

I. Procedure Name: High School Graduation

II. Basic Procedure:

1. Pre-ceremony

- A. Students are required to attend graduation practice in order to participate in the commencement ceremony. Students should be reminded of the mandatory graduation practice in a timely manner. The principal must approve any exception to the mandatory graduation practice.
- B. When at graduation practice, the principal is to remind the male graduates to remove their caps during the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem. All graduates should be reminded to place their hand over their heart for the duration of the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem.
- C. The principal will notify students and parents by letter and School Messenger callout that metal detectors are in use at the Bay Center and all patrons and bags are subject to a security search.
- D. The principal will notify students and parents of items that are not prohibited in the Bay Center, including, but not limited to, large bags, backpacks, waist packs, umbrellas, strollers, any weapons, spikes or chains, laser pointers, noisemakers, silly string, signs/posters or banners, outside food and drink, containers, glass items, confetti, wrapped gifts, balloons and audio and video recording devices. See sample parent/guardian letter.
- D. The principal or designee will make contact with Bay Center to arrange for delivery of school banner, diploma covers, and commencement programs.
- E. No band instrument cases, purses, or backpacks will be allowed on the floor.
- F. Bay Center does not permit tape on rails, walls, or chairs.
- G. In order to help ease congestion, schools will ensure commencement programs are available at entrance areas when the doors are opened to the public.

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- H. The principal will provide the officials at the main entrance to the arena a list of teachers, staff and students who are allowed on the floor.
 - I. All schools will provide an SRO and dean or other school personnel to assist with admittance of students at the hallway leading to the floor of the arena.
 - J. The school representatives must be in place one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of commencement.
 - K. All school personnel that will be working the graduation ceremony or otherwise seated on the arena floor must have district badge.
 - L. Schools should bring two-way radios for coordination of ceremony.
 - M. No one will be permitted to enter the arena late. The doors to the arena will be closed when the principal goes to the microphone to deliver opening remarks.

2. Ceremony

- A. Ceremony will be conducted in a timely fashion and **will not** exceed 90 minutes.
- B. The platform guests will enter in two lines (side by side) from the main entrance. Principal will lead the group across the arena to the center aisle and proceed to the stage entering the stage from either side (principal's choice). **The order must be as follows:**

Line One	Line Two
Superintendent	Principal
Board Chair	Deputy Supt.
Board Vice Chair	Asst. Superintendent(s)
Board member	School Asst. Principal
Board member	School Asst. Principal
Board member	Director(s)

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- C. The superintendent, deputy superintendent, school administration, and school board members should be seated on the front row.
 - D. Graduates will enter from the north end of the arena and walk in pairs up the center aisle and fill the chairs.
 - E. Students at the beginning and end of each row must be aware of their position in the row and fill in the row, even if it appears there is not enough room. There are 15 seats in each row.
 - F. The band will be seated on the southeast side of the floor, and faculty members and guests not a part of the ceremony will be seated on the southwest side of the floor.
 - G. The principal will remind the audience at the beginning of the ceremony of the dignity of the commencement and request all electronic devices be turned off. Principal script:

“To the parents, grandparents, other relatives and friends of our graduates, thank you for joining us for this momentous occasion. This ceremony is very special as we honor our students today. It is a formal ceremony; therefore, I ask that the audience act in a respectful manner so that each graduate may be recognized appropriately. Please silence your cell phones and join us in honoring (school name) class of (year).”

- H. Procession of graduates will begin. The principal will request the audience rise during the procession of graduates and to remain standing for the presentation of colors, the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.
- I. Color Guard--Near the end of the procession of graduates, the color guard should begin moving from their location by the main entrance door of the arena floor to a position behind the last row of graduate seats near the center aisle. Their movement should be timed so as to arrive in position when the last row is filled with seniors. Immediately following the positioning of seniors in the last row or when principal states “present the colors,” the guard will march to center aisle and proceed from there to a position directly in front of the stage. Locating the color guard at the center

aisle in sequence with the graduates filling the last row of seats is important in order to minimize the amount of time it takes the color guard to move to front of stage and reduce audience noise while colors are being presented.

- J. To ensure a continuous flow of the ceremony, individuals designated to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and/or sing the National Anthem should be seated on stage. If a school chorus sings the National Anthem, they must not return to their seats until the color guard has retired the colors.
- K. After the retiring of the colors, the platform guests should be recognized in the following order: superintendent, school board chair, vice chair (board chair and vice chair should be noted in the introduction) and other school board members in order of district, deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, district staff and school-based staff. The principal should contact the director of high schools if unsure about the correct title of district staff.
- L. Presentation of diplomas will begin after the superintendent has completed the graduation message and congratulatory remarks.
 - i. Only the principal will hand out the diplomas. No school district employee, family member or friend is allowed to step up to the stage to congratulate a student during the ceremony.
 - ii. Assistant principal(s) will stand at the diploma table to hand the principal a diploma cover for each graduate crossing the stage.
 - iii. The next senior in line to receive a diploma must be at the top step when each name is called. This procedure will ensure a continuous flow of graduates crossing the stage and make certain the ceremony is timely; not exceeding 90 minutes.
 - iv. Each senior will shake the hand of the principal and superintendent as they proceed across the stage.
 - v. School Board members may step up to the front of the stage to the right side of the superintendent to congratulate a specific student such as a mentee.

- M. At the conclusion of the presentation of diplomas, the principal will move to podium. **Students are to stay seated.** The principal will then certify seniors have met the requirements for graduation by stating the following:

“Superintendent Malcolm Thomas, as principal of (school name), I hereby certify each of these seniors receiving a diploma today has met the eligibility requirements for a standard high school diploma as prescribed by the Escambia County School Board and the State of Florida.”

- N. The superintendent declares the students graduated.

Would the class of 20XX please rise.

ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA, BY THE POWERS VESTED IN ME AS THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY, I HEREBY DECLARE EACH OF THESE SENIORS RECEIVING A DIPLOMA TODAY AS GRADUATES OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT.

YOU MAY NOW TURN YOUR TASSELS.

AT THIS TIME, I PRESENT TO YOU THE GRADUATES OF THE CLASS OF 20XX OF XXXXXXXX HIGH SCHOOL.

- O. Closing remarks. The principal will announce the conclusion of the ceremony and ask the audience to please expedite departure from the arena. The principal will remind parents, family and friends to refrain from entering the arena floor.
- P. Graduates will exit the Bay Center via the northwest exit after returning their cap and gowns to Herff Jones.