
HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION**Policy Code:** HKF
Policy Title: High School Graduation Ceremonies**POLICY HANDBOOK****Cross Reference:**
Legal Reference:
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POLICY

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION SUPPORTS THE RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH SCHOOL-SPONSORED GRADUATION CEREMONIES. THE DIVISION ALSO SUPPORTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION CEREMONIES WHICH ARE INTENDED TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO MEET DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS AND VALIDATE THE ACTIVITY.

DEFINITION

Graduation: refers to provincial high school completion requirements which include obtaining courses to meet:

- Alberta High School Diploma
- Certificate of High School Completion
- Certificate of Achievement
- Certificate of School Completion

GUIDELINES

1. Only graduation activities organized by the school shall be considered Board sanctioned. Other activities, including after-grad parties that may be organized by parents and/or students are not Board sanctioned.
 - 1.1. Staff are strongly advised to not participate in such activities, either as participants or volunteers, especially when alcohol is involved.
 - 1.2. Staff who disregard this advise are participating as private citizens and not as representatives of the Horizon School Division.
 - 1.2.1. As private citizens they take full responsibility and liability for any and all actions.

REGULATIONS (FOR PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION CEREMONIES)

1. Student participation in high school graduation ceremonies shall be a school-based decision determined by criteria established at the school level.
 - 1.1. Students with individual support plans may be provided the opportunity to participate in ceremonies utilizing criteria based on their unique circumstances.

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2. School based criteria shall be
 - 2.1. Established with input from staff, parents and students;
 - 2.2. include deadlines for meeting the criteria;
 - 2.3. include a school appeal processes to address unique circumstances;
 - 2.4. shared with high school students and their parents at the commencement of the student's graduating school year; and
 - 2.5. posted publicly on school websites and/or included in school handbooks.
3. Students' progress shall be monitored and at-risk students and their parents shall be notified by mid-year that the student is not meeting the school's criteria for graduation.
4. A reasonable effort shall be made by school staff to encourage and assist students to meet the criteria in order for the student to participate in the ceremony.
5. The criteria shall be applied fairly to all students without discrimination based on principles established in human rights legislation and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
6. A student or parent(s) of a student who is denied participation in high school graduation ceremonies, may appeal the decision to the Superintendent, who shall convene a committee to hear the appeal.
 - 6.1. The appeal committee shall hear the appeal within three instructional days of the appeal being requested.
 - 6.2. The appeal committee shall be composed of the Superintendent, a trustee and a high school administrator from a school other than the one that the student is attending.
 - 6.2.1. The Superintendent shall act as the chair of the appeal committee.
 - 6.3. The student, who may be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian, shall attend the appeal hearing and shall provide information regarding their fulfillment of the graduation participation criteria, details as to the contravention of this policy, reasons as to not fulfilling the graduation participation criteria, and any other relevant information as to why they should be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.
 - 6.4. The principal shall attend the appeal hearing and shall provide information regarding the student's fulfillment of the graduation participation criteria, the school's efforts to support the student in fulfilling the graduation participation criteria, and any other relevant information as to why the student should not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.
 - 6.5. The appeal committee's decision is final and may not be appealed to the Board.

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7. Elected officials, dignitaries, Indigenous Elders and other important guests should be greeted by staff or students when they arrive.
 - 7.1. Elected officials, dignitaries, Indigenous Elders and other important guests should be provided with reserved seating in the front row.
8. School Convocation programs should follow the following order of events.

Introduction of master of ceremonies

Processional

Entry of graduating class

Singing of Oh Canada

Welcome and opening remarks

Land Acknowledgement

Introduction of elected officials and dignitaries

Introduction of elected officials and dignitaries who are known to be in attendance shall be recognized by the master of ceremonies in the following order.

Horizon Chair of the Board of Trustees

Horizon Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees

Other Trustees

Greetings/regrets from trustees not in attendance

Chief Superintendent and/or designate

School principal, assistant principal

Other elected officials, dignitaries and Indigenous Elders attending (Highest to lowest rank):

Members of the Senate representing Alberta

Members of Parliament (Cabinet Ministers first)

Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (Premier, then Cabinet Ministers, then MLAs)

Mayor

Other municipal councillors/aldermen

Other dignitaries and Indigenous Elders

Speakers

Greetings or remarks from the board chair, vice-chair or trustee representing the Board of Trustees, if applicable

Greetings from representatives of:

Federal government, if applicable

Provincial government, if applicable

Municipal government, if applicable

Superintendent or designate, or school principal (as appropriate)

Keynote and/or other speakers (such as valedictorian)

Presentation of Certificates

Each student receives their diploma

Finalities

Closing remarks

Students' departure