

Dear Admissions Officers,

I am writing to inform you of an exciting change implemented at Herndon High School for the 2023-24 academic year: the adoption of a standards-based instructional model.

This shift aligns our curriculum with clearly defined learning standards, ensuring a deep understanding of essential knowledge and skills for all our students. Standards-based instruction focuses on student mastery of these objectives, as opposed to simply covering content. Grades beginning in 2023-24 have been calculated based solely on student mastery of summative assessments and no longer include grades related directly to work habits such as homework completion, participation, and in-class practice.

This change was large in scope and happened for all students at the beginning of this academic year. Some of our families have noted concern about how adjustments to this change might adversely impact their child related to college admissions. We are writing this letter to add a layer of transparency to students' learning journey over the course of their time at Herndon High School.

What this means for your applicant evaluation:

- **Stronger Writing and Communication:** Many standards touch on effective communication, both written and oral. Students hone their research, analysis, and argumentation skills through standards-based assignments, preparing them for the writing-intensive environment of college.
- **Focus on critical thinking and application:** Our curriculum emphasizes the ability to analyze, solve problems, and apply knowledge in real-world contexts. This aligns with the skills you seek in your incoming students.
- **Differentiated instruction and student growth:** Standards-based instruction allows us to tailor learning experiences to individual student needs, fostering deeper understanding and greater academic growth.
- **College-Ready Skills:** Standards often encompass skills like time management, independent learning, and collaboration. These are all crucial for success in college, and standards-based instruction helps students develop them throughout their high school career.

We believe this new approach will prepare our graduates for the rigors of college coursework and are a far more accurate picture of our students' knowledge, skills, and abilities as they transition out of high school. We are confident that students from Herndon High School will be well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to your vibrant academic community.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our school.

Sincerely,

Krisna Taylor
Director of Student Services | Herndon High School
kntaylor@fcps.edu | 703.810.2223