

CVUSD VALEDICTORIAN



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Valedictorian Proposal



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Current Policy & Practice

Board policy and recent valedictorian data across CVUSD high school sites

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Concerns

Student mental health, equity, and course selection challenges propelled by the policy

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Policy Trends

How other high schools have pivoted and implemented alternative practices

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Moving Forward

Replacing the current practice with Latin Honors

Current Policy & Practice

Board Policy

Students achieving an Indexed Grade Point Average (GPA) of 4.650 or above shall be designated as the Valedictorian. Indexed Grade Point Average: All Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual Enrollment courses will earn an additional .02 points for an “A” and .01 points for a “B”. These additional points are added to the Scholastic Grade Point Average to compute an Indexed Grade Point Average.

Results

Each high school produces a varying amount of valedictorians in every graduating class. School culture, coursework options, and size of the graduating class impact the number of valedictorians.

Timeline

The current valedictorian system seems to have been first implemented in 2007, and has persisted unchanged the past 18 years. Previously, each high school awarded a single valedictorian and salutatorian honor to the first and second ranked student in the graduating class.

The Numbers

Valedictorians by CVUSD High School

	2021	2022	2023	2024
NPHS	38	33	39	47
TOHS	16	22	22	22
WHS	50	52	70	57
Century	1	1*	1*	1
Conejo Valley	0	0	0	0

*Students did not earn a 4.65 Indexed GPA but had the highest GPA in the graduating class

Concerns

Social Emotional Well-being

Many students feel pressure to achieve a certain academic benchmark

Student pressure comes from self, peers, and parents

LCAP Goal 4: enhance the social, emotional and physical well-being for all students through targeted actions that support positive student outcomes.

Equity

Valedictorian may be an impossible title to attain for some students with specialized SAI or ELL coursework

Many students leverage external credits - some which are fee-based, to reach the GPA benchmark

The Indexed GPA calculation feels complex and arbitrary

Course Selection

Students shy away from selecting unweighted coursework

Valedictorians are less likely to participate in activity-based courses that lead to unweighted grades

CTE pathway completion is low for valedictorians

Students are motivated to take external courses as a grade-protecting measure

Equity

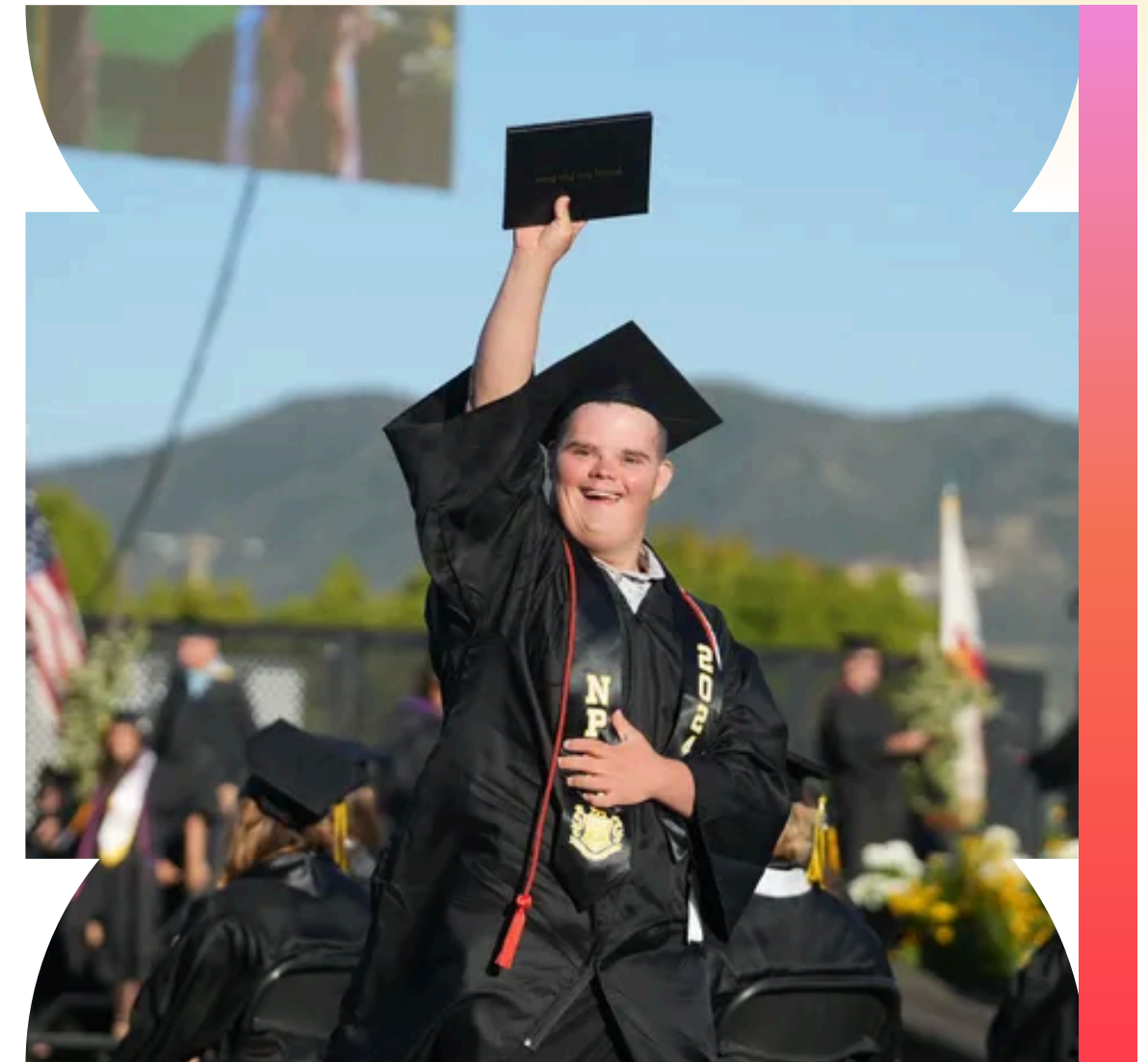
Does the current policy include students of all backgrounds and abilities?

Specialized Coursework

- Students in assessment-driven coursework or specific programs historically don't qualify
- Certain coursework patterns much more likely to qualify
- Doesn't synchronize with current CVUSD priorities and LCAP metrics

External Credits

- Purchased coursework
- Students with additional time or home support
- Not all students include DE credits on transcript to optimize chances of transferable college credit



The Numbers - Zooming In

CVUSD June 2024 Valedictorians

	VALS	GATE	504	IEP	MLL	CTE Completer
NPHS	47	28	0	0	0	2*
TOHS	22	13	0	0	0	0
WHS	57	25	6	0	0	2*
Total Student Body 12th Grade (NPHS, TOHS, WHS)	1,516	205	127	169	58	184

126 total valedictorians
 1,516 total students in the Class of 2024

*Three of the four CTE students would not have qualified without Indexed GPA boost from external credits

The Numbers - Zooming In

June 2024 Valedictorians at Westlake High School

	GATE	504	IEP	MLL	CTE Completer
Vals	25	6	0	0	2*
Total	83	49	38	9	21

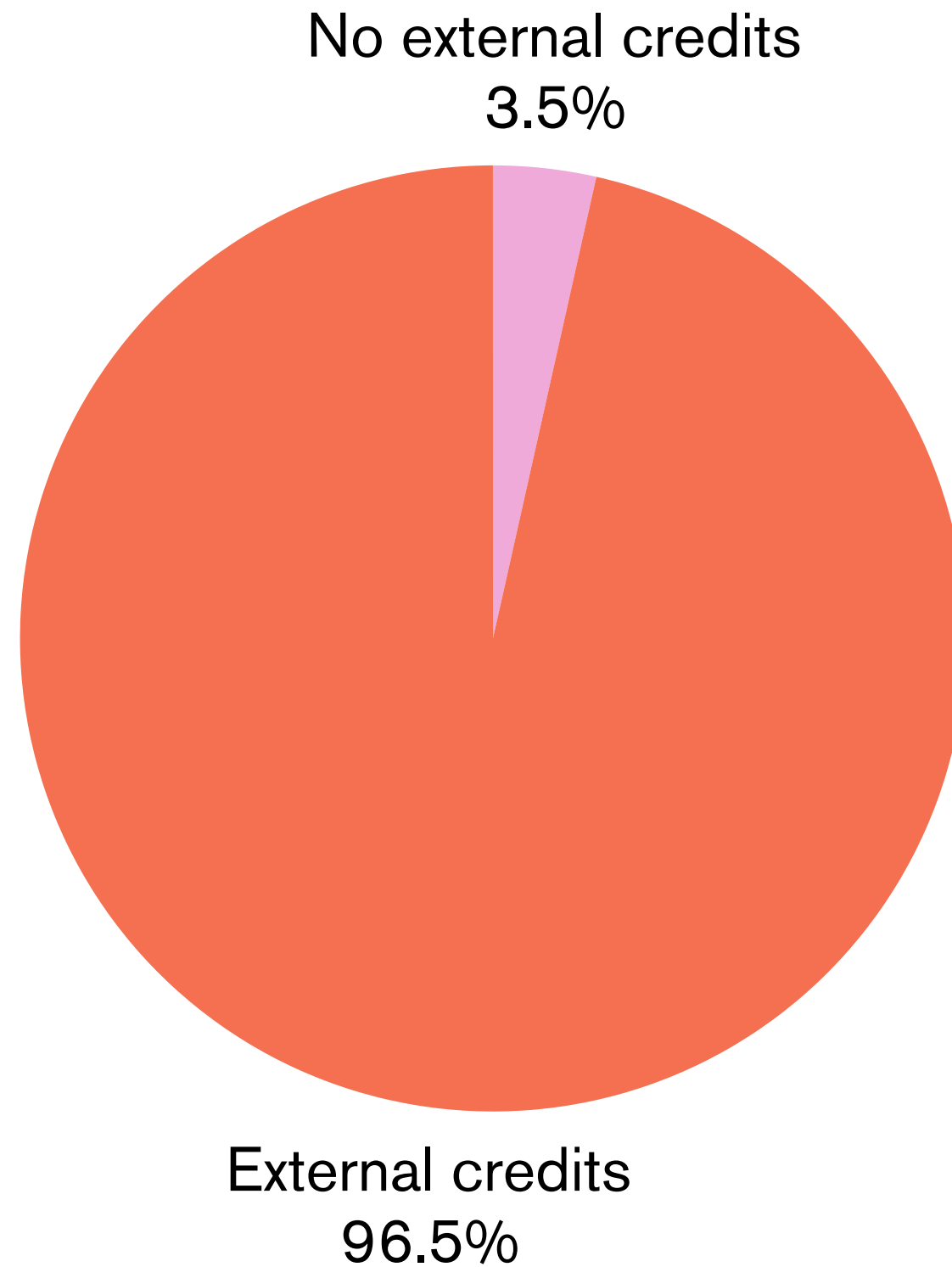
57 total valedictorians

527 total students in the Class of 2024

*Students would not have qualified without Indexed GPA boost from external credits

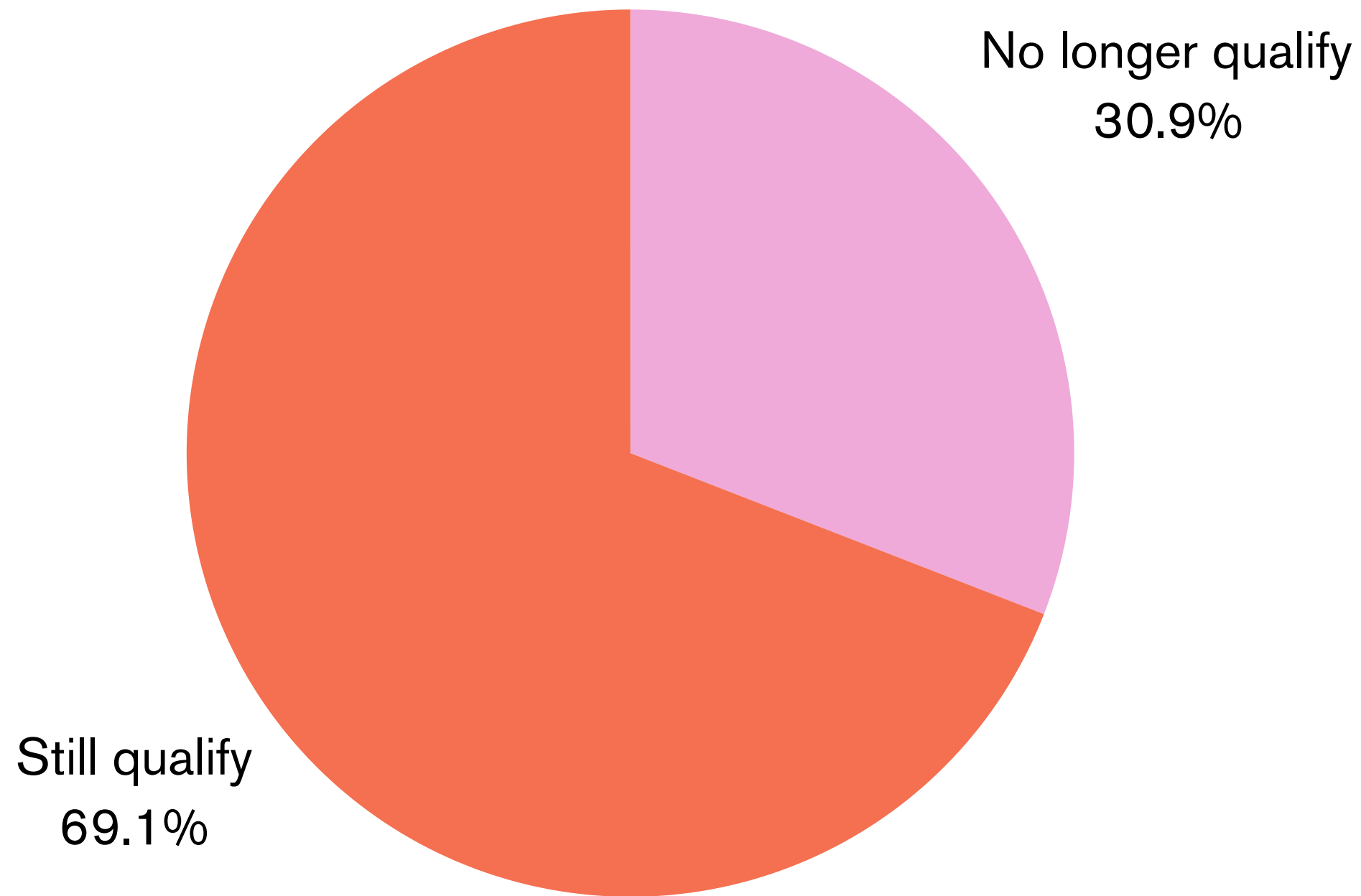
External Credits

WHS Class of 2024 Valedictorians



Without External Credits

WHS Class of 2024 Valedictorians



Recalculated transcripts removing external credits from Indexed GPA

Coursework Selection

How does the current policy influence student program participation?

Enrollment in Activity-based Coursework

WHS Valedictorians Class of 2024
57 total students

ASG*	1
Yearbook	0
Journalism	1
Theater*	1
Choir	1
ROP	1
Four years of sport	12

**Student participated for one year only*

“It was found that student engagement had a positive impact on student learning communities, influencing student grades and course completion rates. The higher levels of student engagement resulted in lower absenteeism in the learning community” (Li, 2023).

Valedictorian Policy Trends

Oak Park High School

- Changed to Latin Honors in 2010
- External coursework not included in OPHS GPA calculation

[Policy.](#)

Foothill Tech (Ventura)

- Changed to Latin Honors and Hometown Hero awards in 2022

[Policy.](#)

La Cañada High School

- Changed to honoring the top 5% of class by cumulative GPA

[Policy.](#)

Wake County Public Schools

- Changed to Latin Honors in 2016

[Policy.](#)

...and many more

Alternative Proposal

Summa Cum Laude: 3.9 - 4.0 GPA
Magna Cum Laude: 3.7 - 3.89 GPA
Cum Laude: 3.5 - 3.69 GPA

*Unweighted GPA utilizing only CVUSD-earned credits.

- All coursework levels count equally (CP, AP, IB, SAI, S, H, EL, DE)
- Includes students who transfer into CVUSD schools later in high school
- Doesn't favor students taking external credits
- Fosters message of achievement for all types of abilities and interests

- Straightforward, traditional GPA calculation
- Aligns with traditional college academic honors
- Aligns with LCAP Goal One
- Aligns with LCAP Goal Four
- Doesn't deter students from CTE or activity-based coursework options

Potential Barriers



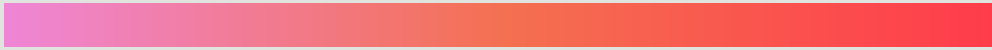
Tradition

- Cultural tradition
- Emotional investment
- Loss of recognition

Perceived College Admissions Benefit

- Class rank limitations, rigor over rank
- Holistic admissions processes
- Timeline

Closing Thoughts



What responsibility does the CVUSD have in defining and molding perceptions around academic success?

What message do we want CVUSD students to internalize about what success, more broadly, looks like?

What other types of students (program selection, interests, strengths) may be impacted by the current policy?

QUESTIONS



Presentation



Full Proposal