



Illustration by freshman Jayda Rodriguez

Too Easy A

by senior Grace Schwenneker

This might shock some of you, but most HHS students will find the A's that they got in high school aren't going to come as easy in college. We owe this all to one thing: grade inflation. Next fall, when these HHS grads are sitting in their dorm room on a Friday night crying because they are getting B's and C's for the first time in their life, don't be surprised.

So who's to blame? Sadly, there is enough blame to go around.

Beware: Momma Bear

Students expect A's to be handed to them. They think if they do the bare minimum, they should get an A. It's just not realistic. Effort. Skill. Knowledge. These all should play a part in getting an A.

But if students don't get that A, they blame the teacher. They say the teacher grades too hard or that the teacher has favorites. They email, harass, and complain to the teacher that tries to stand their ground. If that doesn't work, they release their parents. Then it gets ugly.

So who is to blame for that tear-stained dorm pillow? Students AND their parents, all because they wanted someone to hold their hand instead of hold them accountable.

A for Effort

So, let's skip the drama. Let's give everyone an A. Oh wait- we can't. Life's a competition, especially in high school. Students are competing for scholarships and class rank. But because of grade inflation, if a student has a high GPA, there is a possibility that the student won't even be in the top half of the class. With more and more people getting higher, undeserved grades, it makes it hard to re-

Did You Know?

"[At Hudson] we focus a lot of energy on preventing D's and F's rather than making sure everyone gets an A." - 7-12 Guidance Counselor Kori Koop

ally show who belongs at the top of the class and the head of the pack in the quest for scholarships.

Cheaters Never Win?

That inflated number of students with high GPAs is also because many cheat. You sit down in class, minding your own business, when someone you have gone to school with for the past 13 years plops down next to you. They didn't do the homework because they didn't have time or couldn't understand it, or whatever the excuse. You feel bad for them. Why? Because you know this person... Because you're friends. So what do you do? You let them copy off of you.

Some students might not even see this as cheating; they might even think they are helping. And ironically they are- they are helping to inflate grades. And what happens to the kid who didn't get their homework done? They get an A... an undeserved A.

Raising The Bar

Hudson definitely isn't making it hard for kids to get that easy A. With an A being set as low as 92.5%, this is just contributing to the problem of grade inflation.

Instead of having an A be a meager 92.5%, let's raise it to 95%. Challenge students. Make them push themselves to achieve a higher standard. Push them to be better- to be the best they can be. Having a higher A percentage would only help Hudson students. It will hold them accountable.

Let's not baby students to make the school look better and to give them a false sense of security. Instead let's prepare them for college and life after college. Isn't that the point of high school anyway?

University of Northern Iowa

94% percent that qualifies for an A

"Unlike high school, a class grade can be severely impacted by doing poorly on a test or assignment."

"There is very little extra credit, whereas in high school you have the opportunity in most classes." - 2019 HHS grad Jacob Myers

HAWKEYE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

93% percent that qualifies for an A

"Extra credit can be obtained by attending a presentation and writing a paper or completing extra work on an assignment"

"Grading is somewhat similar in the sense [that] tests, homework and other factors play a role, in your grade." - 2019 HHS grad Rachel Bauler

Wartburg COLLEGE

93% percent that qualifies for an A

"A difference is in college you know how many points are in the grade when you first receive the syllabus."

"High school grading didn't really prepare me for college grading because high school seemed extremely easy (in comparison)." - 2019 HHS grad Izik Rodriguez

A look at grading

by senior Sophie Selenke

Subjective Assessments are a form of questioning that may have more than one correct answer or more than one way of expressing an answer.

<p>What are its benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates how each student approaches the same question Evaluates the student's way of thinking Evaluates the student's writing and communicating abilities 	<p>What are its drawbacks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating subjective assessments require a lot of effort since the right questions have to be used Grading biases may play a factor
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When I do subjective assessments, I let the students argue their viewpoints.

- Most commonly used in English and social studies classes.
- high school English and Spanish teacher Alison Puls

Objective Assessments are a form of questioning that has a single correct answer.

<p>What are its benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a large number of questions, which can test multiple concepts Easy to present scores or grades Completely unbiased 	<p>What are its drawbacks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot check in-depth knowledge of a student Does not evaluate the student's language or writing skills
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Math is matter-of-fact. If X equals two, it can't be X equals two and a half.

- Most commonly used in math and science classes.
- high school math teacher Holly Petersen

The **PRESSURE** of making the **GRADE**

district-wide grading scale for grades 7-12 at Hudson

A	92.5%-100%
B+	89.5%-92.5%
B	86.5%-89.5%
B-	82.5%-86.5%
C+	79.5%-82.5%
C	76.5%-79.5%
C-	72.5%-76.5%
D+	69.5%-72.5%
D	66.5%-69.5%
D-	62.5%-69.5%
F	59.5%-62.5%
F	0%-59.5%

Every day, after the 3:15 bell rings, teachers quietly retreat to their fluorescent-lit classroom, clasp their red pen, and begin the tedious task that they are required to do: grading.

Multiple-choice tests or quizzes, like in math or history, try to keep grading to a minimum, but there are always situations that require more than circling A, B or C, such as English or Spanish essays, projects, and product, causing sleepless nights for teachers and students alike.

Illustration by freshman Lane Rogers

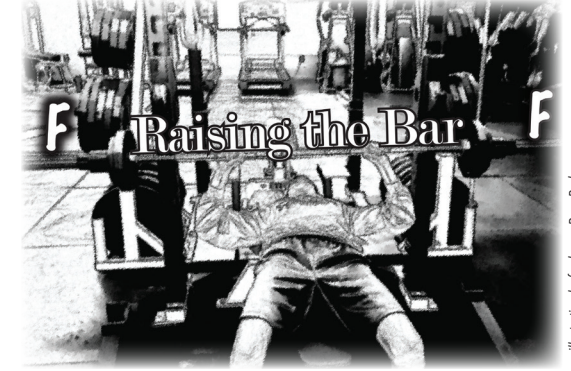
The PRICIPAL on the PRINCIPLES of grading

research by junior Caitlyn O'Malley

- Standard-Based Grading**
"In classes like science, it's really conducive- either you get the concept or you don't. And if you don't, it means that you need more work at it. The struggle then I think is trying to calculate that information into a traditional scale like we have." - 7-12 Principal Jeff Dieken
- Weighted Grades**
"I am not opposed to weighted grades necessarily, but I think there needs to be a lot of care taken into deciding what classes qualify for a weighted grade." - 7-12 Principal Jeff Dieken
- District-Wide Grading Scale**
"The main reason our grading policy was put in place was due to the inconsistencies in the way grades were reported as well as how our student management system, JMC, calculates grades... so as a result, we needed a consistent grading scale throughout the district." - 7-12 Principal Jeff Dieken

Did You Know?

- Sumner-Fredricksburg and Columbus are the only schools in the NICL that use weighted grades.
- An A at Cedar Falls High School is a 92%. At Union High School it's a 93%.
- Before the district-wide grade change, the high school social studies department had an A set at 96% and the English department had it set at 94%.



by senior Brooke Busch

"A is for effort" is something that we have all heard many times, but ironically that is not the case when it comes to grades.

As a high school senior, I've been repeatedly told "your grades are important" and "colleges will look at them" for four looooooooonng years. Sadly, the harsh reality is that me and my fellow seniors' GPA reflects both grades of academically rigorous classes and classes with less academic merit, like P.E. And therein lies a problem. The era of grades based on the athletic ability being equal to academic ability is over.

Let me put this in perspective. I am taking AP Psychology and Composition II, two higher-level classes, but yet I'm ranked 22nd out of the 47 in my class. All the while, there are people ranked above me taking classes with less academic merit. It seems unfair, right? That's why it's time to stop allowing kids to coast to the top by taking elective classes and reward students who are working hard to earn the ranking they deserve in college-level classes.

Our current method of calculating a student's GPA seems antiquated. Times are changing, and the fact is we need to change the way we are grading. It's time to ring in the era of weighted grades. With this system, students would be rewarded for their hard work in classes with more academic rigor. Their GPA would also reflect that academic effort.

While I will not have the chance to reap the benefits of a new grading system, future students would. It is time to make "A is for effort" a reality.

Q: Do you punish or reward for grades?
A: "We would hope that, as our kids continue school, that they will take ownership of their grades." - Greg Selenke

Q: Do you think you encourage or pressure grades?
A: "I don't feel that we pressure for grades. I will mention it if I think [my daughter] isn't applying herself and could do better, but it's not pressure. I think both of my kids pressure themselves in their own way for the grades they get." - Jen Hottle

Q: Do you monitor grades?
A: Yes, but not weekly. "Grades are like weight- if you don't check your number, you don't know if there is a problem." - Greg Selenke

Q: What do you think grades should measure?
A: "Grades should measure one's ability to understand the subject taught, but it should also reflect the quality of teachers. Grades are a combination of two things: the student's ability to understand and the teacher's ability to teach." - Greg Selenke

"Grades should measure what the student has learned over the course of a class." - Jen Hottle