

CLASS RANK

Past, Present & Future

PRESENTATION TO THE WILLIAMSVILLE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

JUNE 13, 2017



PAST

History

- ❑ Class Rank has been computed in our high schools for many decades. It was one of the factors considered in the college admission process.
- ❑ According to the College Board, class rank is a “mathematical summary of a student’s academic record” that helps colleges identify how a student “compares” to his/her peers in their overall academic performance.
- ❑ When used, Valedictorian and Salutatorian are the highest ranked students in their class.
- ❑ In Williamsville, class rank is weighted using a formula computed with AP classes given the highest weight and non-Regents courses the lowest weight.
- ❑ Only academic courses and all AP courses are ranked (English, Social Studies, Math, Science and LOTE).

PAST

Timeline

- ❑ In 2007, the district began researching the use of class rank in the college admission process.
- ❑ Concern arose over students being overlooked for admission to institutions of higher education and being awarded scholarships.
- ❑ Students with a competitive curriculum and 90% average may not rank in the top 100 students in a Williamsville School compared with other districts.
- ❑ Students are separated in rank by very miniscule differences in rank average.
- ❑ Students at the high school level have articulated concern over the years about the impact of class rank.
- ❑ Class rank has been discussed at Wellness Council and Inter-High Council.
- ❑ Parents, Students, and Faculty were surveyed about their views on class rank.

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Research

- ❑ The importance of class rank as a factor in the college admission decision process has declined over the past decade.
 - The percentage of colleges that rated class rank as considerably important plummeted from 42% in 1993 to 13% in 2012 (State of College Admissions, NACAC, 2013).
- ❑ Colleges vary in how they use class rank in the admission process.
- ❑ There is much flexibility for high schools relative to how class rank is reported in the admission process.
- ❑ Almost 60% of High Schools across America do NOT rank their students.
- ❑ As reported by colleges, when class rank is not provided, the breadth and depth of the academic program along with a holistic review is considered in the admission process.

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Stakeholder Feedback


- ❑ A Yale admissions officer indicated, "The GPA and the courses the student takes are more important. We don't compare by rank of the student. At the end of the day it's about who they are. The rank is just a number."
- ❑ A former Co-Editor-in-Chief of The East Side News, opposed the rank system on grounds that it leads to more cheating, creates bad attitudes towards learning, and fosters an unfriendly and tense learning environment among students at East.
- ❑ St. Bonaventure University admissions officer said, "We do look at how the student is ranked, but we don't look at the student's rank that heavily. Rather, we look at the students grades and activities more than how the student is ranked."
- ❑ "This cut-throat competition over hundredths of a point brings out the worst in some of the best," offered by a graduating Senior.
- ❑ Current junior wrote to the East Side News: "Human beings are more than a number; they are gifted with hearts and minds that stretch far beyond a class ranking...The system of ranking students by number devalues the aforementioned qualities, qualities that are critical in not only school, but life."

PRESENT



Stakeholder Feedback

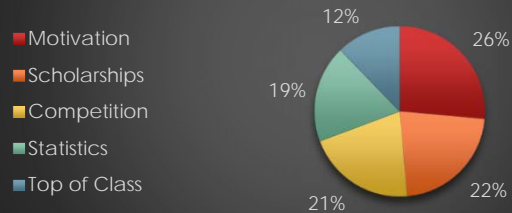
□ Additional student comments are as follows:

- ✓ "People take class rank to mean that they are inferior or superior to others based on their number. That isn't the point."
 - ✓ "Often when determining courses to take, class rank influences the choice of classes that I take. Instead of opting for elective classes I might enjoy, I have to aggressively pursue much harder classes in order to compete with other students. Class rank is busted."
 - ✓ "Class rank creates an environment in which every student is out for his- or herself. We are all competing against each other. It's sometimes hard to help another classmate in school because it would be simultaneously hurting myself."
 - ✓ "I feel class rank is for the people who want to know where they stand in comparison to others. It should have nothing to do with the value of learning."
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PRESENT: SURVEY RESULTS

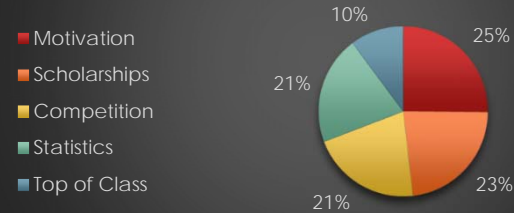
Reasons to Retain Class Rank

What are the reasons to retain class rank?



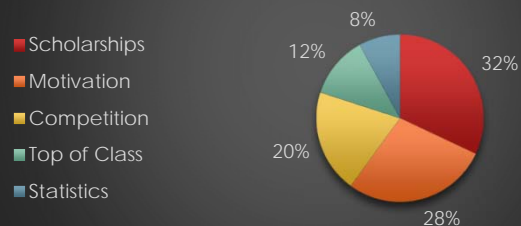
MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS/GUARDIANS [W/STUDENTS]

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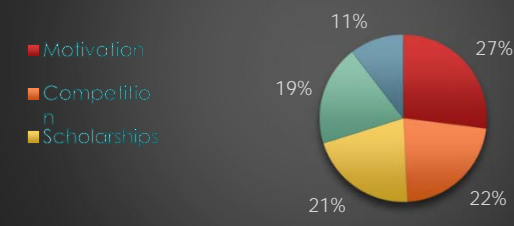
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HIGH SCHOOL STAFF

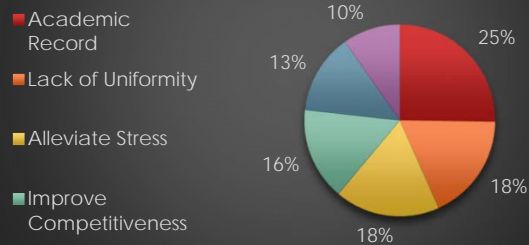
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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

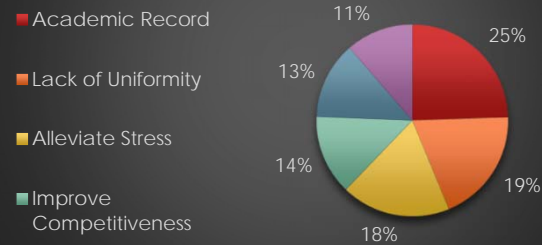
Reasons to Eliminate Class Rank

What are the reasons to eliminate class rank?



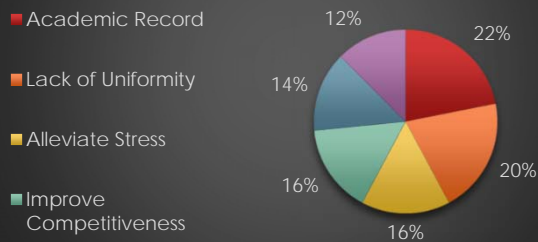
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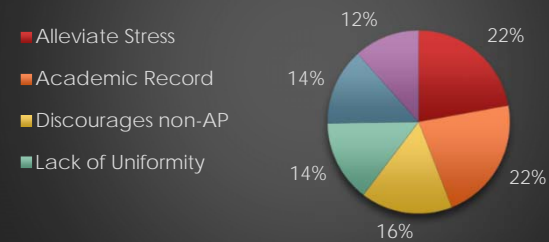
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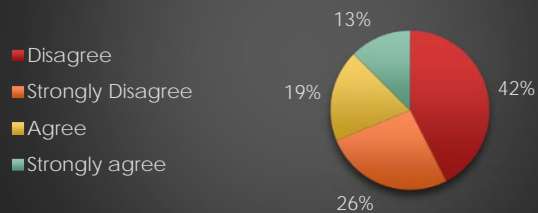
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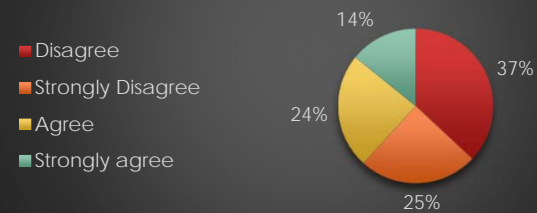
Perceptions of Class Rank

Class ranking is important.



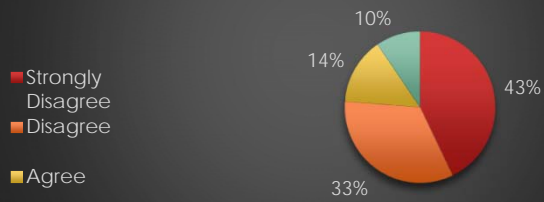
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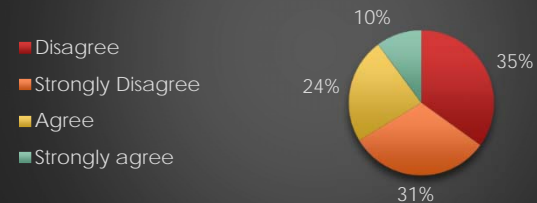
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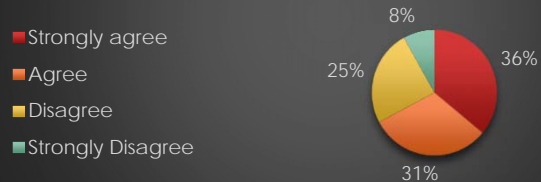
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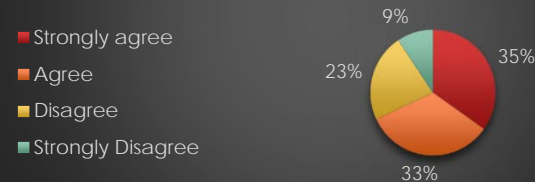
Perceptions of Class Rank

Class ranking creates undue stress and anxiety for students



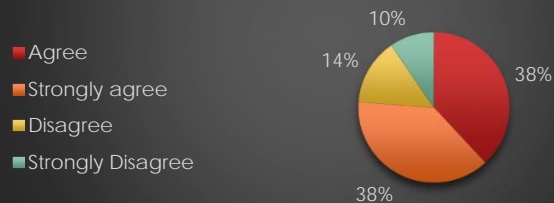
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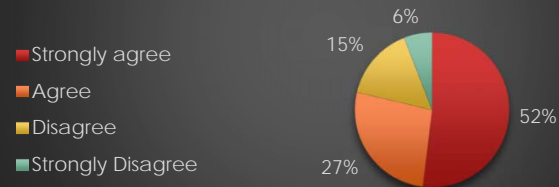
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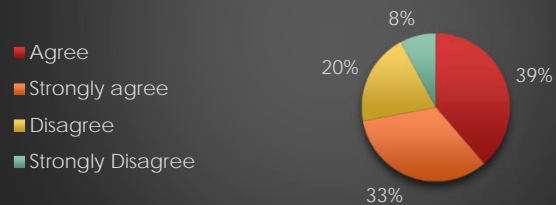
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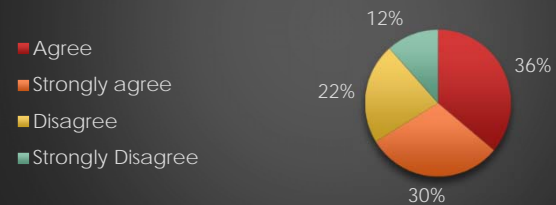
Elimination of Class Rank

A policy that eliminates ranking will benefit my child/the students.



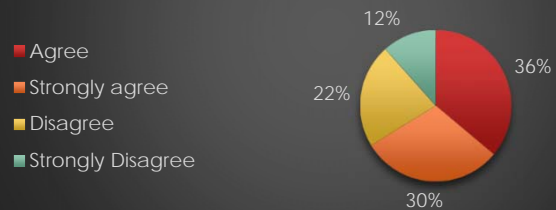
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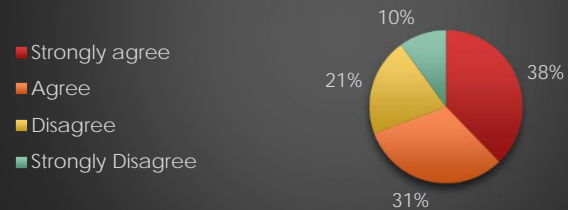
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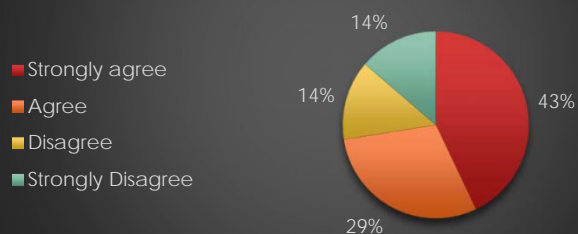
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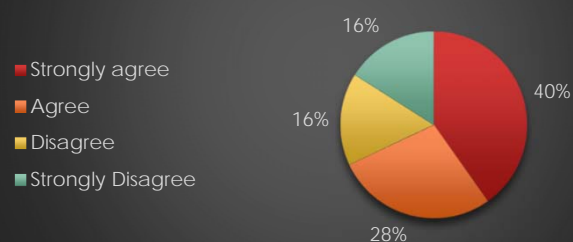
Elimination of Class Rank

I would like to see class ranking eliminated.



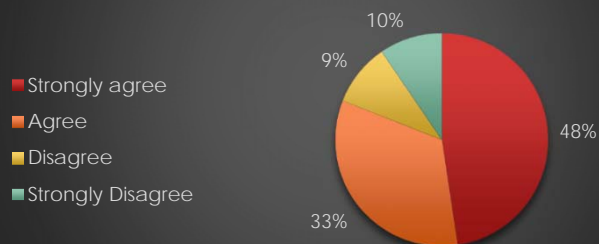
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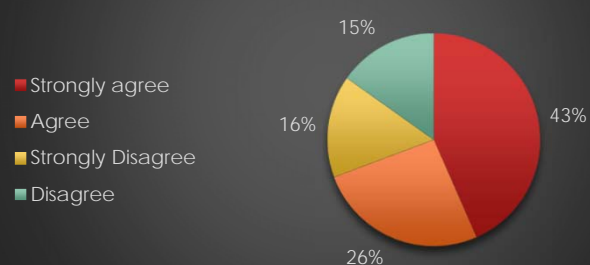
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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

FUTURE



Considerations

- ❑ Discontinue ranking students with the incoming 9th grade class (class of 2021).
- ❑ Communicate the change and work with Middle School Counselors of 8th graders entering high school.
- ❑ Update School Profiles and other pertinent District documents to indicate that WCSD does not use class rank.
- ❑ Encourage students to continue to select rigorous courses without concern for class rank in an effort to increase their chances of acceptance to highly selective colleges.
- ❑ Encourage students to pursue areas of interest without concomitant concern for class rank.
- ❑ Develop and implement a process for selecting student speakers at graduation (to be determined by each high school).

FUTURE

Considerations

- ❑ Without class rank, more seniors may be eligible to earn scholarship money for college.
- ❑ Even our juniors are missing out on potential scholarships from schools like University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute or Clarkson University because they might not be in the top 10% or top 15% of their graduating class, which is one of the typical requirements for schools that have class rank. All of these schools, and several others, have awards programs to recognize junior students who have distinguished themselves academically, are active and involved members of their school and community. We have a number of students that attend these colleges. Many more of these students could have received one of these junior scholarships that are valued between \$7,000 - \$25,000 a year (or \$28,000 - \$100,000 over 4 years) if we did not have class rank.



“Admissions offices read applications based on the context of the school. So whichever context, we will look at how the student has taken advantage of the opportunities available” (Ben Schwartz, Former Assistant Director of Admissions, Dartmouth College).

Questions?



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