

Wayland Public Schools Weighted GPA Decision

Process and Rationale
School Council Meeting
January 25, 2022

Before Weighted GPA was eliminated

- WHS students earned a “Weighted” and “Unweighted” GPA, which were both reported on their transcripts
- Weighted = “Courses in the five academic majors and honors-level elective courses” on a 5.0 scale (H/AP courses get 1.0 extra GPA point in the calculation)
- Unweighted = “Both academic majors and all elective courses” on a 4.0 scale (all courses were counted equally regardless of level)
- Salutatorian and Valedictorian were determined by weighted GPA at the end of seven semesters. Honor Roll and High Honor Roll are both based on unweighted GPA

Why were we concerned about WGPA?

- Students who never take an honors or AP class are disadvantaged by this measure, creating an inequitable system.
- Persistent concerns around stress and anxiety resulting from competitiveness among WHS students.
- Students avoided college-level courses for fear of impacting their Weighted GPAs.
- With more colleges recalculating student GPAs, our students' WGPA figure was arbitrary and/or misleading.
- The increasing number of “electives” at WHS begged the question, What is an *elective* anymore, and what should count towards WGPA?
- Similar concerns were so pervasive that area districts did away with WGPA, or stayed Unweighted-only (as of 2018: Lexington, Belmont, Brookline, Lincoln-Sudbury).

Timeline of process

- 2016-2017:** WHS School Council researched issue of Weighted GPA
- Spring 2017:** WHS School Council recommended eliminating WGPA
- March 2018:** WPS School Committee approved eliminating WGPA, starting with the Class of 2022

Process also included:

- Consultation with Superintendents Stein and Unobskey & WMS Principal Gavron
- Discussion with area districts who had eliminated WGPA
- Discussion at Parent Information Exchange (PIE) meetings
- Survey of 109 colleges & universities (July 2017 - March 2018)
- Survey of students
- Discussion & open comment at School Committee (March 2018)

Since 2018...

Many other districts have also eliminated WGPA, or are in the process of researching this issue. These districts include Weston, Dover-Sherborn, Needham, Acton-Boxboro, and Newton.

COVID has contributed to more mental health needs among students, resulting in additional staffing and programming at WHS.

Many colleges have developed more holistic admissions processes.

The School Committee adopted their Anti-Racism Resolution in January 2021, and the district has identified equity as a “target goal.” These compel us to identify and address barriers in our structures and policies related to achievement and access.

Why did WHS eliminate Weighted GPA?

In sum, Weighted GPA...

- Is an inequitable system.
- Is counter to our mission (“Risk-taking is safeguarded....”).
- Prevents students from making good choices about their academic interests, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Needlessly exacerbates a culture of competition and stress.
- Is a misleading or inaccurate measurement of student achievement.
- Carries little to no meaning in the world of college admissions (the level of the course matters most on the transcript).