



St. Mary, a Christ-centered community rooted in Catholic tradition, empowers students academically, encourages selfless sacrifice, and nurtures learners to become a more positive influence on others.

August 19, 2015

Dear St. Mary Middle and High School Parents and Guardians,

It has been a wonderful start to another school year. Already the students and staff are settling into the pace of "school". Now that we are back into the swing of school, it is time to have conversations about our current grading scale.

At the June St. Mary Education Committee (SMEC) meeting, several committee members asked if the grading scale could be adjusted from the current 93-100 as an "A" scale to become 90-100 as an "A" allowing students more opportunity to increase KEES scholarship dollars and to stay competitive with our neighboring school districts. It was decided to bring this topic forward at the beginning of this school year, as the summer time does not lend itself for good information gathering with families in and out of town.

St. Mary is known for rigorous instruction and expectations with students leaving well-prepared and college/career ready. Changes to a grading scale do not affect instructional rigor and high academic expectations in the classrooms.

Currently, the grading scale is as follows:

93-100	=	A	=	4.0 points
85-92	=	B	=	3.0 points
77-84	=	C	=	2.0 points
70-76	=	D	=	1.0 points
Below 70	=	F	=	0.0 points

The quality point system uses the cumulative average of grade points earned during freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years according to a four (4) point scale. Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual credit courses are multiplied by a factor of 1.1. Letter grades are the only determining factor in computing the grade point average (GPA). As a point of information, GPA's are not factored in determining valedictorian or salutatorian status. Those designations are determined by the cumulative numeric average of the student's high school career.

The grading scale being considered is as follows:

Scale		Weights for GPA	AP/Dual Credit Weights for GPA's	Description
98-100	A+	4.0	4.4	Truly exceptional
94-97	A	4.0	4.4	Superior work
90-93	A-	3.67	4.037	Outstanding work
87-89	B+	3.33	3.663	Very good
83-86	B	3.00	3.3	Good
80-82	B-	2.67	2.937	More than acceptable
77-79	C+	2.33	2.563	Acceptable, meets all basic standards
74-76	C	2.0	2.2	Acceptable, meets most basic standards
71-73	C-	1.67	1.837	Acceptable, meets some basic standards
68-70	D	1.0	1.1	Minimally passing
67-0	F	0.0	0.0	Failure

The current grading scale offers little room for a student to recognize progress or growth during the school year. The letter grade "B" remains 3.0 points regardless of progress made from an 85 to a 92. In the grading scale being discussed, a student could move from a "B" to a "B+" and evidence progress in the quality point attained, thus improving the GPA. The ability to progress within a letter grade scale increases student motivation to achieve a higher grade within that particular letter grade. For some students, earning a 98 "A" in a class sometimes is diminished when a 93 is also currently counted as an "A" grade.

Many St. Mary students take dual credit courses their junior and senior years. The numeric grade is what is transferred to the high school transcripts. However, in our current grading system a 92 is an "A" in the college course, but a "B" for St. Mary High School. The grading scale being considered would allow those scores to be an "A" for both transcripts, with no adjustment between grading scales. This applies to "A", "B", and "C" grades. Students must earn a "B" or higher to continue taking dual credit courses per postsecondary institution requirements.

The St. Mary faculty expressed concern about moving a passing grade from 70 to 60 using the 10-point scale. Ensuring rigor and high expectations of our instructional staff and students, minimizing the point range for earning a "D" and lowering the passing grade to become 68 was a good compromise should the grading scale change.

More scholarship dollars for students who desire to use KEES money at their post-secondary institution of choice are available when changing the grading scale. The Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship (KEES Money) was designed to enable high school students to earn scholarships for postsecondary study. The program contains incentives designed to award continued achievement as students progress through high school. Program Description Effective July 1, 1998, high school students began to earn scholarship dollars (called the "base amount") for each year in which they attained at least a 2.5 GPA.

Listed below are the base scholarship amounts for each GPA. Students earn an award for each year they attain a 2.5 GPA or higher. These amounts are based on the yearly GPA, not the cumulative GPA.

GPA	Amount	GPA	Amount
2.50	\$125.00	3.30	\$325.00
2.60	\$150.00	3.40	\$350.00
2.70	\$175.00	3.50	\$375.00
2.75	\$187.50	3.60	\$400.00
2.80	\$200.00	3.70	\$425.00
2.90	\$225.00	3.75	\$437.50
3.00	\$250.00	3.80	\$450.00
3.10	\$275.00	3.90	\$475.00
3.20	\$300.00	4.00	\$500.00
3.25	\$312.50		

The information above is to assist you in determining your preference for the grading scale used. If a decision is made to change grading scales to be implemented this year, the decision must be made by Labor Day. Transcripts sent to postsecondary institutions would include information on the current grading scale and the grading scale change along with the date of implementation for the system.

We are also sending this information to you electronically through Constant Contact. An email is being sent to parents and guardians with a link to a survey that will provide input on changing the grading system or remaining with the current grading system. We welcome your input and ask that you respond before August 26, 2015. SMEC will discuss and determine changing the grading scale before Labor Day.

Many parents have shared their thoughts about a revised grading scale with our administrators and SMEC members in the past few months. Thank you for your consideration and input.

Sincerely,


Eleanor Spry, Director