



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GRADUATION, PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION CEREMONIES

AP No. 5127

Effective Date: April 7, 2026

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide guidance to administrators concerning appropriate ceremonies to be held at the completion of grades K, 5, 8 and 12.
- II. **POLICY:** The Prince George's County Board of Education (Board) vows to close achievement gaps and raise achievement for all students in Prince George's County by ensuring equitable access to a high-quality education that guarantees that every child graduating from the Prince George's County Public School (PGCPS) is college ready and work ready (Board Policy 0118).
- III. **BACKGROUND:** As students advance in their academic journey from elementary, middle, to high school, school administrators coordinate events to acknowledge the accomplishments of their students. PGCPS encourages the celebration of our students' achievements, although there is a distinction surrounding the type of celebrations held across grade levels.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. *Awards Assemblies* – A ceremony to recognize the outstanding achievements of students.
 - B. *Graduation Exercise* – An academic ceremony that culminates with the conferring of a high school diploma for students who have met the graduation requirements outlined in COMAR.
 - C. *Posthumous Diploma* – A high school diploma awarded to a student who is classified as a senior, as stated in Administrative Procedure 6150: Educational Requirements and Options in Secondary Schools, has met graduation requirements and has been certified as a graduate.
 - D. *Posthumous Honorary Certificate of Completion* - A certificate presented to the family of a deceased student who is classified as a senior who passes away prior to meeting graduation requirements as stated in Administrative Procedure 6150: Educational Requirements and Options in Secondary Schools.

- E. *Recognition Ceremony* – Recognizes students who satisfactorily complete the requirements to matriculate to the next level in their K-12 academic career.
- F. *Senior* – A student classified as grade 12 and has earned at least 14 credits consisting of the following:
 - 1. English – 3 Credits
 - 2. Mathematics – 3 Credits
 - 3. Science – 1 Credit
 - 4. Social Studies – 1 Credit
 - 5. Additional Credits – 6

V. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. Principals are prohibited from scheduling promotion ceremonies, graduation exercises, awards assemblies, or recognition ceremonies at churches or other religious institutions.
- B. High Schools and Charter High Schools (Grade 12)
 - 1. Appropriate graduation exercises are planned for and held under the direction of the Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee, the Associate Superintendent for High Schools and Non-Traditional Programs, and the high school principal.
 - 2. Awards assemblies or recognition ceremonies are suitable for recognizing outstanding student achievement.
 - 3. Students must meet all (PGCPS) financial obligations prior to participating in any graduation exercise.
 - 4. Only those who have met the graduation requirements as specified in COMAR and are enrolled in at least one semester prior to the graduation exercise (i.e., a summer graduation participant must have been a student in PGCPS during the spring semester) will be permitted to participate in the graduation exercise.
 - 5. Principals should refer to the PGCPS High School Graduation Guidelines located in the Principal Portal for details on specific protocols and guidance for Graduation Exercises.
 - 6. Conduct inconsistent with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook may be cause for a student to be excluded from the Graduation Exercises. This will be at the discretion of the Principal, with final approval from the Area Office.
- C. Elementary, Middle Schools (Grades 5, 6, and 8), K-8, K-8 Charter Schools
 - 1. Recognition ceremonies are appropriate to recognize students who satisfactorily complete the requirements to matriculate to the next level in their K-12 academic career (i.e.,Elementary School to Middle School or Middle School to

High School).

2. Awards assemblies and recognition ceremonies are appropriate for elementary and middle schools and may be scheduled to recognize outstanding student achievement.
3. Under no circumstances will elementary or middle schools' awards assemblies or recognition ceremonies be held in a non-school facility. Since space might be a factor for many schools, the local high school may be utilized with the approval of the Associate Superintendent. Prior to submitting a written request (on the principal's letterhead with his or her signature) to the Associate Superintendent, the school should:
 - a. Check school availability via the district's facility request platform
 - b. Contact the school's principal for confirmation
 - c. Submit a reservation request in the district's facility request platform.
 - d. Schools must submit the written request to the attention of the Associate Superintendent no later than February 1st of the school year.
 - e. If the request is not approved by the Associate Superintendent, the requestor must cancel the reservation request in the district's facility request platform.

D. Posthumous Diploma

PGCPS may also provide a student's family with a diploma for seniors who met the graduation requirements as specified in AP6150 and certified by the school's principal and /or central office executive leadership.

E. Posthumous Honorary Certificate of Completion

PGCPS may also provide the student's family with an Honorary Certificate of Completion for seniors who did not meet the graduation requirements as specified in AP 6150.

F. Recognition of Deceased Students

1. Schools may acknowledge students who pass away while enrolled in their senior year by draping a cap and gown on their designated seat and calling the student's name
2. The certificate/diploma will be presented to the legal guardian at the conclusion of the ceremony. Please note that parents/guardians/family members will not be permitted to walk across the stage to accept any diplomas or certificates.
 - a. Schools must verify that the student was a senior (12th-grade) before his/her death and was on track to graduate. If the student meets graduation requirements

per Administrative Procedure 6150 (Educational Requirements and Options in Secondary Schools), a diploma can be issued.

VI. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:

A. Division of School Support and Leadership

1. Schools

- a. School leaders or their designee must ensure that graduation exercises, recognition ceremonies, and/or award assemblies planned are aligned with this administrative procedure.
- b. High School Principals must ensure that only students who have met the graduation requirements outlined in COMAR and have been certified to graduate will participate in the Graduation Exercises.

2. Area Offices will collect information from schools regarding the schedules for their awards/recognition ceremonies and will share this information with the Chief of School Support and Leadership.

3. Student Services - Office of School Counseling will work with schools throughout the school year to ensure compliance with the processes surrounding the certification of graduates.

B. Office of Monitoring and Accountability

The Office of Student Records and Archival Services will review and collect a listing of certified graduates from schools for diploma/certificate issuance.

VII. RELATED ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

Administrative Procedure 5123.2 - General Procedures Pertaining to Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students

Administrative Procedure 5128 – Selection of Valedictorians and Salutatorians

Administrative Procedure 6150 – Educational Requirements and Options

Administrative Procedures 6151 – Student Service-Learning Graduation Guidelines

Administrative Procedure 6161 – Textbooks

VIII. LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.03.02.

IX. MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THIS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE:

The Division of School Support and Leadership will be responsible for updating these procedures, as needed.

X. HISTORY:

July 1, 2005 (Revised)
July 1, 2013 (Revised)
July 1, 2015 (Revised)
April 7, 2026 (Revised)

XI. EFFECTIVE DATE: April 7, 2026