

After much research, discussion, and reflection, the School Counseling Department at Hingham High School has made several recommendations to the high school principal regarding class rank and related policies. On behalf of the School Counseling Department, the Director of School Counseling has compiled this report over the past eighteen months based on information gathered from parents, students, and professional educators including high school counselors, department directors, administrators, and college and university admissions representatives. In order for parents, students, school committee members, staff, and administration to fully understand the scope of class rank, the report is presented in a question-and-answer format.

The Director of School Counseling presented a draft of this report to the following groups and reported all feedback to the members of the department and to the administration.

- Hingham High School Climate Committee November 11, 2003 @ 7pm
- Hingham High School / School Council November 17, 2003 @ 7pm
- Parents of Hingham High School students November 19, 2003 @ 7pm
- Hingham High School students December 2, 2003 @ 2:45pm
- Hingham School Committee January 12, 2004 @ 7:30pm

Verbatim responses to surveys completed by individuals who attended the above presentations are included in the report.

The high school principal makes all final decisions regarding changes to the current class rank system. Specific recommendations to the high school principal may be found at the end of the report.

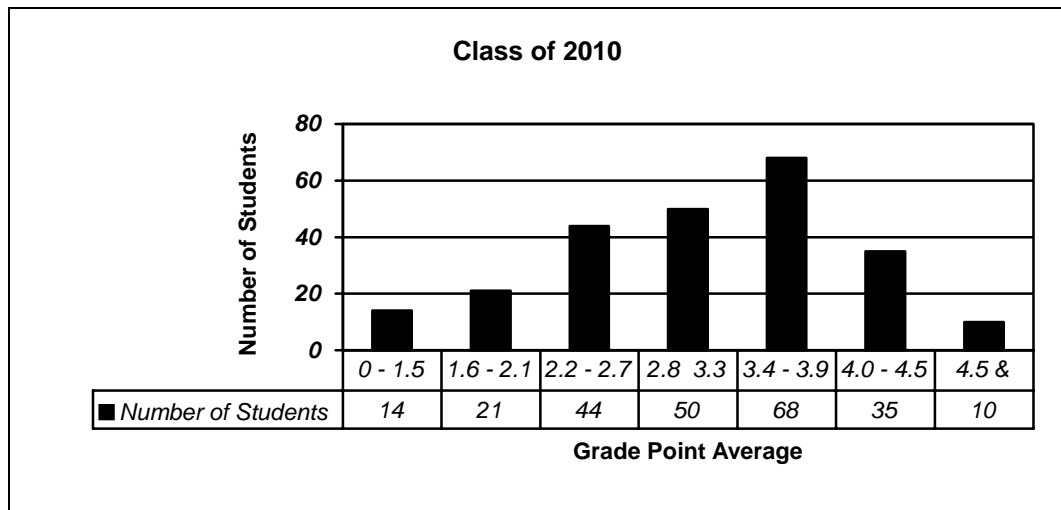
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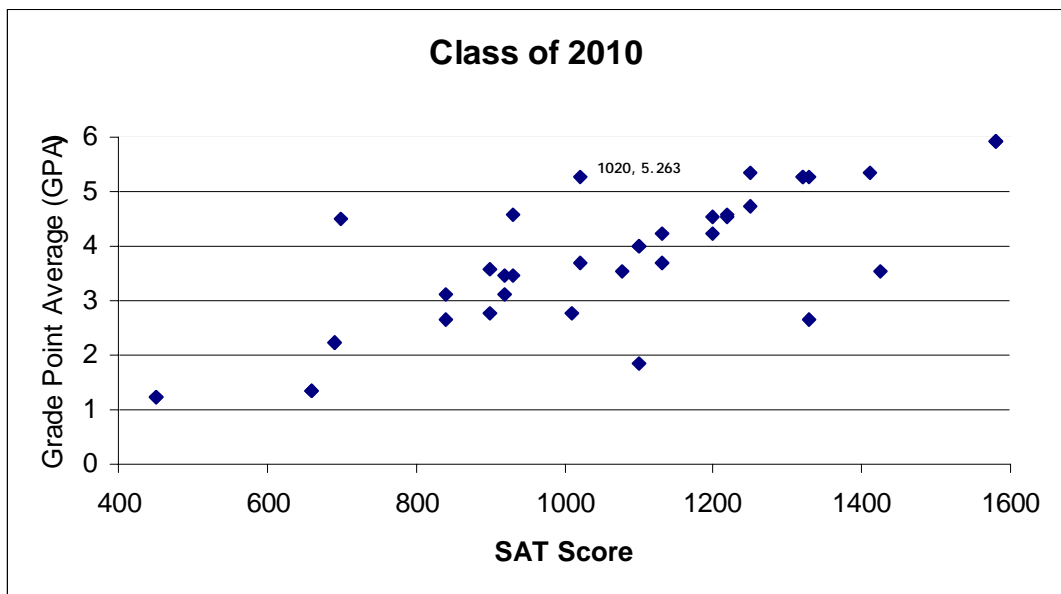
Committee Members Making Specific Contributions to the Discussion of Class Rank  
Meredith Eastman, school counselor  
Ellen Marshall, parent  
Walter O'Donnell, parent  
Helaine Silva, English teacher  
Judy Williams, parent

**Q: What is class rank?** Class rank is nothing more than the distribution of student grade point averages (GPAs) from highest in a group to lowest in a group. Class rank can be reported to colleges and universities in many different ways, but the four most common ways are explained below:

1. Class rank can be reported as a specific number, reflective of where a student stands relative to other students in that class. The student with the highest GPA is the number one student in the class. Students with identical GPAs are assigned the exact same rank. Examples of this most common way of ranking students include #104 out of 215 students or #22 out of 231 students.
2. Class rank can also be reported by decile or by tenth of the class. That is, students in the top 10% of the class are in the first decile while students in the top 30% are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> decile. In a class of 231 students, those ranked 1-23 are in the 1<sup>st</sup> decile (top 10%); those who are ranked between 24-46 are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> decile (top 20%); etc.
3. Class rank is sometimes reported in a bar graph as illustrated below. Bar graphs provide a visual rank range without assigning an exact number.



4. Class rank can be reported as part of a scattergram. In this manner, the admissions office can determine a student's class rank, GPA score, and SAT scores as compared to others in the class all in one chart. Scattergrams visually demonstrate the difference among top students.



**Q: What is Hingham High School's current class rank policy?** Students' class rank is based on a weighted grade point average according to the table below. That is, students taking level 2 (honors/advanced) courses have the opportunity to score more points toward their GPA than students who are taking level 3 (upper standard/college prep) courses. Class rank is calculated for the first time at the end of the fifth semester (middle of junior year). It is recalculated at the end of the sixth semester (end of junior year), seventh semester (middle of senior year), and eighth semester (end of senior year). All leveled courses in grades 9 - 12 are counted towards a student's GPA. Grades from students who transfer to Hingham High School are converted to our leveling system and awarded the appropriate GPA point value.

Hingham currently reports class rank to colleges and universities in two different ways. First, a specific class rank appears on the student's transcript. In addition, the Hingham High School profile that is included with each student's transcript includes a bar graph similar to the previous page.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Grade	Advanced Placement	Honors/Advanced	Upper Standard/College Prep	Standard
A+	7.3	6.3	5.3	4.3
A	7.0	6.0	5.0	4.0
A-	6.7	5.7	4.7	3.7
B+	6.3	5.3	4.3	3.3
B	6.0	5.0	4.0	3.0
B-	5.7	4.7	3.7	2.7
C+	5.3	4.3	3.3	2.3
C	5.0	4.0	3.0	2.0
C-	4.7	3.7	2.7	1.7
D+	4.3	3.3	2.3	1.3
D	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0
D-	3.7	2.7	1.7	0.7
F	0	0	0	0

**Q: Students at Hingham High School do very well when applying to colleges. Why make any changes?**

- Class rank is frequently misused by college and university admissions offices. Class rank becomes a problem because of its frequent misuse. Class rank compares students from the same school to each other. When class rank is used to compare students from one school to another, however, it makes a basic assumption that all schools are equal in terms of demands and student performance. Colleges and universities use class rank to compare students from one school to students from other high schools. Although the comparison may be to similar schools, it is also often used to compare schools radically different from one another. A student in the top half of the class at one school might easily be in the top 20% of another and vice versa. Students from schools like Hingham High School can have a lower rank than students from a comparison high school, even though their academic records would show that the Hingham High School student has a much stronger program of studies and school record.
- Class rank may automatically eliminate a student from consideration. Although the sole criterion of class rank is never used to accept a student in the admissions process, many colleges and universities will automatically eliminate a student from consideration based on class rank alone. Most recently, the Director of Admissions at UMass Amherst has bluntly stated that they will only consider those students whose class rank is in the top 50%-regardless of what high school a student attends. If a student's rank is lower than 50%, that student is automatically eliminated from consideration. The Director of UMass Amherst has specifically told the School Counseling Department at Hingham High School that it would benefit our students if they did not report class rank to the admissions department.
- Class rank statistics are used to rate colleges academically. Equally important to the above information, *School Leader* reported, "if a school does not officially report class rank, then the college cannot and does not include that student in the class rank statistics reported to *U.S. News and World Report*, or to any other rating services. The fact is that if a student applies from a high school which does not report class rank, that student does not have a statistical impact on the college's academic rating statistics as they pertain to class rank (regardless of where a student would have been ranked). **This strongly suggests that there is greater admission flexibility available to student applicants from high schools which do not rank at colleges concerned with their academic ratings"** (*"The Numbers Game," School Leader* November/December 2000: 34).

Some state schools and universities readily admit that class rank automatically eliminates a student from the admissions process. In working with admissions officers on a daily basis throughout the school year, we can presume that something similar occurs at private colleges and universities as well. Although the admissions department at nearly every private college or university will never state that a certain class rank will *automatically* eliminate a student, it's easy to conclude from the following chart that a student's chances of getting accepted to certain private colleges or universities is severely diminished depending on the student's class rank. Once again, if a student applies to one of these colleges from a high school that doesn't rank their students, then the college has much more flexibility in the admissions process because no longer are they concerned about having to include that student in their published statistics.

The following information has been taken directly from the college's or university's admissions profile regarding the entering freshman class (Class of 2007):

College / University		Percentage of high schools <u>NOT</u> reporting class rank	Based on schools that provided class rank:
Cornell University		44%	❖ 81% of admitted students ranked in the top 10%
Colgate University		58%	❖ 78% of admitted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 93% of admitted students ranked in the top 20%
Columbia College	College	59%	❖ 88% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 96% of accepted students ranked in the top 20%
	Engineering	57%	❖ 93% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 99% of accepted students ranked in the top 20%
Kenyon College		Not provided	❖ 56% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 98% of accepted students ranked in the top 50%
Loyola College in Maryland		53%	❖ 66% of enrolled students ranked in the top 20% ❖ 94% of enrolled students ranked in the top 40%
Middlebury College		42%	❖ 90% of matriculated students ranked in the top 20%
New York University		44%	❖ 70.1% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 99.7% of accepted students ranked in the top 50%
Northwestern University		48%	❖ 82% of enrolled students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 94% of enrolled students ranked in the top 20%
U. of Pennsylvania		51%	❖ 78% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 91% of accepted students ranked in the top 20%
Providence College		25%	❖ 99% of accepted students ranked in the top 50%
Reed College		40%	❖ 60% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 84% of accepted students ranked in the top 20%
St. Lawrence University		36%	❖ 61% of accepted students ranked in the top 25% ❖ 92% of accepted students ranked in the top 50%
Tufts University		50%	❖ 30% of accepted students ranked in the top 5% ❖ 96% of accepted students ranked in the top 20%
Wellesley College		40%	❖ 66% of accepted students ranked in the top 10% ❖ 88% of accepted students ranked in the top 20%

**Q: Why is the School Counseling Department at Hingham High School making these recommendations?** There are several reasons for making these recommendations. First and foremost, class rank has become a major impediment in admissions for many of our students, primarily students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> deciles of the class.

Second, students continually report to staff that the academic competition at Hingham High School is a major contributor to the students' overall stress level. Although the administration and faculty have implemented many programs to alleviate stress, students continue to report that the competition amongst their classmates to achieve a high class rank remains constant. Although competition is healthy at times, the pressure to do well in challenging classes is always present at Hingham High School. Moreover, the overall concept of class rank inherently contributes to unhealthy stress levels amongst our students. Currently, rather than focusing on striving to do their best by improving their GPAs, students focus on comparing themselves to their peers, creating an atmosphere where self-worth is tied to the *comparison* of GPAs rather than to their individual achievements. Although we do not expect or intend to eliminate all stress associated with class rank, we strongly believe that an overall healthier atmosphere will result from the changes that are being proposed.

**Q: How do other high schools handle class rank?** According to a recent survey conducted by the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (July, 2003), the use of class rank in high schools diminishes as the percentage of high school students attending colleges and universities increases (see Appendix A). In the past several years, Hingham High School typically has 88% - 93% of students continuing their education at two- or four-year colleges.

This same report also found that eliminating class rank is most common in private schools and competitive public schools on the east coast. Overall, however, in 2002, only 45% of all high schools in the country reported using class rank.

**Q: What other high schools in Massachusetts do not rank their students?** As of the 2003-2004 school year, the following schools are just some of the high schools in Massachusetts that do not rank their students (see Appendix B for more information):

- ❖ Andover High School
- ❖ Brookline High School
- ❖ Concord-Carlisle Regional High School
- ❖ Dover-Sherborn High School
- ❖ Duxbury High School
- ❖ Lexington High School
- ❖ Lincoln-Sudbury High School
- ❖ Marblehead High School
- ❖ Newton Public Schools
- ❖ Norwell High School
- ❖ Scituate High School
- ❖ Wellesley High School
- ❖ Weston High School
- ❖ Westwood High School
- ❖ Winchester High School

**Q: Is Hingham High School considering eliminating the reporting of class rank to colleges and universities just because all of these other schools have eliminated it?** Absolutely not. This is not a case of “because they are doing it, we should do it.” Instead, our intent in listing other high schools in Massachusetts that do not report class rank to colleges and universities is to show that these high schools, despite not reporting class rank, continue to have students accepted to colleges and universities of all levels—including Ivy League and other top-tier schools.

**Q: Have any of these high schools that have eliminated reporting class rank to colleges and universities seen a negative result of doing so?** Although it is very difficult to present any concrete, scientific data to answer this question, each and every one of the guidance and counseling directors from the high schools listed above has stated that eliminating class rank has not had a negative impact on their students, including those in the top 10% of the class.

**Q: How many high schools that have eliminated reporting class rank to colleges and universities have re-instituted it?** None. There are no schools that we know of that have reinstated class rank once it has been eliminated.

**Q: What about students in the top 10% or 1<sup>st</sup> decile at Hingham High School? What effect will it have on their applications?** This is one of many questions we asked college admissions counselors. Every high school that has eliminated the reporting of class rank has asked the same question and in every instance, the response has been that there is no negative impact on an applicant in the first decile.

Again, it is difficult to present empirical data in regards to college admissions decisions. However, few school—if any at all—are willing to admit that one specific factor contributes to a student’s rejection. Instead, a combination of factors results in a student’s rejection from a particular college or university. Moreover, according to NACAC’s most recent *State of College Admission Report* (2002), “...private schools appear to place a much stronger emphasis on the ‘tip’ factors [including essay, interview, counselor recommendations, and teacher recommendations] in the admission decision. It appears as though private schools give a much closer read of each individual application, while state schools appear to attribute most importance to the top factors [grades in all subjects, grades in college prep subjects, class rank, and admission test scores], which can be quickly interpreted and ranked from transcripts or test score reports.”

**Q: How can you be sure that Hingham’s top students will not be negatively affected by these changes?** Hingham High School asked this question to many college admissions counselors including over 100 representatives from colleges and universities who visited Hingham High School last fall. Their answers varied. Yale responded, “While we would like a class rank, if we don’t get it, we will use other data.” Meanwhile, Harvard’s response was “We don’t use class rank anyway. All you would be doing is joining most of the better private schools and other public schools like Hingham High School.”

**Q: If all of this is true, then why do colleges continue to ask for class rank?** Any college, when asked the question "Do you want class rank?" will always answer in the affirmative. It makes the admissions officer's job easier because they can eliminate students based on rank as opposed to conducting a more in-depth review of a student's quality of work as seen in the transcript and supporting materials. Eliminating class rank forces the admissions officer to take a closer look at students' transcripts.

**Q: Shouldn't students at the top of the class be recognized for their achievements and accomplishments?** Absolutely. The School Counseling Department strongly believes that students who have achieved high GPAs should be formally recognized for their accomplishments. Under the current system, the only students who are recognized solely for their academic achievement are the two students who are ranked first and second in the class. These two students are designated class salutatorian and class valedictorian. (Students who are recognized at graduation as part of the National Honor Society must meet several other requirements related to leadership, service, and character).

The School Counseling Department recommends recognizing students with a GPA of 5.0 or above with designations of summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude as outlined below. In doing so, not only are the top two students recognized for their academic achievements—but so, too, are approximately the top 40 students in the class.

- Summa cum laude: 5.70 - 6.00+ GPA (8 students in the Class of 2004)
- Magna cum laude: 5.30 - 5.69 GPA (17 students in the Class of 2004)
- Cum laude: 5.00 - 5.29 GPA (20 students in the Class of 2004)

**Q: How would this policy change affect my son or daughter's chances of receiving scholarships?** Hingham High School counselors would still be able to determine a student's class rank, if required. After all, as long as there is a grade point average for every student, then we have the ability to rank students accordingly. Because we would not want students to be eliminated from consideration of any scholarships, the counselor could report the student's class rank directly to the awarding institution upon request from the parent and/or student.

**Q: If a class rank can still be determined, will it automatically be provided to students and/or parents?** Students and/or parents will not receive a specific class rank number. Instead, primarily to assist students in the college search process, students and/or parents will be given a class rank range at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester (middle of junior year and end of junior year/beginning of senior year) in intervals of five or ten percentage points and as outlined below:

- Top 5%
- Top 10% (1<sup>st</sup> decile)
- Top 15%
- Top 20% (2<sup>nd</sup> decile)
- Top 25 % (top ¼)
- Top 33% (top 1/3)
- Top 40% (4<sup>th</sup> decile)
- Top 50% (top ½)
- Top 60% (6<sup>th</sup> decile)
- Top 70% (7<sup>th</sup> decile)
- Top 80% (8<sup>th</sup> decile)
- Top 90% (9<sup>th</sup> decile)

**Q: What do students at the high school think about class rank?** We surveyed all students in the class of 2003. While individual comments varied, the results of their responses can be summarized below:

The top 30 students in the class.	Students at the top of the class mentioned that while some aspects of class rank are good (such as motivating you to do well), most of these students recommended eliminating class rank because the academic competition causes too much stress and forces an unhealthy academic atmosphere. Many students in this group expressed that they would have preferred taking classes simply to learn rather than have to worry about how the "A-" is going to impact class rank.
Students ranked 31 - 150.	Many students in this group agreed that class rank causes a lot of additional and unnecessary stress; in general, however, the majority of these students recommended keeping class rank in some form primarily because they believed that students at the top of the class should be recognized for their achievements.
Students ranked 151 - 215.	Students in this group had the strongest feelings toward the elimination of class rank. They expressed that a low class rank had a major impact on their self-esteem and made them feel really stupid compared to their peers and friends.

**Q: Why shouldn't we give students the option of reporting their class rank to colleges and universities?** Giving students the option of reporting class rank automatically puts those students who don't report class rank at a disadvantage in the admissions process. Regardless of the student's intent, not providing class rank to a particular college while other students in the same class do raises the suspicion of the admissions counselor. The admissions officer would most likely assume that the student who has not provided his or her class rank must not have an "acceptable" rank.

**Q: Isn't it true that some colleges and universities will estimate a student's class rank if it is not provided to them?** Sometimes, yes. More often than not, however, according to the vast majority of colleges and universities that were surveyed, if class rank is not provided, then class rank is not considered in the admissions process. Remember, too, that the school counselor's recommendation letter will include a reference to a student's strong academic standing if that is indeed the case.

**Q: What class years will be affected with these recommendations if they are adopted? What about the class of 2005?** The School Counseling Department recommends that the new class rank system—including the elimination of reporting class rank to colleges—go into effect with the class of 2005 (the current junior class).

**Q: How will the class valedictorian and class salutatorian be chosen?** The current selection process for the class valedictorian and class salutatorian will remain unchanged. That is, the two students with the top GPAs at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> semester will be designated as class valedictorian and class salutatorian, respectively.

**Q: How will the high school profile change?** Most of the high school profile will remain the same. We will continue to include Advanced Placement scores, SAT scores, National Merit designations, a detailed description of the community, and the different leveling system in place at Hingham High School. However, the only reference to class rank will be a GPA range from highest to lowest (i.e., "GPAs for the Class of 2004 range from 1.124 to 6.115"). This range enables colleges to determine the academic strength of students based on their own achievements (GPA) rather than comparing them to the rest of the class (class rank).

**Summary:**

In keeping with their role as advocates for all students, Hingham High School counselors have been assessing a new trend in the way that student transcripts are reported to colleges. In the past, class rank has been included as one of many pieces of information on the student transcript. More recently, there has been a growing movement to eliminate class rank, a movement that has been adopted by many private and top-tier public high schools in Massachusetts—including many of those comparable to Hingham High School.

Hingham High School's current class rank is a listing of all student grade point averages (GPA's) from the highest (number one) to the lowest (the last number in the graduating class). Thus, 1/231 represents the student with the highest GPA in a class of 231 students. As it stands now, a shift in GPA as small as .001 affect a student's class rank. Colleges use class rank, if it is provided, as one of many factors in the admissions decision process. Class rank is also used by many of the college ratings report (such as *U.S. News and World Annual Top Colleges Report*) to rank the colleges by selectivity—the percentage of the incoming class that comes from the top 10% of their high school graduating class. The higher the percentage of accepted students in the top 25% of the class, the more selective an institution is thought to be. As colleges seek to increase their selectivity standing in these college ratings reports, they face increasing pressure to pay more attention to a student's class rank if it is provided and less attention to the quality of a student's entire application packet. In this competitive environment, reporting class rank is detrimental to students from Hingham High School.

In response to the issues associated with class rank and the trend toward eliminating it from student transcripts, Hingham's School Counseling Department conducted extensive research with staff, parents, and students from both the top and bottom halves of their respective classes. Through focus groups, surveys, and interviews, they found overwhelming support for not including class rank in transcripts. As one staff member pointed out, "Our present system encourages students to become focused on rank rather than education."

Representatives from various colleges, too, concurred that eliminating class rank will not hurt our students and may well be advantageous for many of them. Indeed, colleges are accepting more and more students from high schools that do not report class rank. While it is considered in the admissions decision if it is reported, most weight is afforded to the rigor of the coursework pursued, grades received, the total number of classes taken, credits received, and the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> semester cumulative grade point average. In addition, the school counselor's letter of recommendation can serve to detail evidence of student achievement within the context of other academic and extracurricular activities pursued. The framework of this letter is a far better indicator of the individual student's overall accomplishments, including how he or she stands within the graduating class.

Anyone with a high school junior or senior knows that applying to colleges is a stressful business. Parents and students continually report that competing for admissions at colleges and universities is one of the most stressful times in their lives. With the elimination of class rank beginning with the class of 2005, that stress should be eased a bit and the focus can shift to educational value rather than competitive rankings.

One of the most popular arguments supporting class rank has to do with recognizing students for their academic accomplishments. Under Hingham's current system, students with top grade point averages are not recognized simply for having a high grade point average. Although National Honor Society recognizes those students with a minimum GPA of 5.0, students must also meet requirements in the additional areas of leadership, character, and service. In addition to those students recognized for National Honor Society, the School Counseling Department's proposal would recognize at the Senior Awards Assembly and at graduation all students who achieve a GPA of 5.0 or higher.

## Recommendations to the High School Principal

Based on the information gathered in this report, the School Counseling Department recommends to the high school principal to adopt the following changes to the current class rank system:

### Changes to current policy:

- Recognize students at graduation who have achieved grade point averages of 5.0 on a 6.0 scale with the following designations:
  - Summa cum laude: 5.70 - 6.00+ GPA (8 students in the Class of 2004)
  - Magna cum laude: 5.30 - 5.69 GPA (17 students in the Class of 2004)
  - Cum laude: 5.00 - 5.29 GPA (20 students in the Class of 2004)
- Eliminate the reporting of any form of class rank to colleges and universities effective with the Class of 2005. However, included in the school's profile will be an overall GPA range for all students in the senior class (i.e., GPA range: 1.227 - 6.114).
  - Hingham High School counselors will continue to reference a student's strong academic standing in letters of recommendation to colleges and universities.
- Eliminate the distribution of a specific class rank number to students and/or parents. Instead, primarily to assist students in the college search process, students and/or parents will be given a class rank range at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester (middle of junior year and end of junior year/beginning of senior year) as well as 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semesters in intervals of five or ten percentage points and as outlined below:
  - Top 5%
  - Top 10% (1<sup>st</sup> decile)
  - Top 15%
  - Top 20% (2<sup>nd</sup> decile)
  - Top 25 % (top ¼)
  - Top 33% (top 1/3)
  - Top 40% (4<sup>th</sup> decile)
  - Top 50% (top ½)
  - Top 60% (6<sup>th</sup> decile)
  - Top 70% (7<sup>th</sup> decile)
  - Top 80% (8<sup>th</sup> decile)
  - Top 90% (9<sup>th</sup> decile)
- Give students who transfer to Hingham High School the option of including those grades in determining Hingham's weighted grade point average. Transcripts from both the previous high school(s) and Hingham High School will be mailed directly to colleges and universities.

### No changes to current policy:

- Continue to use the weighted point scale to calculate students' GPAs. Additionally, the GPA will remain on the student's transcript and will continue to be reported to colleges and universities.
- Continue to designate the two students in the senior class with the highest grade point averages as class valedictorian and class salutatorian, respectively. Students who do not attend Hingham High School for at least two consecutive years (four semesters) would not be considered for class valedictorian or class salutatorian.
- Continue to report a specific class rank number to military academies and scholarship sponsoring organizations, if it is requested by parents and/or the student.

	Class Rank
<b>Amherst</b>	Many schools don't provide it, but it is harder for admissions to judge students without it. School profile becomes very important.
<b>Anna Maria</b>	Will be used if provided. If not provided, not a factor.
<b>Assumption</b>	Becoming less and less important because fewer and fewer schools are providing it. Tend to use GPA more.
<b>Babson</b>	If provided, will be used. If not provided, not a factor.
<b>Bates</b>	Used if provided. Not a factor if not provided. The numbers are important.
<b>Bentley</b>	Use it if provided but doesn't count against a student if not provided.
<b>Boston College</b>	Number of schools providing it is getting less. Will use it if provided utilizing the school's profile.
<b>Boston University</b>	If provided will use it. If not provided, it is not a factor. Some schools allow students to elect whether to include class rank.
<b>Bowdoin</b>	Will be used if provided. Not a factor if not provided.
<b>Brandeis</b>	52% of last years applicants had a rank. If not ranked, admissions will talk to counselor to get an idea of place in the class.
<b>Brown</b>	Used if provided. If not provided, is not a factor and all of the other factors become more significant.
<b>Clark</b>	Many schools are not using it anymore. Not a major factor. More significant for scholarships.
<b>Colby</b>	If provided will be used. If not, the candidate is just considered without it.
<b>Connecticut College</b>	Will use if provided and if it is weighted.
<b>Cornell</b>	Is used if given but the transcript is more significant.

	Class Rank
Curry	Used only if provided. More schools seem to be getting away from it.
Dartmouth	A lot of schools don't rank and that is fine. Will be used if provided.
Fairfield	Used if given. Surveyed this and found that slightly over half of the schools don't rank. Behooves if no rank.
Hampshire	Used if provided following school profile. No issue if not.
Hobart & William Smith	Is used if provided. "Smaller schools do students a great disservice by ranking them in a class of under 200. Should rank only the top 10%."
Holy Cross	Prefer that it be given. If not given, will try to figure out where the student would fall in the class.
Johnson & Wales	Used only for merit scholarship.
MIT	Used if provided but no disadvantage to the student if not provided.
Merrimack	Used if given. Not as effective in small school.
Middlebury	Will consider it if provided but not place great importance on it. Transcript of grades and strength of program more important.
Providence	If provided, will be used. "I believe that any school with a class of about 100 or less should not rank as it is a disservice to the students."
Quinnipiac	If given, it will be factored in. In small classes, it can lower the admission ranking and hurt the student, but admissions tries to look at the whole picture.
Regis	Will use it if provided. No factor if not provided.
RISD	Not a major factor whether it is provided or not.
Roger Williams	If provided it will be factored in. No factor if not provided. More schools are moving away from rank.
St. Anselms	Will use if provided. No factor if not provided.

	<b>Class Rank</b>
<b>Smith</b>	The past year 56% of applicants had a rank and this number is going down every year. If it is provided, it will be used. If not provided, the student will be evaluated without it.
<b>Stanford U</b>	Becoming less important as fewer are provided. Use if provided.
<b>Stonehill College</b>	Will use it if provided but just operate without it if not provided.
<b>Syracuse U</b>	Will use if provided. Will evaluate without it if not provided.
<b>Trinity (Hartford)</b>	If provided it is used. Some rank only top 10%.
<b>Tufts</b>	Tufts prefers using class rank as a factor, although more and more schools are not providing it.
<b>U Conn</b>	Use it if provided utilizing school's profile. Evaluate without if not provided.
<b>U Hartford</b>	Use it if given. No issue if not given.
<b>U Mass Amherst</b>	Rank is used to weed people out. More and more schools are not providing class rank. Can hurt a student. If none is provided, the student is evaluated without it.
<b>U Miami</b>	Finding more schools not using it. If provided it will be used. If not provided, will scrutinize school profile more carefully.
<b>U New Hampshire</b>	Used more for merit scholarship than for admission. More and more schools are not providing it. It probably benefits the student not to have it.
<b>U Notre Dame</b>	Is significant. If not provided by the school will ask the school to approximate what part of the class the student falls within.
<b>Wellesley</b>	Lots of schools are not providing it. Will use it if provided but if not provided will look more closely at the transcript.
<b>Wheaton</b>	If provided and if it has been weighted, it will be used. Otherwise, the student is evaluated without it.
<b>Worcester Polytech</b>	If provided will use it. If not provided, more weight to the transcript.

As previously mentioned, presentations were made to several different groups. The following information summarizes the student and parent surveys that were distributed at the end of the presentation. Additionally, all verbatim responses from parents and students in support of or in opposition to the proposals made by the School Counseling Department are included.

## November 19, 2003 Class Rank Presentation to Parents

### SURVEY RESULTS:

- 75 parents in attendance
- 51 respondents representing:
  - 66 current students
  - 17 alumni

I am the parent / guardian of a (check all that apply):

Freshman	<u>13</u>	Junior	<u>20</u>
Sophomore	<u>20</u>	Senior	<u>13</u>
		HHS Graduate	<u>17</u>

1. Prior to this presentation, I (check one):

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| a. Thought that class rank should be reported to colleges and universities     | <u>22</u> |
| b. Thought that class rank should not be reported to colleges and universities | <u>9</u>  |
| c. Didn't really have an opinion one way or the other regarding class rank     | <u>6</u>  |
| d. Needed more information before making a determination about class rank      | <u>13</u> |
| e. No answer   | <u>1</u>  |

2. After this presentation, I (check one):

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| a. Think that class rank should be reported to colleges and universities      | <u>5</u>  |
| b. Think that class rank should not be reported to colleges and universities  | <u>40</u> |
| c. Don't really have an opinion one way or the other regarding class rank     | <u>0</u>  |
| d. Still need more information before making a determination about class rank | <u>5</u>  |
| e. No answer  | <u>1</u>  |

Please list any comments, concerns, or questions that you have after listening to tonight's presentation:

Parent Comments on Class Rank Presentation  
November 19, 2003

Parents who responded, "Class rank should not be reported to colleges and universities":

<u>Parent of:</u>	<u>Comment:</u>
Junior, Graduate	<u>Very helpful</u> presentation. Thank you for your time to research this and to share it with us. I think you did a fine job 'defending' your research during the final questioning.
Junior	Great Presentation! The top ten will always be <u>that</u> . They wouldn't be hurt! Good plan.
Junior	Please implement your recommended changes. Thank you.
Freshman, Junior Graduate	Very interesting presentation. Brought up a lot of issues I was not aware of previous to tonight. Feel even stronger that we should get rid of class rank!! Thank you for all your hard work.
Freshman, Junior	Good presentation. Thanks. Let's get rid of class rank. There is enough stress on these kids already.
Junior	Tonight's presentation was very informative and I agree that class rank should be eliminated, especially in a class where there are a number of top students whose grades are very close.
Junior	Good solid presentation. Convincing. Let's do it!
Sophomore, Graduate	Very helpful presentation. Did not really understand how class rank impacted admission process - now have better understanding. Very impressed with other school systems that have eliminated class rank.
Sophomore, Senior	Slide that shows other communities with strong systems <u>not</u> sending class rank shows me that we should do the same to be <u>fair</u> to our school! Good job, Greg.
Sophomore, Graduate	Thorough presentation; very convincing. Good job!
Sophomore	Just wanted to let you know I found tonight's presentation to be very informative. I felt the info offered spoke for itself. Class rank serves no positive purpose to the students of Hingham High School. I agree without reservation that class rank should be eliminated within Hingham.  Thank you for your efforts and hard work on behalf of my son and the future students attending Hingham High School.
Sophomore, Junior	I totally agree with the recommendations presented this evening.
Junior	I would like to see class (student) ranking eliminated. The evidence speaks for itself. All benefit!
Junior	I was supporting a change in the policy of class rank (i.e., not send to colleges) prior to tonight's presentation. But I must say that after the strength and clarity of the presentation I cannot imagine what benefit there would be to keep reporting the class ranks. There is no benefit to keeping it!!!
Freshman, Junior, & Graduate	In a school like H.H.S. there is not an even distribution of ability from low to high so ranking is misleading and does a disservice to students and is unfortunate.

<u>Parent of:</u>	<u>Commented:</u>
Sophomore & Graduate	Although my H.H.S. '03 graduate completed school with a high class rank (top 10), I have always felt class rank to be an unnecessary stressor for students. As my sophomores approach the college admissions process, I feel even more strongly that class rank should be eliminated. I think this presentation made an excellent and compelling case and I find it a courageous and important gesture in keeping with H.H.S.' evident concerns about stress levels for students.
Senior	The one compelling piece of information was the list of schools that don't report rank -- top schools in the state. I also like that you'd include academic excellence recognition with summa/magna/cum laude.
Junior	I think Mr. Nevader gave an <u>excellent</u> presentation with compelling information in support of his recommendation. I trust his research and agree wholeheartedly with his recommendations.
Sophomore	Greg - Great work! Great presentation - well conceived and pertinent. <u>Thanks</u> .
Junior	Great presentation - lots of info, well presented and argued. Thanks for your efforts!
Sophomore	Nice presentation. Thank you.
Sophomore, Graduate	Based upon a recent state school experience, I found my daughter did not have a chance of gaining admission to certain state schools specifically related to class rank.
Sophomore, Graduate	Mixed feelings as I have students that possess different strengths and class standings. One student that could have benefited by the class rank <u>elimination</u> as well as a student who (may be) in the top 20%. Good luck.
Sophomore	Thank you for your efforts on behalf of our students. You presented your information clearly and it seems to be the way we should go.
Junior	Some could possibly try to fault your stats or science, but it's difficult to possibly see the benefit of reporting rank. Even for the top 10%!  Your plan is great as presented and published.
Junior, Freshman, & Graduate	Terrific job -all the facts were so well thought out and your PowerPoint accompaniment was very informative and educational - truly the skeptics were "getting religion!" Just be assured that the vast majority of the audience applauded your fine work and was strongly in favor of a fast implementation of the new policy.  Again, TERRIFIC job!
Graduate, Sophomore	Just wanted to weigh in on the side of those who praised your presentation tonight and compliment your excellent footwork on making the recommendations to this audience. I thought you did a superb job of considering the issue from all angles, with all ramifications of such a decision evaluated. I felt completely convinced by the data you presented. I was also impressed by Meredith Eastman's comments and felt she offered a valuable perspective from the "other side" [the college admissions side].  Beyond our personal experience, I have become increasingly aware of all the negative consequences of an overly-competitive high school environment. My level of awareness was certainly heightened by Ned Hallowell's excellent presentation earlier this fall; I feel that whatever we can do as a community to help our kids learn to "de-fuse" this competitive environment will be to everyone's benefit. Isn't that what the kids' data that you cited in the study is telling us?

Frankly, after tonight's discussion with the parents, the only reason I could see for perpetuating this index would be to gratify parental egos of the highly ranked students. . .

Carry on and good luck!

None checked off

As a product of the Lexington Public Schools, which has not had class rank for more than 25+ years I feel it offers no benefit to our students. The only person who has anything to gain is the student who places number one. I am optimistic that this policy of assigning numbers to our students will be eliminated in the near future.

Parents who did not answer the survey:

Sophomore

I was skeptical about eliminating class rank. Your presentation made it seem like class rank was the first hoop for college admissions and the data shows it is not. Figure 1 of the June/July NACAC Bulletin 2003 shows it is fourth. Figure 2 shows that for those applying to public college, class rank would appear to be of value. I think you can implement your recommendation if you begin with the Class of 2008 or give families an option to request it.

Again, there are colleges that when not provided a class rank make it up. That was in article I sent to Dr. McCann this summer from the Wall Street Journal. Although counselor recommendations are great, it remains at best a 20% weighted factor (Chap. 4, NACAC, Table 13). The recommendation of summa, magna, etc. is a good one. It is great that you surveyed the students, but not valid. My son still wants to start school at 9:00. The young do not have perspective!

I will read the report, but remain skeptical.

Parents who responded, "Hingham High School should keep class rank":

Freshman, Senior,  
& Graduate

I think class rank reporting should be done at the discretion of the individual student. I think it is an important component of the high school transcript and is often a motivating factor for students to take more challenging courses. Competition can be healthy— just as in sports and "real world"!

Junior

Research I have read indicates that class rank is the single best predictor of college success. I assume college admissions officers have read this, too. What earthly purpose could be served by denying admission officers this information?

The centerpiece of your pitch tonight seems to be Hingham snobbery. "Hingham is better than other towns, so it isn't fair to compare our students directly to others." I find this obnoxious, as a teacher in a neighboring, relative dé classé town. Plus, the ritzier the town, the less likely it is that class rank is reported. So we should want to keep up with the Joneses and the Duxburys, right? That's the Hingham spirit! Yuck!

Sophomore, Senior  
& Graduate

In my experience, class rank is not the first hurdle for the top private colleges - it's just another piece of data after grades and SAT's.

The colleges do know HHS curriculum and do consider our students differently from other high schools because they know how well prepared they are and they know our teachers and courses.

I'm not worried about the stress of class rank - grades are important as a measure of the learning. Life is full of stress -it isn't coming from class rank per se. Should we do away with grades? How about sports competition? Come on! Learn to deal with this within the supportive environment of family and home before these kids are launched into the world.

Class rank has motivated my kids to take harder courses and to work harder, just like recognition for high honor roll or state sports championships or History Day awards, etc. etc.!

At best, the reporting of class rank to the colleges should be at the option of the students, if this is to be an issue at all.

Class rank did help us in deciding which colleges were within our target range.

Parents who responded, "Need more information.":

Freshman, Senior

I had thought the issue was should class rank be determined not reported . . .

As the parent of a student in the top 10% of senior class, many of the schools we have visited (top caliber) said they would determine or assign a class rank if one were not given.

Also, isn't the school profile supposed to address the issue of the caliber of the academics? Didn't you say the counselors letter addressed that also?

I am left with the feeling, not that the school is really trying to help student, but rather that the school is trying to "play the college admission game" better, to make things look better.

I plan to consolidate my thoughts and get back to you!

Junior

A new way to play the college admit game.

Its ok for us to disguise class rank to help our kids get into better schools. But we continue to do nothing to look at teacher grading policies, extra credit, or grade distribution -- this also hurts our students admissions

This all boils down to "Elite high schools should disguise/omit class standing to assist their students in college admissions." Does this make sense on a larger socio-political level?

**December 2, 2003**  
**Class Rank Presentation to Students**

SURVEY RESULTS:

17 students in attendance  
13 students responded to the survey

I am currently a:

Freshman	<u>  1  </u>	Junior	<u>  6  </u>
Sophomore	<u>  5  </u>	Senior	<u>  1  </u>

Prior to this presentation, I (check one):

- a. Thought that class rank should be reported to colleges and universities   7
- b. Thought that class rank should not be reported to colleges and universities   3
- c. Didn't really have an opinion one way or the other regarding class rank   1
- d. Needed more information before making a determination about class rank   2

After this presentation, I (check one):

- a. Thought that class rank should be reported to colleges and universities   1
- b. Thought that class rank should not be reported to colleges and universities   9
- c. Didn't really have an opinion one way or the other regarding class rank   1
- d. Needed more information before making a determination about class rank   2

Please list any comments, concerns, or questions that you have after listening to today's presentation:

## Student Comments on Class Rank Presentation

December 2, 2003

"I like the new system that would be put in place.

It just seems like it hurts more then it helps. Its possible that students could slack off without the threat of class rank but if you got good grades it won't hurt to not report the rank." - **Freshman**

"I believe class rank should be given to the top 20 or 30 people. It hurts more people than it helps. Someone is always going to be last." - **Sophomore**

"I agree with the reasons given during the presentation and I believe eliminating the report of class rank will give more students a wider range of opportunities in terms of college choice and acceptance." - **Junior**

"This is a wonderful proposal, it will most certainly put Hingham High School students in a better light, when compared to other schools. It will most certainly take lots of pressure off the junior students." - **Junior**

"Unless you are #1, it can really only hurt you; always worse than someone, very big classes, close GPA's, etc. Quick story -- My sister goes to Dartmouth University. 3 kids she knows from the same school were all accepted—one early, the other later during early admissions, and the last in regular admissions. At the time each applied, they were current valedictorians (it had switched throughout the year). Under Dartmouth statistics, 3 valedictorians from the same school were accepted!" - **Junior**

"I don't think we should (have) class rank because the curriculum in different schools may be easier than others. What is the grade range a student should have to move up in class levels (Standard, upper standard, advanced)? Do activities you participate in outside of academics count heavily on your college transcript?" - **Sophomore**

"Very good and informative" - **Sophomore**

"Get rid of it because class rank only judges you on comparing you to other people's accomplishments and not on your own merits." - **Junior**

"I like how it takes away from competition though it benefits the lower-ranking, and someone who is 3rd in class gets about as much recognition as someone who is 14th. Graduation is after applying, so what's the use of "cum laude" awards at graduation?" - **Sophomore**

"I'm definitely leaning towards not reporting, but I just want to be assured that colleges will then definitely look at individual curriculum and grades...I think I would prefer to be compared to the rest of my class, but I also enjoy the freedom to take the classes I really want to take, not ones I know I'll do well in - thank goodness at this point they're basically the same thing. Sorry if this ended up *inconclusive*." - **Junior**

"I think it could potentially hurt strong and motivated students in the college acceptance process." - **Junior**

"-provides another way for colleges to learn about your academic standing

-in real world competition exists

-should be rewarded for hard work and recognized

-by difference between being 12 or 21 (both top 10%) as far as what colleges you have a realistic shot at like Ivy League schools.

-In my 4 years, never has stress been directly correlated to rank

-how do we know it's beneficial for schools to scrutinize over transcript" - **Senior**

Parents of Current Seniors

(surveyed at Junior Parent Night, March 2003)

"Class rank should be abolished. It hurts everyone except the top five."

"I think rank adds to the students' stress level--would be interested in more info."

"Class rank: It is my feeling that class rank is fairly meaningless in the college application process where a student at Hingham High may be ranked lower because of the competitiveness of the school than an equal student at a less competitive high school. I think this probably hurts more Hingham kids than it helps."

"Get rid of rank."

"I would probably vote to eliminate class rank. My husband interviews for his college, and it seems like class rank hurts anyone ranked below the top ten."

"In general, I believe that class rank is a detrimental aspect of the high school student evaluation system. The rank is so very dependent upon the particular cohort; students can be artificially rewarded or 'punished' simply by the class of which they are a member.

Rank may be useful for those at the top but for vast numbers of students, I believe the numbers become meaningless. I believe GPA is a far more useful number upon which to focus."

"Class rank should be optional."

"I need to be educated on what class rank policy is. A selection process would be helpful - a guide or seminar."

"I think class rank should stay in effect. I agree that the student should have a choice in whether the class rank is released."

"I think the top students deserve recognition. Not sure it benefits others."

"Class rank? Good to reward kids who work hard and do well."