

MASSABESIC HIGH SCHOOL

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Prepares respectful, responsible and creative thinkers for success in the global community.

November 21, 2017

Dear Students, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, and School Board Members,

Once again I would like to thank you all for your passion and commitment to find resolve. We have collected, synthesized, and discussed your feedback. We have discussed our thinking and proposed solutions with students and received an overwhelming amount of support that our suggestions meet the needs of our students. I will describe this plan in this letter and as promised we will go over this as well at our **November 27, 2017 meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the auditorium**. Per the recommendation of the students, we will first go over the planned suggestions and we will leave time at the end for those of you that want to discuss the other questions and journey over the past 7 years.

First, let me say as I stated earlier, I believe a 1-4 scoring system can and will be a better way to communicate student learning. Some people say that a number such as an 88 is clearer. Although this number might be easier for us to understand, I don't believe it give us a clearer understanding of a student's learning. Whether we are using a 1-4 or a 0-100 the system is as good as we are clear and consistent with using it. I believe we have made a lot of progress the last couple of years with a 1-4 system. When I asked the students which one they preferred, they replied, "Honestly Mr. Hand, you are never going to make everyone happy either way. As long as it's clear, consistent, and fair it doesn't matter."

As I stated in my last letter to you, it became clear that weighting of accelerated courses and AP courses needs to be factored back into our student's GPA's. We will recommend that a weight be given to student's accelerated and AP courses both now and over the past two years. We will recommend that we continue to weigh accelerated courses at 5% and AP courses at 10%, making the highest attainable course scores of 4.20 and 4.40 respectively. Given the amount of concern about Merit Scholarships and admission to colleges/universities, we will also make class rank available through Guidance. We will show academic recognition through the Cum Laude System. The Student Advisory Council will come up with what the graduation ceremony for the Class of 2019 and beyond will look like.

Along with the class rank and weighting scores, it was also apparent that there was a feeling that our Cum Laude system was more difficult to attain as compared to the previous honors and high honors system. We are now proposing that the following Cum Laude system:

3.2-3.39	Cum Laude
3.4-3.59	Magna Cum Laude
3.6 and above	Summa Cum Laude

We want to honor all student learning. In order to make sure the students taking SRTC, dual enrollment classes and AP courses have the best-fit proficiency score, we will need to convert the scores. This conversion chart is only meant to take a 0-100 score and translate it into a 1-4 score; the intent is *not* to convert the other way. In fact, we often hear about other conversion scales when we bring this up. This chart is simply meant to go in one direction, ie. a student receiving an SRTC grade of 89 would convert to a score of 3.25. A student with an AP score of 89 would convert to a 3.25 and with a 10% weight would result in a score of 3.575. If a student had a 75 which converted to a 2.25, they would still get the credit because the sending school recognizes it that way.

In closing, I believe we all want the same things: for our students to be as college and career ready as possible while having every advantage possible moving forward. It is our intention, after School Board approval, to keep the decisions constant, continue to work towards consistency in scoring/grading, and communicate clearly to you all our scoring guidelines. Along with this letter you will also find the proposed conversion chart, a guide to see how we would determine the GPA, and FAQ's. I look forward to seeing you all on November 27th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James A. Hand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail extending to the right.

James A. Hand