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3 **INSTRUCTION**

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5 Participation in Commencement Exercises  
6 Statement of Policy

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8 A student’s right to participate in a commencement exercise of the graduating class at Big Fork High  
9 School is an honor. As such, participation in this ceremony is reserved for those members of the  
10 graduating class who have completed all state and local requirements for graduation before the date of the  
11 ceremony. Students who complete their requirements after the date of commencement exercises will  
12 receive their diplomas at that time.

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14 Organization and Content of Commencement Exercises

15 The school district will permit students to honor their American Indian heritage through the display of  
16 culturally significant tribal regalia at commencement ceremonies. Any item that promotes drug use,  
17 weapon use, threats of violence, sexual harassment, bullying, or other intimidation, or violates another  
18 district policy, state, or federal law may not be worn during graduation.

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20 The school administration may invite graduating students to participate in high school graduation  
21 exercises according to academic class standing or class officer status. Any student who, because of  
22 academic class standing, is requested to participate may choose to decline the invitation.

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24 The school administrators will review presentations and specific content, and may advise participants  
25 about appropriate language for the audience and occasion. Students selected to participate may choose to  
26 deliver an address, poem, reading, song, musical presentation, or any other pronouncement of their  
27 choosing.

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29 The printed program for a commencement exercise will include the following paragraphs:

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31 *Any presentation by participants of graduation exercises is the private expression*  
32 *of an individual participant and does not necessarily reflect any official position of the*  
33 *District, its Board, administration, or employees, nor does it necessarily indicate the*  
34 *views of any other graduates.*

35 *The Board recognizes that at graduation time and throughout the course of the*  
36 *educational process, there will be instances when religious values, religious practices,*  
37 *and religious persons will have some interaction with the public schools and students.*  
38 *The Board, while not endorsing any religion, recognizes the rights of individuals to have*  
39 *the freedom to express their individual political, social, or religious views.*

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41 Legal Reference:        Art. II, Sec. 5, Montana Constitution - Freedom of religion  
42                                Art. X, Sec. 1(2), Montana Constitution – Educational Goals and Duties  
43                                Art. X, Sec. 7, Montana Constitution - Nondiscrimination in education  
44                                § 20-5-201(3), MCA        Duties and Sanctions  
45                                § 20-1-308, MCA         Religious instruction released time program  
46                                § 20-7-112, MCA         Sectarian publications prohibited and prayer permitted

47 Policy History:

48 First reading on: 10/13/21

49 Second reading/Adopted on: 11/10/21