

Graduate Recognition Study Committee Report
Submitted to Greater Clark County Schools
Board of School Trustees
April 27, 2017

Committee Make-Up: The committee was made up of parents, counselors, students, and administrators from Jeffersonville, Charlestown, and New Washington High Schools.

Meetings: September 21, 2016, October 24, 2016, February 9, 2017

Rationale: The rationale for the committee was to investigate alternative methods of recognizing excellence in our graduates as well as cultivating and promoting teamwork and collaboration among students. As GCCS evolves into a Ford Next Generation Learning Community the need to allow students to pursue career aspirations should be their primary goal. The Laude System allows students to aspire for academic excellence as well as cultivate the career skills needed for success in and beyond high school.

Summary of Discussions:

1. Discussed the pros and cons of the current valedictorian/salutatorian system.
2. Invited the Hanover College director of admissions to speak to the group about current admissions practices and what criteria colleges value the most in high school graduates.
3. Researched other systems to recognize high school graduates. Found the majority of high schools in the United States are using a Laude system.
4. Reviewed class rank system. Discussed pros and cons of replacing Val/Sal with class rank.
5. Our committee came to consensus (at our final meeting) that the Laude system was the best fit for our high school transition to the Academies of Greater Clark as it best promotes teamwork and collaboration.

How the Laude System Works: Beginning with the graduating class of 2020 (current freshman class) students would be encouraged to aspire to attain a certain grade point average if they wished to be recognized as a Laude graduate. Due to the differing number of advanced placement and honors courses offered at each high school, the GPA cut scores will be unique to each school. The table below shows the cut scores and what percentage of 2016 and 2017 graduates would have qualified for the Laude recognition had it been in place.

School		2016 Graduate Cohort	2017 Graduate Cohort
Charlestown High School	GPA	166 students	154 students
Cum Laude	4.0 - 4.49	23 (13.9%)	18 (11.7%)
Magna Cum Laude	4.5 - 4.69	3 (1.8%)	7 (4.5%)
Summa Cum Laude	4.7 +	3 (1.8%)	5 (3.2%)
Jeffersonville High School	GPA	446 students	437 students
Cum Laude	4.0 - 4.49	33 (7.4%)	42 (9.6%)
Magna Cum Laude	4.5 - 4.99	30 (6.7%)	26 (5.9%)
Summa Cum Laude	5.0 +	8 (1.8%)	12 (2.8%)
New Washington High School	GPA	54 students	55 students
Cum Laude	4.0 - 4.29	3 (5.5%)	8 (14.5%)
Magna Cum Laude	4.3 - 4.45	1 (1.9%)	6 (10.9%)
Summa Cum Laude	4.46 +	0	3 (5.5%)
If AP class offerings change then the cutoffs for each Laude category may be modified by the administration at each school.			

Selecting Speakers at Commencement: Each high school will have two student speakers at commencement:

1. **Senior Class President**
2. **Summa Cum Laude Student:** Any student earning the Summa Cum Laude honor will be eligible to apply to speak at Commencement. This application will be reviewed by administration then all Laude recipients will vote on the Summa Cum Laude student to speak as their representative.