ.

“It (class rank) is not something we take into consideration for admissions because class rank looks different at all schools. For example, a student may be ranked third in their class, but the highest GPA is a 3.5.” 11 – Univ. of Delaware

Temple, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Randolph Macon College, Lafayette College, West Virginia University, Ramapo College, Roger Williams University, Liberty University, Quinnipiac University, Holy Family University, Rowan University, Penn State University, Rider University, and more.



BROWN



10-Point Grade Point Scale

Grade	Current Scale	10-Point Scale
A+		97-100
A	92-100	93-96
A-		90-92
B+		87-89
B	83-91	83-86
B-		80-82
C+		77-79
C	74-82	73-76
C-		70-72
D+		67-69
D	65-73	63-66
D-		60-62
F	64 & below	59 & below

We believe that the shift will:

- 1. Improve college admission opportunities by creating a fairer opportunity to apply for college admissions and scholarships, given a number of states and high schools throughout the country that utilize a 10-point grading scale.**
- 2. Align to colleges, who predominantly favor the 10-point scale, creating a seamless transition.**
- 3. Maintain current rigor and teacher standards.**



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B-		80-82
C+		77-79
C	74-82	73-76
C-		70-72
D+		67-69
D	65-73	63-66
D-		60-62
F	64 & below	59 & below

The N.C. State BOE began full implementation of a 10-point grading scale in 2015, moving away from a 7-point scale, because they believed it created a disadvantage for N.C. students applying to colleges when other high schools were using a 10-point scale.

The following year the State of S.C. shifted to a 10-point scale. The State's Superintendent Molly Spearman said, "A 92 is a 'B' in South Carolina, while it's an 'A' for students in N.C. and Ga. This means a S.C. student gets a 3.0 for his GPA while students from N.C. and Ga. get a 4.0 for his GPA, putting S.C. Students at a disadvantage when it comes to admission and scholarships."



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The arguments for a 10-point scale hold true for a Kingsway student, as they too will compete for acceptance to colleges and universities with students from Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina.

Additionally, Kingsway students compete locally with student from Lenape, Seneca, Shawnee, Williamstown, Garnet Valley, Lower Merion, Radnor, and Marple Newtown, to name a few, all of whom implemented a 10-point scale.



Realign Grade Point Avg. (GPA)

Grade	10-Point Scale	GPA	GPA "Honors"	GPA "AP"
A+	97-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
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The 4.0 GPA model is the standard scale used at most colleges, and many high schools use it (College Board, 11/30/19) with corresponding grades to match.

Collegvine.com reported that students who attend schools using another grade point scale, are required to convert their GPA to a 4.0-scale-equivalent.



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The current grade scale places students at a disadvantage when trying to achieve NCAA eligibility. The NCAA utilizes letter grades in assigning quality points to calculate GPA. Currently, a 91 is a B and would convert to 3 quality points. Under the 10-point Grade scale, that 91 would equal an A and 4 quality points would be awarded. This places our student athletes on equal footing with other student athletes that operate under a 10-point scale.



Latin Honors Program

We believe in recognizing academic achievement, and Kingsway intends to celebrate students for their outstanding achievement at their commencement ceremony (OR upon graduating).

In our flawed system, students and parents are of a false believe that being ranked 1st is a guarantee for acceptance into colleges of their choosing and, therefore, being ranked 5th, 6th, 7th or 30th or 50th, etc., is deemed “not good enough.”

In fact, the University of Pennsylvania and Duke University rejected more than 60 percent of valedictorians who applied for admission

The Academic Distinction Program, adapted from the traditional Latin Honors Program often used by colleges and universities, will recognize students as follows:

- **Summa Cum Laude – Awarded to students who achieve an ‘weighted’ GPA of 3.90 or higher**
- **Magna Cum Laude – Awarded to students who achieve an ‘weighted’ GPA of 3.70 – 3.89**
- **Cum Laude – Awarded to Students who achieve an ‘weighted’ GPA of 3.50 – 3.69**



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will the changes go into effect?

A: Fall 2020

Q: Who will this effect?

A: The grade scale will apply to all incoming 7th-12th graders. The application of GPA will remain in the high school only.

Q: Will changes apply to current seniors?

A: No changes for Class of 2020

Q: Why not gradually apply changes?

A: We believe our current practice may actually penalize our students

Q: How will Colleges know of changes?

A: Annually Colleges receive Kingsway's "School Profile," highlighting and explaining grading scale, GPA scale and class rank policies

Q: Why use "plus" and "minus" in grade scale?

A: Further identifies the level of student work/achievement in a specific course.

Q: Will there be a valedictorian?

A: There will not be a valedictorian beginning with the Class of 2021

Q: Who will speak at graduation?

A: Selected among interested student(s)

Q: When will students receive their GPA?

A: Rising seniors will receive their GPA in August in order to begin completing college applications

Q: Why weight Honors and AP classes differently?

A: A weighting of 0.5 for Honors course and a 1.0 for Advanced Placement courses will be used and aligns with other high-performing schools and is believed to more accurately reflect academic rigor and course difficulty.

Q: What about NJ STARS Program?

A: Our students will continue to be eligible for and benefit from the NJ STARS Program



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will these changes impact local Kingsway-based scholarships?

A: For the few that do, administration will adjust criteria and/or gain approval from scholarship sponsors to adjust criteria that does not require Class Rank.

Q: What will parents see on PowerSchool reports?

A: Both the letter grade and corresponding numerical value on the Quick Lookup screen and on the online report card. (A-, 91)

Q: Will implementation of a 10-Point Grading Scale change Teacher Recommendations for honors or AP classes?

A: Administration will revisit; however, 3 years of data demonstrates current recommendation system is successful.

Q: Will we adjust the basement grade of 50?

A: Yes. Moving the passing grade to a 60 will require adjusting the 'basement grade' to a 45.

Q: You may get pushback from current seniors who fail due to a 64 knowing that this grade will change in September.

A: This is to be expected. However, the changes will go into effect on September 2, 2020, long after the current seniors are scheduled to graduate. Therefore, this will be a irrelevant argument as they will be governed by the policies and practice in place during the 2019-20 school year.

Q: Will we adjust the Reassessment from a 83 (B) to a 80 (B-)?

A: No. We intend to stay with the 83 (B) as the cutoff.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will these changes have a negative impact on AP enrollment?

A: We may see students who only used AP to climb the rank ladder, create a more balanced schedule and opt for courses of interest next year. However, that could be offset by those who shied away from AP courses because they are GPA sensitive. Given the new grade scale and weighting, enrollment may stay steady or increase.

Q: How will you 'weight' AP Courses?

A: AP Courses will be graded on a weighted scale that goes up to 5.0. On the traditional scale a 4.0 is an A and a 3.0 is a B. On the AP weighted grading scale, a 5.0 is an A, 4.0 a B and etc.

Q: How will administration retroactively adjust historic grades?

A: Once grades close in late June, we will begin the process of identifying those historical Y1 grades that fall within the 60-64 range and begin to award credit. This process will be completed by late August.

Q: Why do you have to adjust historical grades at all?

A: The new method in which GPA will be calculated requires Y1 grades that fall within the range of 60-64 to be awarded credit. I cannot calculate a student's GPA on a 5.0 scale with two different grade scales present in their historical grades.

