

## **GPA and Class Rank Input Survey Results**

### Overview of the Survey

In May 2009, Student Congress, a group of 200 high school students, presented a recommendation to the Henrico County Public Schools School Board to change how grade point average (GPA) is computed at the high school level. The School Board requested the Division of Instruction to gather input from parents and high school faculty and administrators before changing the policy. Additionally, Student Congress recommended discontinuing ranking students by their GPA and the School Board asked for parent and staff input on this recommendation, as well.

To collect input on these recommendations, an online survey was created and posted on the Henrico County Public Schools webpage from September 21- 30, 2009. Parents were informed about the survey through a variety of media, including a backpack letter sent home with each middle and high school student, a Connect Ed message, Twitter, and newspaper announcements. High school faculty and administrators were asked to participate in the survey through email notification.

### Participants

There were 2,157 respondents who completed the survey, including 1,664 middle and/or high school parents, 352 high school faculty and administrators, and 141 other respondents. Respondents who identified themselves as “other” included students, grandparents, elementary school parents, other school division staff, and community members.

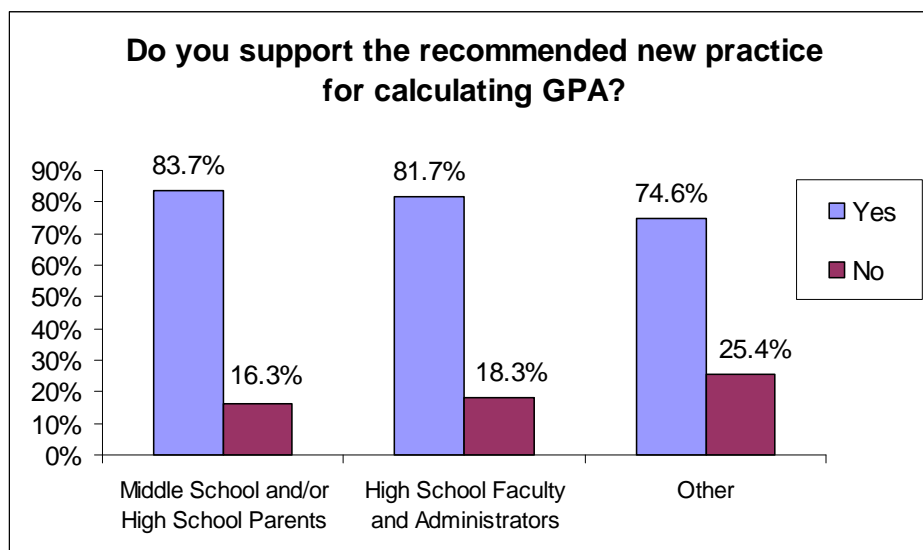
	Frequency	Percent
Middle and/or High School Parents	1664	77.1
High School Faculty and Administrators	352	16.3
Other	141	6.5
Total	2157	100.0

Of the middle and high school parents who participated in the survey, 43.3% were middle school parents and 55.5% were high school parents. It is important to note for later analyses that some parents were high school staff members and some parents had both a middle and high school student.

		If you are a HCPS parent, where do your children currently attend school?	
		Middle School	High School
Middle and/or High School Parents	N	924	1151
	%	55.5%	69.2%
High School Faculty and Administrators	N	9	46
	%	2.6%	13.1%
Total	N	933	1197
	%	43.3%	55.5%

*Results for the Recommendation of Adopting a New Practice for Calculating GPA*

Overall, 81.5% (1,759) of the respondents supported the recommended new practice for calculating GPA. Analysis by respondent group revealed that 83.7% of middle and/or high school parents, 81.7% of high school faculty and administrators, and 74.6% of other respondents supported the recommended practice. Of the parent respondents, 85.4% of middle school parents and 82.4% of high school parents supported the recommendation.

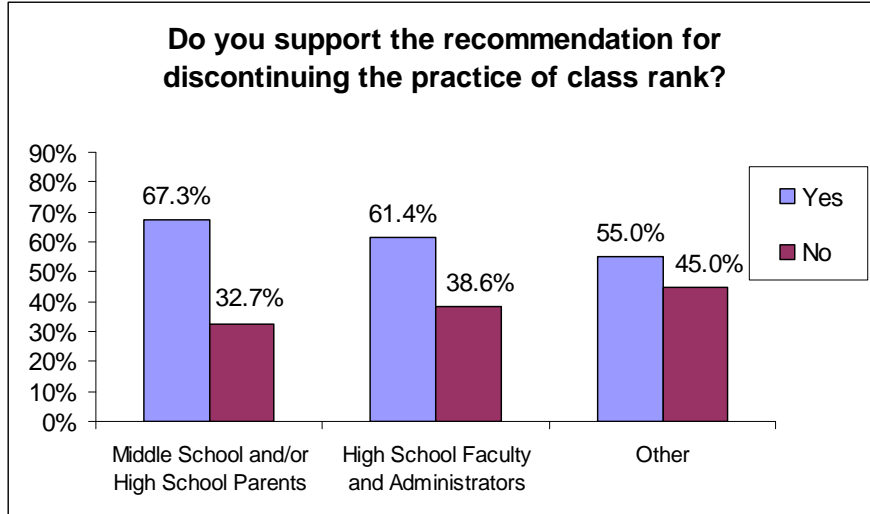


Respondents were also asked to provide any thoughts they would like to share about the current practice or recommended new practice for calculating GPA. A content analysis of the qualitative comments was conducted and the results are as follows:

<b>Do you have any thoughts you would like to share about the current practice or recommended new practice for calculating GPA?</b>		
<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>% of Comments</b>
Supports the recommended practice for calculating GPA ( <i>p. 5-19</i> )	347	51.6%
Does not support the recommended practice for calculating GPA ( <i>p. 20-31</i> )	140	20.8%
Proposes a different method for calculating GPA ( <i>p. 32-34</i> )	38	5.7%
Proposes no GPA weighting for advanced courses ( <i>p. 35-38</i> )	30	4.5%
Would like the School Board to consider a different grading scale ( <i>p. 39-40</i> )	29	4.3%
Poses a question about the recommended practice for calculating GPA ( <i>p. 41-43</i> )	25	3.7%
Believes AP and IB should not be weighted the same ( <i>p. 44-45</i> )	18	2.7%
Other comments ( <i>p. 46-48</i> )	45	6.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Results for the Recommendation of Discontinuing the Practice of Class Rank*

Overall, 64.0% (1,380) of the respondents supported the recommendation of discontinuing the practice of class rank. Analysis by respondent group revealed that 67.3% of middle and/or high school parents, 61.4% of high school faculty and administrators, and 55.0% of other respondents supported the recommendation. Of the parent respondents, 68.5% of middle school parents and 66.3% of high school parents supported the recommendation to discontinue class rank.



Respondents were also asked to provide any thoughts they would like to share about continuing or discontinuing the practice of class rank. A content analysis of the qualitative comments was conducted and the results are as follows:

<b>Do you have any thoughts you would like to share about continuing or discontinuing the practice of class rank?</b>		
<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>% of Comments</b>
Does not support the recommendation to discontinue class rank (p. 49-66)	277	40.9%
Supports the recommendation to discontinue class rank (p. 67-81)	276	40.7%
Proposes an alternative to class rank (p. 82-84)	32	4.7%
Poses a question about the recommendation to discontinue class rank (p. 85-86)	25	3.7%
Would like additional input from college admission offices (p. 87-88)	23	3.4%
Undecided about whether to support the recommendation/Does not have enough information (p. 89)	11	1.6%
Other comments (p. 90-91)	34	5.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>100%</b>

Summary of the Findings

In summary, the overall majority of the survey respondents supported the recommended calculation practice for GPA and the proposal to eliminate the use of class rank. Respondents who supported the recommended calculation practice for GPA

referenced supporting the recommendation for a simpler calculation method, aligning GPA practices with other school divisions, and rewarding rigor of the advanced classes, to name a few. Respondents who did not support the recommendation referred to grade inflation, stress on students to take advanced courses, and disagreement with the values assigned to AP/IB or Honor's courses in the proposal, to name a few. For the recommendation to eliminate class rank, comments in support of the recommendation discussed negative consequences to continuing with the use of class ranking, including class rank not accurately reflecting student achievement, negative competition among students, and stress. Comments provided in opposition to the recommendation, included prepares students for real world competition, penalizes high performing students, and needed for college applications.

Comments from the open-ended survey questions, received emails, and telephone communication are included on the following pages of the report. All comments are verbatim from the survey.