

**Tonight, a recommendation concerning changes to our grading system is ready for board action. In acting:**

- we will honor the considerable and competent work of the committee, comprised of 22 individuals, many of whom did not feel compelled or perfectly comfortable to publicly address their thinking. Their choice will be respected and will not mute their value to the process and the work;
- we acknowledge the committee reached agreement on two of the issues evaluated: (i) a planned elimination of our valedictorian and salutatorian designations with our transition to Latin Honors designations; and (ii) planned changes to our add-on system for Honors courses; and
- we acknowledge the committee could not reach agreement on considered changes to the grading scale but recognize factors and variables may have unintentionally intervened.

**This evening, the board will:**

1. Act to accept and approve, in part, the recommendation and support of the two proposed changes where we determined agreement was reached
2. Modify the remainder of the recommendation to allow for more review of the grading scale, and to determine proper alignment with the other intended changes, and;
3. Direct our administration to:
  - develop and implement a scheduled, managed and published plan that causes a well-balanced, fact-based inquiry that produces a trusted outcome formed upon the district's core educational philosophy;
  - assure the plan engages and relies upon one or more qualified, external, and neutral third-party subject matter expert(s) to evaluate the work already completed, to supplement such work, as may be needed, and, to facilitate a definitive conclusion; and
  - assure the plan is managed to allow for the board's ultimate review and action for effect prior to the commencement of the district's 2021-2022 academic school year.

**We also wished to lend of voice to the discourse that has resonated for the past few months.**

- The issues raised are fair. The various media platforms used are efficient means to capture awareness and rally support. And, there can be no dispute that any reasonable critique of the school board – or any elected body tasked to govern - is proper, and foundational to our country's core principles.
- And though fair and foundational, any campaign should always be mindful that another, equally supported rationale may exist, and that chosen silence or deliberate pause should not signal acquiescence or subordination. We should all presume our best intentions are forming the input offered and received.
- There are always eyes and ears paying attention. We must all remain aware that all students, all teachers, and all residents are also part of this discussion, especially when they are the subjects of it. We must understand the impact, whether great or small, as they listen to us dissect what grades mean.
- Many arguments can present with presumptive logic, and yet, be met with analysis that is not equally binary. The unintended consequences that occur can be just as fragmented. Grades, or "keeping score" generally, casts a derivative burden into our learning environments. The scoreboard never turns off and the finish line always inches away from its pursuers. The social and emotional well-being of every student in our district must be a priority for each of us.

**Having now reviewed and reflected upon the information to date, we find:**

- Without any reservation, the Oakwood student, and graduate, is not disadvantaged by our 8-point grading scale, when wrapped in the excellent education our community, parents, teachers, staff, and administration have tirelessly collaborated to offer and deliver. Although we find a level playing field, the conversation, review and study have pointed to opportunities for consistency and improvement, which do not presuppose inadequacy. Instead, they signal a healthy organization that is willing to grow and deliberately consider change when prudent.
- Our community values the efficacy of a mastered education and a learning environment that assures each student and graduate is an intellectually curious, resilient and engaged participant. We remain vigilant in our focus, not because we naively romance a preferred tradition, but because we are committed to lead a school district that never loses sight of its core mission – to develop and grow our students.