Giles School Honor Cords

September 16, 2025

Board of Education Presentation

Honor Cord History

Since the implementation of Standards-Based Grading in 2017-2018, NSD 80 moved away from using grade point averages (GPAs) to determine student achievement. As part of this shift, the traditional valedictorian and salutatorian recognitions were removed from the 8th grade graduation ceremony. In their place, students are now honored with a series of achievement cords that celebrate their accomplishments in a meaningful and inclusive way.

Current Practice

Cord	***Description***
Gold	Awarded for Mastery in Academic achievement.
Purple	Awarded for Mastery in SEL achievement.
Red	Awarded for membership in the Spanish Honors Society.
Green	Awarded for successfully completing duel enrollment with NSD 80 and RHS 234

Challenges

Concern:

Families question teacher grading decisions, requesting for grade changes when the student's performance did not meet the established requirements.

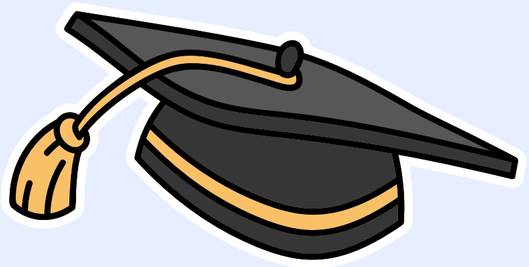
Concern:

Families have questioned the criteria for earning the SEL cord, specifically the attendance requirement, noting concerns about the impact of excused absences such as illness or other valid reasons.

Concern:

Families noted that receiving notification about cord eligibility right before graduation adds stress to the event. This timing also places undue stress on staff, who must respond to questions and concerns during an already busy time.

Recommendations



- Outline the SEL standards taught during Advisory, ensuring alignment with the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards
- Families will be notified of their student's projected cord eligibility during the first week of May, based on performance up to that point. If any changes occur as a result of student performance later in May, families will be promptly informed to ensure they have the most up-to-date information before graduation.
- The SEL standards will now be incorporated into the Academic Cord (yellow), eliminating the need for a separate purple cord. This change streamlines recognition and ensures that students meeting SEL expectations are acknowledged alongside their academic achievements.
- A letter from the principal will be shared with families outlining the qualifications for earning honor cords, as well as the timeline for the review process. This communication ensures that families have a clear understanding of the criteria and important dates related to cord eligibility.

Recommended

Cord	***Description***
Gold	Awarded for Mastery in all Academic achievement (including SEL)
Red	Awarded for membership in the Spanish Honors Society.
Green	Awarded for successfully completing duel enrollment with NSD 80 and RHS 234

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