

# Grading

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me, 'We are supposed to look at every application, but the reality is when we get thousands of applications, it's just much easier to say a 3.6 is better than a 3.2.'

"Our students are really being placed at a disadvantage both for admission to college and also for scholarships. When you compare apples to apples, students from other schools have 4.0 averages," he said.

To create a more level playing field for Dallas students, Speziale proposed adding an additional column to report cards that would reflect a "weighted GPA" more in line with other districts and university standards.

For example, under the current system, a Dallas student who achieves a 92 average shows a GPA of 3.2 on his or her report card. Under the new system, the same 92 average would reflect a more universal 3.75 GPA.

Speziale and Superintendent Gilbert Griffiths emphasized the change would not impact academic standards. Teachers would continue to assign grades the same way they always have.

"All this does is add another column on the report card that takes them out to that 4.0 scale," said Speziale.

Board member Frank Natitus said he understood the disadvantage personally.

"Having had kids graduate (from the district) I know our

*"I think to keep kids competitive in the college marketplace, we really need to do this."*

**Deborah Morgantini**  
Board member

system does hurt our kids. The fact that they have lower numbers does hurt them."

Board member Deborah Morgantini added, "I think to keep kids competitive in the college marketplace, we really need to do this."

Speziale said it was the Parents Advisory Council that alerted him to the issues with the grading system.

Members of the board requested faculty be canvassed for their opinions on the change. Gary Mathers, a board member, said he felt it was important to get input from all faculty, not just department heads.

Speziale said even if the system was put in right away, it would be too late to help this year's seniors, as most have already applied to college. If done soon, however, next year's seniors would likely benefit.

The administration is doing additional research on how the new system would best be implemented. Its findings will be presented at one of the February board meetings, said Speziale.

Sample Grade Calculation				
Student:	Avg	Letter	QPA	GPA
AP Calc	95	A	100	4
Chemistry	88	B	88	3
Intro to Eng Lit	92	A-	92	3.75
Economics	90	B+	90	3.5
<b>Semester Avg --&gt;</b>	<b>91.25</b>			
		<b>Overall GPA --</b>	<b>3.5625</b>	
		<b>Overall QPA --</b>	<b>92.5</b>	

  

Current Grade Calculation				
Student:	Avg	Letter	Weight	GPA
AP Calc	95	A	5	4
Chemistry	88	B		2.8
Intro to Eng Lit	92	A-		3.2
Economics	90	B+		3
<b>Semester Avg --&gt;</b>	<b>91.25</b>			
		<b>Overall QPA --</b>	<b>3.25</b>	
		<b>Average Weighted Grade --&gt;</b>	<b>92.5</b>	

COURTESY OF DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

This graphic shows the difference in GPA between the present grading system at Dallas High School and a new one being investigated, which is more in line with what is used in most other high schools.

# Smart

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graduating with a 4.0 average — a boost to any college applicant's credentials.

But at Dallas, a student must attain 100 percent in every class from ninth grade on to achieve a 4.0 GPA — a feat no one — as far as the assistant superintendent can recall — has ever attained.

"When I originally brought this up (to the Parents Advisory Council), people didn't realize," said Miller.

For example, a 92 percent average at Dallas equals a 3.2 GPA, but at many other schools and universities, a 92 percent equals a much higher 3.75 GPA.

"The grading system makes Dallas students look not as smart," Miller said. "I think when you compare our students against students from other districts, it (the system) works to our disadvantage."

Miller and assistant superintendent Dr. Michael Speziale contend the system is uncommon, not understood by prospective universities and colleges, and so prevents Dallas graduates from being as competitive in the college market-

place as students from other schools.

Miller said in the end her daughter was accepted to the colleges she had applied to; however, she has the lingering concern valuable scholarships would have been more plentiful had there been a 4.0 on her daughter's transcript.

"The guidance department told me when Dallas sends in students' transcripts, they send in an explanation of the grading system." She thinks the attached explanation is often pointless.

Miller and Speziale both believe many universities and colleges sort applicants by GPA first — before reading possible explanations of a school's grading system.

This is Miller's third year on the district-wide Parents Advisory Council. She first brought up Dallas' grading system last year.

The proposed change won't help her daughter, who has already graduated, but she has four more children in the district who could benefit.

"I am definitely for it, it's going to be a help at every level."

# Fire alarm issue still unresolved

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

*"I wish there was a halfway between urgent. I am confident with the safety of the building."*

**Mark Kraynack**  
Building and grounds supervisor

DALLAS TWP. — The Dallas School District's fire alarm company was back January 5 to provide more detail on what it says are necessary changes to the high school's unstable fire alarm system.

At the December board meeting, the company said a small fire had erupted at the school in October and some aspects of the alarm system did not function.

Building and grounds supervisor Mark Kraynack, who opened the presentation, said the system has been tested frequently since it malfunctioned and has operated each time.

"Our kids our safe. I've taken a lot of calls from parents. The system is functioning," he said.

Scott Eyerman of Simplex said the problem lies with the control box or panel. He said it is indicating a malfunction, but that the reading is non-specific.

"We don't know what it is. It could be anything, it could be something internal," Eyerman said.

Because of the age of the system, Eyerman said the only way to repair it is to replace much of it, including the panel, pull stations and audiovisual components. Existing wiring could be used.

School Board members Dennis Gochoel and Frank Natitus brought up the planned renovation of the school and questioned whether the system would accommodate upgrades and expansion. Simplex representatives said it would.

In response to Gochoel's question, Simplex representatives said smoke detection would be a possible addition.

Board member Maureen Matiska said, "In my personal opinion, this is a non-budgeted item. I think we have to look at that

too." Kraynack said he is not able to comment on cost because the repairs will likely go to bid. He has characterized the project as a major expense.

Natitus requested Simplex provide additional cost information for adding smoke detection to the list of repairs being suggested.

Board member Russell Bigus asked Kraynack why replacement was needed now and whether in his opinion it was urgent.

"I wish there was a halfway between urgent. I am confident with the safety of the building," he said.

Eyerman said Simplex had conducted another test of the system Dec. 24, and it functioned properly, but he said, "There is trouble on the system that we cannot repair (without replacement)."

He said the company is continuing to test the system weekly, but there is the possibility that the next call his company receives from the district will be that the system is down.

The board took no action on the item.

# Director

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"Austin was personable with the cast, he brought us together," said Lunderman. "Casts feed off of directors, so when the director is tense and irritated you can see it on stage."

Lunderman likes the more laid back directorship style, although he admits that as a "last resort" the cast might need someone to bear down on them.

# Details

"The Night Thoreau Spent In Jail" written by Robert E. Lee and Jerome Lawrence January 16 and 17 at 7:30 Lake-Noxen Elementary School Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students at the door

While directing styles may vary, time in the theater world is precious and fixed. "You don't have a lot of time. At first I took things very slowly and now I realize we'll be rushing, but we're going to get it done" said Lunderman.

The play is also Lunderman's senior project, a requirement for graduation. "It's really not that easy, you need to be determined, have a positive attitude, be able to organize people and, oh, get used to them not being there for rehearsals," he said.

So how is he doing? Says Cardillo, the freshman actor and friend, "He's committed, loves the play, and he has played one of the roles, so he



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Cast members of "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail" lined up for a photo. From left, first row: Mandy Boyle, Sean Boyle, Stephen Lunderman, Katie Yamrick, Natasha Laver. Second row: Heath Williams, Sarah DeCesaris, Jill Preibe, Joe DeCesaris, Bryan Cardillo, Shannon Lozo. Third row: Amiel Coveleski, Matt Knapp, Jake Davies, Keith Culver.

wants to see it played even better."

Jonathan Pineno, faculty mentor for the senior project, agrees. "By summer he was ready to go. I held him back because of the construction at the school, but you can see I have nothing to do now; these kids know what has to be done and they are doing it."

The senior project concept is open ended, explained

Pineno. It can be a service project or an artistic performance like this play. The grade is determined by three faculty member judges who base their decision on a written synopsis of the project with documentation, a journal, a 20-minute oral presentation and a video clip. Other considerations are grammar, punctuation, and sources correctly cited. Lunderman plans to attend

the Penn State Eberly College of Science this fall and major in pre-medicine. "I love the arts, it's fun to see people laugh. But I'm no Craig Thomas," says Lunderman of his friend and lead actor in the play.

Though appearing very competent Lunderman admits to some anxiety. "The night of the production I'll be a wreck."

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