



EAST PAULDING HIGH SCHOOL

3320 East Paulding Drive
Dallas, Georgia 30157

Brad Thomason, Principal
(770) 445-5100

Dear Senior and Senior Parents,

Congratulations on your child reaching this exciting point in his or her high school career! As we look ahead, our primary focus is preparing for a successful and memorable graduation.

East Paulding High School's Commencement Ceremony will be held on **Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 8:00 PM** in our stadium. Enclosed with this letter, you will find important information regarding the ceremony, including:

- General Information
- Exam/Testing Schedule
- Behavior Expectations
- Dress Code
- Commencement Practice
- Commencement Photos
- Ticket and Parking Information

Please continue to closely monitor your senior's behavior and academic progress during these final weeks to ensure that all graduation requirements and expectations are met. If you have any questions about academic standing, our counseling department is available and ready to assist.

Sincerely,

Brad Thomason
Principal

Class of 2026 — Commencement Information

The faculty and administration of East Paulding High School extend our warmest congratulations to the Class of 2026. We are proud of everything you have accomplished and honored to help you mark this milestone with a ceremony worthy of your hard work.

Seniors and their parents/guardians are asked to review all information in this packet carefully. Each graduating senior is responsible for understanding and following all instructions, requirements, and schedules outlined herein.

Commencement is a formal and dignified ceremony honoring the achievements of our graduates. To preserve the integrity of this event, all participants and guests are expected to conduct themselves respectfully throughout the ceremony. The possession of disruptive items or engaging in disruptive behavior may result in immediate removal from the venue. We also ask guests to refrain from making loud or distracting noises that may detract from the decorum of the ceremony or interfere with another family's opportunity to hear their graduate's name announced.

The commencement ceremony is an official function of East Paulding High School, and therefore all Paulding County School District and East Paulding High School policies and rules remain in effect. We appreciate the cooperation of our seniors, families, and community members as we work together to honor this important academic achievement with the respect it deserves.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 | 8:00 p.m.
East Paulding High School Stadium

Key Deadlines

The following deadlines are critical to your participation in graduation activities. Please review them carefully.

Deadline	Requirement
Monday–Tuesday, May 11–12	Laptop, charger, and case returned after final exams
Tuesday, May 12	All required coursework must be completed
Thursday, May 15	Unapproved honor regalia pre-approval forms due to Mr. Hardage
Monday, May 18	All financial obligations (fees, fines, senior dues) cleared with Mrs. Chester
Wednesday, May 20	All three mandatory graduation practices complete

Senior Arrival

All graduating seniors must report to the gymnasium no later than 6:30 p.m. to prepare for the ceremony. Graduates should park in the back parking lot and must arrive dressed appropriately with their cap and gown in hand. Upon arrival, students should report directly to the gym for check-in.

After checking in, graduates may visit with friends, take photographs, and prepare for the final event of their high school experience. Only graduates will be permitted to enter the building. Families and guests should anticipate heavy traffic entering and exiting campus.

Commencement Parking, Handicap Parking, and Seating

Guests may use both the front and back parking lots, as directed by parking attendants.

For guests with mobility needs or requiring assistance:

- Display a handicap tag, if applicable.
- Parking attendants will direct drivers to designated accessible parking areas.
- Accessible seating will be available for guests who cannot use stadium bleachers, located in designated areas on the home side near the ramp with wheelchair access.

Gates open at 6:00 p.m. Seating is first come, first served, and we will make every effort to accommodate the needs of all visitors.

Tickets

Tickets are not required for general admission. Seating is first come, first served on both the home and visitor bleachers.

Honor Graduates:

- Honor graduate guest seating is on the track.
- Each Honor Graduate will receive four (4) tickets for designated seating.
- Tickets will be distributed during graduation practice on May 20th.

There are no reserved seats or areas other than those designated for honor graduate guests.

Inclement Weather Plan

If inclement weather occurs on the day of commencement, the ceremony may be delayed until conditions improve. If weather does not clear, the ceremony will be moved to the EPHS Main Gym, and each senior will receive two (2) rain tickets for admission.

General Graduation Requirements

To receive a diploma and participate in commencement, seniors must:

1. Meet Academic Requirements

All required coursework must be successfully completed by Tuesday, May 12, 2026.

Parents of seniors who do not meet graduation requirements will be notified by the teacher of record by the end of the school day on May 12. Counselors will follow up to discuss alternative options.

2. Clear All Financial Obligations

All fees — including laptop/textbook fines, library fees, and senior dues — must be paid and cleared by the bookkeeper, Mrs. Chester, before a student may:

- Receive final grades
- Participate in senior activities
- Attend commencement practices

Financial obligations must be resolved no later than Monday, May 18, 2026, though early payment is strongly encouraged. Payments may be made via Revtrak under the Senior Class Only → Fees/Fines section.

Cash is accepted; personal checks are not.

Laptop Return — May 11 & 12

Students must return their school-issued laptop, charger, and laptop case after completing final exams. All stickers or decorations must be removed before returning items.

Do not remove school barcodes or original device labels.

If any items are damaged or missing:

- A fine will be placed on the student's account.
- A letter will be sent home requesting payment.
- Seniors must pay all fines before participating in commencement.

Replacement items may be purchased at: <https://paulding.revtrak.net/central-office/technology-department/>

Commencement Practices

Attendance at all three commencement practices is mandatory for participation in the ceremony. Students must arrive on time; late entry or early dismissal is not permitted.

Practice Guidelines:

- All instructions given during practice must be followed.
- All PCSD and EPHS rules and expectations apply.
- Dress code is required; gym shorts are allowed. (No tank tops or short shorts.)

- All financial obligations must be cleared by May 18, 2026.
 - Student cooperation keeps practice running efficiently and helps everyone finish on time.
 - Students may not reenter the school building after practice.
 - Seniors must park in their assigned spaces. Those without parking passes must arrange alternate transportation. Seniors may ride the morning bus but must arrange afternoon pickup after each practice.
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Ceremony Behavior

All PCSD and EPHS policies remain in effect during commencement. Graduates must:

- Remain fully and appropriately dressed throughout the ceremony.
- Avoid bringing valuables (phones, cameras, purses); no secure storage is provided.
- Arrive on time and follow all directions.

Possession of disruptive objects or disruptive behavior will result in removal from the ceremony.

Guests and graduates must maintain the dignity of the ceremony. No noisemakers, beach balls, horns, or similar items are permitted. Every graduate deserves to hear their name clearly; excessive noise may result in removal from the field.

Diplomas

During the ceremony, students will receive a diploma cover only. Immediately after the ceremony, graduates will return to the gym to meet with their senior advisor and receive their full graduation packet, which includes the official diploma, any award certificates, and other materials prepared for each graduate.

Please allow time after the ceremony for this process before meeting your graduate outside the building.

Honor Graduates

Students with a weighted GPA of 89.5 or higher will be recognized as Honor Graduates. These students will:

- Receive a special honors hood to wear over the gown (distributed May 19 at the cord ceremony).
 - Lead the processional in alphabetical order.
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Valedictorian / Salutatorian

These distinctions are awarded to the seniors with the highest and second-highest GPAs. Both students will be recognized during the ceremony and will have the opportunity to address the graduating class.

Final selections will be announced after Senior Breakfast. Honorees will work with Mrs. Harris and Mr. Hall to prepare an approved speech.

Honors Night

A Senior Recognition and Remarkable Raiders event will be held:

- Wednesday, May 6, 2026
- 6:30 p.m.
- EPHS Theater

Invitations will be issued to students receiving awards, scholarships, or special recognition. The number of guests per student will be determined by the number of honorees. Seniors should dress appropriately.

Baccalaureate

A student-led, nondenominational service honoring the Class of 2026 will be held:

- Thursday, May 14, 2026
- 7:00 p.m.
- New Season Church

Seniors should wear their graduation gown and honor hood (if applicable). No cap, stoles, or cords. This is not a required event, but one planned by students and parents. Families and friends are invited.

Graduate Attire

Caps and gowns must be worn for commencement. Gowns should be steamed or hung — do not iron or hem them.

Ladies

- You may wear a dress, romper, or pants under the gown — nothing may extend below the gown unless it is black.
- Shoes must be black. Wedges are recommended; stilettos are not permitted due to turf safety.
- No flip flops or tennis shoes.

Men

- You must wear black dress pants, a dress shirt with a tie, and black dress shoes.
- No jeans, flip flops, or tennis shoes.

Students needing assistance acquiring appropriate attire should notify a graduation sponsor immediately. Please do not wait until graduation day.

Caps and Gowns

- Must be the official EPHS regalia ordered through Jostens.
- No alterations are permitted.
- Decorating mortarboards (hats) is strictly prohibited.

Only school-approved honor regalia (cords, sashes, and stoles) may be worn. Items not awarded by EPHS require pre-approval by May 15, 2026. Forms are available from Mr. Hardage.

Commencement Photos

To maintain the decorum of the ceremony, guests must always remain in their seats and may not approach the stage for photos or videos. Handheld cameras that do not obstruct views may be used.

Cady Studios will photograph each graduate:

- As they receive the diploma cover
- As they exit the stage

Proofs will be emailed to families for viewing and purchase.

Questions?

If you have a question or need to resolve an issue related to graduation, the table below will direct you to the right person. Please contact the appropriate staff member rather than a general office whenever possible — it will get you a faster answer.

If you have a question about...	See...	Location / Notes
Cap and gown, tassel, mortarboard, or other Jostens attire	Mr. Joel Boyd	Athletic Office
Club cords or organization-specific regalia	Your club or organization sponsor	Contact your sponsor directly
Special stole permission (items not awarded by EPHS)	Mr. Hardage	Pre-approval form required by May 15
Fees, fines, or financial holds	The person or organization owed	Payments via Revtrak or cash to Mrs. Chester for school fees
General graduation questions	Coach Joe Tenoschok Mrs. Kristie Corley	Rm. 2303 Rm. 2214

When in doubt, Coach Tenoschok and Mrs. Corley are your first stop for anything not listed above.

May Graduate Timeline

Date	Event	Details
Mon, May 4	Kindergarten Day	Riding bicycles from Rock Baptist Church to EPHS, 7:00 a.m. start time.
Tue, May 5	Senior Citizen Day	
Wed, May 6	College Decision Day & Honors Night	College Decision Day: Wear your Senior Jeans and college shirt or Senior Jersey. Senior Recognitions, Honors Night, and Remarkable Raider Ceremony: 6:30 p.m., EPHS Theater.
Thu, May 7	Anything But a Backpack Day	Please leave pets and little brothers and sisters at home
Fri, May 8	Toga Day / Senior Sunrise	Senior Sunrise event.
May 4–8	Senior Parking Spot Decoration	Decorate your senior parking spot during Spirit Week (May 4–8). Use ONLY chalk — not chalk paint or any permanent substance. Spots painted with permanent materials will result in a \$100 fine.
Mon, May 11	Senior Exams: 3rd & 4th Periods	Laptop return begins after exams.
Tue, May 12	Senior Exams: 1st & 2nd Periods	Seniors released after 2nd period. Laptop return continues. All coursework deadlines met.
Thu, May 14	Baccalaureate Service	7:00 p.m., New Season Church. Nondenominational student-led service. Not required but planned by students and parents. Wear gown and honor hood (if applicable) — no caps, stoles, or cords.
Mon, May 18	Graduation Practice — Day 1 (Mandatory)	Report to gym at 9:00 a.m. 1. Check-in and name verifications, seating order 2. Practice marching 3. Lunch 4. Yearbooks
Tue, May 19	Graduation Practice — Day 2 (Mandatory)	Report to gym at 9:00 a.m. 1. Breakfast 2. Honors hoods / stoles / cords ceremony (9:30–10:45 a.m.) 3. Senior group picture 4. Top 10 Honors Luncheon
Wed, May 20	Graduation Practice — Day 3 (Mandatory)	Report to gym at 9:00 a.m. Wear comfortable clothes; bring sunscreen and sunglasses. We will be on the field. Wear the shoes you will wear for the ceremony. Honor graduates receive their 4 guest tickets.
Wed, May 20	Graduation Ceremony	Report to gym at 6:30 p.m. Park in back parking lot. Ceremony begins at 8:00 p.m.
