

Students - Progress

Graduation Ceremonies and Activities

Graduation exercises shall be held to recognize those students who have successfully completed the requirements for high school graduation. Promotion activities for fifth, sixth and eighth graders may be held in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

A. Grade 5 or 6

1. If recognition is to be given to fifth or sixth grade students, it should be given during school time.
2. Fifth or sixth grade students may be allowed to have a picnic or similar function at promotion time. It may commence at the end of the regular or minimum school day and shall be considered a field trip if the students leave the school grounds. If the students leave the school grounds, the activities shall subscribe to all District field trip policies and requirements, including approval from the office of Educational Services.
3. For promotion activities not qualifying under the foregoing regulations, special approval must be secured from the office of Educational Services.

B. Participation in Promotional Exercises - Grade 8

In order to participate in the school's eighth grade recognition program, a student must:

1. Earn 100 credits as per Board Policy 6146.5 and Administrative Regulations 6146.5.
2. Receive no more than two Fs in the second semester of the eighth grade year.
3. Receive no more than four unsatisfactory (U) citizenship grades during the eighth grade year. No more than two unsatisfactory citizenship grades can be received in the second semester of the eighth grade year.

C. Participation in Commencement Activities - High School

High school graduation ceremonies shall be held to recognize those students who have earned a diploma by successfully completing the required course of study, satisfying District standards, and passing any required assessments. The Board of Education believes that these students deserve the privilege of a public celebration that recognizes

Students - Progress

Graduation Ceremonies and Activities

the significance of their achievement and encourages them to continue the pursuit of learning throughout their lives.

Participation in high school commencement activities is an earned privilege. In order for twelfth grade students to be eligible for participation in such activities at the end of the school year, the following criteria will be met:

1. Successful completion of the requirements for high school graduation as specified in District Policy 6146.1.
2. Satisfactory citizenship in school and senior activities.
3. Enrollment in at least five classes each semester and earned at least 40 credits during the senior year unless the students has met graduation requirements at the end of the first semester and requests early graduation. This criteria applies to students graduating from the District's comprehensive high schools.

Special education students who have completed their high school experience, participated in the instruction as prescribed in their individual education program and individualized transition plan shall be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies and related activities.

At the discretion of the Superintendent or designee, a student who will complete graduation requirements during the summer may participate in graduation exercises without receiving his/her diploma. When the requirements have been satisfied, a diploma shall be sent to the student.

High school students who have passed the California High School Proficiency Examination or the General Educational Development Test must also meet District graduation requirements in order to participate in graduation ceremonies including being enrolled in the school in the semester the graduation ceremonies are being held.

Invocations, prayers, or benedictions shall not be included in graduation ceremonies. The school or District shall not sponsor other ceremonies or programs for graduates that include prayer.

Students - Progress

Graduation Ceremonies and Activities

D. Honors and Awards

To honor superior academic achievement, graduation ceremonies shall include recognition of valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s). Valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s) shall be selected based on established criteria and procedures that use multiple measures of academic performance.

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.

E. Graduation Attire

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

If cap and gowns are differentiated based on gender, students shall be allowed to wear the color of cap and gown that aligns to their gender identity or gender expression.

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)

Students shall be permitted to wear tribal regalia or recognized objects of religious or cultural significance as an adornment to the customary ceremonial attire, as long as the adornment does not cause a substantial disruption of, or material interference with, the graduation ceremony. (Education Code 35183.1)

Students who desire to wear such adornments shall seek permission from the Superintendent or designee at least 14 days before the graduation ceremony.

F. Disciplinary Considerations

Students are expected to comply with District and school policies, regulations, and rules throughout the school session, including during graduation and related events. Students shall not be denied the privilege of participating in graduation ceremonies and activities except as discipline in cases of serious misconduct. In no event shall a student be denied participation in graduation ceremonies unless the principal or designee has informed the

Students - Progress

Graduation Ceremonies and Activities

student and the student's parents/guardians of the misconduct and has given them an opportunity to respond.

During the graduation ceremony, a student may be removed from the ceremony for conduct that is disruptive or that poses a risk to safety.

High school seniors shall be notified of this policy in advance, through the student handbook or other means, and shall be required to acknowledge receiving it.

Legal Reference: Education Code, Sections 35183.1; 35183.3; 38119; 48904; 51225.5; 51410-51413

Court Decisions:

Workman v. Greenwood Community School Corporation, (2010) Case No. 1:2010cv00293

Cole v. Oroville Union High School District, (2000, 9th Cir.) 228 F.3d 1092

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

Lee v. Weisman, (1992) 505 U.S. 577

Sands v. Morongo Unified School District, (1991) 53 Cal. 3d 863

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

Rules Approved: 01/09/1961 (AR 5390)

Rules Revised: 06/04/1985; 12/02/1986; 05/21/1996; 03/07/2000; 05/16/2000; 06/06/2000

Policy Adopted: 01/14/2003 (BP 5127)

Policy Revised: 10/16/2007; 09/15/2015; 08/13/2019

Formerly AR 5390