

COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The board endorses graduation activities and ceremonies. The date of graduation shall annually be recommended by the superintendent and approved by the board.

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

Guidelines for Graduation Year Activities

Pupil 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.

Pupils and parents/guardians shall be given advance notification of these criteria.

Graduation Procedures and Ceremonies

No pupil shall be barred from participation in graduation ceremonies for arbitrary or discriminatory reasons. A pupil who may be prevented from participation and his/her parents/guardians shall be so notified in advance.

When a pupil or his/her parents/guardians experiences financial hardship and is unable to pay the costs of participation in graduation ceremonies, the board shall assume the costs of the following items.

- a. Rental or purchase of cap and gown;
- b. one year book;
- 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 in graduation activities 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

A board member shall present a copy of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the amendments thereto, and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and the amendments thereto to each pupil upon graduation from elementary school.

The president of the board of education and/or another designated member of the board shall award the diplomas. Board members and former board members shall be afforded the opportunity to award diplomas to their own children.

Dated: August 28, 202

Legal References:

<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:7c-5.1	Board of education prohibited from excluding students from graduation ceremony or from obtaining yearbook for inability to pay fees
<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:11-1	General mandatory powers and duties
<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:36-18	Books containing organic laws at graduation
<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:54-20	Powers of board (county vocational schools)

Ballato v. Long Branch Board of Education, 1990 S.L.D. (August 20)

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

American Civil Liberties Union v. Blackhorse Pike Regional Board of Education, No. 93-2651 (District Court, March 29, 1994)

Cross References:

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

