



What Is FAIRGRADE?:

- FAIRGRADE was created in January 2008 to advocate for major revisions of the grading policies in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). The four Co-founders include a former Admissions Officer for Georgetown University and Admissions Reader for Duke University, a demographer, a former FCPS special education teacher, and a longtime FCPS volunteer and current president of the Fairfax County Association for the Gifted. *(For more information and to sign our on-line petition, contact: www.FAIRGRADE.org.)*

What Is the Issue? Don't Schools Know FCPS' Reputation?:

- The most common GPA scale in the United States and comparable school districts to FCPS is the 10 point Grading Scale: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, Below 60=F. **FCPS Grades are based on a 6pt. Scale, not a 10pt. Scale.** 94-100=A, 90-93=B+, 84-89=B, 80-83=C+, 74-79=C, 70-73=D+, 64-69=D, Below 64=F
- FAIRGRADE acknowledges that FCPS' current 6-point scale and weighting policy is generally taken into account for admissions to Virginia public colleges. But with increased competition for seats in Virginia's public colleges, more FCPS students must consider going out-of-state for college. FAIRGRADE's extensive research shows that many out-of-state colleges and universities do not know FCPS' grading policy nuances, nor do they necessarily make adjustments to FCPS students' GPAs for admissions' decisions.
- Many universities have told FAIRGRADE they take GPA scores directly off a student's transcript when evaluating students for merit scholarships. As a result, FCPS students are losing out on thousands of dollars in merit scholarship awards to students whose school systems use the traditional 10-point grading scale and give more weights for honors and AP courses.

What is FCPS' Grading Scale History?:

- The outdated, 6-point grading scale currently in use in Fairfax County was implemented back in 1962 – **that's 46 years ago!**

Will a 10-pt. Scale "Dumb Down" Fairfax County Schools?:

- Other elite school districts, like neighboring Montgomery County, have the standard 10-point scale and give more weight to grades for honors and AP courses. These elite schools carry no stigma of having "dumbed down" their schools. Transforming current grading policies would not change the rigorous academic curriculum and high test scores that have given FCPS its elite status among school districts.
- Under current grading policies, some FCPS students are foregoing honors classes because they receive no additional weight towards their grade point, and it's easier to get an A in a non-honors course. FCPS current policies may, in effect, be deterring students from "upping their game."



How Does FCPS Compare to Montgomery County Schools?:

FAIRFAX STUDENT					MONTGOMERY STUDENT			
LETTER GRADE	NUMBER GRADE	EXTRA POINT	FINAL GRADE	CLASS/SCORE	LETTER GRADE	NUMBER GRADE	EXTRA POINT	FINAL GRADE
B+	3.5		3.5	Math Honors 93%	A	4.0	1.0	5.0
B+	3.5		3.5	English Honors 90%	A	4.0	1.0	5.0
A	4.0		4.0	Chemistry Honors 95%	A	4.0	1.0	5.0
C+	2.5	0.5	3.0	History AP 83%	B	3.0	1.0	4.0
B+	3.5		3.5	Spanish 92%	A	4.0		
GPA 3.5					GPA 4.6			

- Fairfax students taking honors classes receive NO extra GPA weighting. Their counterparts in Montgomery County receive an extra 1.0 for honors classes. Fairfax students taking AP/IB classes receive only an extra 0.5 weight, while their counterparts in Montgomery County receive an extra 1.0 weight for AP/IB classes, in computing GPAs.
- In 2007, only 5% of graduating seniors at Langley High School had a weighted GPA of 4.0 or higher. At Montgomery County’s Churchill High, 36% had a weighted GPA of 4.0 or higher.

What is the current status of the FAIRGRADE issue with FCPS?:

- In June, FCPS agreed to conduct a joint research study of this issue with FAIRGRADE. FCPS plans to issue a report by mid-October. FAIRGRADE is working to make this a collaborative research effort to ensure an unbiased final report. At this time, FAIRGRADE has expressed several concerns about FCPS’ proposed research and analysis methods. FAIRGRADE is also pressing hard for a public Q&A session with FCPS when the report is presented in mid-October. FAIRGRADE is committed to working in good faith with FCPS but also maintains that the GPA/SAT issue must be a focal point of the FCPS research study.
- SAT and ACT scores are the best criteria to measure the fairness of grading policies, because they predict college performance and academic achievement across populations. FAIRGRADE is encouraging FCPS to carefully analyze relationships between SAT scores and GPAs within the FCPS population and in other comparable populations.

	Avg. SAT 2005-Reading	Avg. SAT 2005-Math	Avg. SAT 2005-Total	Avg. GPA 2005
FCPS	549	565	1114	2.91
Nation	508	520	1028	2.98