

(X) Required
(x) Local
(x) Notice

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

NOTE: We are providing this policy, and the accompanying administrative regulation, to reflect the requirements of recently-enacted state law (Education Law §3204(4-b)) that school boards “establish a policy and adopt procedures” to allow students to participate in the graduation ceremony (and related activities) of their 9th grade cohort if they earn either a Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS) or Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC). Please note that the CDOS can be earned by students with or without disabilities. This policy reflects those requirements.

The graduation or commencement ceremony is a time to celebrate the honors and achievements of the graduating class. The Board of Education will establish the date for graduation ceremonies, while the administration will determine the place and program details, including attire. Academic and other awards and scholarships may be presented along with diplomas. Speakers may be selected from among the graduating class [**optional:** or others].

NOTE: We have not included a specific process for selecting graduation speakers, due to the wide variation in practices among schools. Such process does not need to be included in Board policy. Options include: designating the Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian; allowing the senior class to select one of their own; establishing a selection committee of staff members; designating the senior class president; allowing the senior class to choose someone from outside the school. Another consideration is prior review and approval of speeches by school administrators.

Participation in the graduation ceremony and related activities will be predicated on satisfactory completion of all graduation requirements, or as otherwise described in this policy. Exceptions may be made under extraordinary circumstances with the permission of the Superintendent of Schools. A student who has earned either a Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS) or Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) by the time his/her ninth-grade cohort reaches graduation may, but is not required to, participate in that graduation ceremony and related activities.

NOTE: The law does not specify how to address students who participate in the graduation ceremony by earning a CDOS/SACC only, and subsequently earn a diploma. We have included the optional paragraph below to reflect that a student who earns a diploma may participate in graduation ceremonies. Alternately, the Board could limit a student’s participation to one graduation ceremony. In that case, use the following text instead: “Under this policy, a student shall be allowed to participate in only one graduation ceremony, upon earning either a CDOS/SACC or a high school diploma.”

[**Optional language:**] If a student who participates in the graduation ceremony by earning a CDOS or SACC only subsequently meets the requirements for either a Regents or local high school diploma, he/she may participate in the graduation ceremony of that graduating class as well.

NOTE: We have included language in the paragraph below summarizing a student's right to continued educational services under the IDEA.

A student with a disability who participates in graduation ceremonies by earning only a CDOS or SACC is entitled to continue his/her educational program until the end of school year in which the student turns 21 years old, or until he/she earns a Regents or local high school diploma.

NOTE: Usually, the Superintendent is charged to develop, approve, and promulgate regulations, which Boards usually do not adopt. However, under this law, Boards are required to adopt procedures to effectuate this policy.

The law also requires annual written notice to all students and their parents/guardians about the district's policy and procedures.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations to implement this policy, to be adopted by the Board. The district shall provide annual written notice to all students and their parents/guardians of the requirements of this policy and associated regulations.

Cross-ref: 4321, Programs for Students with Disabilities Under the IDEA and New York's Education Law Article 89
4321.9, Declassification of Students with Disabilities
4773, Diploma and Credential Options for Students with Disabilities

Ref: Education Law §3204(4-b)
8 NYCRR §§100.5; 100.6

First Reading: 10/21/19

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GRADUATION CEREMONIES REGULATION

Participation by Earning a CDOS or SACC

NOTE: Education Law §3204(4-b)) requires that school boards “establish a policy and adopt procedures” to allow students to participate in the graduation ceremony and related activities of their 9th grade cohort, if they have earned a CDOS or SACC. We have developed this sample regulation as a procedure for the district’s consideration. The provisions of the new state law go into effect February 27, 2018, applicable to the graduating class of 2018. Your district may find that the procedures necessary to effectuate the law must begin by a certain time of year.

A student who has earned either a Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS) or a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC), but not a high school diploma, shall be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related activities of the student’s graduating class.

The district shall retain a record of each student’s ninth grade cohort. Each year, the High School Building Principal [*or insert appropriate title*] shall determine whether each student who entered ninth grade with the current year’s graduating class is eligible to participate in that year’s graduation ceremony, pursuant to state law, Board policy and this regulation.

During the school year in which the ninth grade cohort enters twelfth grade, the High School Building Principal [*or insert same title as above*] shall submit to the Superintendent of Schools or designee the name(s) of all students who are on track and expected to earn either a CDOS or SACC, but not a Regents or local high school diploma, by the time of graduation.

For each student so identified, the Superintendent or designee shall ascertain whether the student wishes to participate in the graduation ceremonies and related activities of that year’s graduating class by discussing the matter with the student and/or parent/guardian either in person, in writing, by telephone, or via email.

For any student who meets such requirements and wishes to participate in the graduation ceremony and related activities, the Superintendent shall ensure, prior to graduation, that the High School Building Principal, the student, and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified that the student may participate in that year’s graduation ceremony and related activities, and shall ensure his/her participation is facilitated.

NOTE: The law requires annual written notice to all students and their parents/guardians about the district’s policy and procedures.

The district shall provide annual written notice to all students and their parents/guardians of the requirements of this regulation and associated policy.