



## **Transitioning to the Latin Honors Recognition**

Wellington High School, beginning with the Class of 2023, will no longer include Class Rank on school transcripts, nor make this information available to students and parents, after the class of 2022 receives their final transcripts. In order to recognize students for their academic achievements, we will continue to report both weighted and non-weighted GPAs on transcripts and indicate levels of distinction upon graduation using the Latin honors phrases as outlined below:

### **Summa Cum Laude**

Any student having earned an accumulative GPA of 4.0 or higher will be distinguished as a Summa Cum Laude graduate (with highest honors). This distinction will replace the former recognitions of valedictorian and salutatorian.

### **Magna Cum Laude**

Any student having earned an accumulative GPA of 3.75 to 3.99 will be distinguished as a Magna Cum Laude graduate (with high honors).

### **Cum Laude**

Any student having earned an accumulative GPA of 3.5 to 3.75 will be distinguished as a Cum Laude graduate (with honors).

Students will receive honors cords for these levels of distinction, as well as acknowledgement in the graduation program. This recognition will replace the previous tradition of naming a valedictorian & salutatorian and having those individuals present a speech.

GPA Rank & Valedictorian/Salutatorian will be phased out over the next four years as listed below.

- Graduating class of 2019 – GPA rank
- Graduating class of 2020, 2021 and 2022 – recognize Val/Sal & Latin Honors
- Graduating class of 2023 & beyond – Latin Honors

Students will receive honors cords for these levels of distinction, as well as acknowledgement in the graduation program. This recognition will replace the previous tradition of naming a valedictorian & salutatorian and having those individuals present a speech.

Any student receiving an honors recognition will be able to submit a speech as part of an application process to speak at graduation. Speakers will be selected by a panel of teachers.



## Why the change?

1. **WEIGHTED VERSUS UNWEIGHTED CLASSES** - The current system of ranking by GPA is inequitable and many times, it forces our students to compromise their academic goals.
  - a. Under the current system, students decide against taking electives they want to simply because they are “**unweighted GPA**” meaning that it pulls their GPA down. This happens with a large number of students every year, all the way down to our freshman. For example...
    - i. If I take 4 weighted courses, 1 unweighted course, and get all A’s, I can earn a 4.8 GPA.
    - ii. If I take 4 weighted courses, 2 unweighted courses, and get all A’s, I can only earn 4.67 GPA. This can bring my cumulative GPA down enough that I’m no longer #1.

Example:

	Grade	Credit	GPA Points
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
	TOTAL	2.5	12
		<b>GPA</b>	<b>4.8</b>

	Grade	Credit	GPA Points
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
	TOTAL	3	14
		<b>GPA</b>	<b>4.67</b>

- b. At times, this will cause a student to drop choir, Ag/FFA, or one of many other electives that allow our students to expand and define their path for the future. It is handicapping those students and forcing them to make course decisions based solely on what will give them the most points instead of which classes will give them the best experience. We see firsthand how those students struggle to make course decisions because they don’t want to hurt their rank, even raising to the level of extreme anxiety. A student shouldn’t drop out of choir or Art or not take a mythology class simply to salvage their GPA. That is not a fair decision to force them to make.
2. **CCP GRADE WEIGHT** -The state laws surrounding College Credit Plus have ruined the *fairness* of the class rank system and made the *quick GPA* comparison an injustice for our high achieving students:
  - a. Due to state law, WHS students who take any course that relates to English, math, science, or social studies receive a weighted grade regardless of whether or not the course is actually as difficult as an honors or AP course they would take at WHS.
    - i. This means that because Wellington High School gives weight to GPA points for AP Biology, it must give weight to ALL CCP courses in science. At current, all CCP courses



in English, math, science, and social studies must be weighted, regardless of how they compare to our courses.

- b. Ohio law states that a 1 semester CCP course worth 3.0 college credits or more must be granted a full 1 credit for high school while a 1 semester high school course is worth ½ high school credit.
  - i. This means that a **semester** of CCP English is now worth the same amount of GPA points as the **full year** of AP English. A student who takes both semesters of CCP English would then appear to be equal to a student taking a full year of both AP Biology and AP English when quickly comparing the students using class rank.
    - 1. If I take 3 weighted WHS classes, 2 unweighted WHS classes, and get all A's, I can only earn a 4.6.
    - 2. If I take 3 CCP classes, 2 unweighted WHS classes, and gets all As, I earn a 4.75 GPA.
    - 3. See this example below:

	Grade	Credit	GPA Points
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Weighted	A	0.5	2.5
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
	TOTAL	2.5	11.5
		<b>GPA</b>	<b>4.6</b>

	Grade	Credit	GPA Points
CCP - Weighted	A	1	5
CCP - Weighted	A	1	5
CCP - Weighted	A	1	5
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
WHS - Unweighted	A	0.5	2
	TOTAL	4	19
		<b>GPA</b>	<b>4.75</b>

ii. **This encourages our students to take college classes even if it's not in their best interest.**

- 3. Many of the top college scholarships are limited to the students in the top 3 or 5% of their graduating class. Many colleges use the top 10% as an admissions consideration. But this is only if that information is provided. Amazing students who would be accepted to colleges and given scholarships based upon their test scores, GPA, strength of schedule, athletic participation, service, and extracurricular activities are being passed over because we supply colleges with a class rank that points out that there were other students from our high school with a slightly better GPA than them.
- 4. Other reasons to remove class ranking include:
  - a. **Students can take the classes they want.** They will no longer have to worry that it will negatively affect their class rank. This will lead to increased enrollment in valuable non-weighted subject areas such as art, the social sciences, technology, physical education, and our business classes.



- b. It will reduce students' stress and anxiety.** Students will no longer fret over classes and grades because they are trying to compete with their peers. They will take more manageable schedules and have more time for extracurricular activities and just being kids. Over the last few years we have talked to many parents whose students are miserable, even battling anxiety, because they feel that they need to be the "best". While these students will still strive to do well, removing class rank will eliminate much of this pressure.
- c. It will create a cooperative environment in the classroom.** Students will no longer be forced to compete against one another. High achieving students can have study groups and help one another on difficult assignments, rather than trying to always do better than the student next to them.
- d. Accelerated classes will be more successful.** Students will only take them because they want to, not because they think they have to in order to maintain their class rank. This will allow the courses to move at a faster pace and encourage more vibrant discussion between teachers and students who are actually interested in the course material.
- e. The student body's self-esteem will increase.** The majority of students won't be reminded every semester that they are not as good as their peers. Many other students will be more successful in classes as they won't feel the pressure to overextend themselves.
  - i. We mustn't forget that ALL students are ranked. That means that someone has to be ranked 56 out of 98. There have been a large number of conversations with students in this position over the years who use words like "pathetic" or "dumb" to describe themselves simply because of a rank that they saw.
- f. Our student's won't just be numbers.** Colleges will actually have to look at a student's transcript and see the classes they have taken, what subjects they are interested. As a district we offer amazing educational opportunities for our students to showcase their individual talents and interests. Too often the individuality of students is overlooked by admissions officers trying to compare students as quickly as possible.

In this system, college scholarship/admission departments would still receive all the great information about our students' grades, extracurricular activities, and future plans. The college would look at our students' actual schedule/transcript and see that they are a worthy student taking highly competitive classes. It is likely that they will earn a scholarship that would otherwise be given to a student in a less competitive school district.

Please help us support all of our students who are constantly having to compete to be better than each other, by removing the outdated tradition of class rank from our district.