



TO: District 128 Parents and Students

FROM: Prentiss Lea, Superintendent
Jim Whittington and Mike Stevens, Co-Principals, Libertyville High School
Ellen Cwick, Principal, Vernon Hills High School

DATE: August 18, 2008

RE: **DISCUSSION OF CLASS RANK**

During the previous school year, the administration and staff of CHSD 128 have discussed and carefully researched the growing trend of secondary schools eliminating the practice of listing a student's individual class rank on the academic transcript.

As we studied this trend, we did the following:

- Held many meetings and had discussions with representatives from colleges and universities
- Attended sessions which have addressed this issue at local, state and national conferences during the past year
- Surveyed schools in our area and those with similar demographics as District 128
- Collected feedback from various committees and groups in our organization, including the Program and Personnel Committee of the Board of Education and our staff

We have decided to continue our discussion of this topic during the coming school year and have some information we would like to share with our community. We are now inviting students and parents to join our conversation in the coming months.

This document contains a **proposed transition plan** for the implementation of new practices and procedures related to class rank in District 128. We invite you to review the proposed plan and the **Frequently Asked Questions** document. We will hold two forums, one at each school. Libertyville High School students and parents can join us for an informational meeting on Thursday, September 11, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Studio Theater. Vernon Hills High School students and parents can join us Thursday, September 18, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Studio Theater. At this time, a short presentation will be shared to help you further understand this proposed change. An online survey at our school websites, www.d128.org, will be available to parents and students in September for gathering feedback from our community.

Thank you for your feedback and continued support of our schools. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact us at the District Office 847-247-4500, or the Principal's office at each school: LHS 847-327-7000, VHHS 847-932-2000.



Community High School District 128

Proposed Class Rank Transition Plan

August 2008

Class of 2009

The current seniors, the Class of 2009, will be the last class to have the individual class rank printed on the academic transcript; this rank will be provided to colleges and universities.

Class of 2010

The current juniors, the Class of 2010, will have an option to include or omit their class rank from the academic transcript. Juniors wishing to include class rank on their transcript senior year will need to complete a form designating this by May 29, 2009. Students and parents may consult with the college counselor if they have a question about whether or not they should include class rank on the academic transcript.

Class of 2011 and Beyond

Beginning with the current sophomores and freshmen, the Class of 2011 and the Class of 2012, individual class rank will no longer be printed on the academic transcript; it will no longer be posted or publicly announced.

Special Circumstances

Class rank can be calculated and will be made available to students under very special circumstances. For example, if a student is applying for a scholarship or for admission to a post-secondary institution that will not accept an application without the reporting of a rank, we will produce a rank for that special circumstance. We will ensure that our students' opportunities are not limited.

Graduation Practices

We recognize the elimination of class rank will have an effect on our current graduation practices. Our current practices include honoring a valedictorian and a group of honor graduates, those students with a 4.0 grade point average or higher. We recommend that, beginning with the Class of 2010, we no longer designate a valedictorian publicly. However, we will continue the practice of honoring those students with a 4.0 grade point average as Honor Graduates.

We recommend each school establish a graduation ceremony committee. This committee will establish the program for the ceremony and any selection criteria for graduation speakers. It is our recommendation that each school select graduation speakers with an audition process that allows for qualified and interested students to be given the opportunity to speak to the graduating class.



Frequently Asked Questions about Class Rank

Why is District 128 considering the elimination of class rank?

Community High School District 128 operates on the philosophy of doing what is best for students. After consideration, we believe dropping class rank is what is best for our students. The competitiveness of the college admissions process puts our students at a disadvantage by including this measurement on the transcript. The elimination of class rank will improve student opportunities in the college admissions process.

Colleges and universities are moving away from using individual class rank. They are now looking more holistically at a student's transcript. Based on research from other area schools, we have learned that the elimination of class rank generally aided students in being accepted in the college admissions process.

Class rank only compares our students to other students in their class. We believe this does not allow for a fair comparison of our students to other students locally or nationally. By eliminating class rank, we believe the focus will be on our students' grade point average (GPA), activities and the reputation of District 128 schools.

How will the elimination of class rank affect my student in the college application process?

Colleges will still receive an individual GPA for each student on the transcript, along with a school profile describing the competitiveness of District 128 schools. The elimination of class rank will encourage the colleges to look more holistically at each student: at course work, grades, and other applicant qualities such as activities, volunteer/service work, athletics, test scores, recommendations, interviews, and personal statements. We believe the GPA is more important and a better indicator of college success than an individual's class rank.

Will this decision to eliminate class rank place more importance on my ACT score?

Colleges and universities look closely at all student information provided by a high school. Most post-secondary schools are placing more emphasis on grade point average and success in rigorous high school coursework. Test scores are another piece of information which validates student success in high school and predict college success.

What information does District 128 provide to colleges and universities in the college application process?

Our college counselors communicate with admissions representatives and directors throughout the year. They attend national conferences and locally held admissions forums. The LHS and VHHS school profiles, which are mailed with each student transcript, provide the following statistics for each school: enrollment, test score averages for ACT, SAT, PSAT, PSAT and the

number of National Merit Semifinalists and Finalists for the previous class. Graduation requirements and an explanation of the grading system are prominent. Advanced Placement test results are also listed. Courses offered at the high schools are listed, which allows the college to see the highest level of classes offered in each area of the curriculum. The last page of the profile addresses data regarding post-secondary decisions of District 128 students. All counselors are available to answer questions from college admissions representatives regarding individual students and their high school record. You can view our school profiles online at our school CRC web pages.

What other schools with demographics similar to District 128 have already made this decision to eliminate class rank?

The following schools have made such a change: New Trier High School , Lake Forest High School, Glenbrook North High School, Glenbrook South High School , Stevenson High School, Barrington High School, Highland Park High School , Deerfield High School, Hinsdale Central, Hinsdale South, Naperville North, Naperville Central, Warren High School, and most other private high schools including Carmel Catholic High School and Loyola Academy.

Can I get my student's class rank if it is needed for a scholarship or special circumstance?

If absolutely necessary and proof of need is presented, a rank can be produced for special scholarship or admission applications. These requests will be handled on an individual basis by the Director of Counseling. We will ensure that our students' opportunities are not limited.

Will District 128 be designating a valedictorian and giving that student the honor to speak at graduation ceremonies?

Beginning with the Class of 2010, we will no longer recognize a valedictorian. Publicly recognizing a valedictorian indicates a class rank. Each school will select graduation speakers with an audition process which allows qualified and interested students the opportunity to speak to the graduating class. We will continue to honor those students with a 4.0 grade point average or higher at each graduation ceremony as Honor Graduates.

Recommended and respectfully submitted by Class Rank Subcommittee Members: Marina Scott, Deb Larson, Scott Birtman, Ole Stevens, Frank Lestina, Greg Herman, Sue Butler, Patricia Finnerty, Steve Korney, Mary Todoric