LCS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION GUIDELINES:
The purpose of High School Graduation Guidelines is to answer many of the questions that arise during a school’s preparation for its commencement exercises. These Guidelines are written in a question and answer format to provide a more “welcoming” presentation of the issues.

What must be included in the graduation program booklet?

- Board Members’ names
- Name of the Superintendent
- Names of School-based administrators
- List of all graduates with a disclaimer (See below). You may want to add this disclaimer to all senior/parent graduation information, website, parent newsletter, etc. that is sent home from the beginning of the year.

*Only students who have completed Florida DOE requirements will be allowed to march in this ceremony.*

- Indication of Valedictorian (s)/Salutatorian (s)/Summa, Magna, Cum Laude for designated graduates (Only if possible with no extra cost)
- Order of the ceremony
- Date of the ceremony

(Schools may choose to include more than the above in the program booklet.)

What should be included in the graduation ceremony?

- Flags should be visible (U.S. Flag/State of Florida Flag) unless your ROTC Color Guard participates.
- Processional (Also order of Processional for graduates)
- A moment of silence/Student led Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance (Male graduates are to remove their caps.)
- National Anthem
- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Introduction of Honored Guests
- Reflections/Speeches: The speeches should adhere to school custom.
- Presentation of Awards/Recognitions (Associate Degrees/Military Students)
- Presentation of Diplomas/Conferring of Diplomas
- Concluding Remarks
- Recessional
**What pre-graduation planning should be done with the students?**

School administrators should meet with the students participating in the graduation ceremony to review proper dress, graduation etiquette, appropriate behavior and the disclosure Statement (See Attachment 1). Graduation procedures and guidelines should be provided to each student in writing at least two weeks prior to the ceremony.

**What are the expectations of the audience?**

- Behavior should be respectful and cooperative
- Family and friends are not to enter the field until the program is concluded.

**What is the procedure for the conferring of diplomas?**

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the principal should state the following:

As principal of _____________ High School, I certify that these seniors have met all of the requirements set forth by the Lake County School Board and the state of Florida. By the power vested in me, I hereby declare the Class of 20____ to be graduates of _____________ High School.

**How is the tassel worn?**

Traditionally, the tassel is worn on the right side of the mortar board until the principal at the conclusion of the ceremony officially and formally confers upon the recipients the status of graduate. The tassel is then moved from the right side to the left side of the mortar board.

*Note: consider what the rule will be for decoration of the mortar board!*

**What are the protocol guidelines for the processional order and introductions of dignitaries and guests at graduation ceremonies?**

The school’s principal should lead the dignitaries or processional to the stage in one single line. The principal should be followed by:

- Superintendent of Schools
- Board Member of the School
- School Board Chair
- School Board Vice Chair
- School Board Members (alphabetical by last name)
- Elected Official of Local Municipality
Dear Parents and Guests:
The Graduates of the Class of 2018 welcome you to our Commencement Exercises. May we request that you allow each one of us our moment of recognition in as dignified a manner as possible.

We request that you not bring items into the graduation site which may detract from the dignity of the ceremony or create any action which interferes with the ceremony. Individuals who cannot comply with this request will be asked to leave the premises.

We earnestly request that you refrain from individual demonstrations of enthusiasm for your particular graduate and that you join us all at the conclusion of the presentation of diplomas with a strong show of pride and congratulations.

Thank you for demonstrating your support for us in giving our ceremony the dignity and honor it richly deserves.
The Graduating Class of 2018

Declaración
Estimados padres de familia e invitados:
Los graduados de la clase de 2018 les damos la bienvenida a nuestra ceremonia de graduación y quisiéramos rogarles que nos permitan disfrutar de este momento de reconocimiento en la forma más digna posible.

Les pedimos que no lleven al lugar donde se celebra la graduación artículos que pudieran disminuir la solemnidad de la ceremonia o que pudieran generar cualquier acción que interfiera con la misma. A las personas que no puedan responder a esta solicitud se les pedirá que abandonen el local. Les rogamos encarecidamente que se abstengan de hacer demostraciones individuales de entusiasmo por su graduado en particular y que se unan a todos nosotros al concluir la presentación de los diplomas en una gran expresión de orgullo y felicitaciones.

Les agradecemos su apoyo a nuestros esfuerzos por proporcionar a nuestra ceremonia la dignidad y el honor que tanto merece.

Los graduados de la clase de 2018
HELPFUL HINTS:

1. Use persons familiar with students for diploma distribution, preferably homeroom teachers and/or guidance counselors.

2. Include security before, during and after the ceremony.

3. Secure the assistance of an English/ speech instructor to work with student program speakers.

4. Secure the assistance of faculty members to maintain order and control in the processional lines, as well as during the ceremony. (They should be seated with students.)

5. Arrange for extra caps, gowns, collars, tassels, and other paraphernalia to be taken to the graduation site.

6. Prepare gift bags for dignitaries to be placed on stage. Each gift bag should contain water, tissues, hand sanitizer, mints and a thank you note.

7. Determine the position of each graduate in the processional, the seating arrangements, and the recessional.

8. What will your policy be regarding student fines? **Note: this can be a major battle line.**
POST THIS STATEMENT:

This event is being videotaped. By entering the event, you are giving your permission to be recorded and to have your likeness used in the final product.
Consideration in preparation for Graduation at Elementary, Middle and High:

2 Months Ahead: Have your graduation coordinator report each of the following questions to you personally in a scheduled meeting.

- What is your budget plan within the approved budget?
- When will graduation begin?
- When will the gates open?
- What extra security might we need?
- What is our well-structured ticket plan (printing, distribution, how many per student, collecting at the gate, etc.) and seating established for handicap visitors.
- Do we need transport shuttles (usually golf carts) for handicapped and/or elderly visitors is advisable as well.
- What is the dress code for students? Do boys need ties? Can girls wear pants or heels? Let students and families know!
- How and when will students arrive and what are the monitoring plans? Where will they dress and what are the monitoring plans? When and how will students enter the arena and what are the monitoring plans? How will students proceed across the stage? How will students exit and what are the monitoring plans.
- What will our plan for students who cannot abide by the rules?
- How many speakers are needed? What is the process for selecting a speaker? Give each speaker at least a two-month notice to prepare. Consider the following:
  - A popular teacher for that year
  - The administrator at the next level up (Elementary consider Middle School Principal, etc.)
  - A Board Member
  - A top-notch student
  - Someone from the community – a business leader, an academic or a professional. While they did not need to have graduated from the school, inviting someone from the area or even the neighborhood resonates well with students and parents. Since most are honored to be included at a graduation awards ceremony, don’t be shy to call and ask.
- Entertainment – sound system, music, video or slide show – Make sure to get these elements assigned at least two months before the graduation awards ceremony date.
- Which students will receive special awards? Triple check all graduation criteria and know who is on the bubble.
- What company will provide the caps and gowns? When will students have to get their orders in?
- Who is monitoring the graduates and their individual requirements for graduation?
Graduation '18

Principal Checklist

- What are the awards? Salutatorian and Valedictorian medals and awards are musts of course! The varieties of colors, figures, stands and inserts allow you to tailor the award specifically to the school's identity. Note: How will you handle personal purchases of cords and sashes?
- Will all students get awards? Graduation medals/Cords are an inexpensive way to give each student a personalized keepsake, for a memory that will last a lifetime. Graduation medals can come in the school's colors and have one of many varieties of “Class of 2018” insets. It’s smart to order all Commencement Awards at least four weeks ahead of time.
- Diplomas – Your bookkeeper receives an email each year from Student Services containing an order from. The Bookkeeper and your guidance department work together to determine the number and cost of the diplomas needed. The bookkeeper posted a PO to finance and awaits approval. Once approval is received the bookkeeper purchases the kinds of Diplomas needed from Herff Jones, and guidance sends in the student names to Herff Jones. Herff Jones will deliver the printed diplomas to your school. Note: you will want to make sure some extras blanks were ordered in case of mistakes or last minute students passing. Handing out the diploma should be a meaningful occasion and the look and feel of the reward should suit the ceremony.
- Will you need formal invitations to invite family? Or, is the tradition to send an email and announce graduation ceremony in the school bulletins and/or flyers? Note: Consider the occupancy of your facility! You may need to set a limit. What venues are at your disposal?
- If you are renting a venue, will you have to rent a stage, podium or chairs?
- If you are using an outdoor venue, what will be your “Plan B” for inclement weather? Then monitor the weather forecasts closely every day for the week leading up to the event. Make sure all stakeholders are aware of “Plan B” in the event you need to use it. Finally, be prepared to make a decision in the event a surprise storm appears.
- Which local printer will handle the invitations and the Ceremony Order of Service? What is the basic outline of the program? (It should mimic the district requirements for High School above).
- How much decoration dollars are in the budget? Red carpet? Flowers at the front by the podium? Flowers at the end of each row? Banner saying “Congratulations Class of____!”
- What equipment will you need – Microphone, movie screen, video equipment, projector?
Graduation '18
Principal Checklist

One Month Ahead: Next meeting with the coordinator
☐ Check all awards received to make sure they are the right color, style and amount.
☐ Send invitations to families.
☐ Order diplomas from district.
☐ Order caps and gowns.
☐ Finalize the graduation awards ceremony program and send for printing.
☐ Determine where graduates will start procession. Where will they sit once they’ve processed in – on the stage or in the front rows of the venue?
☐ Order non-perishable decorations

One Week before Graduation Awards Ceremony: Next meeting with the coordinator.
☐ Have the person who will be announcing the names of each graduate during diploma distribution clearly state the names of each student to an administrator familiar with them. Pronunciation is important on this special day.
☐ Check bulletin for special designation such as Honors, High Honors, Valedictorian, etc. Note: When a child’s names is missing from a special designation the principal will be sure to hear about it!
☐ Check with florist to ensure flowers are on schedule.
☐ Recheck your attendance capability.
☐ Find or rent an adequate number of chairs.
☐ Check graduation awards ceremony program from printer to make sure all elements are correct.
☐ Principal should do at least one practice walkthrough and convey expectation to students.
☐ Have the guidance office advise you of changes to the line-up as they occur (students passing or failing at the last minute, or changes in GPA that may impact honors status). This can generate some angry phone calls or visits from parents and you want to be prepared.
☐ I always met with any speakers during the days leading up to the event. Meet with students to review their speeches for any inappropriate or ill-advised comments or messages the fewer the surprises the better.
Day before the Graduation Awards Ceremony: Final meeting with the coordinator. This should be a walkthrough:

- Make sure programs, equipment, decorations, list of graduates, diplomas are all organized in one place.
- Decorate.
- Set up electronics and other equipment necessary for slide show or video.
- Make sure there are no cords or obstacles in aisles where processing and recessing graduates could trip.
- Final Walkthrough with graduates. This is a perfect time for the pre-game talk – (Graduates: this is how you are to act, this is what will happen if you choose not behave in the appropriate manner, etc.)
- Have the guidance office again advise you of changes to the line-up as they occur (students passing or failing at the last minute, or changes in GPA that may impact honors status). This can generate some angry phone calls or visits from parents and you want to be prepared.
- Meet with adult speakers to advise on what to do if graduates begin a distracting activity – like the beach ball volley. A good idea is to tell adults to step away from the podium and wait. That usually ended the activity much quicker than if they try to talk over it.
- Watch parent volunteers very closely during setting up. Parent volunteers have been known to bring 200 or so beach balls and taped them to the bottom of the chairs while they were setting the field up. Food for thought!!!