

### COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Board of Education endorses the annual middle school commencement program and directs the Superintendent to ascertain that no student be barred from participation for arbitrary or discriminatory reasons, or by financial constraints.

The Board reserves the right to deny participation in commencement activities when circumstances warrant it. Such denial shall be treated in the same manner as a suspension and the student so affected shall be afforded the rights of review provided in policies of this Board.

The Board reserves the right to withhold a diploma until all fines are paid.

The Superintendent shall ensure that the program and facilities enable graduating disabled students to participate.

The Board shall not prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in any district school, consistent with guidance issued by the United States Department of Education and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

#### Awarding of Diplomas

A copy of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the amendments thereto, and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and the amendments thereto shall be presented to each student upon commencement from middle school.

The President of the Board of Education and/or another designated member of the Board shall award the diplomas. Board members and former Board members shall be afforded the opportunity to award diplomas to their own children.

<b>Legal References:</b>	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:7C-5.1	Boards of education prohibited from excluding students from commencement ceremony or from obtaining yearbook for inability to pay fees
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:11-1	General mandatory powers and duties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-18	Books containing organic laws at commencement
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:54-20	Powers of Board (county vocational schools)
	<u>Ballato v. Long Branch Board of Education</u> , 1990 <u>S.L.D.</u> (August 20)	
	<u>Lee v. Weisman</u> , 112 <u>S.Ct.</u> 2649 (1992)	
	<u>American Civil Liberties Union v. Blackhorse Pike Regional Board of Education</u> , 84 <u>F.3d</u> 1471 (3d Cir. 1996)	

<b>Cross References:</b>	*5113	Absences and excuses
	*5114	Suspension and expulsion
	*5126	Awards for achievement
	*5131	Conduct/discipline
	*6111	School calendar
	*6141.2	Recognition of religious beliefs and customs
	*6146	Commencement requirements

\*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.

#### Key Words

Commencement Activities, Commencement Ceremonies

Approved: April 28, 2008  
Revised: August 22, 2011