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Dear Parents of Upper School Students:

This letter will introduce you to some changes in academic policies for the upper school that Harding Academy will be making for this fall.

You may see the complete document that outlines these changes [here](#). This following list is a short summary.

- The grade scale has been changed to a modified 10-point scale, and percentages will now appear on the report cards.
- There is no D+ or D- in the scale, only D.
- Semester averages will now be calculated based on the percentages—each quarter grade counts 40% and the semester examination counts 20%.
- The twelve-point scale we have used for over 30 years for calculating cumulative GPAs has been replaced with a weighted four-point scale.
- Honors classes in grades 9-12 will receive an additional ½ point each semester when cumulative GPAs are calculated. AP classes will continue to receive an additional point per semester.
- The class offerings designated as “honors” have been expanded considerably. All of our classes are college preparatory classes. Many of them have been honors quality all along but until now have not carried the honors designation.
- For students in the classes of 2014, 2015, and 2016 who previously (grades 9 or higher) took classes newly designated as honors classes, we will go back and add the extra points retroactively.
- We will not go back into previous records and change letter grades based on the new grade scale. The new grade scale takes effect in the fall of 2013.
- The class of 2017 has new requirements for the various kinds of diplomas offered.
- Applying to a four-year college is now a requirement for graduation from Harding Academy.

Harding Academy is a college-preparatory school, and we are committed to preparing our students to be successful in four-year colleges. We are making these changes in our academic policies in order to give our students every advantage in the competition for college acceptance, scholarship awards, and other honors.

Because letter grades and grade point averages are key factors that colleges consider, we want to allow our students to be as competitive as possible. The world of grades is not an apples-to-apples comparison. A student who makes an A at one school may be considerably less capable than a student who makes an B at another—but the A student often gets the scholarship.

We are committed to educating students well and to giving them every opportunity for success. We are not making it easier to make an A; we are leveling the playing field.

I hope you will read the full Academic Revisions document on our website [here](#). Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,

*Melanie P. Semore*

Head of Upper School