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Dear students and families,

Beginning with the graduating Class of 2019 students will be honored at graduation using university-aligned Latin honors designations. The Chatham County Schools Board of Education approved this change during the March 12, 2018 monthly meeting. These new designations are listed below for reference.

- **Summa Cum Laude** for students with weighted grade point average of 4.5 or higher. This Latin designation means “**With Highest Honor**”.
- **Magna Cum Laude** for students with weighted grade point average of 4.0 to 4.49. This Latin designation means “**With Great Honor**”.
- **Cum Laude** for students with weighted grade point average of 3.5 to 3.99. This Latin designation means “**With Honor**”.

This new process for honoring our graduates will replace the traditional designation of ‘valedictorian’ and ‘salutatorian’ titles beginning with the graduating Class of 2019. This letter is being shared with students and families to provide information about the transition to the new graduation honors system.

In January 2015 the North Carolina State Board of Education approved changes to the grading scale used in public high schools. Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, all public high schools in North Carolina adopted a ten-point grading scale and a standardized system for converting grades to grade point average.

Statewide Ten-Point Scale

A = 100-90%
B = 89-80%
C = 79-70%
D = 69-60%
F = ≤ 59%

Statewide Grade Point Average

100-90% = 4.0
89-80% = 3.0
79-70% = 2.0
69-60% = 1.0
≤ 59% = 0.0

Grade point average is used in Chatham County Schools to determine class ranking at each high school. Class rank will remain on the official student transcript. This information was previously used to identify the valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s) for each graduating class. At each high school, the valedictorian(s) and the salutatorian(s) then participated in roles during the commencement activities. The changes to the statewide grading scale for high schools increased the number of potential students competing for valedictorian or salutatorian designations. Following a study of actions taken by school districts in our region and across the state, a survey was conducted through K-12 Insight to collect feedback from interested students, teachers, parents, staff, school administration, and community members.

Feedback collected from surveys along with the analysis of actions taken in other school districts supports eliminating the traditional designation of valedictorian and salutatorian. Using the broader Latin honors designations encourages students to take more courses of interest rather than courses chosen to provide a better class rank. Beginning with the Class of 2019 more of our graduating students will have the opportunity to attain an honors designation. Roles for students during commencement activities will continue to be determined at each high school.

Thank you for taking the time to review this letter and best wishes to each of you for a great school year.

Respectfully,

Dr. Colin K. Batten, Jr.
Executive Director of Secondary Programs
Chatham County Schools
kbatten@chatham.k12.nc.us

The mission of Chatham County Schools is to graduate globally competitive and confident students by providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum in a supportive, safe and nurturing learning environment.