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***-FAIRGRADE Releases Refined Platform on Grading Policy Changes-  
Says Clarification Needed As Community Begins to Focus on Specifics***

**Fairfax County, VA –Friday, October 10, 2008** – FAIRGRADE today released a refined platform of its position on the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) grading policies issue.

FAIRGRADE said that as the public and media become more knowledgeable about FCPS’ existing grading policies, the discussion is now progressing towards which options may be considered in the final report scheduled to be released in late fall, 2008.

“It’s too soon to speculate what recommendations will be included in the final grading policies report to Superintendent Jack Dale and the FCPS School Board,” FAIRGRADE President Megan McLaughlin said. “But now that the community is beginning to focus on the options out there, FAIRGRADE wants to make it clear to our supporters, the public, FCPS officials, members of the School Board and the media which options FAIRGRADE supports and does not support,” McLaughlin stated.

McLaughlin said FAIRGRADE supports:

- A 10-point grading scale with pluses and minuses
- Increased weights for Honors, AP/IB classes
- Numeric grades

Likewise, McLaughlin said FAIRGRADE does NOT support:

- No changes at all
- Increased weights for AP/IB classes, but no weight for Honors classes and no change to the grading scale
- Increased weights for Honors and AP/IB classes, but no change to the grading scale
- No changes, coupled with a resolution to ask the state of Virginia to set a statewide grading policy

FAIRGRADE Co-Vice President Marcy Newberger said FAIRGRADE’s platform is a clarification of FAIRGRADE’s original position that advocated a straight 10-point grading scale.

“After talking to teachers, principals, students and parents across Fairfax County, we realized this would be a logical and reasonable modification of our original position. The addition of pluses and minuses within a 10-point scale would make clear the distinctions between high A’s and low A’s, high B’s and low B’s, high C’s and low C’s and high D’s and low D’s so that a student’s achievement in the classroom would be more accurately reflected in their grade. If FCPS wants to go the route of adding pluses and minuses to a 10-point scale, this is something FAIRGRADE will definitely support.”

FAIRGRADE Co-Vice President Louise Epstein said a numerical scale is also acceptable to FAIRGRADE if FCPS doesn’t modify the letter grading scale.

“FAIRGRADE feels a numeric grading scale with weighting would be a better alternative for FCPS students than the current FCPS system. FAIRGRADE understands that when colleges receive transcripts that contain numeric grades with no corresponding letter grade scale, colleges usually then translate those numeric grades into letter grades and quality points using a 10-point scale,” Epstein said.

FAIRGRADE Co-founder Sara Pacqué-Margolis said one proposal FAIRGRADE strongly rejects is a deferment of the grading policies issue to the state of Virginia – an idea recently raised at the FCPS Roundtable in August (8.25.08).

“It would be disastrous for FCPS students and parents if FCPS follows Spotsylvania County’s lead and asks the state of Virginia to establish a uniform grading policy. Such action could take years. Meanwhile, FCPS students would continue to lose out on admissions and scholarship opportunities,” Pacqué-Margolis said.

Epstein added that FAIRGRADE also does not support proposals that leave out weights for Honors classes. “It has been suggested to FAIRGRADE that we drop our support for adding weights to Honors classes. Based upon research evidence, FAIRGRADE believes that FCPS grading policies should reward the efforts of capable high school students who take challenging Honors classes,” Epstein said.

FAIRGRADE’s grading policy positions can also be found on FAIRGRADE’s homepage at [www.FAIRGRADE.org](http://www.FAIRGRADE.org).

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