



NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: I - Instruction
POLICY TITLE: Graduation Ceremonies
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY
 2. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION
 3. STUDENT CONDUCT DURING GRADUATION CEREMONIES
 4. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES
-

1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

Graduation ceremonies are sponsored by the Board of Education to honor students who graduate from Nebo School District high schools. The Board recognizes the value placed on a high school graduation ceremony by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992), that it is, for many, one of life's most significant occasions and that it is a time for family and those closest to the student to celebrate success and express mutual wishes of gratitude and respect. It is also a time to impress upon the graduating students the role they are to assume as adults in the community. Nevertheless, participation is a privilege, not a right, and may be denied if a student fails to comply with the participation standards set forth below. In addition, graduation ceremonies are not public forums for the expression of private speech. The Board adopts this policy to establish and maintain the dignity, decorum, and purpose of high school graduation ceremonies.

2. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

2.1. Students are not required to participate in the ceremony and may receive an earned diploma independent of such participation. Students choosing to participate in graduation ceremonies must first satisfy the following requirements:

2.1.1. Except as provided in paragraph 2.1.2, students must have met all of the credit and other requirements set forth in [Nebo School District Policy IKF, Curriculum Standards and Graduation Requirements: Academic and Citizenship Credit and Grading](#) to qualify for a high school diploma.

2.1.2. A student with a disability under the IDEA may participate in graduation ceremonies as provided under [Nebo School District Policy JS, Special Education](#).

2.1.3. Students must be in good standing with the school. Students may not participate if they are under suspension, expulsion, or other restrictive discipline imposed by school administrators in accordance with school and district policies and procedures.

2.2. Students must have paid all fees and fines owed to the schools or have made appropriate payment or waiver arrangements with a school administrator. Students are not precluded from participation because of unpaid fees which are waived.

3. STUDENT CONDUCT DURING GRADUATION CEREMONIES

3.1. Students must wear the designated cap and gown. Students who are unable to provide a cap and gown because of financial hardship will be provided one by the school.

3.2. During the graduation ceremony, which includes the duration of the program from the opening processional through completion of the recessional, students must meet the standards of dress

and grooming established by [Nebo School District Policy JDG, Student Dress and Appearance Standards](#). During the graduation exercises, graduating students must wear the designated cap and gown over clothing that complies with Policy JDG. Students must be permitted to wear tribal regalia as provided in [UTAH CODE ANN. § 53G-4-412](#). Students must also be permitted to wear recognized items of cultural or religious significance with, but not replacing, the cap and gown, as provided in [UTAH CODE ANN. § 53G-4-414](#), as long as it is not likely to cause a substantial disruption of, or material interference with, the graduation ceremony.

- 3.3. Students must be in compliance with [Nebo School District Policy JDB, Student Substance Abuse](#), and must not be in possession or under the influence of alcohol or any other substance prohibited under Policy JDB.
- 3.4. Students may be removed from the ceremony if they are found in violation of any provision of this policy or engage in any behavior that is disrupting to the event or that causes unnecessary distraction to other students, parents or patrons.

4. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1. Graduation Ceremonies shall be conducted with dignity and respect for students, parents, educators, and the school.
- 4.2. Schools shall designate caps and gowns for all students to wear during the graduation ceremony. Schools shall ensure that all students participating in the graduation ceremony wear the designated cap and gown. Students may not be assigned caps and gowns of different colors based on race, religion, disability, sex, or other classification protected by law.
- 4.3. Student Speeches
 - 4.3.1. Schools may invite one or more students to offer a speech during the graduation ceremony. Schools shall determine the criteria for selecting students to speak.
 - 4.3.2. The school administration shall approve all student speeches before the graduation ceremony. Students shall submit a written copy of their speech before the ceremony, and administrators shall maintain the copy until after the ceremony is completed to ensure the student does not stray from the approved speech.
 - 4.3.3. Students who deliver a speech that is different, in whole or in part, from the speech approved by the administration are subject to having their diplomas withheld.
 - 4.3.4. If a student delivers a speech different than that approved by the administration but which is not disruptive or likely to cause disruption to the ceremony, the administration may, immediately upon completion of the speech, announce to those in attendance at the ceremony that the speech was not approved by the school or the District.
 - 4.3.5. If a student delivers a speech that is lewd, vulgar, offensive, or that may reasonably cause a substantial disruption to the ceremony, the administration shall use reasonable methods to terminate the speech. The student may be removed from the ceremony.

5. DECEASED STUDENTS

- 5.1. The name of a deceased student may be read as part of the graduation ceremony regardless of whether the student met the eligibility requirements outlined in section 2.
- 5.2. A deceased student who met the eligibility requirements in section 2 may be represented in the graduation ceremony by a single individual who may walk with the other graduating students and be given the deceased student's diploma.

REFERENCES

[UTAH CODE ANN. § 53G-4-412](#)

[UTAH CODE ANN. § 53G-4-414](#)

[UTAH ADMIN. CODE R277-705, Secondary School Completion and Diplomas](#)

[Nebo School District Policy IKF, *Curriculum Standards and Graduation Requirements: Academic and Citizenship Credit and Grading*](#)

[Nebo School District Policy JDB, *Student Substance Abuse*](#)

[Nebo School District Policy JDG, *Student Dress and Appearance Standards*](#)

[Nebo School District Policy JS, *Special Education*](#)

FORMS

None

HISTORY

Revised: 12 July 2023 – added eligibility exception for special education students; added permission for items of cultural significance per SB103 (2023); added provisions for recognizing deceased students.

Revised: 11 May 2022 – added reference to tribal regalia per HB30 (2022); made technical changes.

Revised: 8 March 2017 – substantially restructured; removed section on certificates of completion; added school responsibilities, including guidelines for student speeches.

Revised: 9 July 2008 – reformatted.

Revised or adopted: 12 July 2006.
