

# Santa Barbara Unified School District Board Policy

Students

BP 5127

## 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.

*(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)*

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.

*(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 may 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 nonschool awards.

*(cf. 5126 - Awards for Achievement)*

### **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)

### **Disciplinary Considerations**

In order to encourage high standards of student 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, 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. If a privilege is to be denied, the student and parent/guardian shall receive written notice of the denied privilege and the means whereby he/she may appeal the decision.

*(cf. 5125.2 - Withholding Grades, Diploma or Transcripts)*

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*

*(cf. 6161.2 - Damaged or Lost Instructional Materials)*

### **Elementary/Middle School Promotion Exercises**

Each elementary and middle school may provide age-appropriate promotion exercises to recognize students who have completed the school's course of study.

#### *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*

51410-51412 *Diplomas*

##### COURT DECISIONS

*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:*

##### WEB SITES

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

SANTA BARBARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Santa Barbara, California

November 25, 2008; May 26, 2009; August 31, 2010