

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope everyone is having an amazing senior year. Please find enclosed a copy of the date notifications and procedures that were sent home with your senior in October. Also, please take a moment to read about the changes to graduation procedures described below.

The Anne Arundel County Public Schools Board of Education has made several changes to the procedures for graduation this year. We would like to share them with you at this time.

During the last graduation season, the Board of Education switched from a system that recognized the valedictorian, salutatorian, and the top five percent of the graduating class to the Latin Honors system. In this system, students are recognized as Summa, Magna, and Cum Laude depending on their GPA. The students with the corresponding grade point averages receive a stole in either gold, silver or bronze to wear over their graduation robe. In this system students are recognized as follows: Summa Cum Laude (for weighted GPA of 4.3 or higher), Magna Cum Laude (weighted GPA of 4 to 4.29) and Cum Laude (unweighted GPA of 3.4 to 4). This means that students in the top 5% will not receive a gold cord, but instead will have their stole indicating their Latin Honor level. In addition, the valedictorian and salutatorian will be seated on the stage, and will receive medals for their academic performance, but those awards will be given during the senior awards ceremony and not during the graduation ceremony.

The Board of Education is also changing the student speakers at graduation. In the past, the valedictorian and salutatorian both made speeches during the ceremony. This year, the Senior Class President will speak. The second student speech will be selected by a panel of school staff through a competition of any interested student who has achieved the Latin Honors level of Summa Cum Laude. The students will be notified of their eligibility early in the second semester. The speech competition will be held during the month of April, with a final decision shortly following the competition. Students will be asked to write and recite a short speech, (3-5 minutes). The winner will present their speech during the graduation ceremony on June 7, 2018.

The final change, and perhaps the one that will impact the greatest number of students comes directly from the Board of Education. In the past, the students could decorate their graduation caps with two-dimensional appropriate displays. This is no longer allowed, according to Board policy. Student who come to the ceremony with decorations on their caps will have them confiscated and replaced with blank caps. If your student experiences this, any decorated caps will be available for pick-up at the school on the day following graduation.

If you have any questions regarding any of these changes, please feel free to contact myself, or any of the administrative staff at South River. My email is [mlivingston@aapcs.org](mailto:mlivingston@aapcs.org).

Sincerely,

Marie Livingston  
Senior Class Advisor