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 Board of Education 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. 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

The Superintendent or designee may identify 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)

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 school Principal 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.

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

Policy Adopted: 02/21/07; 09/01/10; 03/04/20