

**Policy**

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COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Haworth Board of Education is committed to recognizing with proper ceremony, the completion of studies at the Haworth School. The date of Commencement shall annually be recommended by the superintendent/principal and approved by the board.

Commencement shall not occur prior to completion of the required 180 days of pupil instruction.

Guidelines for Commencement Activities

Pupil participation in special commencement year activities will require conduct of the highest caliber in all school situations.

Criteria for exclusion from these activities concern consistent behavioral patterns and shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Consistent involvement in disciplinary action(s);
- B. Suspension;

The final decision shall be made by the superintendent/principal.

Pupils and parents/guardians shall be given advance notification of these criteria.

Commencement Procedures and Ceremonies

No pupil shall be barred from participation in commencement ceremonies for arbitrary or discriminatory reasons. A pupil who may be prevented from participation and his/her parents/guardians shall be so notified in advance at the discretion of the superintendent/principal prior to the close of the school year.

When a pupil or his/her parents/guardians experiences financial hardship and is unable to pay the costs of participation in commencement ceremonies, the board shall assume all costs. Financial hardship shall be defined by eligibility standards for free and reduced price meals under the state school lunch program.

The board reserves the right to deny participation in commencement activities when extreme circumstances warrant it. Such denial shall be treated in the same manner as a suspension and the pupil so affected shall be afforded the rights of review provided in policies of this board.

The board reserves the right to withhold report cards until all fines are paid.

Special Education

The requirements for commencement from the Haworth School for a student with disabilities shall be set forth in his/her individualized education program (IEP). Completion of IEP goals shall qualify the pupil for commencement and entry to high school.

General

A board member or designee shall present a copy of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the amendments thereto, and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and the

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amendments thereto to each pupil upon commencement from elementary school.

The president of the board of education and/or another designated member of the board shall award the diplomas. Board members and former board members shall be afforded the opportunity to award diplomas to their own children.

The board shall not prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in any district school, consistent with guidance issued by the United States Department of Education and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Adopted: January 29, 2002  
 NJSBA Review/Update: September 2009  
 Readopted: May 2010

**Legal References:** N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-5.1 Boards of education prohibited from excluding students from graduation ceremony or from obtaining yearbook for inability to pay fees  
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties  
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-18 Books containing organic laws at Graduation  
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2 Causes for suspension or expulsion of pupils  
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)  
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 et seq. Implementation of Commencement

## Requirements

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1 et seq. Student Conduct

Ballato v. Long Branch Board of Education, 1990 S.L.D. (August 20)

Lee v. Weisman, 112 S.Ct. 2649 (1992)

R.L. v. Kingsway Regional Board of Education, 95 NJAR2d (EDU) 296

D.C. v. Parsippany Troy Hills Board of Education, 96 NJAR2d (EDU) 697

DO'G v. Ridgefield Park Board of Education, 96 NJAR2d (EDU) 820

R.F. v. Park Ridge Board of Education, 97 NJAR2d (EDU) 1

American Civil Liberties Union v. Blackhorse Pike Regional Board of Education, 84 F.3d 1471 (3d Cir. 1996)

**Possible**

**Cross References:** \*5113 Absences and excuses  
 \*5114 Suspension and expulsion  
 \*5126 Awards for achievement  
 \*5131 Conduct/discipline  
 \*6111 School calendar  
 \*6115 Ceremonies and observances  
 \*6141.2 Recognition of religious beliefs and customs  
 \*6146 Commencement requirements

\*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.