

<b>Date of Issue</b>	April 2023
<b>Original Date of Issue</b>	November 25, 1998
<b>Subject</b>	<b>SPECIAL EVENTS – INCLUDING GROUNDBREAKING, SCHOOL OPENING, COMMENCEMENT, AND GRADUATION CEREMONIES</b>
<b>References</b>	<a href="#">Policy 2101 – Use of School Board Resources During the Municipal and School Board Election Campaign</a> <a href="#">Policy 2199 – Flag Protocol</a>
<b>Contact</b>	School Services

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## 1. Protocol for Special Events

Administrative Council has established a protocol for schools to follow when planning for special events such as commencement/graduation exercises and the official opening of major additions or new schools. The protocol ensures a consistent system approach to public occasions.

- 1.1 Special events provide schools with an opportunity to benefit from media coverage. The local media appreciate early notification of upcoming special events.
- 1.2 Before scheduling any event, the school should reference the Holy Days and Holidays Calendar, and when possible, avoid the event taking place on a major faith day.
- 1.3 The following events are covered by this Administrative Procedures Memorandum (APM):
  - 1.3.1 groundbreaking ceremonies for new schools or major additions;
  - 1.3.2 official openings of new schools or additions to existing schools;
  - 1.3.3 school closing ceremonies;
  - 1.3.4 school anniversaries; and,
  - 1.3.5 school commencements/graduations.

## 2. Groundbreaking, Opening Ceremonies for New Schools and Major Additions

- 2.1 The date of the opening ceremonies should be set in consultation with the superintendent of education and the Director's Office, and will be determined at least six weeks prior to the opening ceremonies. The school principal shall provide a final copy of the agenda to the superintendent of education a minimum of three weeks prior to the event. The superintendent of education will review the agenda and provide a copy to the Director's Office for final approval. Final approval will be provided to the principal, via the superintendent of education, a minimum of two weeks prior to the event.

- 2.2 The official opening should be held at a time appropriate for the school community. Although the school is welcome to plan a formal platform speaker event, generally, the official opening should be a student-focused, less formal event.
- 2.3 Schools should contact the Communications Department for assistance with planning and promoting the official opening celebration.
- 2.4 The school shall send out printed invitations a minimum of three weeks in advance of the event. Invitations shall be sent to:
- 2.4.1 parents/guardians;
  - 2.4.2 Chairperson of the Board;
  - 2.4.3 all trustees who represent students at the school;
  - 2.4.4 Director of Education;
  - 2.4.5 Superintendent of Education;
  - 2.4.6 Minister of Education (by emailing Minister.EDU@Ontario.ca);
  - 2.4.7 Ministry of Education Representative (through the Regional Office);
  - 2.4.8 school's namesake (if applicable);
  - 2.4.9 facility partners;
  - 2.4.10 architect;
  - 2.4.11 construction company(ies);
  - 2.4.12 board staff responsible for the project; and,
  - 2.4.13 representatives from Beausoleil First Nation and Chippewas of Rama First Nation.
- 2.5 The school may invite:
- 2.5.1 Local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP);
  - 2.5.2 Local Member of Parliament (MP);
  - 2.5.3 Representative(s) of the local municipality(ies).

The above mentioned individuals may be invited to bring greetings at the discretion of the principal; however, during municipal, provincial, or federal elections, those in office may be invited to attend, but will not be invited to speak at school events, with the exception of the school trustee(s), in accordance with Policy 2101 – Use of School Board Resources During the Municipal and School Board Election Campaign.

- 2.6 Invitations to bring greetings are to be extended to the Minister of Education (or their designated representative), the Chairperson of the Board, all trustees who represent students at the school (on behalf of the Board), the Director of Education, the superintendent of education (on behalf of senior administration), and the school council chair (on behalf of the school community).
- 2.7 The provincial and national flags will be on display at all official ceremonies, in accordance with Policy 2199 – Flag Protocol.

**3. School Closing Ceremonies**

- 3.1 The date of closing ceremonies shall be set in consultation with the superintendent of education and the Director's Office and will be determined at least six weeks prior to the event. The school principal shall provide a final copy of the agenda to the superintendent of education a minimum of three weeks prior to the event. The superintendent of education will review the agenda and provide a copy to the Director's Office for final approval. Final approval will be provided to the principal, via the superintendent of education, a minimum of two weeks prior to the event.
- 3.2 The event shall be planned similar to a school official opening (refer to section 1). The format and the role that platform guests will play shall be decided in consultation with the superintendent of education.
- 3.3 Schools should contact the Communications Department for assistance with planning and promoting the closing event.

**4. Anniversaries**

- 4.1 Schools will recognize milestone anniversaries. Anniversary celebrations may be included in previously planned school activities, like an open house or Education Week activities.
- 4.2 The event shall be planned similar to a school official opening (refer to section 1). The format and the role that platform guests will play shall be decided in consultation with the superintendent of education.
- 4.3 Schools should contact the Communications Department for assistance with planning and promoting the anniversary celebration. The trustee(s) shall be consulted by the superintendent regarding their role in the event.

**5. Secondary School Commencements/Graduations**

- 5.1 Invitations to attend and present awards are to be extended to the Chairperson of the Board, all trustees who represent students at the school, the Director of Education, the superintendent of education, and the school council chair.
- 5.2 Invitations to bring greetings are to be extended to all trustee(s) who represent students at the school, the Director of Education, and the superintendent of education.
- 5.3 Schools may choose to invite the local councillor, mayor, MP, or MPP. During municipal, provincial or federal elections, those in office may be invited to attend, but will not be invited to speak at school events, with the exception of the school trustee(s).

- 5.4 The provincial and national flags will be on display at all official ceremonies, in accordance with Policy 2199 – Flag Protocol.
- 5.5 All invitations are to be distributed at least six weeks in advance of the event, but not prior to May 1.

## **6. Elementary School Graduations**

- 6.1 Invitations to attend and present awards are to be extended to the Chairperson of the Board, all trustees who represent students at the school, the Director of Education, the superintendent of education, and the school council chair.
- 6.2 Invitations to bring greetings are to be extended to local trustee(s) who represent students at the school, the Director of Education, and the superintendent of education.
- 6.3 The provincial and national flags will be on display at all official ceremonies, in accordance with Policy 2199 – Flag Protocol.
- 6.4 During the event, a balance should be struck between official presentations and student participation/performance at all official ceremonies.

## **7. Order of Presenters/Speakers**

- 7.1 The order of presenters/speakers for all official ceremonies should be as follows (where applicable):
  - 7.1.1 Principal/Vice-principal
  - 7.1.2 Minister of Education (or a designated representative if attending on behalf of the Minister)
  - 7.1.3 Chairperson of the Board
  - 7.1.4 Trustees who represent students at the school
  - 7.1.5 Director of Education
  - 7.1.6 Superintendent of Education
  - 7.1.7 School Council Chair
  - 7.1.8 Representatives from Beausoleil First Nation and Chippewas of Rama First Nation (where applicable)
  - 7.1.9 Local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP)
  - 7.1.10 Local Member of Parliament (MP)
  - 7.1.11 Municipal Representative

Note: A superintendent may attend on behalf of the Director of Education or, if both are attending, the two may determine between them who will speak.

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***Issued under the authority of the Director of Education***