

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SYNOPSIS AGENDA/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CODE:	55-03
COMMITTEE:	Curriculum & Instruction
DATE:	January 9, 2007

SUBJECT/TITLE

Revision to the 2006 South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (First Reading)

PURPOSE OF REPORT/REGULATION/ITEM

Revisions to this policy require approval by the State Board of Education.

CRITICAL FACTS

In September, the State Board of Education approved the revised uniform grading policy to ensure its alignment with recommendations in the Report of the South Carolina High School Redesign (March 2006) and the Education and Economic Development Act (2006). Following the November 8, 2006, State Board of Education study session on the revised policy, the State Department of Education has determined that additional revisions are needed. Under *The Legislative Mandate*, third paragraph, page 55-03-01, we are proposing to add the following sentences: Recalculations will be limited to 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. On page 55-03-4, please add the following sentence: College orientation courses for dual credit will be weighted as College Prep. On page 55-03-5, we are recommending the addition of this sentence: Computations will not be rounded to a higher number.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

- September 2005 A committee of 27 school and district representatives statewide was formed to review the 1999–2000 version of the uniform grading policy and determine if revisions were needed. The committee included assistant superintendents of instruction, guidance counselors, Commission on Higher Education members, curriculum coordinators, and SDE personnel.
- October 2005–January 2006 The committee continued to meet to revise the policy. Input was sought from instructional leaders throughout the state.

- January 2006–
March 2006 The policy was distributed via the Web for public input.
- April 2006 The revised draft was presented to technology coordinators at a statewide meeting for input.
- June 2006 The revised draft was presented at two sessions at the 2006 Summer Leadership Institute for principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents for input. The final revised draft incorporates statewide input.
- August 9, 2006 The State Board of Education received the policy for first reading.
- September 13, 2006 The State Board of Education considered and approved the policy on second reading.
- November 8, 2006 The State Board of Education conducted a study session on the revised policy.
- January 9, 2007 The State Board of Education is receiving the policy for approval on first reading concerning revisions recommended by the State Department of Education.
- February 2006–
May 2007 Districts will communicate new policy and incorporate changes.
- August 2007 The new policy will be effective for all students.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

COST: None _____

FUND/SOURCE: _____

RECOMMENDATION

The State Department of Education recommends that the State Board of Education approve the 2006 South Carolina uniform grading policy, as revised, for first reading.

ACTION REQUEST

FOR APPROVAL:

FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

REVIEW REQUIRED BY EDITOR: Yes

No

Signature of Editor (If Required)

Date

APPROVED BY:

Signature of Deputy Superintendent

Date

*Signature of General Counsel

Date

**Signature of State Superintendent of Education

Date

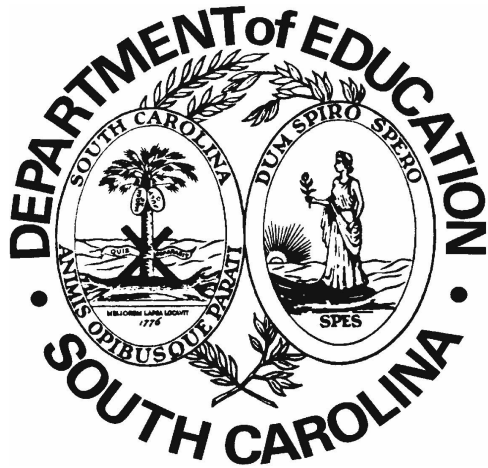
ATTACHMENT:

*The Office of General Counsel must approve any action that requires the promulgation, amendment, or repeal of State Board of Education regulations.

**The State Superintendent of Education must approve all item(s) *before* the item(s) is placed on the State Board of Education agenda.

When signature is not required, please put N/A in Signature block

South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy



**Issued by the
South Carolina Department of Education**

**Inez Moore Tenenbaum
State Superintendent of Education**

January 9, 2007

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The Legislative Mandate

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-68 (2004) reads as follows:

The General Assembly finds that given the fact the State provides substantial financial academic assistance to students of the State based on cumulative grade point averages and districts currently use a variety of grading scales, it is in the best interest of the students of South Carolina for a uniform grading scale to be developed and adopted by the State Board of Education to be implemented in all public schools of the State. Therefore, the State Board of Education is directed to establish a task force comprised of superintendents, principals, teachers, and representatives of school boards and higher education no later than June 30, 1999. The task force shall make recommendations to the board including, but not limited to, the following: consistent numerical breaks for letter grades; consideration of standards to define an honors course; appropriate weighting of courses; and determination of courses and weightings to be used in the calculation of class rank. The task force shall report its findings to the State Board of Education no later than December 1, 1999. The State Board of Education shall then adopt and school districts of the State shall begin using the adopted grading scale no later than the 2000-2001 school year.

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 will be 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.

Grade Point Conversion Chart

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions				
Numerical Average	Letter Grade	College Prep	Honors	AP/IB/ Dual Credit
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:

- A. An honors course must have a published syllabus that verifies rigor sufficiently beyond the College Preparatory (CP) requirements.
- B. Textbooks and other course materials must be differentiated and more rigorous than those used in CP courses.
- C. 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 or 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 and International Baccalaureate 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).

- 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.
- An AP course can carry only *one* quality point.
- 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

Course Taken	Numerical Average	Quality Points	Unit
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	=	Quality Points x 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 →	5.5		19.1875 ← sum of quality points x units

$\frac{\text{sum of quality points x units}}{\text{divided by sum of units attempted}} \rightarrow 19.1875 \div 5.5 = \mathbf{3.488636} \rightarrow \text{student's GPA}$

Computations will not be rounded to a higher number.

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.

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 or 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 ten 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 ten days in a 180-day course shall 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 ten-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:

- The student will receive a WP if he or 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.
- The student will receive a WF if he or 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 or 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 twelve 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 or she has taken and the grades he or 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 or 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 or her ninth-grade year may retake that course regardless of the grade he or 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.