



# Improving College Acceptance, Strengthening Academic Culture and Expanding Opportunities for All Students

## SUMMARY DOCUMENT

As Kingsway Regional School District continues to prepare its students for a seamless and successful transition to college, we will begin to implement adjustments to our grading scale, grade point average (GPA) calculations, and academic achievement recognition (i.e. class rank) beginning September 2020. The goals of these adjustments are as follows:

1. To provide students a seamless transition to college through the use of common language and practices
2. To maintain current rigor and high standards of excellence with a focus on student learning
3. To improve the overall college admissions experience and outcomes for our students

Below provides a summary of adjustments intended to meet these goals. More in-depth information, including the full plan and resources consulted this plan can be found at [www.krsd.org/ImprovingCollegeAcceptance](http://www.krsd.org/ImprovingCollegeAcceptance).

### SHIFTS TO A 10-POINT GRADING SCALE

Kingsway currently uses an 8-point grading scale. Beginning in September 2020, Kingsway will transition to a 10-point grading scale, implementing a plus and minus system (i.e. A+, A, A-, B+, etc.). This transition will not lower classroom rigor or standards of achievement as the strength of curriculum and teacher instruction will remain the same. Instead, such a transition will:

- **Improve chances of college admissions and increase scholarship opportunities.** College admissions translate from grades. For example, an admissions officer who would have previously seen a 91 on a Kingsway student's transcript, will now see a 91/A, strengthening the profile for that student and increasing related scholarship and honors opportunities.
- **Align with the traditional 10-point college/university grading scale.** Familiarity with the traditional 10-point scale used by colleges/universities, while maintaining academic rigor in the classroom at the 7-12 level, supports a seamless transition to a collegiate academic culture.
- **Encourage students to challenge themselves by taking advanced level courses.** Expanding the grading scale will encourage students to challenge themselves by taking higher-level courses that they once did not take because they were fearful it would negatively affect their GPA. Subsequently, these advanced courses carry greater weighting, potentially increasing their cumulative GPA.

It is critical to note that many schools within our region and across the nation implement a 10-point grade scale to measure academic success. Therefore, some students earn A's with a grade of 90, while others need to hit 92, 93 or 94 to claim the top grade. **The grading differences may not be significant within the school walls, but this becomes extremely important when students experience the college admissions process and look to earn scholarship money.**

### IMPLEMENTS A 4.00 GPA SCALE

Kingsway currently implements a 100-point grade point average (GPA) scale. When evaluating students for admission, many colleges look at GPA on a four-point scale. Beginning September 2020, Kingsway will shift its approach to align with the more commonly used 4.0 GPA scale. This transition will:

- **Reduce confusion for students & families when applying to college and increase understanding of the 4.0 scale prior to entering college.** Because Kingsway currently uses a 100-point GPA scale, students are required to

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convert their GPA to the 4.0 scale when applying to colleges, which has been reported as being confusing by our families. Additionally, the National Association of Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) calculates GPA on a 4.0 scale and sets a specific GPA to determine eligibility for Division I and Division II athletes.

- **Continue to provide added weight to Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses to reflect course rigor.** Within the 4.0 GPA scale, Honors courses will receive additional weighting of .5 (4.5) while AP courses will receive additional weighting of 1.0 (5.0), continuing our commitment to high standards and rewarding students for challenging their learning.
- **Align with our adjustment to a 10-point grading scale.** [See conversion table here.](#)

Conversion to a 10-point grading scale that is in line with a 4.0 GPA reporting, **Kingsway will position its students up to be more competitive during the college admissions process when compared to those around the nation.** Additionally, more scholarship opportunities for both academic and athletic ambitions will expand.

### SHIFTS AWAY FROM PUBLISHING CLASS RANK

Kingsway recognizes the importance of rigorous, challenging coursework, a diversified learning experience, and the personal and emotional growth of every student. Beginning September of 2020, Kingsway will no longer rank its students numerically from best to worst based on academic achievement. This shift away from publishing class rank does not negate our commitment to the values noted above but rather our recognition that ranking students may be detrimental to their college admission opportunities. Our rationale for moving away from this practice is below.

- **The differences in GPA among high-achieving students are often statistically insignificant, placing our students at a disadvantage.** Often, students ranked at the top of the class are within one-hundredth of a point. For example, we have found that a student with a 92% (A) weighted GPA did not fall within the top 35 percent. College admissions officers quickly review a student's academic profile (GPA, number of advanced level courses, rank (if published), and test scores) before they fully read the application. Rank, therefore, serves as a cut and dry way for colleges to determine competitiveness within their applicant pool. As a result, even high achieving students may be overlooked for admission to colleges or for scholarship consideration due to their rank.
- **There is a misconception that high schools must use class rank for the college admissions process.** A large number of high schools across the nation do not rank their students. Therefore, many colleges have stopped requiring it as part of admissions process. Highly competitive colleges publicize a holistic approach to their admissions process. Important factors for colleges include the rigor of the academic program, GPA, SAT and ACT scores, essay or writing samples, and counselor/teacher recommendations. When rank is not provided, a student's application is evaluated based on these factors rather than rank.
- **Many Kingsway students report elevated levels of anxiety and stress related to the positioning that occurs when calculating class rank.** Rather than enrolling in courses that students are interested in exploring, some students focus their attention on selecting courses with the greatest "weight" strictly because of the class rank calculation.

It is important to note **that Kingsway will continue to maintain class rank internally.** Therefore, if class rank or a decile ranking is *required* by an institution or for a specific scholarship, students and/or parents may inquire through the guidance supervisor. It is also important to mention that high schools that have eliminated class rank report no adverse effect for their students when it comes to the college admissions process or to the awarding of scholarships.

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## IMPROVES ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNITION THROUGH A LATIN HONORS PROGRAM

Moving away from class rank, more specifically no longer highlighting the Top 10 at graduation, does not devalue Kingsway's *Commitment to Excellence*. We recognize the hard work and determination of those who strive to achieve at high levels academically. As noted above, when ranked in descending order, students at the top of the class are often separated by only hundredths of a tenth of a point. Our plan to incorporate a Latin Honors Program, one used by colleges and universities, would continue our celebration and recognition of these high-achieving students.

Those who achieve this prestigious honor will be announced at graduation with a corresponding cord to wear during the ceremony and will have the honor documented in the graduation booklet and on the high school diploma. The Latin Honors Program criteria is below:

- **Summa Cum Laude** – Awarded to students who achieve a *weighted* GPA of 3.90 or higher
- **Magna Cum Laude** – Awarded to students who achieve a *weighted* GPA of 3.70 – 3.89
- **Cum Laude** – Awarded to Students who achieve a *weighted* GPA of 3.50 – 3.69

Therefore, those students who are academically driven, who are internally motivated, and who immerse themselves in rigorous coursework can achieve high distinction and recognition through this Latin Honors Program.

## A LOOK AT THE NEW 10-POINT GRADING SCALE & CORRESPONDING GPA

The new 10-Point Grading Scale and corresponding GPA will begin on September 1, 2020. The chart below demonstrates the conversion from our current 8-Point Scale to the new 10-Point Scale with corresponding GPA equivalents.

Grade	Current 8-Point Scale	New 10-Point Scale	New "Unweighted" GPA	New "Weighted" GPA (Honors = +0.5)	New "Weighted" GPA (AP = +1.0)
A+		97-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
A	92-100	93-96	4.0	4.5	5.0
A-		90-92	3.7	4.2	4.7
B+		87-89	3.3	3.8	4.3
B	83-91	83-86	3.0	3.5	4.0
B-		80-82	2.7	3.2	3.7
C+		77-79	2.3	2.8	3.3
C	74-82	73-76	2.0	2.5	3.0
C-		70-72	1.7	2.2	2.7
D+		67-69	1.3	1.8	2.3
D	65-73	63-66	1.0	1.5	2.0
D-		60-62	0.7	1.2	1.7
F	64 and below	59 and below			

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