

# Brief to ILTexas Board

## Early Graduation & Class Rank



# Task Force

- **Question:** Do Class Rank advantages exist for early graduates. In other words, do 3-year graduates have a Class Rank advantage over their 4-year counterparts?
- **Task Force Participants:** Deputy Superintendents (DSAAS and DSSL), Area Superintendents, High School Principals, High School Guidance Counselors, College Advising, PEIMS, Accountability/Data Analysis, and Legal.
- **Review:**
  1. Parents' concerns: Early Graduation and Class Rank
  2. Top 40 students in 11th and 12th grade classes from selected campuses (most veteran).
  3. TAC §61.1201 /TEC §28.026
    - i. ranking top 10% students
    - ii. implications regarding college acceptance
  4. Early Graduation and Class Rank Policy for neighboring school districts
  5. ILTexas Early Graduation and Class Rank Policy: 2021-22 Student Handbook (pgs.70-81)

# Current Policy

To be classified as a senior - 18 credits (10 credits must be English, Math, Science and Social Studies)

All courses taken during the regular school year at ILTexas shall count toward GPA (exceptions: aide positions, study hall, peer tutoring, college credits that are not dual credits, credit by examination credits, & SAT prep class).

Only courses taken at ILTexas count towards local GPA. Local GPA is based on a 100-point scale. Further, weightings are based on the following scale:

- Advance Placement/Dual Credit 1.15
- Honors/Pre-AP 1.1
- All other courses 1
- For the 2021-2022 school year, beginning with the incoming freshman (class of 2025), dual credit courses will have a GPA set of 1.1

For the purpose of determining honors to be conferred during graduation activities, the campus shall calculate class rank by using grades available at the time of calculation at the end of the 5th six week grading period of the senior year. For the purpose of applications to institutions of higher education, ILTexas shall also calculate class rank as required by state law (top 10% only).

Graduating seniors with the highest and second highest cumulative local weighted grade point average as determined at the end of the 5th grading period of the senior year, will be eligible to serve as the Valedictorian and Salutatorian respectively. The Valedictorian shall be the eligible graduate with the highest local GPA; the Salutatorian shall be the eligible graduate with the second highest local GPA.

# Findings

Is there a class rank advantage to graduating early?

- There are many variables. Each individual student scenario is dependant on the classes taken, such as, 1) the number of high school courses taken as a middle school student, 2) the number of AP and Dual Credit courses, 3) the number of weighted core classes rather than an elective (i.e., AP level fine arts classes, etc.), 4) summer school courses, and 5) course load year-to-year (i.e., seniors not taking an elective or Fitness their senior year).
- When comparing the top 40 11th and 12th graders of our most established high school campuses, the following trends emerged:
  - 2 out of 3 high schools' data demonstrated that traditional 4-year seniors had top ten advantage
  - 3-year seniors, in some scenarios, had advantage in the rank of 2, 3, and 4
- Upon review of surrounding school districts' policy regarding Early Graduation and Class Rank, most are including early graduates in class rank. - with no penalty for completing requirements in three years. However, one school district, Keller ISD, does not allow early graduates to be named as Valedictorian or Salutatorian.
- Early Graduation is, and always has been, an option for all ILTexas students.

# Recommendations

1. Discuss and act on the current criteria used to establish Valedictorian and Salutatorian: Graduating seniors with the highest and second highest cumulative local weighted grade point average as determined at the end of the 5th grading period will be eligible to serve as the Valedictorian and Salutatorian respectively. The Valedictorian shall be the eligible graduate with the highest local GPA; the Salutatorian shall be the eligible graduate with the second highest local GPA.
  - If the eligible graduate(s) with the highest or second highest GPA is displaced in class rank by an early graduate, ILTexas shall establish separate Valedictorians and/or Salutatorians for each cohort (early graduates and 4-year graduates). Additionally, if displaced by a 3-year graduate, ILTexas will issue a scholarship to the highest ranking 4-year graduate that equals the Texas Education Agency's Highest Ranking scholarship (currently approximately \$15K).
2. Discuss and act on adding clarity to our student handbook regarding early graduation eligibility and requirements.
  - A student that will meet all ILTexas graduation requirements (i.e., Graduation Plan, Service Learning Project, Service Hours, etc.), by the end of the academic year of the intended graduation class, shall be eligible for Early Graduation.
3. Discuss and act on application deadline for Early Graduation.
  - Early Graduation Application Deadline - last day of January of the intended graduation class.