



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Minutes  
Board of Education  
February 10, 2003

The members of the Board of Education met for a Committee Meeting on Monday, February 10, 2003 at 7 p.m. at the Don Stroh Administration Center, 5606 South 147th Street. The discussion topics included weighted grades and a review of the Board initiatives and the Superintendent's goals.

PRESENT: Jean Stothert, Mike Pate, Brad Burwell, Linda Poole Julie Johnson, and Mike Kennedy.

Others in attendance were Keith Lutz, Martha Bruckner, Judy Porter, and other administrators

One board member mentioned that the current grading system allowed a student with a GPA of 3.75, who was taking 8 classes to have a higher class rank than a student with a GPA of 4.0, who was taking 7 classes. Another board member suggested that if honors courses were weighted, then AP

advisement system is meant to help. A counselor suggested that if kids were proactive and motivated, they would search out the information.

One board member mentioned that the current system of mark points honors quantity instead of quality and punishes students for taking a study hall. Another board member mentioned that the stress seems to be worst at the freshman level, and that by ted seni [(fn)shby2p026t132-135917411(15)10]

## Weighted Grades

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
February 10, 2003

**BACKGROUND:** In 1998, a committee comprised of 57 members including curriculum representatives, high school administrators, 10 parents, 5 business representatives and 16 high school

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TIMELINE: It was recommended that the new recommendation be applied to the

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## CONSIDERATIONS

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**AGENDA SUMMARY SHEET**

**AGENDA ITEM:** Weighted Grades and Grade Point Average

**MEETING DATE:** October 21, 2002

**DEPARTMENT:** Educational Services

**TITLE AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION:** Weighted Grades and Grade Point Average

**TIMELINE:** It was recommended that the new recommendation be applied to the graduating class of 2004 and that the classes of 2001, 2002, and 2003 would retain the current system of calculating class rank. Further the application of weighted grades to International Baccalaureate classes would be effective in 2002-03. The International Baccalaureate recommendation was delayed one year based on year of approval for the International Baccalaureate program in Millard. The new recommendations have not yet been fully implemented.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Copy of the report given to the Board on January 3, 2000 – Weighted Grades, Grade Point Average, and Class Rank
- Approval of Policy 6330 - Grades and Rule 6330.1 Grading Guidelines for Third - Twelfth Grade (April 24,2000)



Example #2 who earned 25 credits with the 4.40 GPA would be ranked ahead of Example #1 who earned 30 credits and received a 4.33 GPA.

Other examples can be but these two illustrate the concerns that have been expressed by parents, students, faculty, and administrators,

Concerns:

1. The high schools and the district want students to maximize their educational opportunities by taking as many classes as possible.
2. The current system appears to penalize students who wish to take electives
3. A pattern has been detected in

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# Weighted Grades, Grade Point Average, and Class Rank

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Example #1

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**Weighted Grades, Grade Point Average, and Class Rank**  
**(Student/Parent Information Sheet for Class of 2004 & Beyond)**

Below is the Millard Public schools' Marking System. This system is us0 17.12v 695.522

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In this scenario, Example

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***Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment***

***Grades***

**6330**

*The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement student grading guidelines. The objectives of grading guidelines shall be to quantify and report the academic achievement of each student. Grades should fairly reflect the level of student achievement in*



***Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment***

***Grading Guidelines for Third -- Twelfth Grade***

**6330.1**

*The*








# ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES 2002-2003

## Computer Science

260 Advanced Placement Computer Science - 11/12 Y

## English

048 Advanced Placement English – 12 Y

## Foreign Language

119 Advanced Placement German – 12 Y

139 Advanced Placement French – 12 Y

159 Advanced Placement **Spanish** – 12 Y

165 Advanced Placement **Latin** – 11/12 Y

## Mathematics

243 'Advanced Placement Statistics -

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INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE CLASSES 2002-2003

Art

732 IB Visual Arts SL – 11/12 Y

733 IB Visual Arts HL – 11 Y

734 IB Visual Arts HL –

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**ABBREVIATED COURSE TITLES AND NOTES**

**2002 - 2003**

- Arch Drft Des: Architectural Drafting and Design
- Alg Essen One year equals one semester Algebra
- IBS: Introduction to the Behavioral Sciences
- Int Comp Sci: Introduction to Computer Science
- Int Design: Interior Design in the Home
- Res Meth: Research Methods
- Res Drft & Des Residential Drafting and Design
- Res: Level II Resource classes
- SpRd/StRef: Speed Reading Study and Reference Skills
- Hon Honors Courses for the Gifted

'Millard North High School is an 1915.88 c 52.3 Tr 7c 7.912 0 7nÁ24 438.599 54.9 59 (mpTc 3.441Bod ('M6752 0 Taffing ))TJ -007288Tc 3.441 ationesid-38(Association Taffing 101f -0.0149 Tc 4.2973ü7o5.88

**COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL DATA**

Millard North High School is one of three public high schools in Millard, a suburban, predominantly residential district in west Omaha (Metro area population 600,000). The Millard School District has the reputation of being among the finest in the state; students consistently score high on national tests and 83% go on to higher education. With the community expectation of

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# ard West High School

## **DISTRICT INFORMATION:**

Millard is an independent school system in southwest Omaha, Nebraska. A predominantly suburban, residential district serving approximately 19,000 students including twenty-two elementary schools, six middle schools and three high schools. Millard Public Schools has the reputation of being among the finest in the state; students consistently score well on national tests and nearly 85% of the students go on to higher education. With the community expectation of higher education, the curriculum emphasizes skills in English, math, science, social studies and foreign languages. We also have very strong vocational and tech prep programs. The district has AA accreditation, the highest recognition awarded by the Nebraska Department of Education. Millard West is also accredited by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges.

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION:**

Millard West opened in August 1995 to serve the rapidly growing western area of the district.

## **Profile**

**5710 South 176th Avenue  
Omaha, NE 68135-2268**

**Telephone (402) 894-6015  
Fax (402) 894-6080.**

**ACT/ SAT School Code 281-723**

cc

**Principal:**

Dr. Richard Kolowski

Assistant Principals:

Pupil Services

Dr. Kathy Ryan

Activities

Mr. Steve Joekel

Curriculum

Dr. Deb Kolc

Discipline / Leadership

Mr. Harry Grimminger

Dean of Students

Mrs. Stacy Longacre

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Counselors

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# Weighted Grades Survey

College/Institution

University of Kansas							
* depends on department							
■ "What role do weighted grades play in the review of an admissions application?"							
2. Are applications positively influenced if the high schools don't weigh honors classes?							
3. Do you reconfigure high school GPA's to the same scale?							
4. Must a							

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**Harvard -**

Q. Are there secondary school course requirements for admission?

A. There is no single academic path we expect all students to follow, but the strongest applicants take the most rigorous secondary school curricula available to them. An ideal four-year preparatory program includes four years of English, with extensive practice in writing; four years of math; four years of science: biology, chemistry, physics, and an advanced course in one of these subjects; three years of history, including American and European history; and four years of one foreign language. [Back to top](#)

Q. Is it to a student's advantage to take advanced, accelerated or honors courses?

A. Yes. Although schools provide different opportunities, students should pursue the most demanding college-

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**Stanford –**

Academic Preparation

More than 5,000 high schools are represented in our applicant

## UCLA –

Q: What are the average GPA and SAT scores for freshmen admitted to UCLA?

A: These statistics and many more are available on our Fall 2001 Freshman Profile.

This is often the first question prospective freshmen ask us. Many students instinctively focus on GPA and test scores without fully understanding how these numbers are used in our admission process. These statistics are only two of the elements we use in our academic review; we carefully balance many factors to gain a complete sense of an applicant's achievements.

Here are some of the additional criteria we will use to evaluate your application:

The quality, content, and level of college prep courses you have taken throughout your entire high school program, especially coursework completed beyond the minimum courses required for eligibility to the University of California.

The strength of your senior year coursework.

The number of and performance in Advanced Placement [AP], International Baccalaureate [IB], school-designated honors, and college courses you have taken, particularly in your junior and senior years.

The degree to which you have challenged yourself within the context of your own high school.

Q: Which counts more in admission decisions--grades or test scores?

A: GPA--combined with the quantity and level of your high school courses--is of primary importance [a strong GPA, for instance, on an academic program that lacks honors level courses or does not include courses well beyond those needed for basic UC eligibility, will not likely result in admission]. That being said, test scores are still an important element.

First and foremost, you should take the most challenging courses you are able to handle. This is also the best way to prepare for your standardized tests. It is also a good idea to be prepared to take the tests more than once--in other words, don't wait until your senior year. That way, if you do not perform your best on some tests, you have a chance to retake them in the fall of your senior year.

We also

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The benefit of an AP/IB course is that it is part of a nationally standardized program culminating in an



NACAC

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P I I I I F T N





## ADMISSION TRENDS

(Continued *from page 5*)

decision plans noted an increase in ED applications. It is important to remember, however, that only 18 and •wser,cecesion

### **Full Report**

NACAC will release the full research report in early January, 2003. Visit [www.nacac.com/research.html](http://www.nacac.com/research.html) to view a copy of the full report and for copies of previous surveys.

Contact [research@nacac.com](mailto:research@nacac.com) with questions or requests for more information.









### **Summary of AP English and AP Foreign Language Course Histories**

The following provides course histories and AP testing information on students enrolled in AP English and AP Foreign Language courses during the 2001 – 2002 school year. This is the latest year that AP test information could be gathered on these students.

#### **AP English:**

There were 240 students who took AP English, 67 of whom took the AP English exam receiving an average test score of 3.4. The average grade for all students enrolled in AP English













**Dr. Rick Werkheiser – Millard North High School**

It appears that non-weighted honor courses allow students to enroll in honor courses for the right reasons – to be challenged and to determine strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes without the pressure or focus of the weighted grade. Students are not enticed to enroll in honor courses only because of the weighted grade. In the Millard Public Schools, there is a continuum or sequence of courses where honor courses prepare the student for the more rigorous AP or IB courses, which are weighted. No universal standards exist for honor courses from district to district where national standards exist for

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**Notes on Counselor interviews – Weighted grades**

North HS –

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**Weighted Grades: Student Interview Questions (Currently enrolled in Honors,  
not planning on taking AP courses)**

1. What Honors English courses have you taken to date?

Honors English 9: Yes (SHS) 1,1,1,1,1

(WHS)

4. If you have not taken Honor English 9 and/or 10, would the availability of weighted grades (other than AP/IB courses) have influenced the selection of classes you have taken during your high school career? If

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To: Judy Porter  
Fr: Martha Bruckner  
Date: December 27, 2002  
Re: Review of articles related to weighted grades and grade point average.

I have reviewed many articles related to the issues of weighted grades and grade point average, and have decided that it might be most helpful to give you a summary

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O'Connell said, she would be more eager to take advanced classes.

"Honors students do a lot more than in regular classes," O'Connell said. "If we have to do more work, there should be more incentive to want to do it. It just doesn't seem fair that we get the same number of points on our GPA for doing so much more work."

St. Tammany Parish School Board officials will assemble a committee of parents, teachers and administrators this month to study whether the district should adopt a weighted-grade system that would award extra quality points to students enrolled in Advanced Placement, honors and gifted courses.

A level field

Since 1992, when the School Board did away with weighted grades and initiated a lower grading scale for all classes, students at the north shore's seven public high schools have been able to earn the same number of quality points — 4.0 for an A, 3.0 for a B, and so forth — for each class, regardless of its difficulty level.

The change came after some parents and administrators complained that the weighting system was biased against students in regular classes, who would always be outranked by pupils who used weighted courses to inflate their GPAs.

While St. Tammany is considering returning to weighted grades, however, school officials in St. John the Baptist Parish are doing away with their weighted-grading system for the coming school year, saying inflated scores have hurt students who tried to earn scholarship money through Louisiana's Tuition Opportunity Program for Students.

An informal survey of the state's 66 school systems conducted by St. Tammany administrators found that 35 districts did not award extra points for hard courses during the past school year. Fifteen, including those in St. Bernard and Jefferson parishes, used a 5.0 scale for Advanced Placement, honors or gifted classes, while six districts offered different grading scales in those courses.

The rest designated advanced classes on report cards or added a set number of points to final grades in tough courses.

Weighted scale spreading

Nationwide, school districts are increasingly adopting weighted-grade systems, said Gail Downs, who studies the issue at the Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine's College of Education and Human Development.

The trend has been driven mostly by parents of high-achieving kids, who see unfairness in a grading system that offers the same credit to students in regular and remedial classrooms that their kids earn in rigorous, college-level courses.

It has been buttressed by students who hope a high GPA will help them earn private and public scholarship dollars, despite concerns such as those in St. John the Baptist Parish.

Gayle Sloan, St.

at Emory University in Atlanta.

"Obviously, with 10,000 applications for freshman admissions, all with different grading scales, for our staff who are reading the files, it's just easier to look across the board and it all means the same thing," said Jordan.

Weighted grades have helped good students get into colleges and universities that do not refigure grades but instead look at class rank and weighted GPA, Downs said.

"The person with the weighted grades so much more often gets accepted to these schools, which are usually elite universities, than the person with the unweighted grade because the admissions





Music education enriches students academically and personally but may cost them their class rank—and possibly the competition for valedictorian.


**W**eighted high school grade point averages (GPAs)



# Occasional Paper no. 35

by Gail C. Downs, M.S.  
Center for Research and Evaluation

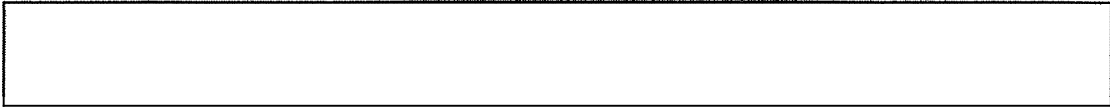
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and the Penquis Superintendents' Association

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# Penquis Superintendents Association Research Cooperative

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Occasional Paper No. 35

# Weighted Grades: A Conundrum for Secondary Schools

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College of Education & Human Development  
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June 2000

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**The Occasional Paper Series** is intended to provide educators and policymakers in Maine with information that can assist them as they address the complex problems confronting their communities, education systems, or students. Papers are distributed periodically as topics vital to educational improvement are addressed by faculty and graduate students at the University of Maine. The opinions and information obtained in the Occasional Paper Series are the authors' and do not necessarily represent those of the University of Maine or the College of Education & Human Development.

**The Center for Research and Evaluation** is a nonprofit research unit within the College of Education & Human Development.



## **Weighted Grades: A Conundrum for Secondary Schools**

### **Introduction**

Maine high schools, as well as secondary schools throughout the nation, have been grappling with the issue of how best to assign grades. Developing an appropriate grading system has become paramount in Maine since the University of Maine instituted a program that makes a full tuition scholarship available to the two highest ranked students in their senior classes. The scholarship is awarded to students who enroll at the Orono Campus following graduation from high school. If the recipient maintains a **3.0** grade point average, the award continues for four years, providing a substantial financial benefit.

These high stakes have Maine college-bound students searching for strategies that will give them the highest rank in class possible. School administrators are being pressured to assign "weighted" values to more rigorous classes so that students enrolled in these classes would earn more quality points toward their grade point averages than students enrolled in average classes. School administrators, parents, teachers, and students are **struggling** to develop fair and equitable grading systems for their districts. However, what is fair and equitable?

### **Overview**

About half the school systems in the country are currently assigning weighted grades and the number is increasing (Manzo, 1998). When computing a student's grade point average (GPA), different school systems may assign from four to eight points for an earned "A" in a comparable Advanced Placement (AP) English class. Furthermore, schools that do weight other types of





**Table 1**


In order to illustrate how weighted grades can make a significant difference in a student's ~~MC~~

computing a student's GPA. Although satisfactory completion of health and

### **Other strategies and systems**

A 1983 National Association of Secondary School Principals study reported that 73% of schools used "all" courses in computing GPA; the most frequent course exception being physical education.

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other courses would be included to meet minimums for each semester. Although both weighted and non-weighted

Talley and Mohr (1993) reported that 74% of surveyed private college admission directors said that students with weighted grades on their transcripts have no advantage over students whose transcripts do not include weighted grades. However, a comparison of students with the same basic transcript show that the student with weighted grades was chosen over the student with non-weighted grades 76% of the time. Responses from 559 college admission directors from private and public four-year undergraduate institutions express their preferences regarding grade weighting:

- ◆ 33% prefer non-weighted grades
- ◆ 27% prefer quality points added to honors and AP courses
- ◆ 22% prefer specific point values for different levels of courses
- ◆ 15% prefer that honors and AP courses be multiplied by a specific factor
- ◆ 3% had no preference

Of the 74% that reported using students' GPAs in computing freshman profiles, 47.5% reported using weighted grades in the computation while 48.1% used non-weighted grades; 4.4% use both.

### **Legal implications**

Both the University of California and California State University systems add one point to non-weighted honors and AP courses when calculating the GPA for applicants. The median GPA for students admitted to UCLA and UC Berkeley is over 4.0 - a score impossible for students to attain if their schools have no honors or AP courses. Students with little access to AP courses are competing for admission against students whose GPAs are increased because of weighted grades; these students are clearly at a disadvantage.

Inglewood High, a California school that enrolls approximately 2000 students, most of whom are either Latino or African American, until recently offered just three AP courses. About 10 miles away, Beverly Hills High School offered more than a dozen

ACLU claims these students should not be denied the ability to compete equally for admission to California's elite universities (Hill, 2000). The charge, "denying students equal and adequate access to AP courses" can be interpreted to mean "denying students equal opportunity for college admission and for scholarships." Is the real issue

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little incentive to set a

nonweighted grades beginning next fall.

"Some students and parents had concerns that they might not be as competitive because other schools weighted the grades but we didn't," said Gregory C. Eckles, the district's director of secondary schools.

Weighted grades may also provide more incentive for students to push themselves harder academically, some students say. In an unweighted system, a student who knows he can do better in a regular class *may* not take honors classes for fear of getting lower grades.

Andy Howard, who will be a senior at Greenwood Community High School near Indianapolis in the fall, said his GPA has suffered for his decision to take honors English and calculus, which have earned him B's. In his class of 200 students, Mr. Howard is ranked 28th.

"There are a few people above me in rank who haven't taken honors courses. They just don't want to work," he said. "I could easily have gotten A's in regular English."

### **Valedictory Umbrella**

The numbers game has become an increasingly touchy one. Battles with students and parents, which have periodically ended up in court, are causing many schools to stop ranking students or bestowing honorary titles. And weighted-grading systems have occasionally added to the quandary.

At one San

Read an abstract of the study, "The Case for Weighting Grades and Waiving Classes for Gifted and

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EDUCATION WEEK on the WEB

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# The Honors Course Dilemma

By William R. Cross

Opinion

High schools that adjust or weight grades for honors courses are both helping students who take those honors courses. When honors course grades are adjusted or weighted, students are able to earn grade point averages (GPAs) that are greater than the GPAs that other students can earn. In a 4-point grading system numeric grades for non-honors courses are as follows:

A = 4; B = 3; C = 2; D = 1; F = 0.

Frequently, honors courses award numeric grades as follows:

A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2 or 1; F = 0.

The best GPA that students can attain if they do not take honors courses is 4.0, while those students who take honors courses can earn GPAs greater than

didates for the above three categories because their GPAs (4.0 maximum) are too low. This separation of students is not necessarily bad and is probably one of the reasons that

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Our schools grannled ~~with~~  
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nate all straight-A students valedictorians, regardless of their **G.P.A.s**. Students who'd received all **A's** and only one **B** were named salutatorians. Often, we had numerous valedictorians and salutatorians. To add to the confusion, some of the salutatorians had higher **G.P.A.s** than did some of the valedictorians.

This controversy led to a study of how we designate honors to our **highest-achieving** graduates. Soliciting the ideas and opinions of students, parents, and teachers, the school board approved a plan to eliminate the designation of valedictorians and salutatorians. We replaced it **with a** new system, designating Highest Honors to graduates with **G.P.A.s** of 5.2 or above, High Honors to those with **G.P.A.s** of from 5 to 5.2, and Honors to those with **G.P.A.s** of from



going to retain a weighted grading system.

With these responses in hand, the task force made two significant changes in our recommendations: First, we abandoned the six grading periods in favor of quarterly grades, the status quo. Second, we proposed expanding the weighted grading system.

Here's how the task force phrased the revised recommendation:

"Philosophically, we believe that all learning has equal value. Consequently, we support the total abandonment of weighted grades. However, reality tells us that our





with disabilities who receive *A*'s and *B*'s in lower level courses ineligible. If the latter, then weighted grades are irrelevant and unnecessary. In either case, however, it is an issue of differentiation and selection. It is not an academic issue.

The use of weighted grades in selecting a valedictorian is another matter altogether. Recall that in Chapter 3 we discussed the dilemmas caused by this process when selection is restricted to a single student. Our recommendation there was to name multiple valedictorians or to follow a process similar to that used in colleges and universities where graduates are distinguished as *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude*. This provides special recognition for those students who have distinguished themselves academically while eliminating the detrimental effects that stem from the competition among students for that singular distinction.



# MEMORANDUM

To: Keith Lutz

Fr

# MEMORANDUM

To: Donna Flood  
Director of Staff Development

Fr: Mark Feldhausen  
Assistant Superintendent of Technology

Cc: Martha Bruckner  
Associate Superintendent of Educational

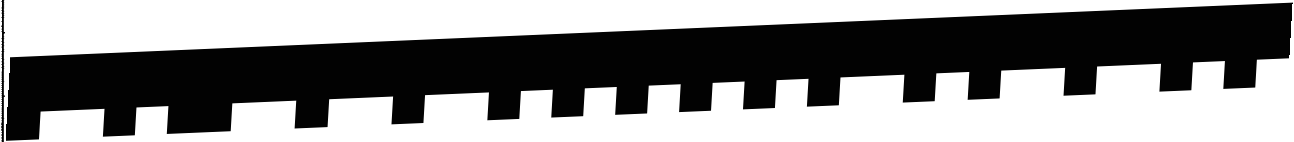
# Technology Integration in Teaching and Learning

For more than a decade the Millard Public Schools has been committed to utilizing technology to enhance student learning and to support the effective management of the district. This commitment has been reflected by numerous technology strategies/action plans found in the District's Strategic Plan, in specific initiatives of the Board of Education, and in community support and advocacy for technology in each school and classroom. Most recently, technology has been a major component of mandatory staff development. Instruction, support, and encouragement have been provided for teachers as they continue to improve and increase their technology skills and work toward the integration of technology into teaching and learning. But, what does it mean to truly integrate technology into teaching and learning and what is the relationship of technology integration to the Indicators of Effective Teaching as defined by the Millard Public Schools?

The process of improving one's technology skills is continuous. The challenge of integrating a teacher's technology skills into the classroom, as a



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	assessment		
	A. evaluate		

	products		

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# Indicators of Effective Teaching Using Technology Evaluation Rubric

Indicators	Description of Effective Use of Technology			
Planning	<p>A. align the use of technology resources with curricular outcomes</p> <p>B. apply best practices regarding teaching and learning with technology</p> <p>C. design developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that apply technology-enhanced instructional strategies to support the diverse needs of all learners</p>		1	
Management	Teachers manage technology resources within the context of the			
Instruction				

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## Ed Services Input Session December 6, 2002

- Wide variety of tools – not latest and greatest
- Tech Integration – goal to be students use technology effectively = implied
  - Focus of document = teacher
  - Not obvious the student role / use
  - Match with indicators of effective teaching needs to be mentioned
  - How is the teacher managing what is going on?  
Kids need to

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- o None has the expertise to accomplish all of these – building how technology looks for like-minded teachers. Give staff members recognition for what they do and can teach their peers regarding how technology can impact Marzozzo, diff., teaching.
- Involvement of technology at the H.S. level
  - o Issues, rapid, keeping eye on what is happening, access, availability
- How can we ask taxpayers for more money if we don't have a technology vision – picture?
- In order to move instruction is to raise the bar and bring to the fore front s document such as this.
- Visioning document – white paper process?
  - o Assisting only the evaluation process?
- Language, beginning point of discussion/ issues
- Reminder – 3<sup>rd</sup> board goal – infusion to improve student achievement

**Technology Integration Input Session  
December 10, 2003  
Session II, Tech Advisory Committee**

One of the challenges we have is dealing with helping the district to try to define the tech integration; we are working with Ed Services. Using technology purposefully, staff development, how do we define this and what do we expect in the long term?

Technology and Tech Integration...what are our expectations? Using Indicators of Effective and roll it into the process of teacher evaluation.

Group One:

- Consider adding, "demonstrate learning through the "creation" of quality products to the student language
- Teachers and administrators would need additional info to clarify the indicators. 'Similar to what we have in the current indicators, give examples of what an indicator might look like in the classroom
- The tech infrastructure (hardware, software, network, staff development) will need to be in place in order for this to work.
- Take out the 3 levels of evaluation (satisfactory, exemplary, unsatisfactory) and model the current system of commendations and recommendations
- Remove the A, B, C indicators

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- Effective teaching = management of the classroom
- Instruction – implement