

Commencement Exercises

To be eligible to participate in commencement activities and ceremonies, a student shall meet all state and local graduation requirements, including all applicable state testing. [See EI, EIF]

Mandatory Removal

A student who is subject to mandatory removal for disciplinary reasons during the final three weeks of the school year immediately preceding graduation shall not be eligible to participate in commencement exercises.

Student Speakers

A student may be allowed to speak during commencement exercises. The following provisions shall govern the eligibility, selection, and content requirements related to such student speakers.

Time Limits

For each student speaker, the principal or designee shall set a maximum time limit that is reasonable and appropriate to the occasion.

Eligibility and Selection

If a District secondary school wishes to choose a student to speak at commencement, the student shall be selected based on neutral criteria.

Certain students who have attained special positions of honor in the school, based on neutral criteria, have traditionally spoken at commencement exercises as a tangential component of their achieved positions of honor. Nothing in this policy eliminates the continuation of the practice of having these students address commencement audiences in the normal course of their respective positions.

Content

The subject of the speech of any student speaking publicly at District commencement exercises shall be clearly designated in advance. A student shall speak only on the designated subject.

Unless otherwise decided by the District employee overseeing the commencement ceremony, the subject of a student speaker's speech at the District commencement exercise shall be related to the purpose of the commencement ceremony, marking and honoring the occasion, honoring the participants and those in attendance, and the student's perspective on purpose, achievement, life, school, graduation, and looking forward to the future.

The subject of the speech of any student introducing District commencement exercises shall be related to the purpose of the event and to the purpose of marking the opening of the event, honoring the occasion, the participants and those in attendance, bringing the audience to order, and focusing the audience on the purpose of the event.

A student speaking publicly at District commencement exercises may not engage in speech that:

STUDENT ACTIVITIES
COMMENCEMENT

FMH
(LOCAL)

1. Is obscene, vulgar, offensively lewd, or indecent;
2. Creates reasonable cause to believe that the speech would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others;
3. Promotes illegal drug use or other conduct prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct;
4. Violates the intellectual property rights, or other rights of another person;
5. Advocates imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action; or
6. Violates state or federal law or any provision of the United States Constitution.

Sponsorship of
Student Speech

The District shall not sponsor student speech that is the personal expression of the individual student. Unless otherwise indicated, the content of any and all student speakers' speeches is not endorsed or sponsored by the District and does not represent the position or expression of the District.

Disclaimer

The statement below, or a similar statement, shall be stated in writing, orally, or both, at each District commencement exercise at which a student speaks:

"The students speaking at this event were selected to speak based on neutral criteria. Unless otherwise indicated, the content of each student speaker's message is the private expression of the individual student and does not reflect the endorsement, sponsorship, position, or expression of the District."

Effective Date

This policy shall be effective as of the Board adoption date on August 22, 2011.