April 19, 2012
Approval of New Academic Distinction

Throughout the last several years there have been numerous discussions among our high school principals regarding the tradition of recognizing a single valedictorian and salutatorian. On December 14th, 2011, all high school principals signed a form documenting their support for replacing the valedictorian/salutatorian honors with the more inclusive Latin academic honors commonly used by universities. By recognizing all seniors with a minimum weighted grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher as cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude, our school system will have the opportunity to celebrate the high academic achievement of many deserving graduates, rather than just two.

In addition to recognizing the efforts of more students, the new academic honors system provides students with additional flexibility in their schedules to take classes that directly relate to their interests and career goals. Those competing for the top class rank will most likely find that they need to successfully complete as many honors courses as possible to achieve a higher weighted GPA. A student’s GPA will be calculated using all of the credits a student earns, rather than just the traditional 18 required courses used to determine a single valedictorian and salutatorian.

Students in the classes of 2012-2015 will continue to have the opportunity to compete for recognition as valedictorian or salutatorian. During this transition period, principals will have the flexibility to begin using the Latin academic honors to recognize eligible students along with the valedictorian and salutatorian. The new academic honors system will be effective with the class of 2016, and a valedictorian and salutatorian will no longer be recognized at that time.

Academic Honors

Eligibility for academic honors will be determined by calculating the cumulative weighted average of all final course grades posted on the high school transcript. Students who earn a D or F in any high school course will not be eligible to receive academic honors.

The academic honors designations shall be awarded as follows:

- Summa Cum Laude (with highest honors) 4.00 and higher
- Magna Cum Laude (with high honors) 3.75-3.9999
- Cum Laude (with honors) 3.50-3.7499

Class Rank

A student’s final cumulative weighted grade point average calculated to at least the fourth decimal place, including grades earned for repeated courses will be used to determine class rank.