

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES

High school graduation ceremonies shall be held to recognize those students who have successfully completed the required course of study, satisfying district standards, and passing any required assessments. The Governing Board believes that these students deserve a public celebration that recognizes the significance of their achievement and encourages them to continue the pursuit of learning throughout their lives.

(cf. 6011 – Academic Standards)

(cf. 6143 – Courses of Study)

(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)

(cf. 6162.52 – High School Exit Examination)

(cf. 6146.4 – Differential Graduation and Competency Standards for Students with Disabilities)

High school students who have passed the California High School Proficiency Examination or the General Education Development Test must also meet district graduation requirements in order to participate in graduation ceremonies.

(cf. 6146.2 – Certificate of Proficiency/High School Equivalency)

Disciplinary Considerations

In order to encourage high standards of conduct and behavior, the principal may deny a student the privilege of participating in graduation ceremonies and/or activities in accordance with school rules. Prior to denial of the privilege(s), the student, and where practicable his/her parent guardian, shall be made aware of the grounds for such denial and shall be given an opportunity to respond to the proposed denial. If privilege(s) are to be denied, the student and parent/guardian shall receive written notice of the denied privilege and the means whereby he/she may appeal this decision.

(cf. 5125.2 – Withholding Grades, Diploma or Transcripts)

(cf. 5144 – Discipline)

(cf. 6161.2 – Damaged or Lost Instructional Materials)

Honors and Awards

To honor superior academic achievement, graduation ceremonies shall include recognition of valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s). The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures that ensure a fair determination of the valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s).

(cf. 5121 – Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)

The Superintendent or designee shall identify other school-sponsored awards, which may be given during graduation exercises. A separate awards program may be held to recognize graduating students receiving other school and non-school awards.

(cf. 5126 – Awards for Achievement)

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

Conduct at Graduation Ceremonies

Any student participating in a graduation ceremony shall comply with district policies and regulations pertaining to student conduct.

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

The Superintendent or designee may require graduating students to wear ceremonial attire, such as cap and gown, at the ceremony.

However, any graduating student who has completed basic training and is an active member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces may, at his/her option, wear his/her military dress uniform at the ceremony. (Education Code 35183.3)

Elementary/Middle School Promotion Exercises

The Board desires that each elementary and middle school provide age-appropriate promotion exercises to recognize students who have completed the school's course of study. In order to encourage high standards of conduct and behavior, the principal may deny a student the privilege of participating in promotion ceremonies and/or activities in accordance with school rules. Prior to denial of the privilege(s), the student, and where practicable his/her parent guardian, shall be made aware of the grounds for such denial and shall be given an opportunity to respond to the proposed denial. If privilege(s) are to be denied, the student and parent/guardian shall receive written notice of the denied privilege and the means whereby he/she may appeal this decision.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35183.3 Graduation ceremonies; military dress uniforms

38119 Lease of personal property; caps and gowns

48904 Liability of parent or guardian; withholding of grades, diplomas, transcripts

51225.5 Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange students

51400-51403 Elementary school diploma

51410-51412 Diplomas

COURT DECISIONS

Cole v. Oroville Union High School District, (2000, 9th Cir.) 228 F3d 1092

Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe (2000) 530 U.S. 290

Lee V. Weisman, (1992) 112 S.Ct. 2649

Sands v. Morongo Unified School District, (1991) 53 Cal. 3d 86389

Lemon v. Kurtzman, (1971) 403 U.S. 602

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES

Grade 12 students must have completed 220 credits, passed all required courses, and passed all proficiency tests prior to the date of graduation in order to participate in the commencement ceremony. Parents of all students will be notified in writing of this policy at least two times during the school year. Specifically, communication to students and/or parents will be as follows:

- Information in course description booklet and student handbook given to students.
- Verbal information given by counselors to students during all September class assemblies.
- Written information mailed to parents in October “Back to School Night” packet.
- Counselors visit English classes in the Fall to explain requirement and Social Studies classes in the Spring during programming.
- Requirement is emphasized to parents and students by counselors during 10th Grade Counseling night appointments. This is the first time parents are given an in-depth explanation of alternative programs/classes that are available for students (i.e., community college, adult school, continuation high school, ROP and work experience).

During the first quarter of a student’s junior and senior year, the counselor will visit every English class. A letter will be distributed to each student that explains the commencement ceremony requirements and the alternative programs/classes available. The letter must be signed by the parents and returned to the teachers.

During the second week of the second semester, parents of all 12th graders who have fewer than 190 credits and/or are not enrolled in their remaining required classes, will be notified by certified mail that the student might not graduate nor participate in commencement exercises.

By May 1, the parents of those 12th grade students not enrolled in sufficient classes or programs to satisfy the graduation requirements will be notified by certified return receipt mail that the student may not be permitted to participate in commencement exercises.

As final grades are not available until the last week of school, the Guidance Office will make every attempt to notify by telephone no later than 24 hours prior to the commencement ceremony, those parents/guardians of 12th grade students, as well as students themselves, who are not eligible to participate in the ceremony. Parents may expect this notification unless they have been previously notified by the May 1st letter.