

Policy 0603-21

High School Commencement Ceremony

The Board of Trustees recognizes graduation as a significant milestone, representing years of hard work and commitment from students, parents, and staff. We expect our commencement ceremonies to reflect the gravity and dignity of this accomplishment, and outline the following criteria accordingly:

Participation

Students may participate in their enrolled school's commencement ceremonies, provided they:

- Satisfy graduation eligibility criteria specified in Policy 603.20 and/or a student's Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP). There will be no exceptions to this requirement.
- Have been enrolled full-time both semesters of their senior year as defined by Policy 500.10 or early-graduated that year.
- Have no significant outstanding disciplinary matters.

Students who do not meet the above criteria (aside from the graduation requirement) or who wish to participate in commencement ceremonies other than their enrolled school may request an exception through a process overseen by the Superintendent or designee.

Graduates who disrupt the commencement ceremony may be removed from the building and excluded from formal graduation-related materials (such as official photographs, videos, congratulatory lists, etc.)

Valedictorian

Each traditional high school shall name a Valedictorian determined as follows:

- Must have a minimum of three years secondary full-time attendance in the District.
- Must be class rank 1.

- Ties in class rank 1 will be broken as follows:
 - First, aggregate of AP test scores.
 - Second, score of the PSAT used for National Merit Scholar determination.
 - Finally, Joint Valedictorians named if any ties remain.

Regalia

The Superintendent or designee will develop procedures to specify eligibility for all regalia according to the following requirements determined as of the third Monday in April preceding the ceremonies.

The following regalia, and only the following regalia, will be adorned for commencement ceremonies. Each regalia item must be worn unaltered from its original state; no decorations or other adornments are permitted. The Superintendent or designee will develop procedures (including deadlines) to specify eligibility for all regalia according to the following requirements:

Cap and Gown

Students must wear the cap and gown designated for that school's commencement ceremony.

Cords

Cords will be conferred representing the following academic achievement in the graduating class as determined by weighted GPA from the student's transcripts:

- Highest Honors, which is reserved for students who achieve the pinnacle of academic performance.
- High Honors, which is awarded to students who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement.
- Honors, which represents a significant standard of academic excellence.
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) cords which represent proficiency in CTE programs and adherence to set criteria, including completion of relevant courses, pathways and academic achievements.
- National Honor Society (NHS) cords which represent membership and achievement within NHS as outlined by the organization's criteria, which typically includes maintaining high academic standards, demonstrating leadership qualities, and engaging in community service.
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) which represent a student's participation and achievements within the AVID program.
- Other such cords as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Stoles/Pins

Wearing stoles/pins is reserved for graduates with specific accomplishments. These are:

- Named Valedictorian
- Earning an Associate's Degree
- Earning an International Baccalaureate Diploma
- Enlistment in a branch of the United States Military
- Other such stoles/pins as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Student Speakers

Students will be invited to speak at commencement according to the following criteria determined as of the third Monday in April preceding the ceremonies:

Centennial, Eagle, Meridian, Mountain View, Owyhee, and Rocky Mountain High Schools

Two students will be offered opportunities to speak:

- Valedictorians will be offered the opportunity to speak, which may be refused.
- Each school may nominate up to one additional student from the top 10% of their graduating class as measured by weighted GPA for consideration as a commencement speaker.

Idaho Fine Arts Academy and Renaissance High School

Each school may nominate up to two students from the top 10% of their graduating class as measured by weighted GPA for consideration as commencement speakers.

Eagle Academy, Meridian Academy, Rebound School of Opportunity, and Virtual School House

Each school may nominate up to one student from the top 10% of their graduating class as measured by weighted GPA for consideration as a commencement speaker.

Speaker Decorum

The Superintendent or designee must approve each commencement speaker and presentation in advance to ensure the dignity and solemnity of commencement is maintained. Speakers whose remarks differ significantly from the approved presentation may be requested to leave the commencement and receive their diploma off-stage.

Implementation

The Superintendent or designee will develop procedures consistent with the above objectives, with particular attention to specific deadline and eligibility criteria, and make every effort to ensure potential graduates are aware of them well in advance.

Reference: Idaho Code 08.02.01.350