

The school district shall sponsor commencement or graduation exercises for students who have met the graduation requirements set forth by this school district and the State of Idaho for completion of a high school program and the awarding of a diploma. Participation in commencement exercises is a privilege. In addition to students who have met all graduation requirements, the following students will be allowed to participate in graduation exercises:

1. Foreign exchange student in their senior year who have completed a comparable program as approved by the district.
2. Students who have not completed all graduation requirements, but who have received permission to participate. The decision to allow such students to participate in graduation exercises will be made in extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis by the principal. The principal's decision is final.

Additionally, only students enrolled in a program approved by the school during the last semester will be allowed to participate in graduation exercises.

### ***ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES***

School administration will exercise plenary power over all aspects of any graduation exercise held within the district. It is the policy of the district to have two (2) graduating seniors address the other participants and audience at the commencement ceremony. The student speakers will be selected based on academic or class officer status. If there is more than one (1) student with the same academic standing, determined at the end of the first semester of the senior year, the senior class will vote to select the valedictorian. The second speaker may either be a class officer or a salutatorian. Any speaker invited to speak at commencement may decline the invitation.

Student speakers may deliver a personal address of any nature so long as it is appropriate for the circumstances and is not disruptive to the ceremony. The school principal and senior class advisor may establish time periods to limit the length of the student's presentation. The principal will review and approve the student's presentation prior to the commencement ceremony to ensure that there is no conflict with the Establishment Clause as set forth in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Idaho Constitution, or the laws of the state of Idaho.

The district may place a disclaimer on graduation programs substantially similar to the following:

The Board of Trustees of School District No. 232 neither promotes nor endorses any statements made by any person involved in the graduation ceremony. Any

communication by participants in this graduation ceremony is the private expression of the individual and is not intended to reflect the opinions or beliefs of the District, the Board of Trustees, administration, or other students.

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**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

Idaho Code Sections:

33-512 – Governance of Schools

33-1603 – Sectarian Instruction Forbidden

Id. Const. art. IX, §6 – Religious Test and Teaching in School Prohibited

U.S. Const., amend. I, cl. 1-2 – Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses of the First Amendment

**ADOPTED:** January 28, 1998

**AMENDED:** October 17, 2023