



TITLE: **SECONDARY SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES**

Date Authorized: 15 May 1998
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COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUITY

The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that the development of procedures and the associated work promotes and protects Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity. The Board will strive to address and eliminate discrimination and structural and systemic barriers for students, staff, and community.

1.0 RATIONALE

To establish guidelines for commencement ceremonies in secondary schools.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Please refer to Appendix A for a list of definitions of terms used in this policy.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The Board recognizes commencement ceremonies as important celebrations of student learning and accomplishment, honouring student contributions, and fostering a sense of community and pride among students, families, and educators.
- 3.2 The Board is committed to creating inclusive ceremonies that reflect all students' diverse identities, experiences, and pathways/achievements, ensuring that every individual feels valued and respected.
- 3.3 The planning of commencement ceremonies shall consider the accessibility needs of students, families, and guests.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

- 4.1 The principal of each secondary school shall be responsible for arranging the graduation or an annual commencement ceremony exercises.

- 4.2 Commencement ceremonies shall include all students in a grade 12 class who have satisfied the conditions to graduate as prescribed by the Ministry of Education; who are receiving school-leaving certificates; or who have been engaged in the school community and are deemed eligible to participate by the principal.
- 4.3 Commencement ceremonies may include student awards, recognitions, certificates, or other acknowledgements of accomplishments celebrating student learning, leadership, citizenship, and personal growth.
- ~~4.4 No cash awards shall be given from Board funds.~~
- ~~4.5 The cost of awards to be presented to secondary students who attain an average of 90 per cent or over shall be borne by the Board.~~
- ~~4.6 Trophies, medals, and other prizes for presentation at graduation exercises in secondary schools shall be left to the discretion of the principal, in consultation with the donor or donors, as appropriate.~~
- 4.7 All recognitions and awards for presentation at commencement ceremonies shall be at the discretion of the principal. Whenever possible, an award selection committee should be established, comprising varied positions and roles and ensuring representation requirements amongst staff at the school.
- 4.8 The Board recognizes that elementary schools may organize school-leaving ceremonies outside of the scope of this policy recommends that celebrations to mark promotion from elementary to secondary school be age appropriate. Elementary schools do not hold commencement or graduation ceremonies, but may organize age-appropriate school-leaving ceremonies or transition ceremonies
- 4.9 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.
- 4.10 If a student disagrees with the principal's decision to exclude them from a commencement ceremony, they may appeal the decision to the superintendent.

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Policy Definitions

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Ontario Regulation 435/00 and 436/00, 2000

Board [Procedure PR.527.SCO: Secondary School Commencement Ceremonies](#)

APPENDIX A: POLICY DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

Board means the Board of Trustees.

Commencement ceremony means an event to recognize educational milestones and achievements of a class of students, including those who have not fulfilled their graduation requirements but meet the criteria stipulated in the OCDSB commencement ceremony policy.

District means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.