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**Crystal Lake-based Community High School District 155 nixes class rank**

**Incoming freshman will not be ranked by GPAs as district adopts new grading philosophy**

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[CRYSTAL LAKE](http://nwherald.com/crystallake) – Community High School District 155’s Class of 2018 will be the last with valedictorians and salutatorians.

The School District 155 Board unanimously voted Tuesday evening [to eliminate the system of ranking students by their grade point averages](http://www.nwherald.com/2015/06/17/crystal-lake-based-district-155-weighs-eliminating-class-rank/aew302/) for the incoming freshmen and to adopt a new grading philosophy designed to emphasis what students know, not penalize them for the learning process.

The next step is figuring out how the top of the class will be recognized moving forward, said Corey Tafoya, the district’s assistant superintendent of educational services.

The plan is to take the conversations to the buildings where staff, parents and students can get involved and the different cultures and traditions of the schools can be taken into consideration, he said, adding that he expects to bring a proposal to the board in January.

Several board members also asked to be involved in the process, two of them making their yes votes contingent on that happening.

“I’m in favor of this for the college advantages, but I still want to recognize – and I think the other board members feel that way – our very top achievers,” board member Ann Somers said.

Besides the college application benefits – students can’t be penalized for a rank that looks lower than that of students at less competitive high schools – Tafoya pointed to students feeling freer to pick classes based on rigor and their career aspirations.

The school board also approved moving ahead with another teacher-initiated project aimed at [shifting the district’s grading philosophy](http://www.nwherald.com/2015/07/23/crystal-lake-based-school-district-155-rethinks-grading-considers-test-retakes/agco6og/), putting most of the emphasis grade-wise on summative assessments, such as unit exams, essays and final exams, and not on formative assessments, such as homework, quizzes and other assignments designed to gauge where students are along the way.

The shift means students won’t be penalized for the learning process and not understanding something right away, said Prairie Ridge High School Vice Principal Lisa Connell, who served on the committee that did the research and developed the philosophy.

It also means the grading system will recognize that students learn at different paces by giving students the opportunity to take another assessment and improve their grade, Tafoya said.

“We’re not going to give up on anyone that might have struggled with the initial first brush with that topic,” he said.

While there will “always be tough nuts to crack,” Crystal Lake South High School math teacher Kris Davis, who also sat on the committee, said she thinks this method will give more students than before the opportunity to succeed.

How the grading and reassessment process actually will look in each course at each building will be hammered out this year, now that the board has given the go-ahead, Tafoya said.

Board President Ted Wagner requested an update on that process be presented to the board before full implementation occurs during the 2016-17 school year.