

WHARTON BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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"Learn to Thrive in a Dynamic World"

Marie V. Duffy Elementary School

"Governor's School of Excellence"

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Alfred C. MacKinnon Middle School

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Superintendent

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Vice President

Anthony Astrologo
Gilbert Bahr
Paul Breda
Jennifer DiSanto
Wayne Schiele

Superintendent's Office
973.361.2592
Fax 973.895.2187

Business Office
973.361.2593
Fax 973.442-7593

Marie V. Duffy School
973.361.2506
Fax 973.361.4917

Alfred C. MacKinnon School
973.361.1253
Fax 973.361.4805

Child Study Team
973.361.3010
Fax 973.361.4897

Guidance
973.361.2506
Fax 973.361.4917

Dear Eighth Grade Algebra Parents,

Thank you very much for sharing your concerns regarding the potential placement of your child in advanced math courses in the high school. As I stated last night, we are always willing to listen to parent feedback and make adjustments should they be necessitated or beneficial.

The district is always trying to enhance and improve our instructional and reporting practices to advance our student progress and achievement and the results have shown and confirmed our efforts in recent years. The goal of Standards Based Report cards is to provide the parent and student more specific details of student strengths and areas in need of improvement. These report cards are based on levels of proficiency allowing for specific strengths and challenges to be isolated, creating the opportunity for more differentiated (individualized) instruction, thereby providing explicit, detailed information towards student progress. The core intention and objective of what we do and implement is always to provide the best for our children and no one is more proud of or invested in our student's accomplishments than me.

As I understand from concerns last night, the "fluidity" of the grade reporting in Standards Based Report Cards and the "concreteness" of the 240 point requirement to progress to advanced mathematics courses in the high school can lead to trepidation as a single digit or point can result in a different placement. I also appreciate that, with this concrete 240 point condition, for only this class, and the importance of constant numeric scrutiny by the student family, a change would benefit the parent, and therefore the student, in supporting your child's success. I would like to dispel any misconception that we did not correspond with the high school regarding this translation.

With this being the only section challenged with an exact digital sum requirement I would like to meet your request of providing reporting more readily aligned and available for monitoring of your child's goal of obtaining this requirement, while keeping a semblance or hint of the benefits realized from the implementation of Standards Based Report Cards. To do this, we will keep the list of standards on the report card. This will provide parents and students awareness of what standards are expected by students throughout the year in this advanced mathematics setting. However, the student grade will be scored and reported as a single grade average based on the traditional 100 point scale. This will afford you the opportunity to view the grade portal at any time to analyze your child's progress in the format you are familiar with, one that is "concrete" and not "fluid" as prescribed by Standards Based reporting.

To also seek a slice of the gains realized from Standards Based reporting, I will ask the teacher to arrange the grade book on the grade portal by standard. This will allow you to see the score of each assessment under the primary standard that the majority of the graded piece incorporates.

While I do believe in and have seen the benefits of Standards Based reporting, I am understanding of the concerns expressed with this section's specific high school requirement. I am always willing to address concerns expressed and work to take action that will best benefit the students in our schools.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Herdman
Superintendent