

Section I: Instructional Goals and Objectives	Knox County Board of Education Policy		
	Descriptor Term: Commencement Ceremony	Descriptor Code:	Issued:
		I-372	7/95
		Reviewed:	Revised:
	11/25	12/16	

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An annual commencement ceremony shall be held at the end of the second semester of the regular school year for students who have met all high school graduation requirements since the previous annual ceremony. The purpose of the ceremony shall be to award documents of completion, consisting of the regular Diploma, the High School Certificate, and the Diploma of Specialized Education.

Participation in the annual commencement ceremony shall be limited to students who have completed all requirements for a document of completion and who have not previously accepted one of the documents. Students completing requirements in summer school will, upon request, receive the document at the time of completion. Students completing requirements and exiting the school during the academic school year may receive the document at the time of completion if, in the judgment of the principal, arrangements are feasible. However, students who accept the document prior to the annual ceremony may not participate in the ceremony.¹

Students who voluntarily complete at least ten (10) hours of community service each semester while the student is in attendance at a public high school shall be recognized at the school’s commencement ceremony. This recognition should be in accordance with other types of recognitions at the individual high school.²

Commencement ceremonies shall be physically accessible to all students, their parents and/or legal guardians, and other interested citizens.³

Students who do not wish to participate in the commencement ceremony shall make this known to the school principal at least five (5) days prior to the day of graduation. Non-participating students will receive their diplomas, or certificates, from the principal’s office within one week following graduation ceremonies.

There shall be no sponsorship of a baccalaureate service or other graduation activity which is religious in nature by the Board or its employees, and no school funds, including paid staff time, shall be used for such activities.⁴

Legal Reference:

1. T.C.A. § 49-6-405.
2. T.C.A. § 49-6-413.
3. Public Law 101-36; U.S.C. 12101.
4. *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992).

NOTE: This policy was suspended on May 13, 2020 for the 2019-2020 school year in response to the current state of emergency caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Approved as to Legal Form
By Knox County Law Director 10/25/2016
/Gary T. Dupler/Deputy Law Director