



## The School Sounding Board

### From the Principal's Desk

Fuzzy Math is the new math that our Department of Education is using to label schools. It is supposed to be much more transparent and easier to understand. Letter grades are easier to understand and comprehend. Right? We have been using letter grades since elementary school. We know that an A is outstanding and is the highest grade. B is above average and a good grade. C is average and aren't most of us at least average? D means we need to do some work and improve. An F is failing, the lowest grade. At least that is the concept that we were taught.

Needless to say I couldn't explain how an area school with 58% passing was given an **A** while North Harrison High School which scored a 78% would receive a **D**. NHHS also passed the federal mandate for AYP meaning we made adequate yearly progress. So I contacted the DOE and expressed my concerns. I asked them to explain the labeling system so that I could explain it to the parents, teachers, students and anyone else who would be concerned.

Mr. Jon Gubera, Chief Accountability Officer for the Indiana Department of Education, responded to me with this explanation giving exact details to how PL 221 has been calculated.

"North Harrison High School passed 76.2% of their students for 2011. However, when looking at only the students enrolled 126 days, those students passed at a rate of 78.1% in 2011; but those same students passed their 8th grade ISTEP+ assessments at a rate of 77.7% for an improvement of 0.4. So even though this school had a higher passage rate on the ECA than the 8th grade ISTEP+, the school is still a 'D' (the "floor" grade for a school with a passage rate of 70-79.9%) since they showed < 1% improvement.

The other High School only passed 57.9% of their students in 2011 but ended up with an 'A'. They were able to accomplish this because their students enrolled 126 days improved their passage rates from 49.0% on the 8th grade ISTEP+ to 60.6% on the 2011 ECAs. So because the other High School had nearly 12% improvement (and didn't have any grade caps associated with their performance), the school was able to receive a higher overall grade than North Harrison High School; despite North Harrison having a much higher student performance rate. Student improvement is a major component of calculating PL 221."

Now the ISTEP+ and ECAs are entirely different tests. NHHS passed at 76.2% and the other High School passed at 57.9% a difference of 18.3% the other school received an A while NHHS was given a D. Fuzzy math, I can't explain. I just know we have work to do and must improve. We need everyone's help. NHHS isn't a D school, and we need to show it even with "fuzzy" math.

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### Newsletter Spotlight

The newsletter is being designed to give parents information, timelines and deadlines of events and scheduled activities. We hope to highlight an organization each month and still be informative and helpful.

**Welcome to our new Superintendent Mr. John Thomas.**

**Mr. Thomas will join us on Oct. 1st. when he leaves Pike County Schools. He has 35 years experience in education and has been a teacher, principal and superintendent.**

**He has signed a 5 year contract and we look forward to working with him.**



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North Harrison High School Guidance Website:  
[www.nhcs.k12.in.us/nhhs/guidance](http://www.nhcs.k12.in.us/nhhs/guidance)

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[kstone@nhcs.k12.in.us](mailto:kstone@nhcs.k12.in.us)     [jhuffman@nhcs.k12.in.us](mailto:jhuffman@nhcs.k12.in.us)

[Counselor students M-Z](#)     [Counselor students A-L](#)

There is numerous scholarship information on the counseling website. Check it frequently.

Oct. 10th, College Fair at New Albany H.S. 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Oct. 12th, 2012 PSAT

### People in our news!

Mrs. Shannon Murphy is our school nurse. She splits time between the high school and North Harrison Elementary.

She replaced Tonya Caffee who decided to become a teacher at Ivy Tech and supervise the student nursing program.

### GETTING THE MOST OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

Step One—understand your academic record. It's important that every student understand the high school's academic requirements. Every student should know the following:

1. How many credits is a yearlong academic course such as English worth? **2**
2. How many credits do you need to advance to the 10th grade? **10**  
11th? **20** 12th? **30** To graduate? **40 minimum**
3. What happens if you don't have enough credits to advance to the next level? **You remain exactly where you are.**
4. Is there a state required test you must pass to graduate?  
**ECA (End of Course Assessment) for English 10 & Algebra I.**
5. What does it take to participate in commencement? **Having attained the required 40 credits minimum.**

If you don't know the answer to one or more of these questions, ask a teacher or talk to your counselor. If you ever have questions about your schedule, transcript, see counselor.

### Harmony

Harmony is North Harrison Community Schools student management system. It has been in place for 4 years and it does get better with age.

Parents, Harmony is very useful if you want to keep informed of your child's academic progress, attendance, discipline and homework. The information is listed and it is as close as your computer. We encourage all parents to check at least weekly.

Students, Harmony is actually a good tool to use if you are sick and can't attend school. It can become one of your worst nightmares if you procrastinate and don't study or do your homework.

Overall, I believe the open communication of information pertaining to each student is vitally important. There are no secrets being kept in the gradebooks. Attendance is kept every period and discipline is open for inspection. This is just another example of trying to keep the parents involved with the education of their children. Hopefully, it is a tool that you will use.



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**Q:** There are times when I think my 16-year-old must have a hearing problem. When I tell her/him what I expect her/him to do (or not do). It's like I never said anything. I am really worn out by trying to get her/him to follow the rules. At times, I feel like just giving up. I want to enforce a curfew this school year, but I am not sure I have the strength to stick with it.

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**A:** Giving up is exactly what your teen would like for you to do. They are smart enough to realize that they may wear you down. Then they'll get to stay out as late as they want!

Your teen doesn't have a *hearing problem*—they have a *listening problem*. So when you say anything, be prepared to say it again and again. Think of it as the “three times” rule.

*Your teen doesn't have a hearing problem—*

*They have a listening problem.*

Your teen is going to test you, hoping you will get tired and just give up. So brace yourself. Let them know exactly what the consequences will be if they come in after curfew. Then calmly enforce them whenever the teen misses curfew.

The parent's job is to raise their child to be an independent adult. But they are not ready to be on their own at 16. By enforcing the rules each time, you are teaching them that you will follow through on your words. Once they see that you really do mean what you say, you'll probably find that their *hearing problem* will go away.

—Kristen Amundson

The Parent Institute