Invocations/ Benedictions

School officials shall not direct the performance of a formal religious exercise at promotional and graduation ceremonies. *Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992) (addressing prayer by clergy at graduation)*

School-Sponsored Speech

A district shall not adopt a policy that establishes an improper majoritarian election on religion and has the purpose and creates the perception of encouraging the delivery of prayer at a series of important school events. The religious liberty protected by the Constitution is abridged when a district affirmatively sponsors the particular religious practice of prayer. *Santa Fe Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290 (2000) (addressing school-sponsored, student-led prayer delivered over the public address system at high school football games)*

Note: In *Jones v. Clear Creek Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 977 F.2d 963 (5th Cir. 1992), cert. denied, 508 U.S. 967 (1993), the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals held that a district may permit a graduating senior class, with the advice and counsel of the senior class sponsor, to select student volunteers to deliver nonsectarian, nonproselytizing invocations and benedictions for the purpose of solemnizing graduation ceremonies. Although not expressly overruled, the precedential value of this case has been called into question by the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Santa Fe Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Doe*, *530 U.S. 290 (2000).*

Private Student Speech

A district shall adopt a policy that includes the establishment of a limited public forum for student speakers at all school events at which a student is to publicly speak. *Education Code 25.152* [See FNA(LEGAL) at Expression of Religious Viewpoints]

Early Graduates

A parent is entitled to have a child who graduates earlier than the child would normally graduate participate in graduation ceremonies at the time the child graduates, if the child completes each course required for graduation. *Education Code 26.003(a)(3)(C), (4)* [See EIF]

Special Education Students

A district shall issue a certificate of attendance to a student who receives special education services and who has completed four years of high school but has not completed the student's individualized education program (IEP). A district shall allow a student who receives a certificate of attendance to participate in a graduation ceremony with students receiving high school diplomas. A student may participate in only one graduation ceremony under this provision. This provision does not preclude a student from receiving a

diploma if the student successfully completes an IEP. *Education Code 28.025(f)*

Certificate of Coursework Completion

A student who completes all graduation requirements except for required end-of-course assessment instruments may be issued a certificate of coursework completion. A district may allow a student who receives a certificate of coursework completion to participate in a graduation ceremony with students receiving high school diplomas [see EI(LOCAL)]. *19 TAC 74.5(m); Education Code 28.025(d)*