




Norfolk Public Schools
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October 14, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Norfolk School Board

FROM: Stephen C. Jones, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: New Promotion and Grading Procedures

I understand you and members of the City Council continue to be queried from many quarters about the promotion and grading procedures we adopted for this school year. I appreciate the support you have expressed for the intent behind our new procedures, and I regret that inadequate communication on our part has contributed to this level of criticism and misunderstanding in the community. The article and editorial cartoon in today's newspaper and the request by the mayor and the council for me to come over and report to them at some point in the near future, suggest we need to move much more quickly to address the community's ongoing concerns.

Elizabeth Mather and I spoke at length this morning with the editorial page editor of *The Virginian-Pilot* regarding an upcoming editorial on this topic, and I suspect the editorial will clarify our position in several key areas. But I must admit this will not be enough. I have decided that we're going to expand our approach to gathering information from various sources, including teachers, parents, students and administrators, and we will engage in a more comprehensive and widespread communications effort that undoubtedly will lead to some modifications to the grading and promotion procedures.

Although the specifics of the procedures are likely to change, the underpinnings will not. We are absolutely committed to ending this process with a set of practices that guarantees the best possible opportunities for high achievement and motivation for our students, and that is consistently applied across the school division.

Please let me know your thoughts and suggestions as we move forward.