

**Board Policy IHDA: Valedictorian/Salutatorian**

**Status:** ADOPTED

**Original Adopted Date:** 07/01/2001 | **Last Revised Date:** 07/20/2023 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 07/20/2023

**SELECTION FOR VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTATORIAN,  
DISTINGUISHED HONOR GRADUATES, AND HONOR GRADUATES  
FOR THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2024 AND BEYOND**

*For the graduating class of 2024 and beyond, the Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Distinguished Honor Graduates are those who have demonstrated the highest level of performance in all academic content areas in the most rigorous courses of study. These honors represent the best performance of the local high school graduating class; therefore, students must be enrolled in the Troup County School System for a minimum of four (4) semesters prior to their graduation date to be considered for Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Students receiving Honor Graduate status represent those who have maintained a high simple grade point average in their desired course of study. Selection of Valedictorian, Salutatorian, Distinguished Honor Graduates, and Honor Graduates will be based on the criteria described below.*

**CLASS RANK DETERMINATION:**

Class rank will be based on weighted GPA and used to determine the system's Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Transcript grades and grades that are posted to the report card at the end of the third nine weeks of the senior year will be used to calculate class rank. Class rank of students will be established using a four point scale where four (4) points are given for an A, three (3) points for a B, and two (2) points for a C for all classes, each receiving equal weighting with the exception of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate (IB) , and dual enrollment. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will carry honor weights of six (6) points for an A, five (5) points for a B, and four (4) points for a C. Dual enrollment in academic classes (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language) will carry honor weights of five (5) points for an A, four (4) points for a B, and three (3) points for a C.

Per the Georgia Student Finance Commission, effective for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond, the Dual Enrollment program is subject to a Funding Cap. The Funding Cap is a maximum amount of financial assistance for tuition paid by the Dual Enrollment funding program for terms of enrollment. Only Dual Enrollment credit earned within the Funding Cap will be included in class rank and Valedictorian and Salutatorian calculations.

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF HONOR GRADUATES OF EACH HIGH SCHOOL:**

Honor Graduates will be determined using a simple GPA calculation at the conclusion of the first semester of the senior year. Students earning a simple GPA of 3.75 or above (without rounding) will receive the Honor Graduate distinction. Only students having attained the status of Honor Graduate will be considered for Distinguished Honor status. Distinguished Honor Graduates, Valedictorian, and Salutatorian will be determined at the conclusion of the third nine weeks of the senior year. The grade that is received in the registrar's office on this date is the grade that will be used in determining Distinguished Honor Graduates, Valedictorian, and Salutatorian.

In order to attain the title of Distinguished Honor Graduate, the student must first receive an A in the categories using any combination of half or whole credits. The combination must be earned in an increasingly rigorous course of study.

- Four (4) units of mathematics
- Four (4) units of English
- Four (4) units of science
- Three (3) units of social studies
- Two (2) units of foreign language
- Three (3) units of fine arts; health and/or physical education; career, technical, agricultural education; or an additional foreign language unit(s).

Additionally, Distinguished Honor Graduates must take a minimum of four (4) Advanced Placement/IB and/or dual enrollment courses in academic classes (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language) while enrolled in high school, and earn a score of 3 or above on at least one (1) AP test or 4 or better on at least one (1) IB test before the beginning of their senior year.

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THE VALEDICTORIAN:**

- The Valedictorian must be a member of the graduating class cohort.
- The Valedictorian must be a Distinguished Honor Graduate.
- The Distinguished Honor Graduate who has taken one or more AP/IB class(es) in each of the four academic areas (ELA, math, science, social studies), taken at least one AP/IB exam in each academic area, and who has the highest weighted GPA will be the Valedictorian. These testing requirements must be met prior to the student's date of graduation. If the testing is scheduled to take place after the announcement of honors distinctions and the student fails to complete the requirements, the student's honor graduate status will be changed prior to graduation.
- The Valedictorian will be awarded the highest class rank in the graduating class.
- In the event where a school has no Distinguished Honor Graduate(s), the Valedictorian will be the student with the highest weighted GPA, and by default will be a Distinguished Honor Graduate.
- In the event of a tie for Valedictorian, the honoree will be the student with the highest simple GPA on a 100 point scale calculated to four decimal places.
- In the event there is still a tie: the student with the highest number of Advanced Placement test scores earning a 3 or higher will be Valedictorian.

#### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THE SALUTORIAN:

- The Salutarian must be a member of the graduating class cohort.
- The Salutarian must be a Distinguished Honor Graduate.
- The Distinguished Honor Graduate who has taken one or more AP/IB class(es) in each of the four academic areas (ELA, math, science, social studies), taken at least one AP/IB exam in each academic area, and who has the second highest weighted GPA will be the Salutarian. These testing requirements must be met prior to the student's date of graduation. If the testing is scheduled to take place after the announcement of honors distinctions and the student fails to complete the requirements, the student's honor graduate status will be changed prior to graduation.
- The Salutarian will be awarded the second highest class rank in the graduating class.
- In the event where a school has no Distinguished Honor Graduate(s), the Salutarian will be the student with the second highest weighted GPA, and by default will be a Distinguished Honor Graduate.
- In the event of a tie for Salutarian, the honoree will be the student with the second highest simple GPA on a 100 point scale calculated to four decimal places.
- In the event there is still a tie: the student with the highest number of Advanced Placement test scores earning a 3 or higher will be Salutarian.

#### TRANSFER CREDITS

- For the determination of Distinguished Honor Graduates, Valedictorian, and Salutarian, only those transfer credits which are equivalent to those available to all TCSS students will be considered.
- For the determination of Distinguished Honor Graduates, Valedictorian, and Salutarian, only courses approved by TCSS will be considered. Only Dual Enrollment credit earned within the Funding Cap will be included for honors distinctions.\*

#### PROCEDURES FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTORIAN, AND DISTINGUISHED HONOR GRADUATES:

- Written explanation of selection process will be provided to all high school students in the student handbook each fall.
- Each high school principal will provide the Director of Secondary Education with information and documentation regarding the candidates for Valedictorian, Salutarian, and Distinguished Honor Graduates for review prior to the April Board of Education meeting. Valedictorian, Salutarian, and Distinguished Honor Graduates will be announced at the April Board of Education meeting.

\*The state funding cap as of June 2023 is 30 hours. If this cap should change, this policy will adjust to align with the new state guidelines.

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