



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Graduation
Code	217
Status	Second Reading
Adopted	February 14, 2006
Last Revised	February 13, 2024

Purpose

The Board shall establish graduation requirements and acknowledge each student's successful completion of the instructional program by awarding diplomas and certificates at graduation ceremonies.

Authority

The Board shall adopt the graduation requirements students must achieve in accordance with state regulations.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The Board requires graduation requirements to be published and distributed to students and parents/guardians, and made available in each school building or on the district's website. All changes to graduation requirements shall be published and distributed to students and parents/guardians, and made available in each school building or on the district's website immediately following approval by the Board.[\[1\]](#)

Diplomas

The Board shall award a high school diploma to every student enrolled in this district, and its related educational programs, who meets the requirements for graduation established by this Board.[\[1\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

A student who has completed the requirements for graduation shall not be denied a diploma as a disciplinary measure, but the student may be denied participation in the graduation ceremony when personal conduct so warrants. Such exclusion shall be regarded as a school suspension. Students who have failed to meet notices of obligation prior to the first full day of commencement exercises will be denied participation in the graduation ceremony.[\[8\]](#)

Students Experiencing Educational Instability –

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that district staff comply with HSD policy 251 related to *Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care and Other Educational Instability* with regards to graduation.[\[9\]](#)

Students With Disabilities –

The Board shall permit a student with a disability, whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) prescribes continued educational services, to participate in commencement ceremonies with his/her graduating class and receive a certificate of attendance, provided that the student has attended four (4) years of high school. The Board shall issue a high school diploma to each student with a disability who completes the graduation requirements established by the Board or the goals established in the student's IEP, as determined by the student's IEP team. [1][10][11][12][13][14][15]

A student may only participate in one (1) graduation ceremony during his/her academic career.

Students Attending Approved Specialized Programs –

A student may qualify for graduation with a reduced number of district graduation credits when officially enrolled in a Board-approved specialized educational program that is designed to serve students who are unable to meet graduation requirements through full-time attendance at Hempfield High School. Prior to enrollment, the Student Services Approval Committee shall conduct an individualized review of the student's educational record and circumstances, which may include the student's age, grade point average, attendance history, number of credits earned, number of semesters attended at Hempfield High School, documented academic barriers, and environmental or situational factors that substantially interfere with the student's ability to attend school on a full-time basis. Upon determining that enrollment in a specialized program is educationally appropriate, the committee shall make a recommendation to the Superintendent. Final approval for enrollment in the specialized program and for graduation with a reduced number of credits will be at the discretion of the Superintendent. [1][10][11]

Students With Special Situations –

A student may be considered for a waiver or modification of district graduation credit requirements when the student enrolls in the Hempfield School District under special circumstances, including but not limited to transferring from another school district or country whose graduation requirements are not aligned with Hempfield School District requirements. Upon registration, the school counselor shall refer the student to the Student Services Approval Committee for review. The committee shall examine the student's official transcripts, prior coursework, and the graduation requirements of the student's previous school or educational system to determine whether a credit exception is educationally appropriate in order to allow the student to graduate with the cohort with which the student would have graduated had the student remained enrolled in the prior school. Any waiver or modification of district graduation requirements shall be permitted only if the student meets the minimum graduation credit requirements established by the Pennsylvania School Code and met a Graduation Pathway as defined in ACT 158 of 2018. If the committee determines that a credit exception is warranted, a recommendation shall be submitted to the Superintendent. Final approval of any waiver or modification of graduation credit requirements shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent. The number of waivers granted will be shared with the school board at the end of each year. [1][10][11]

Part-Time Students –

A student may qualify for graduation by attending a district school part-time when lawfully employed part-time or when officially enrolled part-time in a postsecondary institution.[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)

Full-Time Postsecondary Students –

The fourth year of high school shall not be required for graduation if a student has completed all requirements for graduation and attends a postsecondary institution as a full-time student.[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#)

Eligible Veterans –

In order to honor and recognize honorably discharged eligible veterans who left high school prior to graduation to serve in World War II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War, the Board shall grant a diploma to a veteran who meets the applicable requirements of law and completes the required application.[\[4\]](#)

Upon proper application, the Board may award a diploma posthumously to a veteran who meets the stated requirements.

The Superintendent shall submit to the Board for its approval the names of veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War who are eligible for a high school diploma.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for ensuring the following:

1. Publication and distribution of graduation requirements to students and parents/guardians.[\[1\]](#)[\[19\]](#)
2. Counseling of students regarding expectations of graduation requirements.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[20\]](#)
3. Assessment of individual student attainment of academic standards to ensure the student's progress toward achievement of graduation requirements.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[20\]](#)
4. Accurate recording and reporting of each student's progress and accumulation of graduation requirements.[\[7\]](#)[\[21\]](#)
5. Provision of assistance to those students having difficulty attaining the academic standards.[\[1\]](#)[\[22\]](#)
6. Development of a list of individuals who qualify for the award of a diploma.
7. Planning and executing graduation ceremonies that appropriately recognize this important achievement.

1. 22 PA Code 4.24
2. 22 PA Code 4.51
3. 22 PA Code 4.52
4. 24 P.S. 1611
5. 24 P.S. 1613
6. Pol. 127
7. Pol. 212
8. Pol. 233
9. Pol. 251
10. 22 PA Code 11.27
11. 22 PA Code 4.12
12. 24 P.S. 1614
13. 34 CFR 300.102
14. 34 CFR 300.305
15. Pol. 113
16. 22 PA Code 11.5
17. 22 PA Code 11.8
18. 22 PA Code 11.4
19. 24 P.S. 510.2
20. Pol. 102
21. Pol. 216
22. 24 P.S. 121
24 P.S. 1331.1
34 CFR Part 300