



Dotherightthing dcps <dotherightthingdcps@gmail.com>

Request for Immediate Action to Address Unfairly Computed Class Ranks at School Without Walls

Wilson, Antwan (DCPS) <Antwan.Wilson@dc.gov>

Wed, Mar 15, 2017 at 9:00 AM

To: DoTheRightThingDCPS <dotherightthingdcps@gmail.com>

Cc: "Spence, Jane (DCPS)" <jane.spence@dc.gov>, "Davis, John (DCPS)" <john.davis@dc.gov>, "Trogisch, Richard G. (DCPS)" <richard.trogisch@dc.gov>, "Bey, Drewana (DCPS)" <drewana.bey@dc.gov>

Good day "DoTheRightThingDCPS,"

I appreciate your advocacy on behalf of School Without Walls students and families. Your collective voice makes School Without Walls stronger. Thank you!

Regarding the concern you shared, I understand the frustration parents must feel when it comes to this class rank dilemma. Your students have worked extremely hard while at School Without Walls, and I understand your desire to have a formal recognition of their efforts. While in the future this will no longer be an issue, since Honors courses have now been added at School Without Walls, it appears you feel current student ranks are being compromised by the fact that some students had access to honors courses prior to their arrival at School Without Walls, while others did not. In reviewing your concern along with others I have received, I realize that any solution proposed also needs to take into account the perceived impact of enrollment in the George Washington University Early College program on student class ranks.

To address this, while I cannot change course titles retroactively as you have requested for reasons that were shared previously with the School Without Walls community, there are some alternative solutions that School Without Walls stakeholders may want to consider with Principal Trogisch. Specifically,

- There may be a way to remove class rank from School Without Walls transcripts altogether, so that the worry of an unfair advantage could be eliminated. Instead, SWW could explore placing students in strata (i.e. top 1%, top 5%, top 10%, or Highest Distinction, High Distinction, Distinction, etc.). Of course, the final decisions related to this sort of practice would lie with Principal Trogisch, and there would be lots of logistics that would need to be weighed, but this may be something to consider. To allay your concerns on this, you may want to do research on how schools that no longer rank students ensure that their students are not at a disadvantage. Our College and Career Division can assist with this. There are students attending schools throughout the country who are regularly competitive for top selective universities and colleges.
- Please know that School Without Walls is not required to have a Valedictorian or Salutatorian. (There are elite high schools nationally that have abandoned this practice). This may eliminate the pressure this concept has placed on students, allowing them to focus on simply doing their best and knowing they were a top student in one of the top high schools in the nation.
- Alternately, the School Without Walls building leadership has the option of having more than one Valedictorian/Salutatorian. While this option could not be used to separate transfer students' class ranks, it could be exercised to address the George Washington University program class rank considerations. Simply have a Valedictorian/Salutatorian for the GWU program separate from the traditional program. Again, there are numerous schools similarly situated nationally that employ such an approach.

I understand the importance of this issue and the solution to the issue needs to be arrived at with Principal Trogisch, who is fully empowered to make any of the decisions mentioned above in this message as a solution to the concerns raised. If he needs assistance he can leverage support through the district working directly with Superintendent Bey. I do want to assure you that even if the School Without Walls administrative team decides to take no action at all, School Without Walls students would still continue to have excellent post-secondary options and scholarship opportunities. Many scholarships focus more on unweighted grade point averages, than class rank or weighted grade point averages, since they are aware of the myriad of factors that can impact those factors. All colleges and universities also consider unweighted grade point averages as well as the reputation of the school when considering admission. For these reasons and more, I feel confident that the School Without Walls student body will continue to be among the best in the nation, and will be recognized as such. Thank you again for your advocacy!

Respectfully,

Antwan

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From: DoTheRightThingDCPS [mailto:dotherightthingdcps@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2017 9:02 AM

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Please see attached letter and supplemental information.