

Policy

COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Harrison Township Board of Education endorses commencement activities and ceremonies. The date of commencement shall annually be recommended by the superintendent and approved by the board.

Commencement activities shall not occur prior to completion of the required 180 days of student instruction.

Guidelines for Graduation Year Activities

Student participation in special commencement 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.

The final decision shall be made by the superintendent.

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

Procedures and Ceremonies

No student shall be barred from participation in commencement ceremonies for arbitrary or discriminatory reasons. A student who may be prevented from participation and his/her parents/guardians shall be so notified in advance and no later than 14 days prior to the close of the school year.

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

- A. One year book;
- B. 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 commencement activities when extreme circumstances warrant it. Such denial shall be treated in the same manner as a suspension and the student so affected shall be afforded the rights of review provided in policies of this board.

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 student upon graduation from elementary school.

COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES (continued)

The president of the board of education and/or another designated member of the board shall award the completion certificates. 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.

NJSBA Review/Update: July 2014
Adopted: October 27, 2014

Key Words

Commencement Activities, Graduation Ceremonies, Voting, Voting Registration

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 students
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)
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 NJAR 2d (EDU) 296

D.C. v. Parsippany Troy Hills Board of Education, 96 NJAR 2d (EDU) 697

DO'G v. Ridgefield Park Board of Education, 96 NJAR 2d (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)

Possible

Cross References: *5113 Attendance, Absences and excuses
*5114 Suspension and expulsion
*5126 Awards for achievement
*5131 Conduct/discipline
*6111 School calendar
*6115 Ceremonies and observances
*6141.2 Recognition of religious beliefs and customs
*6146 Graduation requirements

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.