



## Understanding Grade Point Average (GPA)

Term grades are given at the end of each 9 week term (also called a quarter or marking period). A **term grade point average (GPA)** is calculated based on the **term** grade for each marking period and is used to determine honor roll and eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities and sports. This information is included on the report card each term and is called the **Term GPA**. When calculating a student's term GPA, all courses are counted equally on a 4.0 (unweighted) scale. Final course grades are *calculated* (in accordance with FCPS Regulation 500-05) at the end of the semester for semester long courses, or at the end of the year for year-long courses. Final course grades are based on all term grades for the course and in some cases, a final exam.

A **cumulative GPA** is calculated for all high school level courses\* based on the number of credits received and a 4.0 (unweighted) and 5.0 (weighted) scale. Cumulative GPAs are used by FCPS high schools to determine class rank and graduation honors, eligibility for the National Honor Society, by colleges as part of the admission criteria, by many scholarship and grant providers, and occasionally, by employers. This information is reported to parents on the term 4 report card, new in school year 2011-2012, and on the student's high school transcript. The high school transcript is a record of all final course grades received for high school level courses.

### Weighted vs. Unweighted Cumulative GPA

**Unweighted Cumulative GPA** is the average of all **final** course grades received in high school level courses based on a 4.0 scale (see table below). Unweighted GPA is calculated by multiplying the final course grade with the credit awarded divided by the total credits. (see example #1)  $[GPA (unwdt) = Quality Points / Total Credits]$

Grade	Points awarded
A (90%-100%)	4
B (80%-89%)	3
C (70%-79%)	2
D (60%-69%)	1
F (0%-59%)	0

### Example 1: Calculating unweighted (4.0 scale) cumulative GPA's:

*[Quality Points = Grade Points x Credits Earned]*

Unweighted GPA (4.0 scale)			
COURSE	FINAL	CR	Quality Points
ALG BASED PHYSICS HONORS	B	1.0	3
ALGEBRA 2 HONORS	C	1.0	2
CERAMICS	A	1.0	4
HEALTH	A	0.5	2
FITNESS FOR LIFE	A	0.5	2
FOUNDATIONS OF TECH	B	1.0	3
ENGLISH 9 HONORS	B	1.0	3
GEOMETRY HONORS	C	1.0	2
GOVERNMENT - HONORS	B	1.0	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>8.0</b>	<b>24</b>
		<b>Unweighted GPA = 24 / 8.0</b>	<b>3.0000</b>

**Weighted Cumulative GPA** uses a different scale based on the “weight” of certain courses. Some courses (i.e. honors courses, upper level world language, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses) are calculated on the weighted 5.0 scale in determining the weighted GPA (see table below). All other courses are calculated using the traditional unweighted 4.0 scale. (see example #2)  $[GPA (wtd) = Quality Points / Total Credits]$

Grade	Points awarded
A (90%-100%)	5.00
B (80%-89%)	3.75
C (70%-79%)	2.50
D (60%-69%)	1.25
F (0%-59%)	0.00

**Example 2: Calculating weighted (5.0 scale) cumulative GPA's:**

*[Quality Points = Grade Points x Credits Earned]*

Weighted GPA				
COURSE	FINAL	CR	Weighted?	Quality Points
<b>ALG BASED PHYSICS HONORS</b>	B	1.0	Y	3.75
<b>ALGEBRA 2 HONORS</b>	C	1.0	Y	2.50
CERAMICS	A	1.0	N	4.00
HEALTH	A	0.5	N	2.00
FITNESS FOR LIFE	A	0.5	N	2.00
FOUNDATIONS OF TECH	B	1.0	N	3.00
<b>ENGLISH 9 HONORS</b>	B	1.0	Y	3.75
<b>GEOMETRY HONORS</b>	C	1.0	Y	2.50
<b>GOVERNMENT - HONORS</b>	B	1.0	Y	3.75
<b>Total</b>		<b>8.0</b>		<b>27.25</b>
			<b>Weighted GPA = 27.25 / 8.0</b>	<b>3.4063</b>

**\* HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT EARNED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The Maryland State Board of Education allows local boards of education to grant graduation credit to middle school students who take high school courses in middle school. These courses must have the same expectations, curriculum and final exams as the equivalent courses taught in high school.

The following FCPS middle school courses have been identified for high school credit:

- Algebra 1
- Geometry
- World Language levels 1 & 2, but not FLEX (i.e. German 1, 2, Spanish 1, 2, Latin 1, 2, French 1, 2, etc)

Students who pass these courses and the final exam will automatically be granted high school credit. These grades will be reflected on the student’s high school transcript and included in cumulative GPA calculations.