Board Policy IHDA: Valedictorian/Salutatorian

Status: ADOPTED

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SELECTION FOR VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTATORIAN, DISTINGUISHED HONOR GRADUATES, AND HONOR GRADUATES

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, and dual enrollment.

Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge 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.

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.

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/Cambridge 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, a score of "C" or higher on at least one (1) Cambridge AS/A Level exam, 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/Cambridge class(es) in each of the four academic areas (ELA, math, science, social studies), taken at least one AP/IB/Cambridge 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, Cambridge, or International Baccalaureate test scores earning a qualifying score (AP 3+, Cambridge "C"+, IB 4+) will be Valedictorian.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THE SALUTATORIAN

- The Salutatorian must be a member of the graduating class cohort.
- The Salutatorian must be a Distinguished Honor Graduate.
- The Distinguished Honor Graduate who has taken one or more AP/IB/Cambridge class(es) in each of the four academic areas (ELA, math, science, social studies), taken at least one AP/IB/Cambridge exam in each academic area, and who has the second highest weighted GPA will be the Salutatorian. 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 Salutatorian 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 Salutatorian 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 Salutatorian, 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, Cambridge, or International Baccalaureate test scores earning a qualifying score (AP 3+, Cambridge "C"+, IB 4+) will be Salutatorian.

TRANSFER CREDITS

For the determination of Distinguished Honor Graduates, Valedictorian, and Salutatorian, 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 Salutatorian, 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, SALUTATORIAN, 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, Salutatorian, and Distinguished Honor Graduates for review prior to the April Board of Education meeting. Valedictorian, Salutatorian, 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.

SELECTION FOR GRADUATE RECOGNITIONS IN CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

For the graduating class of 2026 and beyond, the CTAE Distinguished Graduates are those who have demonstrated the highest level of performance in their CTAE pathways and student organizations. Student achievement in CTAE will be recognized in three levels.
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 the highest level of recognition, the CTAE Distinguished Scholar. Students receiving level I and level II recognition represent those who have completed a CTAE pathway, been an engaged member in a Career Technical Student Organization, maintained a CTAE portfolio, and who have earned a Credential of Value as defined by the Georgia Department of Education. Selection of the CTAE Distinguished Scholar will be based on the criteria described below.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION AND RECOGNITION OF CTAE LEVEL ONE GRADUATES

Students will be named CTAE Level One Graduates by meeting the following requirements:

- Competing a minimum of one CTAE pathway at either the high school or the technical college level
- Actively participating in a Career Technical Student Organization
- Maintaining a verified CTAE portfolio

CTAE Level One Graduates will be recognized at graduation by wearing a single rope cord for each CTAE pathway they have completed.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION AND RECOGNITION OF CTAE LEVEL TWO GRADUATES

Students will be named CTAE Level Two Graduates by having met all of the requirements of the CTAE Level One Graduate as well as meeting the additional requirements below:

- Earning a Credential of Value
- Demonstrating leadership in a CTSO by serving as a chapter officer, earning a state CTSO recognition, serving on a CTSO committee, or contributing to an approved chapter project
- Compete in a regional, state, or national CTSO competition

CTAE Level Two Graduates will be recognized at graduation by wearing a braided cord for each CTAE pathway they have met all of the CTAE Level Two requirements for.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION AND RECOGNITION OF CTAE LEVEL THREE GRADUATES

Students will be named CTAE Level Three Graduates by having met all of the requirements of the CTAE Level One Graduates, CTAE Level Two Graduates and must meet the additional requirements below:

- Place at the state, national, or international level in a CTSO competition
- Successfully complete two semesters of a Work Based Learning experience aligned to a CTAE pathway that has been completed
- Earn a minimum of two technical college certificates
- Submit a complete and verified CTAE focused portfolio

CTAE Level Three Graduates will be recognized at graduation by wearing a CTAE stole. These students will be eligible to receive the CTAE Distinguished Scholar Award.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION AND RECOGNITION OF CTAE DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR AWARD

A CTAE Distinguished Scholar will be selected for each high school. All CTAE Level Three students will be eligible for the CTAE Distinguished Scholar Award. The portfolios of all level three students will be assessed using a district developed rubric. Those individuals with the highest three scores will move on to be interviewed. The interview panel will consist of judges chosen from local businesses/industries. The CTAE Distinguished Scholar will be chosen by the panel of judges.
The CTAE Distinguished Scholar will receive a scholarship and will deliver a speech at the graduation ceremony.

PROCEDURES FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTATORIAN, AND DISTINGUISHED HONOR GRADUATES

Written explanation of the selection process will be provided to all high school students in the student handbook each fall. Each high school principal/CTAE supervisor will provide the Director of CTAE with information and documentation regarding the eligible candidates for the CTAE Distinguished Scholar Award. The CTAE Director will

arrange the interviews for all eligible candidates. All eligible candidates will be named at the March Board of Education meeting. The candidate chosen as the CTAE Distinguished Scholar for each high school will be named at the April Board of Education meeting.