DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

214-AG-1. STUDENT RECOGNITION – *CUM LAUDE*

The Board acknowledges the usefulness of a system of computing grade point averages and class ranking for secondary school graduates to inform students, parents/guardians and others of their relative academic placement among their peers under relatively similar circumstances. The Board recognizes, however, that the reporting of class rank can have unintended, and unhealthy, consequences. Thus, the Board seeks to balance the need for a system of class ranking with a system that relieves student pressures and unhealthy competition and allows for flexibility in scheduling.

In recognition of the heavier burden of work for certain courses, they will receive a higher weighted grade point value.

The Board hereby establishes the parameters of a class ranking system, as follows:

1. A student's weighted and unweighted grade point averages shall be entered on his/her record and shall be subject to the Board's policy on release of student records.

2. The district shall not report student class rank publicly. Student transcripts will report N/A or not available.

3. The district shall maintain a weighted grade point average for all students and will maintain a class rank order. However, the district shall only report a student’s individual class rank position directly to postsecondary institutions or other entities, which have a legitimate reason to request such information.

4. Individual letter grades shall be reported on a student’s report card or progress report. In recognition of the rigor of studies in the three (3) levels of courses provided by the district, the numeric value for the letter grades shall be weighted. For unweighted courses, A’s would be awarded a 4; B’s would be awarded a 3; C’s would be awarded a 2; D’s would be awarded a 1; and failures would be 0. For students who take honors courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) standard level, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses without taking the AP exam, A’s would be awarded a 4.5, with the other grades descending accordingly, and with failures being 0. Finally, for students who take AP courses with the AP exam and IB high level, A’s would be awarded a 5, with the other grades descending accordingly, and with failures being 0.

5. The district shall provide a weighted and unweighted grade point average on student
transcripts and report cards for each semester.

6. The district shall not recognize the honorary distinctions of valedictorian or salutatorian after the graduation of the Class of 2016. The district shall institute a Latin, college-style honors system beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, except for the Downingtown STEM Academy who will institute the college-style system beginning with the class of 2014. Such a system shall recognize all students with weighted GPA’s of 4.4 or higher, as summa cum laude, all students with weighted GPA’s between 4.20 and 4.39, as magna cum laude, and all students with weighted GPA’s between 4.0 and 4.19, as cum laude.

It shall be the responsibility of each high school principal to select student speakers for the graduation ceremony through an audition process. Students who have achieved the status of summa cum laude will be eligible to speak at graduation. Each high school shall establish a graduation speaker selection panel comprised of professional staff (teachers, counselors, and administration) and students for the express purpose of selecting two student speakers for graduation. Students wishing to speak are to submit written speeches and audition before the graduation speaker selection panel. The high school panels will develop a common rubric to be used for the selection of the speakers. Recommendation for speakers made by the panel shall be final.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the computation of grade point averages and the assignment of rank in class to implement this policy.