

Lake Mills High School

LAUDE SYSTEM

FAQ

1. What is a Laude System?

A Laude System is a way to recognize academic honors in graduates. Although the Latin origins of Laude systems in Universities dates back 150 years, there is no “one true system” or universal Laude system. The Laude System referred to throughout this document is specific to Lake Mills High School. The LMHS proposed Laude System is a point-based system that combines honor points (based off of designated honors courses taken) and cumulative grade point average to create a Laude Score. The Laude Score determines which laude rank a student falls under at graduation.

2. What will a Laude System at LMHS do exactly?

The proposed Laude system would replace the current grade point average class rank system. The contemporary education literature regarding class rank is clear: it is a poor statistic to use in public education.

3. I understand Laude will replace the GPA class rank system. But what about the overall purpose(s) of a Laude System?

Our primary purposes of proposing a Laude System is to encourage rigor in student coursework, decrease unnecessary competition between classmates, and increase students’ academic and intellectual risks. The addition of the Laude System – and the concurrent elimination of the existing class rank system – will have a positive impact on students.

4. When will the Laude System go into place?

The Laude System was approved by the LMASD School Board and started with the class of 2024.

5. What are the ranks within the Laude System?

Upon meeting a certain minimum criterion, students could obtain Cum Laude (“with honor”), Magna Cum Laude (“with great honor”), or Summa Cum Laude (“with highest honor”) status.

6. How will students be recognized at graduation?

Students will be asked to stand at each ranking. Students at Cum Laude will receive white honors cords; Magna Cum Laude will receive silver honors cords; Summa Cum Laude will receive gold honors cords.

7. Even though class rank is no longer reported, will it be available upon request?

No. We will not report class rank at all unless we encounter the rare exception of it being absolutely required for a specific college application.

8. If class rank is not provided on most college applications, will that hurt our students' chances to be accepted into college?

On the contrary. Not reporting class rank will allow college admissions to view our graduates via a more holistic approach, putting greater emphasis on rigor of coursework and corresponding grades in that coursework, ACT/SAT scores, letters of recommendation, etc., and will likely be advantageous for our students. The trend across our nation is fewer high schools reporting class rank, and fewer colleges considering class rank.

9. But if there is no class rank, how will the top student be determined for the Academic Excellence Scholarship?

The Academic Excellence Scholarship is awarded to the student with the highest GPA in the class who attends a college or university in the state of Wisconsin. A student's laude score is not included in the criteria for this scholarship.

10. Will there still be a designated class Valedictorian and class Salutatorian?

No. Instead, we are honoring and recognizing all students graduating with Laude distinction.

11. So who will speak at graduation in place of the Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian?

Any students graduating Summa Cum Laude can express an interest to speak at graduation. All students in the Summa Cum Laude rank will vote on who they would like to speak. The student with the most votes will have the opportunity to speak.

12. What about other scholarships? Don't some of our local scholarship criteria include class rank?

The local scholarship groups, foundations, and/or individual donors will be notified that the criteria language will need to change so that the term "class rank" is no longer included. We will work with our local providers on ways to change criteria to better reflect the Laude System changes, if necessary.

13. What if a student transfers into LMHS her/his junior year? Will/how they be eligible for Laude recognition?

Yes, they will be eligible. This is addressed in Board policy. Students transferring in will have their AP courses recognized; additionally, unique situations will be considered on an individual basis based on the rigor of the course.

14. Will the list of courses designated as AP and departmental honors ever change?

Probably. This also will be evaluated every year on the revision cycle. The incorporation of newly approved AP or departmental honors courses at LMHS may very well drive future changes.

15. Will the Laude system drive students to overload courses in some departments and in turn lead to deserted courses in other departments?

We do not believe so. The Lake Mills High School mission is to ensure all students are learning – that they are acquiring the knowledge and skills essential to achieving their full potential and becoming productive citizens. We believe our wide variety of offered courses – including the fact every department has a means for students to acquire honors/Laude points – is reflective of our mission.