



**WINDHAM SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

NUMBER: SD-10.04 (rev. 3)

DATE: January 23, 2019

PAGE: 1 of 3

**SUPERSEDES: SD-10.04 (rev. 2)
April 1, 2015**

SUPERINTENDENT DIRECTIVE

SUBJECT: GRADUATION CEREMONIES

AUTHORITY: WBP-03.02, "Windham School District Superintendent Responsibilities and Authority"

APPLICABILITY: Windham School District (WSD)

POLICY:

Graduation ceremonies shall be conducted to recognize offenders who have achieved a General Educational Development (GED) certificate within the WSD. Graduation ceremonies for offenders who earn a high school diploma should follow the same guidelines.

PROCEDURES:

I. Eligibility

- A.** Offenders who have achieved a GED certificate within the WSD are eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies, with the following exceptions:
- 1.** Offenders in Administrative Segregation at the time of the graduation ceremony are ineligible.
 - 2.** Offenders classified as Level 5 at the time of the graduation ceremony are ineligible.
 - 3.** Participation of offenders classified as Level 4 will be at the discretion of the warden.

- B. As space permits, other offenders who have satisfactorily completed the requirements of various WSD programs may be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies. Priority shall be given to the other offenders in the order listed below:
1. Career and Technical Education (CTE) completers who also achieved industry certification;
 2. Full-length CTE completers;
 3. Cognitive Intervention completers;
 4. Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) completers; and
 5. Parenting & Family Wellness completers.

II. General Requirements

- A. Each unit that provides GED test administration shall hold at least two ceremonies each academic year but are encouraged to hold up to four ceremonies. The regional administrator may grant an exemption from this requirement for large intake sites, if circumstances warrant.
- B. All ceremonies shall be held on Saturdays.
- C. The regional administrator shall approve all schedules in close coordination with the warden.
- D. Offenders may participate in one ceremony for each type of certificate earned since the last ceremony. The principal shall verify fulfillment of program completion requirements before approving graduation participation.
- E. Campuses are not responsible for tracking offenders who did not participate in graduation ceremonies due to custody or unit transfer. Requests for participation in a later ceremony may be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the principal.
- F. Combining units for ceremonies is permissible if approved by the warden for each unit participating.
- G. Each eligible offender is allowed to have two adult (18 years old and older) guests from his or her approved visitation list. Children (17 years old and younger) may attend without being counted in this number. Additional restrictions may apply. Consult the current Texas Department of Criminal Justice *Offender Visitation Plan* and the warden. Depending on space available, additional guests may be approved at the discretion of the warden. Guests must adhere to the visitor dress requirements described in the *Offender Visitation Plan*.

- H. Specific offenders may be ineligible for contact visits or contact visits with children. Such offenders may participate in the graduation ceremony, but shall not attend the reception where contact visits occur unless approved by the warden.
- I. Use of the unit food service department is encouraged; however, if the unit food service department does not provide refreshments for the graduation ceremony, a reasonable, standard-sized cake, drinks, cups, and napkins may be purchased with the procurement card.
- J. No WSD funds shall be expended for caps and gowns without prior written approval from the Superintendent.
- K. The use of funds for photograph processing is authorized. Photographs of the ceremony and those in attendance may be taken. The procurement card may be used to pay processing charges. It is not permissible to sell photos.
- L. Graduation invitations in the form of a letter are acceptable. Printed programs and invitations may be produced locally.
- M. Every effort should be made to recruit graduation speakers who are community or state leaders.
- N. Ceremonies should be approximately 45 minutes in length followed by at least a 45-minute contact visit. Graduation visits shall be in addition to regular visits and will not count against regular visitation.
- O. Each campus shall post ceremony information on the WSD web page, through the WSD information resource specialist, in a timely manner. Changes in ceremony dates must also be submitted in a timely manner.
- P. Each campus is required to keep statistical information on graduation ceremonies in accordance with the WSD Records Retention Schedule. Such information shall include the date and location of each ceremony, the number of graduates by category, and the name of the guest speaker.
- Q. Campuses may elect to hold classroom completion ceremonies for offenders who satisfactorily complete the requirements of a Career and Technical Education program, CHANGES, Cognitive Intervention, or Parenting & Family Wellness if those programs are not combined with regular GED ceremonies. Participants of classroom ceremonies shall not benefit from additional contact visits, shall not invite families to attend, nor have a full reception. No WSD funds shall be expended for classroom ceremonies, other than the cost of processing for photographs. Classroom ceremonies shall be held during the school week.

Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent
Windham School District