

345.62 - RULE PARTICIPATION IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONIES/ACTIVITIES

Minimum Academic Eligibility to Participate in High School Graduation

In addition to any exceptions defined in a School Board policy, a student who has not satisfied the District's graduation requirements and who is not eligible to receive his/her high school diploma will be deemed academically eligible to participate in a high school graduation ceremony in the following circumstances:

1. The student is able to show acceptable evidence of current or pending participation in summer school or in other educational programming (e.g., online courses or credit recovery, if available) that, if successfully completed, will result in the completion of graduation requirements no later than the start of the next school term, and, in addition, any of the following applies:
 - a. The student has deficiencies of one credit or more at the end of the second semester of their senior year and upon completion of the senior final exam period will not be able to participate in formal graduation exercises.
 - b. During the academic grading period preceding the graduation ceremony, the student was enrolled in but did not successfully complete courses or other programming that would have otherwise fulfilled all requirements for high school graduation; or
 - c. The student is in the high school cohort of the graduating class and has demonstrated appropriate academic progress, but the student was unable to fully participate in school and fulfill the high school graduation requirements by the end of the academic grading term preceding the graduation ceremony due to extenuating circumstances beyond the student's reasonable control (e.g., a long-term, serious illness). In this situation, the administration may, at its discretion, extend the period for completing the high school graduation requirements into the following school year.
2. The student is a foreign exchange student who attended high school in the District with 12th grade status for at least the complete credit-earning grading period immediately preceding the ceremony, provided that the student successfully completed his/her program and courses and wishes to be recognized with a certificate of attendance.

Separate from the situations identified above, if the District Administrator or his/her administrative-level designee, determines that compelling extenuating circumstances exist that are beyond the reasonable control of the student, the administrator(s) may authorize other exceptions to the conditions and timing of a student's eligibility to participate in a graduation ceremony.

Denial of Participation in a Graduation Ceremony or Related Activity

In addition to any situations where a Board policy or other District rule prohibits a student's participation, the administration will deny an otherwise-eligible student the privilege of participating in a District-sponsored high school graduation ceremony when any of the following applies:

1. As of the date of the ceremony or the student's last scheduled day of school prior to the ceremony, the student is within the term of an existing expulsion order. However, this criterion does not require the non-participation of a student during the term of an expulsion if all of the following apply:
 - a. The student has been granted conditional enrollment or early reinstatement;
 - b. The applicable conditions do not expressly prohibit participation in graduation and either permit the student to attend school in person or expressly authorize the student to participate in graduation; and
 - c. The student's conditional enrollment or early reinstatement has not been revoked.
 - d. The student is serving, or has served, any period of suspension from school that expressly included non-participation in graduation as part of the disciplinary sanction.
2. As of a District-established deadline that the District has reasonably attempted to communicate to the student and/or to the student's parent or guardian, the student has unpaid fees or any other unpaid monetary balance that is owed to the District or has not returned District-owned materials or equipment as directed. However, this criteria shall not require disqualification if the District Administrator or his/her administrative-level designee determines that the student has demonstrated a clear financial hardship that results in the family's current inability to pay the monetary balance in full; the person(s) responsible for payment have been cooperative in efforts to resolve the debt; and the person(s) responsible for payment have executed a mutually-acceptable written payment agreement with the District under which there are no delinquent payments.
3. The student had 40 or more periods of absence from school during the semester (or equivalent time period) immediately preceding the graduation ceremony.
4. Unless exempted from this requirement due to mid-year early graduation or by the High School Principal or District Administrator due to either the nature of the student's District-approved academic program or other extenuating circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student, the student was not enrolled as a District student for at least the complete credit-earning grading period immediately preceding the ceremony.

The administration may also deny a student permission to participate in any graduation-related activities that are offered as a privilege any time the student is ineligible or denied permission to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Separate from the situations identified above that automatically disqualify a student from participating in a District-sponsored graduation ceremony, the District Administrator or designee may also deny an otherwise-eligible student the privilege of participating in a high school graduation ceremony and/or in any related District-sponsored activities as a District-imposed consequence for a rule violation or other conduct, provided that there is a lawful and non-arbitrary reason for doing so. A student's out-of-school conduct may give rise to such a consequence if the administration determines that, as a result of such conduct, the student's participation in the activity would substantially detract from the purpose of the activity or could reasonably be expected to cause a disruption of the activity. Time permitting, any such decision may be appealed to the District Administrator for his/her review or reconsideration.

Additional Rules and Standards

As District-sponsored activities, graduation activities are subject to applicable District policies and rules that generally address student and visitor conduct. In addition, eligible students who choose to attend and participate in a graduation ceremony or in a related District-sponsored activity must abide by any additional rules, directives, or standards that the District establishes on topics such as dress, conduct/decorum, participation in rehearsal(s), guest limitations, etc., including the following:

1. Only School District supplied regalia may be worn during the graduation ceremony. Caps and gowns will not be decorated other than district approved recognitions; i.e. NHS honor cords, Val and Sal awards, etc.

Approved: March 16, 2022

Revised: July 20, 2022