

## **Rank in Class, Honor Graduates, Graduation Ceremonies**

High schools uniformly determine the class rankings of students based on the grade point ratios (“GPRs”) of students in grade twelve, i.e., seniors, including students considered to be in grade twelve (see “Acceleration of students in grades nine through twelve”). GPRs are calculated after seniors’ grades are finalized at the end of the school year, i.e., at the conclusion of the fourth nine-weeks grading period. These final class rankings for seniors are computed in order to achieve the following three purposes:

1. To determine honor graduates, using the Latin honors system as follows:
  - a. Students with a weighted GPR\* of 4.750 or higher on the S.C. uniform grading scale will be recognized as Summa Cum Laude graduates.
  - b. Students with a weighted GPR\* of 4.250 or higher, but less than 4.750, will be recognized as Magna Cum Laude graduates.
  - c. Students with a weighted GPR\* of 3.750 or higher, but less than 4.250, will be recognized as Cum Laude graduates.

*\*Weighted GPA calculations are based upon the S.C. Uniform Grading Policy’s three decimal-point scale, and computations will not be rounded to a higher number.*

Honors graduates will be recognized at each district high school graduation ceremony in the following manner:

- A notation indicating honor status (i.e., Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Cum Laude) will be inserted by the graduate’s name in the high school’s graduation program.
- The high school will announce the honor graduate’s level of recognition (i.e., Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Cum Laude) when the graduate walks across the stage.
- District-wide, a uniform color-coding system will be used for the honor cords awarded to honor graduates. The color coding is as follows:
  - Summa Cum Laude      school color + gold
  - Magna Cum Laude      school color + silver
  - Cum Laude              school color + bronze

Academic regalia such as honors cords will be worn by a graduate during the ceremony provided that the student is:

- Eligible for Latin honors recognition, or
- A member of a chartered honor society.

Honor cords or other academic regalia may not be worn by students in graduation ceremonies to signify a student’s membership or enrollment in an academy/club/organization/program, a student’s completer status, and/or a student’s winning a competitive event.

2. To determine students who will speak at district high school graduation ceremonies:
  - a. The Valedictorian (the senior with the highest weighted GPR) will speak at his/her school’s graduation ceremony.
  - b. The Salutatorian (the senior with second highest weighted GPR) will speak at his/her school’s graduation ceremony.

- c. A third senior, who has earned magna or summa cum laude recognition, will be selected through election by his/her peers in the magna/summa cum laude student group to speak at his/her school's graduation ceremony.
3. To provide final class rank information that seniors may need to report to the post-secondary institution(s) of their choice.

**Preliminary Class Ranking of Seniors for College Admissions and/or Scholarships**

Preliminary class rank will be uniformly determined on the 135th day of school for twelfth graders based on the students' weighted GPRs for the following two purposes:

1. To provide preliminary class rank information that seniors need for scholarships and other awards;
2. To provide preliminary class rank information that seniors need for admission to postsecondary programs.

**Preliminary Class Ranking of Juniors for Selection of Junior Marshals**

For the sole purpose of district high school graduation ceremonies, high schools will calculate the class rankings of eleventh graders, based upon their GPRs, on the 135th day of school, in order to identify junior class marshals. This 135-day ranking of eleventh graders is used only for the purpose of identifying junior class marshals.

**Ranking of Tenth and Eleventh Graders for South Carolina Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Eligibility**

In order for students in grades ten and eleven to be considered for initial eligibility for South Carolina's Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, calculation of GPAs and determination of class ranking for tenth and eleventh graders will occur after the 180th day of school when all grades have been finalized.

The rank in class for high school students will be computed according to the guidelines included in the S.C. Uniform Grading Policy. The District reserves the right to make changes in its policy concerning the structure for determining class rankings and grade point ratios.

The S.C. Uniform Grading Policy will apply to students enrolled in grades three through twelve.

See, also: "Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students."

*Legal reference:*

*State.*

*S.C. Department of Education – Uniform Grading Policy.*

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