



# SHS CLASS RANK PROPOSAL

Moving toward our goals of equity, the whole child, and student mental health

# WHY?

SHS leadership has decided to examine this policy to ensure that it is supporting the district's goals of equity, educating the whole child, student mental health, and college/career readiness. In the wake of COVID and the current mental health crisis, SHS leadership decided to get more data to examine whether a change was necessary.

# CURRENT POLICY - RANK

In Student Handbook:

- Rank is calculated for the first time after one full year at SHS
- Valedictorian and Salutatorian are calculated after first semester senior year

Past practice (but not officially in handbook):

- SHS Calculates an *exact* rank based on weighted GPA.
- Rank is re-calculated after each semester.



# HOW IS RANK CALCULATED

- ✘ Each student has a weighted GPA calculated. The highest weighted GPA is ranked #1, the second highest is #2 and so on...
- ✘ To calculate a weighted GPA, each final grade is given a numerical value (see table) and averaged according to how many courses/credits the student has taken.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>AP</u>	<u>Honors</u>	<u>CP</u>
A+	5.333	4.833	4.333
A	5.000	4.500	4.000
A-	4.667	4.167	3.667
B+	4.333	3.833	3.333
B	4.000	3.500	3.000
B-	3.667	3.167	2.667
C+	3.333	2.833	2.333
C	3.000	2.500	2.000
C-	2.667	2.167	1.667
D+	2.333	1.833	1.333
D	2.000	1.500	1.000
D-	1.667	1.167	0.667
F	0.000	0.000	0.000



## QUESTIONS TO INVESTIGATE:

- Does class rank causes stress among students and lead to competitive culture rather than collaborative?
- Are students taking courses solely to increase their class rank? Are they prioritizing it over other courses that they are interested in (like music, art, etc).
- Do colleges and universities need class rank? Will this put SHS students at a disadvantage in the college application process?
- Transfer students have a class rank of 0 until four consecutive quarters at SHS. Which students does this affect and how?



# RANK PROPOSAL

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Do not calculate or report  
Class Rank



Begin With Class of 2025  
(current Grade 10)



Gather additional qualitative  
and quantitative data in  
2022-2023 to examine  
weighted GPA policy.

## This proposal aims to:

- Reduce student stress and competition
- Allow students to choose courses based on their interests and needs (rather than just to raise their class rank)
- Take the time necessary to evaluate the weighted GPA policy separate from Class Rank.



# WHAT ABOUT VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN?

The proposal does not currently include a recommendation on whether to continue to have a valedictorian and salutatorian. SHS leadership has committed to getting more data, student voice, parent/guardian voice, and staff voice before making this decision for the Class of 2025.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✘ Shouldn't there be a way to show that AP course and Honors courses are more rigorous? That A's are better than C's? *Transcript will still show this.*
- ✘ Will this affect my child's chance at college admissions? *No - based on admissions survey. Most neighboring schools with high college-bound percentages do not rank.*
- ✘ How will this affect course enrollment? Why would students take AP courses without the rank "boost"? The AP students who were interviewed expressed that they would still take AP courses because it was the right level of challenge for them.

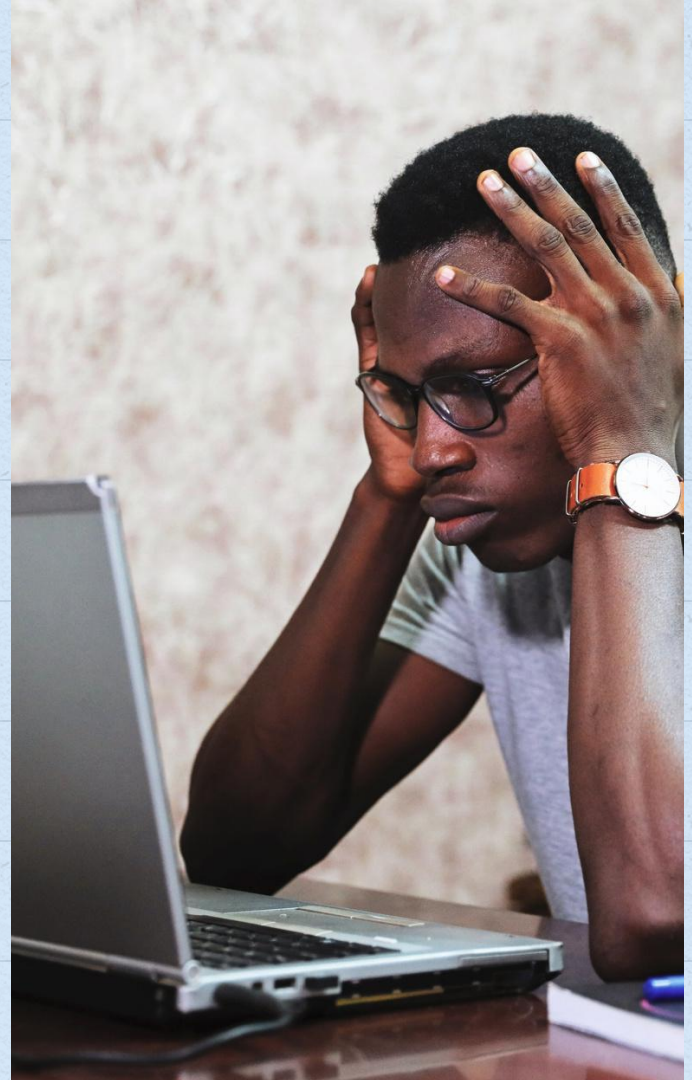


# STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

“I wish our school didn’t show rank. Students feel guilty for not taking APs because they know even if they get A’s they won’t ever ‘catch up’”

“So many social conflicts stem from rank”

*\*quotes from Class of 2022 student focus group (13 students participated in 3 different focus groups)*





# STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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Themes from focus groups:

- 9th graders did not report peer conflicts due to grades. Mentioned that they do not know their rank yet.
- General support for no rank or not releasing rank to students before senior year.
- AP student focus group would continue to take certain AP courses related to their interests even if there was no rank/GPA boost - reported they needed the challenge and liked the learning environment.
- Students in summer school - acknowledged that AP is more work and person might “deserve” higher ranking but also noted that many students have life circumstances that make it very hard to take on AP courses.

# ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE SURVEY

When asked if they took AP courses so that their GPA would go up, 33 out of 39 students said that was “somewhat true”(20 students) or “very true” (13 students).



# THE MLE EXPERIENCE

- ✗ Many MLE students enter SPS in high school. They do not get a class rank until 4 consecutive quarters. Sometimes this is not before applying to college.
- ✗ ESL requirements by law. These courses are never weighted so MLE students can not be at the top of the class.
- ✗ “There is no downside to dropping class rank for MLE students. Ranking has never fairly honored the work they are doing.” - MLE Department Head, SHS



# ONE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

- ✗ MLE student arrived toward the end of sophomore year. Placed in ESL 3.
- ✗ Took 6 AP classes in 11th and 12th grade. Grades: A+, A, A+, A-, B+, A. Most challenging courses available to him in a new language.
- ✗ Because he needed to take ESL 3 (two blocks) and ESL 4, his rank is 59.
- ✗ Without reporting rank, his transcript can be viewed based on his achievements rather than just his rank.



**CLASS RECORD**

Year	Subjects	Marks					Credit	Year	Subjects	Marks					Credit	
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Fnl				1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Fnl		
2020	TR [REDACTED]						0.00		381C PHYSICS 1 AP	A+	A+	A+	A	A+	5.00	
	TR0 MATHEMATICS					B+	5.00		381L PHYSICS 1 LAB - SEM	P	P			P	2.50	
	TR0 SPANISH LANG					A-	5.00		600 HEALTH ED 1			D-	A	C+	2.50	
	TR0 ENGLISH FOREIGN LANG					A-	5.00		799 EL COLLEGE & CAREER			P	P	P	2.50	
	TR0 ARTS & CULTURE					A-	5.00		7AC ESL COMMON CORE	A-	A+			A	2.50	
	TR0 SOCIAL SCIENCE					A-	5.00		7C2 ESL 4	A	A	A	A	A	5.00	
	TR0 CITIZENSHIP & CIVIC					A-	5.00		SPX X-Block		A+					
	TR0 PHYSICAL EDUCATION					A-	5.00		TR. ART/AI/ROBOTICS - LESLEY DE					A	2.50	
	TR0 RELIGION					A-	5.00		TR. ART/AI/ROBOTICS - LESLEY DE					A	2.50	
	TR0 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY					A-	5.00									
	2021	122E US HISTORY 2			A+	A+	A+	5.00	2023	041B ENGLISH 4 HONORS	B-					
250 PRECALCULUS HONORS						NC	0.00	140 PSYCHOLOGY AP		A-						
341 PHYSICS 1 HONORS				A-	A+	A	5.00	256 STATISTICS AP		B+						
7B2 ESL 3				A-	A	A-	10.00	382C PHYSICS 2 AP		A						
931 FITNESS EDUCATION				A+	C+	B+	2.50	605 HEALTH ED 2		A						
SP8 CREDIT RECOVERY								837 CERAMICS		A+						
SP8 CREDIT RECOVERY								SP8 ACADEMIC LAB FOR COLLEGE		P						
TR [REDACTED]							0.00	SPE COMMUNITY GROUP FOR								
TR0 MATHEMATICS		A	A				0.00	SP3 IN SCHOOL INTERNSHIP								
TR0 SPANISH LANG		A	A				0.00	382L PHYSICS 2 LAB - SEM								
TR0 ENGLISH FOREIGN LANG		A	A				0.00	825 SCULPTURE								
TR0 ARTS & CULTURE		A	A				0.00									
TR0 SOCIAL SCIENCE		A	A				0.00									
TR0 CITIZENSHIP & CIVIC		A	A				0.00									
TR0 PHYSICAL EDUCATION		A	A				0.00									
TR0 RELIGION		A	A				0.00									
TR0 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY		A	A				0.00									
2022		112 US HISTORY 1	A-	A	B+	B	B+	5.00								
		251 CALCULUS AP-AB	A	A+	A+	A+	A+	5.00								
	261 COMPUTER SCIENCE AP	A	A	A-	A-	A	5.00									

# THE SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

- ✘ Inclusion classes are never given extra GPA weight. Students in inclusion classes will never be at the top of the class rank because it is based on weighted GPA.
- ✘ Some students on IEPs are required to take Study Skills which is never given extra weight in GPA.



# THE CTE EXPERIENCE

- ✘ Throughout their time at SHS, CTE students take 8 CTE courses. These courses are not weighted. Therefore, regardless of how well they do or what other classes they take, they will never rank at the top of the class.
- ✘ Highest possible weighted GPA is 4.67 if student took EVERY AP and Honors course they could, they had no schedule conflicts, and they got an A+ in every single class every year.
- ✘ That would put them at #10 in the current class.





# SCHOOL COUNSELORS ARE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSAL

- x 100% of school counselors want to eliminate class rank

Possible benefits to eliminating class rank according to a community school counselor:

*“More equitable for CTE students, special education students and our most at-risk student groups. Most students do not feel good about class rank when they see it. The ones that are ranked at the top don’t even feel good because they are all competing against each other and this can lead to adverse and negative interactions within that peer group.”*



*“This isn't just about the top students. It's also about all those who fall in the middle or the end. And why am I even referring to them as middle/end? Because we rank. I shouldn't refer to students that way but that's what this system makes us do. And it's a system that makes students look at themselves this way.”*

*-School Counselor at SHS*

# OTHER SHS STAFF INPUT

Feedback from November 28th Staff Focus Group (5 teachers in attendance)

Most supported the proposal to remove class rank

- ✘ “Ranking is in combat with student learning, doesn’t support what we’ve talked about with growth mindset for students. Ranking goes against that.”
- ✘ “Makes kids care about their number and they shouldn’t care about it.” “-Being #1 doesn’t mean anything.”
- ✘ Removing rank would “prevent a lot of anxiety - they are looking up rank as sophomores”<sup>3</sup>

One teacher expressed some concerns:

“I like rewarding hard work, I get concerned that we give everyone a ribbon. There will always be competition in life.” They would like to keep the valedictorian.



# PARENT/STAFF PERSPECTIVE



- Most parents supported removal of rank.
- Expressed tension their students feel around interests vs. classes that will increase rank. “I can’t be number one because I took music theory instead of AP Bio.”
- Parents acknowledged that grades can be like a game. Students that can play the game well get higher rank. Some felt this was a reason to remove rank. One parent felt that this was realistic to life.
- Biggest question/concern: how will this impact my child in college admissions? What do nearby towns do?

Acknowledge demographics



# KEY TO SUCCESS: COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

SPS needs to educate students and families that moving to unweighted GPA and no ranking will NOT negatively impact them.



# DATA FROM ADMISSIONS SURVEY

Survey of Admissions Counselors from 18 colleges (in state, out of state, selective, and non-selective):

- **100% said it would NOT negatively impact a student's application if their school does not calculate/provide class rank.**
- **69% said they have no preference for whether/how class rank is reported. 16% said they preferred no class rank.**
  - \*Only three schools said they prefer exact class rank. They followed that up to say that if a school does not provide class rank, it would not affect their evaluation. They have other ways to examine rigor and achievement.

# Admissions Survey: How do you evaluate applicants from high schools that do not provide class rank?

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- **Theme 1: Class Rank not a factor**

- We do not look at class rank as part of our application review process. (3 similar responses)
- The same as applicants with a class rank, it does not impact admission decisions. (3 similar responses)

- **Theme 2: College evaluate strength of curriculum and grades:**

- We evaluate strength of curriculum and academic trend alongside strength of school
- By examining their rigor, grades received, and when applicable; the top GPA, GPA bands, or info of that nature
- We look at rigor of program, school profile for course offerings, testing if provided, grades, trends
- GPA (2 responses)
- We recalculate grades from all applicants to keep the process fair for all.
- We count the number of each letter grades and calculate the ratio of As to other grades.

- **Theme 3: Holistic Review**

- Through holistic review ranging from academic performance, transcript trends, rigor, etc.
- All applications are read holistically. Traditionally, we use our own GPA calculation as part of any admissions decision.
- We recalculate weighted GPAs for all students and compare them to other applicants from the same school, with equal consideration of academic performance, academic rigor, and community/extra-curricular engagement.
- We aren't comparing students to one another, just ensuring that they are prepared for our programs.



# CONCLUSIONS FROM ADMISSIONS SURVEY

The data from the admissions survey clearly shows that moving to no class rank would have no negative impact on our students as applicants.

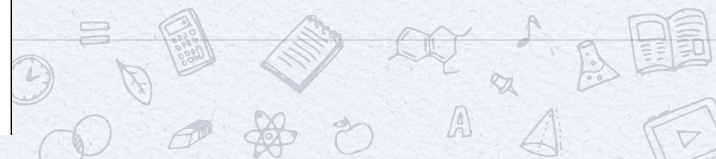


# TO CONSIDER: COULD RANK HURT STUDENTS IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS?

Students can take rigorous classes, multiple AP courses, get mostly A's and still be ranked in the 40's or 50's. Does this help or hurt students?

Year	Subjects	Marks					Credit	Year	Subjects	Marks					Credit
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	FnI				1st	2nd	3rd	4th	FnI	
2020	011 ENGLISH 1 HONORS	A	A-	A+	P	A	5.00	2022	031 ENGLISH 3 HONORS	A	A-	A	B+	A-	5.00
	111 US HISTORY 1 HONORS	A	A	A	P	A	5.00		130 WORLD HISTORY MODERN AP	B+	C-	B-	B	B-	5.00
	223 GEOMETRY	A-	A+	A	P	A	5.00		250 PRECALCULUS HONORS	A	B+	A	A	A	5.00
	311 BIOLOGY 1 HONORS	A	A-	A	P	A	5.00		348 HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY HONORS	A-	B+	A-	A	A-	5.00
	434 SPANISH 3 HONORS	A-	A	A	P	A	5.00		381C PHYSICS 1 AP	B	B-	A-	C	B	5.00
	600 HEALTH ED 1			A	P	A+	2.50		381L PHYSICS 1 LAB - SEM	P	P			P	2.50
	907 FILM STUDIES	A+	B				2.50		454 SPANISH 5 HONORS	B+	A-	B+	A+	A-	5.00
	TZA VOC EXPLORATORY sem 1	A+	A				2.50		915 SPORTS MEDICNE			A+	A+	A+	2.50
TZB VOC EXPLORATORY sem 2			A	P	A	2.50									
2021	021 ENGLISH 2 HONORS	A	A+	A	A	A	5.00	2023	030 ENGLISH LANGUAGE AP	A					
	074 WRITING LAB 2	P	P			P	2.50		251 CALCULUS AP-AB	A					
	152 US HISTORY AP	A	A	A	A-	A	5.00		371C BIOLOGY AP	A					
	231 ALGEBRA 2 HONORS	A	A	A	A-	A	5.00		837 CERAMICS	A+					
	331 CHEMISTRY 1 HONORS	A	A	A	A+	A	5.00		937 YOGA	A					
	444 SPANISH 4 HONORS	A+	A+	A+	A+	A+	5.00		SP3 IN SCHOOL INTERNSHIP	P					
	605 HEALTH ED 2			A+	A-	A	2.50		SP8 ACADEMIC LAB	P					
	837 CERAMICS 1	A+	A+			A+	2.50		371L BIOLOGY LAB - SEM						
SPR REMOTE STUDY - sem 2			P	P	P	2.50	SPE COMMUNITY GROUP FOR								
							138 HUMAN BEHAVIOR								
							SP3 IN SCHOOL INTERNSHIP								
							SP3 IN SCHOOL INTERNSHIP								

This student is ranked in the mid-40's. 6 AP courses taken. 12 Honors classes. 2 B's as final grades and every other final grade is A.



# WHAT DO OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS DO?

## No Rank:

- ✗ Cambridge Rindge & Latin School (2013)
- ✗ Melrose High School (YOG 2024 and later)
- ✗ Winchester High School (pre-2003)
- ✗ Arlington High School (2012)
- ✗ Newton North High School (as of 2016)

## Exact Rank:

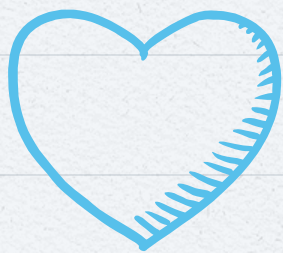
- ✗ Medford High School
- ✗ Everett High School
- ✗ Malden High School
- ✗ Lynn Classical & English High Schools
- ✗ Saugus High School



# ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON CLASS RANK AND GPA

- ✘ <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/12/04/competitive-high-school-asks-are-weighted-gpas-doing-any-good>
- ✘ <https://www.ednc.org/eraceing-inequities-the-intersection-of-race-and-grade-point-average-in-nc-schools/>
- ✘ <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2018-11-30/what-students-should-know-about-the-gpa-scale>
- ✘ <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-families/5-tips-for-more-caring-college-admissions>





THANKS!

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