



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Molly M. Spearman
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: April 18, 2016

RE: Implementation of a 10-Point Grading Scale

On Tuesday, April 12, 2016, the State Board of Education (SBE) unanimously voted to implement a 10-point grading scale effective in the 2016–17 school year. The new uniform grading scale is accompanied by a new [conversion chart](#) that will also be implemented in the 2016–17 school year. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will be providing professional development to districts this spring and summer; however, the details provided below will assist you in your early preparations.

Grades for high school courses in PowerSchool will be locked and stored at the end of the 2015–16 school year under the 7-point scale. Summer school grades for 2016 will also be entered and stored on the 7-point scale. Effective August 2016 the 10-point scale will be imported into PowerSchool. Beginning with the 2016–17 school year, all districts will implement the 10-point scale in courses for high school credit.

PowerSchool will store all grades and associated quality points going forward with the new 10-point scale. For current juniors, at the end of the 2016–17 school year, PowerSchool will average the quality points scored on the 7-point scale with the quality points earned on the 10-point scale to determine a student's GPA. The following school years (2017-18 and 2018-19) will use the same system for current sophomores and freshmen. Freshmen entering in school year 2016–17 (class of 2019-20) will enter under the 10-point scale. Any high school credits earned in middle school will follow the lock and store system described above. Although the new 10-point scale is only mandated for grades 9–12, all middle school students taking courses for high school credit will be graded on the 10-point scale.

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Determining grading scales for grades 3–8 remains a local decision; however, the SCDE recommends implementation of the 10-point scale in middle school when it does not impede innovation and personalized learning. Local boards of education need to examine their current board policy for consideration of revision.

Districts need to begin preparing for implementation this spring. The SCDE will offer training to PowerSchool administrators, secondary school counselors, and principals. The SCDE will also host a statewide faculty meeting so teachers receive the information needed relative to their roles in implementing the new grading scale.

Schools need to begin thinking about the implications for programs of study, student handbooks, and criteria for activities such as National Honor Society and Beta Club. Communication within the district and with external stakeholders is important. Teachers' grading practices and course syllabi will need to be revised and communicated to students and parents. Communicating with parents and the community may begin this spring with letters in final report cards and then in back-to-school packets at the beginning of the new school year. School newsletters, websites, social media, PTO, and SIC meetings are also great ways to communicate the change to the 10-point grading scale.

This is an exciting time in South Carolina; implementing a 10-point grading scale gives our students a fair opportunity to compete for college admissions and scholarships. Thank you for supporting the SCDE and the SBE as we work to support you in preparing students to be college and career ready.