



Background:

Honor roll is a system that recognizes students for the attainment of a level of academic excellence or proficiency. In Pleasantdale we recognize Honor Roll Students in grades 5-8 each trimester. The district hosts several levels of Honor Roll which are attached to grade point average. In our Honor Roll system, all classes (with the exception of non-graded classes) are included in the Honor Roll calculation. These classes include: ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, Art, Music, Band/Orchestra, STEM, PE, and Spanish. Below are the different levels of Honor Roll offered by the district:

- Gold: 4.0 GPA
- Silver: 3.9 - 3.75 GPA
- Bronze: 3.74 - 3.5 GPA

The benefits and drawbacks of Honor Roll have long been debated. There are those that believe that extrinsic rewards such as Honor Roll are counterproductive to student growth and development, while others believe that these rewards motivate positive behaviors in students.

Honor Roll Benefits

When researching the pros and cons of an honor roll system there are those who are favorable to such a system. Some of the commonly cited benefits of an Honor Roll system include motivating students to achieve a goal. A spot on the honor roll is evidence that a student has worked hard in class and did his/her best during the academic year. Likewise, the recognition of such an achievement may be motivating to students. For example our Honor Roll lists are submitted to local newspapers and are often recognized on social media. Additionally, Pleasantdale Middle School Graduates who have made the Honor Roll are recognized at our annual Honor Assembly. It can be argued that making the Honor Roll sets students up for future success in high school. By experiencing that level of academic success in middle school, students may be further motivated to recreate that success at the next level of schooling. Finally, an ancillary benefit is the prestige of being added to a list of high achieving students.

Honor Roll Drawbacks

Some researchers have questioned the validity of the honor roll as an effective form of positive reinforcement. It is argued that the pursuit of an extrinsic reward is not an accurate reflection of intrinsic interest in course material. There are those that also claim that Honor Roll systems create an “us against them” feeling within the school where students are left feeling less than for not making the Honor Roll or a certain level of Honor Roll (e.g. silver rather than gold). Further, an Honor Roll system places a value on academic outcomes over all else and is inconsistent with a growth mindset. Finally, if schools, as learning organizations, prize learning and growth over attainment, using grades as the criteria for Honor Roll is inconsistent with the mission. For example if homework completion or class participation are part of the grade calculation for a class, we can assume a child may earn a higher grade for these learner qualities and not for what he/she actually learned in the class.



Clearly there are multiple perspectives on the value of an Honor Roll system and the argument can be made both for the continuation or dissolution of such a system. As a school that looks to balance the competing sides of this issue, we provide multiple other forms of student recognition over the course of the school year. These additional recognitions include our monthly PAWS (Positive Attitude Within our School) breakfasts, pep assemblies, trimester awards ceremonies, annual honors assembly, sports awards night, and Tiger Stripes to name a few.

PMS Honor Roll System

At the middle school, students in grades 5-8 are eligible to make the Honor Roll. As stated above, we offer three levels of Honor Roll for the varying levels of academic achievement. The table below shows the number of students and percentage of students that have achieved the various Honor Roll levels this school year.

Grade	Honor Roll Level	1st Trimester		2nd Trimester		3rd Trimester	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
5 ¹	Gold	22	24%	14	15%	17	18%
	Silver	11	12%	15	16%	16	17%
	Bronze	16	17%	21	23%	15	16%
6 ²	Gold	20	18%	14	13%	24	22%
	Silver	15	14%	19	17%	12	11%
	Bronze	23	21%	15	14%	18	17%
7 ³	Gold	13	14%	9	9%	15	16%
	Silver	11	12%	13	14%	16	17%
	Bronze	27	29%	23	25%	19	18%
8 ⁴	Gold	36	37%	24	24%	26	26%
	Silver	6	6%	10	10%	8	8%
	Bronze	14	14%	14	14%	24	24%

¹ 5th Grade n=91

² 6th Grade n=106

³ 7th Grade n=91

⁴ 8th Grade n=97

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All graded classes are part of the Honor Roll calculation. The only classes that are not included in the calculation are math and reading labs, resource classes, and any class that a student may be taking on a pass/fail basis. Students are allowed to take classes on pass/fail in rare cases such as when a student comes out of an intervention class and is placed back into a graded class. The pass/fail option is not meant to be a permanent fixture in a student's academic work, but does allow that student to transition back to a class without the pressure of having to worry about the grade. The calculation is made each trimester and the Honor Roll lists are announced and student recognized shortly after the calculations are made. As we look at our Lyons Township peers, all LT associate middle schools/junior high schools have some form of Honor Roll system making us consistent with the township.

Honor Roll Options

As we consider our Honor Roll system the administration would recommend continuing the Honor Roll system we have as is. However, we have identified three potential options for discussion.

1. Option 1: No change - Continue to offer three levels of Honor Roll based on the GPA including all graded classes.
2. Option 2: Exclude Spanish, Art, Music, STEM, Band/Orchestra, etc. - Continue to offer three levels of Honor Roll, but only include ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies in the calculation
3. Option 3: Discontinue the Honor Roll system - No longer calculate student GPA for the purpose of creating an Honor Roll.