

Calculating GPA

In June 2018, the MCPS School Board approved discontinuing the practice of ranking students by GPA (MCPS Policy 6-6.3). Based on a recommendation from the GPA & Class Rank Committee, all high schools in MCPS now recognize all graduating seniors who have attained the same levels of achievement based on established standards of academic excellence. [\[Current Policy 6-6.3\]](#) This recommendation followed a 3-year study by a group that included school leaders, parents, students, and college admissions officers.

After revisions to Policy 6-6.3 relative to class rank were approved, members of the GPA & Class Rank Committee continued to work on a way to calculate GPA that would award additional grade points for weighted courses but not lower a GPA for taking additional unweighted courses.

Using the current method for determining GPA, students are awarded grade points for final letter grades earned in unweighted classes on a 4-point scale (A=4) and in weighted classes on a 5-point scale (A=5). The sum of each student’s grade points is divided by the total number of credits attempted (unweighted and weighted) to calculate the grade point average. Because the total number of credits attempted varies by student, this method can inadvertently result in students who have identical grades and the same number of weighted credits having different GPAs.

To address this issue, the proposed method awards the same amount of additional grade points to each student’s GPA for each passing grade earned in a weighted course. This is accomplished by awarding these additional grade points AFTER calculating GPA rather than awarding them prior to calculating GPA. This way of calculating GPA corrects the issues with the current method, and produces GPAs comparable to using a 5-point scale (A=5) for weighted classes.

The proposed formula is a two-step process:

1. Calculate EVERYONE’S GPA first on a 4-Point Scale (A=4)
2. Add Grade Points to that GPA for weighted classes

**Additional Information
on MCPS Webpage**

- PowerPoint Presentation
- GPA Calculator

$$\frac{\text{Total Grade Points Earned (everyone on a 4-point scale)}}{\text{Total Credits Attempted}} = X$$

$$\frac{\text{Number of Passing Grades in Weighted Courses}}{32} = Y$$

$$\text{Final GPA} = X + Y \text{ (2 decimal places with no rounding)}$$

EXAMPLE

		Student 1	Student 2
		11 Weighted A’s 22 Unweighted A’s	11 Weighted A’s 24 Unweighted A’s
Current Formula		$\frac{(11 \times 5) + (22 \times 4)}{33} = 4.3333$	$\frac{(11 \times 5) + (24 \times 4)}{35} = 4.3142$
Proposed Formula	Step 1	$\frac{(33 \times 4)}{33} = 4.00$	$\frac{(35 \times 4)}{35} = 4.00$
	Step 2	11 weighted credits $11 \div 32 = 0.34$	11 weighted credits $11 \div 32 = 0.34$
	Final GPA	$4.00 + 0.34 = 4.34$	$4.00 + 0.34 = 4.34$

IMPACT

- Every additional grade point for a weighted class will be worth the same amount for every student.
- Students with the same grades and the same number of weighted credits will always have the same GPA.
- There is no incentive to limit the number of unweighted credits. Limiting the number of credits attempted will no longer raise a student’s GPA.