



David Sondheim
Principal

Redwood High School

*A National Blue Ribbon School
A California Distinguished School*

395 Doherty Drive, Larkspur, CA 94939
(415) 924-6200 Fax: (415) 945-3675 www.redwood.org

Sue Hall
Assistant Principal

LaSandra White
Assistant Principal

Saum Zargar
Assistant Principal

October 14, 2019

Dear Future Redwood Families,

I'm writing to let you know that we support our feeder school efforts to implement standards-based grading for grades 6-8. It is exciting to see our feeder schools working in tandem to provide your children with the best possible academic and social/emotional preparation for high school.

Ross, Del Mar and Hall Middle Schools have replaced A-F grades with grading systems that provide feedback to students using descriptive language based on specific academic and behavioral standards. Standards-based (or competency-based) grading is actually something the State of California began recommending to middle schools in 2001 with the publication of Taking Center Stage. In describing the advantages of this feedback model, they note:

*Assessment practices and the reporting of performance levels should provide a means by which students can accurately measure their progress toward achieving desired proficiency. Content and performance standards provide unmistakable evidence of what is expected to be learned and how well it should be learned. Those expectations are clear. With content and performance standards, student assessment data are credible, defensible, and, perhaps most important, **understandable to students and their parents.***

Alongside academic standards, students are also given feedback on habits of learning like Collaboration, Communication, Agency and Initiative. All together, this provides students, parents and teachers a much clearer, detailed and accurate view of the strengths and growth areas of every student. We at Redwood believe that feedback like this is what helps develop strong learners and, just as importantly, confident and self-aware young adults.

One concern that the principals of these three feeder schools have heard is that the absence of letter grades in middle school will adversely affect their children once they reach Redwood. I want to assure you that we support this research-based practice wholeheartedly. While high schools still use A-F grades and calculate GPA as a means of communicating information about students to higher education, teachers across our district are working to provide their students very similar kinds of feedback in their classrooms.

Redwood High School is thrilled to see this revolution in teaching, learning and growth occur in our partner schools.

Sincerely,

David Sondheim