



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

SELECTION OF VALEDICTORIANS AND SALUTATORIANS

5128

Procedure No.

July 1, 2008

Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide procedures for the selection of valedictorians and salutatorians in Prince George's County high schools with approved schedules including the official countywide methodology for numeric computation of the cumulative grade point average (GPA).

- II. **BACKGROUND:** The Prince George's County Board of Education in an effort to give greater recognition for outstanding scholarship, resolved that the graduating senior in each high school who had the highest level of academic achievement for her/his qualified courses earning high school credit as measured by the cumulative GPA shall be recognized as the Valedictorian. In addition, the student with the second highest GPA shall be recognized as the Salutatorian.

- III. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. Valedictorian – The student who earns the highest cumulative GPA with respect to qualified program/courses taken by the student. In case of tied GPAs, those students should both/all be recognized as Valedictorians.

 - B. Salutatorian – The student who earns the second highest GPA with respect to qualified program/courses taken by the student. In case of tied GPAs, those students should both/all be recognized as Salutatorians.

 - C. Cumulative GPA – A GPA is calculated at the end of grade nine. At the end of both grades ten and eleven, the GPA is recalculated, each time including the current year's final grades of all prior qualified courses. The final GPA includes all qualified courses attempted in grades nine, ten, eleven, and in the first, second, and third quarter for grade twelve. Summer School, Evening High School, and Saturday School qualified courses are also included.

 - D. Accredited High School – Any high school that has been approved by the Maryland State Department of Education or accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Secondary Schools, or like commissions in other areas.

 - E. Credit-Bearing Courses – Those qualified courses which earn credit and can be used to fulfill Maryland State Department of Education graduation requirements.

 - F. GPA Qualifying Courses – Those courses which earn credit and can be used to compute the GPA for the valedictorian or salutatorian. A list of courses that earn credit and do not count in the GPA is attached (Attachment 1).



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- G. History File – The online computerized record of all student achievement-related data on qualified courses. Accurate and complete data is imperative.
- H. Structure Lists – An alphabetical class list by student name including the student’s cumulative GPA at time of printing and a class list by cumulative GPA at time of printing on History File data.
- I. Eligibility Requirements – A student must be currently enrolled in a Prince George’s County high school, must have completed three years in accredited high schools, and three quarters of the senior year in a Prince George’s County high school.

IV. **PROCEDURES:**

A. SELECTION PROCESS

1. Within two weeks after the third quarter report card issuance, the school will contact the Information Technology (IT) Office for details about the final senior Structure List and the availability of the final Structure List. The Structure List shows cumulative GPA as traditionally calculated from final grades in each qualified course attempted in past years along with the inclusion of achievement data for the first three quarters of the senior year. The three-quarter, senior year achievement data reflects the actual numeric grade point values of the grade earned in each course in each quarter divided by three rather than a rounding down to the nearest “letter” equivalent.
2. The Principal and/or designee should review the final senior Structure List for possible valedictorian and salutatorian candidates looking at those students who have the highest GPAs with the qualified courses, who are currently enrolled in a Prince George’s County public school, who have completed three years in accredited high schools, and who have completed three quarters of their senior year in a Prince George’s County public school.
3. The Principal and/or designee will select the five students with the highest cumulative GPAs on this final, senior Structure List who also meet the criteria just above. If GPAs of more than the top five students are tightly grouped in the decimal portion of each GPA, then you may go beyond the top five to include as many as is appropriate based on their GPA score.



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4. The Principal and/or designee will conduct an in depth audit of each candidate's academic achievement using cumulative folder contents (transcripts, report cards, PDS-SR2A/SR3 card/form, Summer School, and/or Evening High School and/or Saturday School report cards, etc.) to verify the completeness and total accuracy of the History File (e.g., no missing grades, no missing courses, etc.)
5. Under the supervision of the Principal, the designee will make any legitimate additions, changes, or corrections in the History File for each candidate if needed. **NOTE: There is no necessity for further data entry or for any calculations by school area office, or other computer systems other than IT.**
6. When all possible candidates' History Files have been audited and corrected if necessary, and when the entered data is correct, then the Principal should work with IT to obtain a new final senior Structure List which will provide official, valid cumulative GPAs for the senior class including those corrected files of the valedictorian candidates. (If no corrections were made in any candidate's History File, simply use the already existing, valid, senior Structure List.)
7. From the finalized Structure List, the school Principal should then identify the graduating class valedictorian and salutatorian. The valedictorian is that student with the highest cumulative GPA. The salutatorian is that student with the second highest cumulative GPA.

B. CALCULATION METHODOLOGY

1. Background – The Valedictorian/Salutatorian is directly related to the History File and the Structure Lists. The Class Structure List is based on a student's final year-end grades in previous school years, including Summer School, Evening High School, and Saturday School, the final marks/grades in the current school year, and constructed marks/grades in the current school year. It can be printed at the school by using the online system provided by IT and is available by alphabetically-printed student name and/or by GPA for students in grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve on or after certain IT designated dates according to grade level. In the event of a grading error on the third quarter report card, the student has ten (10) days to appeal a grade change and request a grade change.



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2. Current school year course information through third quarter is used to generate the Structure List. During this processing an average mark/grade is constructed; the course credit value is adjusted for the time of year; and course data not associated with county course offerings is eliminated. (This means any courses not available in PGCPs).

3. The senior, three-quarter year formulations used to produce the cumulative GPA in the Valedictorian/Salutatorian process reflect exactly what the student has earned (truncated neither up nor down). The method retains the actual mathematical average and thus does not inflate or deflate the grade point average. The following are illustrative calculations:

- a. The Average Mark/Grade and Adjusted Course Credit Value are constructed only when a final mark/grade is not available (i.e. seniors taking year long or second semester courses).

- (1) An "E" is used for missing marks/grades.
- (2) A numeric value is assigned to each of the quarter marks/grades. (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, E=0, I=0).
- (3) The quarterly marks/grades are totaled, giving Total Quarterly Mark Value. Here are three examples:

Time of Year	Length of Course	Grades Received				Total Quarterly Mark Value
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	
3 rd Qtr	2 nd Semester			B		3
3 rd Qtr	Full Year	A	A	B		11 (4+4+3)

- b. The Total Quarterly Mark Value is divided by the number of elapsed quarters for each course and rounded at two decimal places, giving an Average Mark/Grade. Here are three examples:

Time of Year	Length of Course	Total Quarterly Mark Value	Elapsed Quarters	Average Mark/Grade
3 rd Qtr	2 nd Semester	3	1 (3 rd)	3.00
3 rd Qtr	Full Year	11 (4+4+3)	3 (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd)	3.67

- c. An Adjusted Course Credit Value is constructed to agree with the time of year (reporting period). This is done by



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multiplying the course credit value by .50 for second quarter full year courses, third quarter second semester courses, or .75 for third quarter full year courses.

Time of Year	Length of Course	Course Credit Value	Multiplier	Adjusted Course Credit Value
3 rd Qtr	2 nd Semester	.50	.50	.25
3 rd Qtr	Full Year	1.00	.75	.75

- d. Once the Average Mark/Grade is determined, the GPA is calculated. Individual courses with a final mark/grade of, “P” or “W” are ignored.
- e. The remaining course credit values and Adjusted Course Credit Values earned in qualifying courses are totaled, giving Total Credits Attempted:
 - (1) The Weighted Course Value is determined by adding one unit to each grade, A to D, giving adjusted Grade Points. Numeric mark/grade values are A=5.00, B=4.00, C=3.00, D=2.00, E=0, and I=0. A list of weighted courses is attached (Attachment 2).
 - (2) The adjusted Grade Points and all other Grade Points earned in qualifying courses are totaled, giving Total Grade Points.
 - (3) The Total Grade Points are divided by the Total Credits Attempted and rounded at three decimal places, giving Grade Point Average (GPA) earned in qualifying courses.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Schools – To assure that full, complete, accurate individual student achievement data has been entered into the History File.
2. Information Technology – To provide the appropriate computer programs so that all schools can print out senior Structure Lists without recourse to any further school or IT calculations assuring that Valedictorians and Salutatorians are selected on a single basis countywide.



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D. RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS

1. The Prince George's County Board of Education at its first June meeting will present certificates to the Valedictorians and Salutatorians from each high school's then current graduating classes.
2. The Valedictorians and Salutatorians will be recognized in the graduation program and during the graduation ceremonies.
3. The Valedictorians and Salutatorians will have their selection, as Valedictorian or Salutatorian, recorded on the PDS-SR2A/SR3 card/form under honors and awards.

V. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** Administrative Procedure 5120, Academic Recognition Award; Administrative Procedure 5121.2, Grading and Reporting for Secondary Schools; Administrative Procedure 5122, Interscholastic Sports and Extracurricular Activities – Academic Requirements; and Administrative Procedure 6150, Student Enrollment in Courses and Educational Requirements and Options in Secondary Schools.

VI. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** The Office of Student Transfers and Records, together with Information Technology, will be responsible for updating these procedures and for timely provision of detailed information each year in preparation for graduation.

VII. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5128, dated October 1, 1995.

VIII. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2008.

Approved by:
John E. Deasy
Superintendent of Schools

Attachments:

1. High School Courses That Earn Credits But Do Not Count in the Calculation of the GPA
2. Weighted High School Courses

Distribution: Lists 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 12