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ACTION REQUESTED

Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

January 13, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Secondary School Principals

From: Erick J. Lang, Associate Superintendent 

Subject: ACTION: Update to Earning High School Credit in Middle School

Key Points

- This memorandum includes one significant change to system guidelines for the earning of high school credit in middle school and restates the original four guidelines for this topic. The original four guidelines are as follows:
 - Students taking high school courses in middle school are required by the Code of Maryland Administrative Regulations (COMAR 13A.03.02.05) and by the Montgomery County Board of Education endorsed staff recommendations to pass the course and the final examination at the end of the second semester in order to earn credit towards high school graduation.
 - Middle school students who pass the first semester of a course, but do not pass the final examination at the end of the second semester, must retake the second semester of the course before they retake the final examination. Middle school students may retake the final examination after retaking the second semester during the regular school day or in a high school summer program between Grades 8 and 9, pending course availability.
 - Students who enter high school without passing the second semester final examination will not receive credit for the course even if they earn a passing grade. Once the student retakes and passes the second semester and the final examination, credit is earned toward graduation and the passing grade will replace the middle school grade on the transcript.
 - In order to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment under these requirements, middle schools are not permitted to administer the final examination after tutoring or make-up sessions offered in lieu of summer school. It is important that all schools comply with this requirement for consistency of instruction and assessment.

- All courses approved for earning high school credit in middle school must follow these procedures, with the exception of the Grade 8 course offering Advanced English. Due to the unique situation for Advanced English, the following separate process for awarding high school credit will be followed:
 - Students must pass the examination at the end of the second semester to earn elective high school credit.
 - In 2009–2010, students must earn a final grade of A or B to be awarded elective high school credit.
 - In 2010–2011, students must earn a final grade of A or B in each semester to be awarded elective high school credit.
 - Students who do not earn an A or B in the course will not receive elective high school credit and their grades will not count toward their high school grade point averages—the course will not be reported on the high school transcript.
- For this semester only, the weight of the examination administered in January 2010 should be determined by the school as part of the quarter grade. The examination should count for no more than 20 percent, but not less than 10 percent of a student's second quarter grade. Beginning with the June 2010 examination administration, there will be a semester examination each semester that will count for 25 percent of the student's semester grade, following the practice of other high school courses.
- Attachment A is a draft letter to parents who are considering enrolling their child in a high school course in middle school.
- Attachment B is a draft letter to parents with a child currently enrolled in a high school course in middle school.

Action for Middle School Principals

- Provide a copy of the letter to parents and students to ensure they understand the implications of taking a high school credit course in middle school.
- Communicate this information to parents, students, and appropriate staff members, including counselors and resource teachers, especially at the time of course registration (Attachment A) and immediately to parents with children currently enrolled in Advanced English 8 (Attachment B).
- If a student fails a course, communicate in writing the options for retaking the course and the implications for the student's transcript.

Action for High School Principals

- Communicate this information to appropriate staff members, including counselors and resource teachers.

Questions

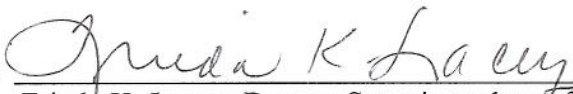
- Contact Mrs. Linda E. Ferrell, director, Middle School Instruction and Achievement, at 301-517-5007 or via e-mail.

EJL:smw

Attachments

Copy to:

Dr. Stetson
Community Superintendents
Mrs. Blum
Ms. Brown
Dr. Carlson
Mr. Creel
Mr. Depola
Directors of School Performance
Mrs. Ferrell
Mr. Fliakas
Secondary School Administrative Secretaries
Ms. Seppy
Mr. Shea
Dr. Newman
Mr. Prouty

Approved: 
Frieda K. Lacey, Deputy Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL NAME
DATE

Dear Parent or Guardian:

If you are considering enrolling your son or daughter in high school courses while in middle school, please be aware of the following information that may affect your child's high school transcript.

Credit and grades for middle school students taking a high school course are awarded based on the following:

- Students must pass the course each semester.
- Students must pass the final examination at the end of the second semester.

Students who meet these criteria, by earning an A, B, C, or D, will receive high school credit and will have these grades count towards their Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) high school grade point average (GPA). If your child is not satisfied with the grade earned, he or she may retake the course in Grade 7 or Grade 8 if it is available, or they may retake the course in high school.

All courses approved for earning high school credit in middle school follow the procedures outlined above, except for Advanced English in Grade 8. Since students may not be able to retake Advanced English, high school credit for this course will only be awarded based on the following:

- Students must pass the examination at the end of the second semester and must earn a final grade of A or B in each semester to be awarded high school credit.
- Students who do not earn an A or B in the course will not receive high school credit and their grades will not count toward their high school grade point averages—the course will not be reported on the high school transcript.

A high school course will be recorded automatically on the high school transcript, once a student has entered high school. Students receive their first copy of their high school transcript in March of their Grade 9 year and receive updates throughout high school. College admissions offices receive copies of student transcripts when students apply to colleges in their senior year. The transcript shows credits students have earned in high school courses, their cumulative MCPS GPA, and a weighted MCPS GPA. MCPS GPAs are calculated on a four-point scale, awarding four points for an A, three points for a B, two points for a C, 1 point for a D, and 0 points for an E, using the final semester grade for each course. A quality, or extra point, is awarded for honors, Advanced Placement, and advanced-level classes for some final grades. Grades of A, B, and C in honors high school courses earn a quality point toward a student's weighted MCPS GPA. **It is important to note that many competitive universities do not use the MCPS calculated GPAs.** Instead, they use their own calculations based on the profile of students they are seeking.

Your student's counselor has details about earning high school credit in middle school. If you have questions, please contact the school's counseling office. Thank you for being an active partner with us in your child's education.

Sincerely,

Principal

SCHOOL NAME
DATE

Dear Parent or Guardian:

If your child is currently enrolled in high school courses while in middle school, please be aware of the following information that may affect your child's high school transcript.

Credit and grades for middle school students taking a high school course are awarded based on the following:

- Students must pass the course each semester.
- Students must pass the final examination at the end of the second semester.

Students who meet these criteria, by earning an A, B, C, or D, will receive high school credit and will have these grades count towards their Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) high school grade point average (GPA). If your child is not satisfied with the grade earned, he or she may retake the course in Grade 7 or Grade 8 if it is available, or they may retake the course in high school.

All courses approved for earning high school credit in middle school follow the procedures outlined above, except for Advanced English in Grade 8. Since your child is currently enrolled in Advanced English in Grade 8 and may not be able to retake Advanced English, high school credit for this course will only be awarded based on the following:

- Students must pass the examination at the end of the second semester and must earn an A or B final grade in each semester to be awarded high school credit.
- Students who do not earn an A or B in the course will not receive high school credit and their grades will not count toward their high school grade point averages—the course will not be reported on the high school transcript.

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