

## **Valedictorian / Salutatorian Discussion**

### **Rationale**

At Dixon High School we are considering moving away from the traditional valedictorian / salutatorian honors system, and instead, moving toward the Latin honors system, which nearly all post-high school institutions use to recognize academic achievement.

Transitioning from a valedictorian and salutatorian system to a Latin honors system, such as summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude, can promote a more inclusive and equitable environment in high schools. This shift removes the pressure and competition for a single top position, which can be detrimental to student mental health and foster unhealthy rivalry. The Latin honors system recognizes a wider range of academic achievements, allowing more students to be acknowledged for their hard work and dedication, thus encouraging collaboration rather than competition. Additionally, it can mitigate socioeconomic disparities, where often a few students dominate the ranking, and instead celebrate collective success within the graduating class.

### **FAQ's**

#### **Will we continue to have class rank?**

Students will still have a grade point average, however, class rank will not be published.

#### **Who will give speeches at graduation?**

Following the seventh semester, we will offer the top honors system (Summa Cum Laude) students the opportunity to submit graduation speeches. These speeches will be blind reviewed by a group of staff members and the speech scoring the highest will be chosen to be allowed to speak at graduation, in addition to the senior class officer president.

#### **Will this affect my students' chances of college admission?**

Not recognizing a valedictorian or salutatorian will have no effect on a student's chances of college admission.

#### **Will this affect scholarship opportunities for my student?**

Not recognizing a valedictorian or salutatorian will have no effect on a student's chances of college scholarships, including the Sauk Scholar program.

#### **Have other high schools moved away from the valedictorian system and to the Latin system?**

Yes. Of the ten schools in our conference, four of them still use the valedictorian / salutatorian system, with one of them indicating that they are moving away from it as well in the future, leaving only three of ten who still use it.

**What is the Latin honors system?**

The Latin honors system recognizes students who have excelled academically throughout their educational career. While there are many variations, Dixon High School would use a traditional Summa Cum Laude (3.81 and higher g.p.a.), Magna Cum Laude (3.41 – 3.80 g.p.a.), and Cum Laude (3.00-3.40 g.p.a.)

**Implementation**

This change would be implemented beginning in the fall of the 2025 school year with the graduating class of 2029. The graduating classes of 2026, 2027, and 2028 would all still use the traditional valedictorian / salutatorian system due to the fact that they entered high school under this system.