



School District of Hilbert

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Invest, Interact, Inspire... Every Child, Every Day!

LAUDE SYSTEM FAQ

1. Why change to the Laude System?

Class rank has been shown to be unreliable and inequitable for students. Class rank does not take into account the level of classes students are taking, the various teachers, and the number of students in the class. The many shortcomings make its statistical use questionable which is why we are moving to the Laude System. This system recognizes students for the rigor of their coursework, their success in their coursework, and it prepares students for the rigor and expectations beyond high school. It also allows for the ability to recognize more students and their academic accomplishments.

2. What is a Laude System?

A Laude System is a way to recognize academic honors among graduates. Although the Latin origins of Laude systems in Universities date back 150 years, there is no “one true system” or universal Laude System. The Laude System referred to throughout this document is specific to Hilbert High School. The HHS proposed Laude System is a point-based system that combines honor points (based on designated courses taken) and cumulative grade point average to create a Laude Score. The Laude score determines which Laude rank a student falls under at graduation.

3. I understand Laude will replace the GPA class rank system. But what about the overall purpose(s) of a Laude System?

Our primary purposes for implementing a Laude System are to encourage rigor in student coursework, encourage self-betterment, foster learning and growth in fields of interest, and increase students’ academic and intellectual risks. The addition of the Laude System—and the concurrent elimination of the existing class rank system—should have a positive impact on students.

4. When will the Laude System go into place?

The HHS Laude System will fully replace the current class rank system with the 22-23 school year. The graduating class of 2023 will not be given their class rank, but will have the ability to calculate their Laude score based on the classes they have taken or are taking.

5. What are the ranks within the Laude System?

Upon meeting certain minimum criteria (GPA and Laude courses), students could obtain Cum Laude (“with honor/distinction”), Magna Cum Laude (“with great honor/distinction”), or Summa Cum Laude (“with highest honor/distinction”) status.

6. How will students be recognized at graduation?

Students will be given cords at the graduation ceremony that will correlate to their Laude rank. Students at Cum Laude will receive white honors cords; Magna Cum Laude will receive silver honors cords; Summa Cum Laude will receive blue honors cords. Each student's Laude ranking will also be noted in the graduation program.

7. Even though class rank is no longer reported, will it be available upon request?

No. We will not report class rank at all unless we encounter the rare exception of it being absolutely required for a specific college application. Class rank will not show up on transcripts as it has in the past.

8. If class rank is not provided on most college applications, will that hurt our students' chances to be accepted into college?

Those who have implemented a Laude System say that this is highly doubtful. On the contrary, not reporting class rank will force college admissions into evaluating our graduates via a more holistic approach, putting greater emphasis on rigor of coursework and corresponding grades in that coursework, ACT/SAT scores, letters of recommendation, etc., and will likely be advantageous for our students. The trend across our nation is fewer high schools reporting class rank, and fewer colleges considering class rank.

9. But if there is no class rank, how will the valedictorian and salutatorian be determined for the Academic Excellence Award?

Per state statute, we are only required to determine a valedictorian for each class. The student with the highest GPA at the end of 7 semesters will be the valedictorian per policy 5430. If there is a tie with GPA, please reference the tie-breaker criteria in the board policy.

10. If the Academic Excellence Award is determined at the end of the 7th semester, will that mean that students could then "slack off" the 2nd half of their senior year?

There has always been a chance of this since the inception of the Academic Excellence Award. However, this issue is addressed with the final Laude designation for graduation being determined at the conclusion of the 8th semester which also encourages students to take a rigorous 2nd semester their senior year. Colleges are also now looking at the entire transcript for students they have accepted and if colleges see a drop in course work for the student's final semester the college can drop that student from acceptance.

11. So who will speak at graduation in place of the Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian?

The valedictorian will have the first choice to speak at graduation along with the student with the highest Laude score based on 8 terms. If the valedictorian and/or student with the highest Laude score choose not to speak, staff will select a senior or seniors who want(s) to speak at graduation from the highest Laude score group based on their leadership, service & character, and academics.

12. What about other scholarships? Don't some of our local scholarship criteria include class rank?

The local scholarship groups, foundations, and/or individual donors will be notified that the criteria language will need to change so that the term "class rank" is no longer included. We will happily work with our local providers on ways to creatively change criteria to better reflect the Laude System changes, if necessary.

13. What if a student transfers into HHS her/his Junior year. Will/how they be eligible for Laude recognition.

Yes, they will be eligible. This is addressed in Board policy 5430 where students must successfully complete at least three semesters at Hilbert High School. Students transferring in will have their AP courses recognized; additionally, unique situations will be considered on an individual basis based on the rigor of the course.

14. Will the list of courses designated as AP and departmental honors ever change?

The list of courses and offerings will most likely change with new courses and discussions. This list of courses will be evaluated every year on the revision cycle along with the Laude System as a whole through our handbook process. The incorporation of newly approved AP or departmental honors courses at HHS may very well drive future changes.

15. Will the Laude System drive students to overload courses in some departments and in turn lead to deserted courses in other departments?

We do not believe so. Our goal at Hilbert High School is to encourage students to take classes that will benefit their development and aid in their future work/college plans. We believe our wide variety of offered courses – including the fact every department has a means for students to acquire Laude points – is reflective of our mission.