

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES

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 Governing Board believes that these students deserve the privilege of a public celebration that recognizes the significance of their achievement and encourages them to continue the pursuit of learning throughout their lives.

Promotion ceremonies shall be held at the middle schools to recognize eighth grade students who meet certain academic and behavioral criteria. Certificates of promotion shall be awarded to these students.

(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)

(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)

(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)

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

High school students who have passed a high school equivalency test or the California High School Proficiency Examination must also meet district graduation requirements in order to participate in graduation ceremonies.

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

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.

(cf. 1330 - Use of School Facilities)

(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)

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.

(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)

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Graduation Attire

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

(cf. 3260 - Fees and Charges)

Any graduating student who has completed basic training and is an active member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces may, at the student's option, wear a 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.

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

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)
(cf. 5144 - Discipline)

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.

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Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35183.1 Graduation ceremonies; tribal regalia or recognized object of religious/cultural significance

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

51410-51413 Diplomas

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

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Pupil Fees, Deposits and Other Charges, Fiscal Management Advisory 17-01, July 28, 2017

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, February 2003

WEB SITES

AASA The School Superintendents Association: <http://www.aasa.org>

Antidefamation League: <https://www.adl.org>

California Department of Education, High School: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gc/hs>

U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov>

Policy

adopted: May 9, 1990

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revised: October 10, 2019

MURRIETA VALLEY USD

Murrieta, California