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Top News

Hard courses mean higher rankings

A new Syracuse schools policy will take effect for ninth-graders this fall.

July 17, 2003

By Paul Riede
Staff writer

Syracuse high school students who take the most challenging courses will be rewarded with higher class rankings, thanks to a new policy adopted by the city school board Wednesday.

The board approved a change that will give college-level courses more weight than other courses.

A student who gets an A in an Advanced Placement calculus course, for example, will get more ranking points than one who gets the same grade in an easier math course, or for that matter, for a physical education, chorus or band course.

The new system will give college-level courses a weight of 1.1 - a tenth more than other courses.

In Syracuse, college-level courses include Advanced Placement courses and those run in conjunction with Syracuse University Project Advance, Onondaga Community College and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. International Baccalaureate courses also will be included if they are introduced at Corcoran High School.

Steve Gramet, the district's assistant director of pupil services, said the change will align the district with most other districts in the area, which

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have long given more weight to college-level courses.

Class rankings determine who becomes the valedictorian and salutatorian, and, to an extent, who gets college scholarships.

"We want to encourage students to take the most challenging courses," Gramet said.

He said the change was discussed with the superintendent's Student Cabinet and went over well there. It will be phased in beginning with ninth-graders entering high school this fall.

Retirement incentive In other business, the school board approved a special retirement incentive that will give a one-time stipend of \$10,000 to eligible administrators who choose to retire this year.

The hope is that more administrators will choose to retire, thus saving the jobs of others who face layoffs this year. The same offer was given to teachers last month, and Syracuse Teachers Association President Kate McKenna said enough retirement-age teachers took advantage of it to save the jobs of about 20 younger teachers.

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