

COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Board endorses graduation activities and ceremonies. The date of graduation will be held on the last day of high school student attendance or another date authorized by the Superintendent.

Graduation shall not occur prior to completion of the required 180 days of pupil instruction.

Guidelines for Graduation Year Activities

Student participation in special graduation year activities will require conduct of the highest caliber in all school situations.

Criteria for exclusion from these activities concern consistent behavioral patterns and shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Consistent involvement in disciplinary action(s);
- B. Suspension;
- C. Collaborative evaluation by the staff.

The final decision shall be made by the Superintendent. Students and parents/guardians shall be given advance notification of these criteria.

Voting Information and Registration

Prior to graduation, the Board will provide a voter registration form and material describing the role of a citizen and the importance of voting to each eligible high school student.

Graduation Procedures and Ceremonies

No student will be barred from participation in graduation ceremonies for arbitrary or discriminatory reasons. A student who qualifies for graduation may be prevented from participation and his/her parents/guardians shall be so notified in advance and, circumstances permitting, no later than five (5) days prior to the close of the school year.

When a student or his/her parents/guardians experience financial hardship and is unable to pay the costs of participation in graduation ceremonies, the Board will assume the costs of the following items:

- A. Rental or purchase of cap and gown;
- B. One year book; and
- C. Other, as may be determined by the Board.

Financial hardship shall be defined by eligibility standards for free and reduced price meals under the state school lunch program.

The Board reserves the right to deny participation when extreme circumstances warrant it. Such denial shall be treated in the same manner as a suspension and the pupil so affected shall be afforded the rights of review provided in policies of this Board.

The Board reserves the right to withhold a diploma and transcripts until all fines are paid.

Awarding of Diplomas

Board members and former board members shall be afforded the opportunity to award diplomas to their own children.

The Board shall not prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in any district school, consistent with guidance issued by the United States Department of Education and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Date: February 10, 1998
Reviewed/Revised: February 24, 2014

Legal References:

- N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-5.1 Boards of education prohibited from excluding students from graduation ceremony or from obtaining yearbook for inability to pay fees
- N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
- N.J.S.A. 18A:36-18 Books containing organic laws at graduation
- N.J.S.A. 18A:36-27 Voting information
- N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2 Causes for suspension or expulsion of pupils
- N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 et seq. Implementation of graduation requirements
- N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1 et seq. Student conduct

- Ballato v. Long Branch Board of Education, 1990 S.L.D. (August 20)
- Lee v. Weisman, 112 S.Ct. 2649 (1992)
- R.L. v. Kingsway Regional Board of Education, 95 NJAR2d (EDU) 296
- D.C. v. Parsippany Troy Hills Board of Education, 96 NJAR2d (EDU) 697
- DO'G v. Ridgefield Park Board of Education, 96 NJAR2d (EDU) 820
- R.F. v. Park Ridge Board of Education, 97 NJAR2d (EDU) 1
- American Civil Liberties Union v. Blackhorse Pike Regional Board of Education, 84 F.3d 1471 (3d Cir. 1996)

Cross References:

- 5113 Absences and excuses
- 5114 Suspension and expulsion
- 5126 Awards for achievement
- 5131 Conduct/discipline
- 5131R Code of Conduct
- 6111 School calendar
- 6115 Ceremonies and observances
- 6141.2 Recognition of religious beliefs and customs
- 6146 Graduation requirements