

TITLE: Middle School Culmination Activities and Certificate of Completion

NUMBER: BUL-3815.4

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POLICY: This bulletin outlines the standardized criteria for issuing a Middle School Certificate of Completion and for participation in the Middle School Culmination Activity. This policy will be effective for Middle Schools students culminating in Spring of 2024 and will continue for all Middle School students thereafter.

MAJOR CHANGES: This version replaces BUL-3815.3, dated May 25, 2016. Guidelines for additional school-site criteria to participate in the culmination ceremony have been added. The deadlines for submission of the request to add additional school-site criteria and the verification of communication with parents have been changed.

GUIDELINES: **I. CRITERIA FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION AND PARTICIPATION IN CULMINATION ACTIVITY**

A. Eligibility for the Certificate of Completion

The Certificate of Completion and participation in the culmination activity is determined by receiving a mark of “D” or better in eighth grade classes. All subject areas will be considered for eligibility. Students must earn a total of 50 credits during their eighth-grade year to be eligible for a Certificate of Completion.

Grade 8:

- Students earn five credits for passing each semester course with a mark of “D” or better.

ROUTING
Regional
Superintendents
Regional Directors
Regional Counseling
Coordinators
Middle School
Principals
Middle School
Assistant Principals
& Coordinators
Middle School
Teachers
Middle School
Counselors

Eighth Grade Course of Study

Fall 8 th Grade		Spring 8 th Grade	
Courses	Credits	Courses	Credits
English 8A	5	English 8B	5
CC Math 8A/ ACC CC Alg 1	5	CC Math 8B/ ACC CC Alg 1	5
US Hist G&C A	5	US Hist G&C B	5
Science-8A	5	Science 8B	5
Int PE A	5	Int PE B	5
Elective/ ELD	5	Elective/ELD	5
Credits Possible	30	Credits Possible	30

If a student transfers into an LAUSD middle school or span school for the first time in the second semester of eighth grade, the principal or designee will evaluate student culmination eligibility based on the possible credits attempted and earned from the date of entry into the school.

Eligibility for the certificate of completion is determined solely by the number of credits that the student completes during their eighth grade year. Failure by a middle school student to meet school behavior or attendance expectations is not a valid reason to withhold a certificate of completion.

- If a student does not meet school behavior expectations, the principal may request a conference with a student and their parents/guardians.
- If it is determined that the student may not participate in the ceremony, the certificate will be issued to the student on a determined day after the culmination ceremony.

B. Additional Criteria for Participation in the Culmination Ceremony

Schools may set additional school-site criteria, including behavior, work habits and attendance, for participation in the culmination activity as long as they inform all students and parents/guardians during their sixth and/or seventh grade year. Schools that choose to set their own criteria must complete and submit Attachment D to their Regional Director and Superintendent for approval by the fifth week of the fall semester. Schools that set their own criteria must also edit Attachment A, Parent Letter Regarding Middle School Culmination and Certificate of Completion Policy. School-site criteria for participation in the culmination ceremony must abide by the following guidelines:

- Expectations are positively stated and explicitly defined, taught, reinforced, monitored, and corrected utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior and Social Emotional Well Being using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices (PBIS/RP).
- Students' progress should be monitored regularly, while providing various opportunities and support to meet appropriate expectations as needed.
- Students should be offered the opportunity to earn back participation through an agreed upon plan.

Note: Schools implementing additional criteria for participation should ensure that the additional criteria are not applied in a discriminatory manner and consider the unique needs of students, including students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, and/or students with disabilities. If a student with an IEP or Section 504 Plan, history, known or perceived disability, fails to meet additional criteria that the school has added, the student's case carrier must be consulted prior to the student, or their families being notified of possible non participation in culmination activities.

II. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The school's culmination policy shall be communicated to students and parents/guardians on a yearly basis at the beginning of the school year. Information shall also be available at a minimum of two additional times at school events and meetings such as grade level meetings, Back-To-School night and Open House.

For verification purposes, students and parents/guardians shall be informed annually of the policy during registration, using the parent letters (Attachments A and B) and the policy should be emphasized during each IGP Conference. Counselors should use the school message on the IGP signature page to document the additional requirements were explained to the student and parent.

Verification of annual parent communication shall be completed annually by the principal or designee. The principal shall submit the completed verification form (Attachment F) to their Regional Director no later than the 10th week of the fall semester annually.

III. SUPPORT FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF REQUIREMENTS

In order to provide middle school students with the opportunity to meet the requirements for a certificate of completion and to participate in the culmination activity, schools need to establish a support system for their students. Some options include:

- A. Identify students in need of support early and enroll them in appropriate intervention courses
- B. Provide academic intervention programs during the school day
- C. Institute an attendance recovery program
- D. Celebrate and reinforce student achievement
- E. Provide counseling lessons to students addressing topics to promote success such as study skills, time management and classroom behavior
- F. Ensure frequent and consistent school to home communication
- G. Initiate clubs and/or activities that promote a college-going culture
- H. Establish an adult mentoring program for students in need of support

IV. APPEAL PROCESS

If a student does not meet the minimum culmination activity or certificate of completion requirements, the student or parent/guardian may appeal by

following the procedures listed below. Considerations may include extenuating circumstances that affect attendance and/or academic achievement or demonstrating significant improvement in the eighth grade.

A. School-site Level

1. A Culmination Appeals Committee shall be convened at the school to review appeals. At a minimum, the committee must include a counselor, a school-site administrator and a teacher.
2. A student or parent/guardian must submit a written request to the Appeals Committee stating why the student did not meet the requirements for the certificate or for participating in the culmination activity.
3. The committee response shall be provided in writing and by phone within two school days following the appeal.
4. If the parent/guardian does not agree with the Committee's decision, they may appeal to the school site principal within three days by phone or in writing.
5. A decision by the principal will be made within three school days following the appeal.

B. Region Level

1. If the parent/guardian does not agree with the school's decision, they may appeal to the Region within three school days of receiving the school sites appeal decision.
2. The Region decision is final and will be provided by phone and in writing within one school day following the appeal.

V. CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

The certificate of completion should include the district seal, school name, student name, and date of culmination. A sample certificate of completion is included on Attachment D. Certificates for students who identify as transgender, intersex or non-binary are to reflect the name that corresponds with their gender identity. Requests must be made in accordance to District policy outlined in BUL-5703.4, Name and/or Gender of Pupils for Purposes of School Records, dated August 30, 2021. A legal name change is not required.

VI. CULMINATION CEREMONY

The culmination ceremony is intended to recognize and celebrate the students’ successful completion of middle school. It is not a commencement ceremony in which diplomas are conferred. The use of caps and gowns is reserved for high school graduation and should not be included in middle school culmination ceremonies.

1. Ceremony Conduct Policy

Every middle school should develop a culmination ceremony conduct policy that includes and clearly defines the following:

- dress standards
- attendance at rehearsals
- expected behavior
- and the consequences of failing to adhere to these policies.

This policy shall be communicated in writing to both students and parents on a yearly basis at the beginning of the fall semester.

2. Culmination Committee

Every middle school should establish a broad-based culmination committee to advise the principal on all matters relating to culmination activities, the culmination ceremony, and other relevant matters. This committee should include, but not be limited to the following:

• Principal or designee	• Class Representative
• Culmination Coordinator	• Parent(s) of Grade 8 Student
• Plant Manager	• School Counselor(s)
• Student Council or Leadership Advisor	

3. Rehearsals

The number and length of rehearsals should be carefully reviewed. For the least disruption to the academic program, consideration should be given to reducing the number of rehearsals to the minimum required for an orderly process.

4. Day and Time of Culmination Ceremony

Middle School culmination ceremonies are traditionally held during the last three days of the school year. The day and time should be coordinated with neighboring schools in order to allow

parents to attend elementary, middle and senior high school ceremonies as necessary. Approval to hold the culmination ceremony prior to the last three days of the school year must be obtained from the Region Superintendent.

5. Attendance Policy

If culmination ceremonies are held prior to the last day of school, in accordance with the District's attendance policy, all students must be expected to attend school through the last instructional day of the school year. Administrators should communicate this expectation in writing to staff, students, parents and teachers. Teachers should be prepared to teach as on any other instructional day.

6. Individual Recognition

The primary purpose of the culmination ceremony is to honor the culminating class as a whole. The recognition of individual awardees or honorees should be kept to an absolute minimum. It is recommended that such individual honors or awards be bestowed at a separate awards ceremony.

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Division of Instruction.

RELATED RESOURCES: [BUL-138307, Graduation and Culmination Ceremony Policies and Procedures](#), dated April 10, 2023

[BUL-133307, Discipline Foundation Policy: Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior and Social Emotional Well-Being using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices \(PBIS/RP\)](#), dated November 21, 2022

[BUL-5703.4, Name and/or Gender of Pupils for Purposes of School Records](#), dated August 30, 2021

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - Parent Letter Regarding Middle School Culmination and Certificate of Completion Policy
- Attachment B - Parent Letter Regarding Middle School Culmination and Certificate of Completion Policy (Spanish)
- Attachment C - Considerations for Setting Additional School-Site Criteria
- Attachment D - Sample Certificate of Completion

Attachment E - Request to Implement Additional School-Site Criteria for Participation in the Culmination Ceremony

Attachment F - Verification of Communication with Parents About the Middle School Culmination Requirements

ASSISTANCE: For assistance or further information please contact School Counseling Services at (213) 241-7510 or your Regional Counseling Coordinator, <https://lausd.org/page/7778>

**PARENT LETTER REGARDING MIDDLE SCHOOL CULMINATION
AND CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION POLICY**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The LAUSD *Middle School Culmination Activity and Certificate of Completion* policy defines the criteria for earning a Middle School Certificate of Completion and participating in the Culmination Ceremony. To participate in the culmination ceremony, eighth grade students must meet all LAUSD requirements to earn a Certificate of Completion. Students will be evaluated based on the marks and credits earned in the eighth grade. Students will earn five credits for passing each semester course with a ‘D’ or better. Grades from all subject areas will be used to determine credits earned in eighth grade.

- ▲ **Students must earn 50 credits during eighth grade to be eligible for the Certificate of Completion.**

Additionally, _____ Middle School requires all students to meet the following criteria to participate in the culmination ceremony.

- ▲ **[Insert additional school-site criteria]**

Sample Criteria:

- ▲ **Earn a minimum of 10 Es or Ss in Work Habits and Cooperation on the final report card**
- ▲ **Maintain 96% attendance throughout the eighth grade year**

Parents of students not meeting the academic, behavior and/or attendance requirements will be notified in a timely manner of ineligibility to participate in the culmination ceremony. Parents wishing to appeal must contact _____, of the appeal committee.

Students may also be required to participate in one or more of the following intervention and support programs for assistance with meeting the expectations above.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| a) ___ Parent Conference | d) ___ Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT) |
| b) ___ Daily Attendance Check | e) ___ After School Tutoring |
| c) ___ Weekly Progress Reports | f) ___ Coping Skills Session(s) with PSW |

Students and parents/guardians will discuss this policy during the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) conference. If you have questions about the Culmination Activity and Certificate of Completion policy, contact your child’s counselor _____ at _____. Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understand these requirements.

Student Name:	Signature:	Date:
Parent Name:	Signature:	Date:
Administrator/Designee:	Signature:	Date:

CARTA PARA LOS PADRES DE LA POLÍTICA SOBRE LA CULMINACIÓN Y EL CERTIFICADO DE FINALIZACIÓN DE LA ESCUELA SECUNDARIA

Estimados Padres / Tutores:

La política sobre la actividad de culminación y el certificado de finalización de la escuela secundaria del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Los Ángeles (LAUSD) define los criterios para obtener un certificado de finalización de la escuela secundaria y participar en la ceremonia de culminación. Los estudiantes que cursan el octavo grado deben cumplir con todos los requisitos del LAUSD para obtener un certificado de finalización y participar en la ceremonia de culminación. Los estudiantes serán evaluados en base a las calificaciones y créditos obtenidos en el transcurso del octavo grado. Los estudiantes obtendrán 5 créditos al pasar cada clase semestralmente con una calificación de 'D' o mejor. Las calificaciones de todas las materias se utilizarán para determinar el número de créditos obtenidos durante el octavo grado.

- ▲ **Los estudiantes deben obtener 50 créditos durante el transcurso del octavo grado para ser elegibles para recibir el certificado de finalización.**

Además, la Escuela Secundaria _____ requiere que todos los estudiantes cumplan con los siguientes criterios para participar en la ceremonia de culminación.

- ▲ **[Insertar criterios adicionales del plantel escolar]**
Ejemplos de los Criterios:
- ▲ **Obtener un mínimo de 10 calificaciones de “E” o “S” en hábitos de trabajo y cooperación en la boleta de calificaciones final.**
- ▲ **Mantener un 96% de asistencia escolar durante todo el transcurso del octavo grado.**

Se les notificará a los padres de manera oportuna sobre la inelegibilidad de los estudiantes que no cumplan con los requisitos académicos, de comportamiento y/o de asistencia para participar en la ceremonia de culminación. Los padres que deseen apelar deben comunicarse con _____, del comité de apelación.

También se puede requerir que los estudiantes participen en uno o más de los siguientes programas de intervención y apoyo para ayudarlos a cumplir con las expectativas anteriores.

- | | |
|--|---|
| d) ___ Conferencia con los padres | d) ___ Equipo de Apoyo y Progreso Estudiantil (SSPT) |
| e) ___ Verificación de asistencia diaria | e) ___ Clases de tutoría después horas regulares de clase |
| f) ___ Informes de progreso semanales | f) ___ Sesión(es) de habilidades de afrontamiento con el trabajador social psiquiátrico (PSW) |

Los estudiantes y los padres/tutores hablarán sobre esta política durante la conferencia sobre el Plan de Graduación Individual (IGP). Si tiene preguntas de la política sobre la actividad de culminación y el certificado de finalización, comuníquese con el consejero de su hijo / hija _____ al _____. Firmar a continuación para indicar que ha leído y entendido estos requisitos.

Nombre del estudiante:	Firma:	Fecha:
Nombre de los padres:	Firma:	Fecha:
Administrador/Designado:	Firma:	Fecha:

Considerations for Setting Additional School Site Criteria

This section includes guidance for schools that set additional school-site criteria, including behavior, work habits, and attendance, for participation in culmination activities.

1. Guidance should be written in affirming language that implements Restorative practices as an alternative to traditional school discipline.
2. Expectations are positively stated and explicitly defined, taught, reinforced, monitored, and corrected utilizing a Multi- Tiered System of Support for Behavior and Social Emotional Well Being using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices (PBIS/RP)
3. Students' progress should be monitored regularly, with various opportunities and support to meet appropriate expectations as needed.
4. School support staff must provide opportunities for students' to correct behaviors and students' must be informed of the school support staff who can support them throughout the school year to ensure they are meeting the expectations
5. Students should be offered the opportunity to earn back participation through an agreed upon plan.

Behavior

All students must be taught and supported in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate, engage in learning, and demonstrate responsibility for themselves and respect for others. This is accomplished through the implementation of a multi-tiered system of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Restorative Practices (PBIS/RP), which prioritizes wellness and nurtures the social-emotional development of the whole child, whole classroom, whole school, and whole community. ([Bul 133307](#))

Sample Contract Language:

"I will be safe, respectful and responsible, following the established school behavior expectations."

"Aim for E's and S's in Work Habits and Cooperation"

PBIS/RP Supports:

Tier 1 Universal Prevention Supports and Strategies include but are not limited to:

- Positive behavioral expectations explicitly defined, taught, reinforced, monitored, and corrected
- Community building circles
- Restorative language (i.e., affective statements and restorative questions)
- Check-ins
- 4:1 (4 positive interactions to 1 corrective interaction)

- Social-emotional learning incorporated into lessons
- Fostering and promoting healthy affirming relationships

Tier 2 Selected Supports and Strategies include but are not limited to:

- Restorative conferences
- Repairing the harm circles
- Targeted small group or individual interventions and supports
- Targeted social-emotional learning
- Self-monitoring daily progress report

Tier 3 Intensive Supports and Strategies include but are not limited to:

- Individual supports
- Re-entry circles
- Interventions based on the function(s) (reason) of the behavior
- Interim Behavior Response Plan (IBRP)
- Multi-disciplinary team support
- Intensive social-emotional learning

Attendance Expectations

Contracts that include attendance expectations should only include unexcused absences as reasons for not participating in activities.

Sample contract language:

"Attend all classes except when a valid excuse is provided. All valid excuses should be confirmed by parent/guardian oral or written verification."

"Establish healthy attendance habits, only miss school when necessary with an excused absence. All excused absences should be confirmed by parent/guardian oral or written verification."

"Aim for 96% attendance, and only miss school when there is a valid excuse. All valid excuses should be confirmed by parent/guardian oral or written verification."

Supports:

Providing Support Services and Interventions

Support services and interventions are to be provided for students with excessive absences to help them get back on track. The support services and interventions may include, but are not limited to, any or all of the following:

- A conference between school personnel, the pupil's parents/guardians/caregivers, and the pupil.

- Recognizing pupils who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance.
- Referral to a school nurse, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, and other pupil support personnel for case management and counseling.
- Identifying barriers to attendance that may require schoolwide strategies instead of case management in schools with significantly higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Tier 1 Universal Supports:

Clear, concise and consistent communication about attendance and expectations

Routines and celebrations related to attendance and engagement

- Personalized positive communication to families when students are absent
- Recognition of good and improved attendance
- Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood
- Connection to a caring adult in the school
- Every child and their family encouraged to develop a success plan that includes attention to attendance

Tier 2 Targeted Intervention:

- Common community and school barriers identified and addressed
- Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- Home visits
- Mentoring:
 - Adult Connections
 - Peer Connections
- Intensive tutoring
- Check-In/Check-Out
- Expanded learning opportunities
- Small group interventions and supports for students
- Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension
- School Attendance Review Team (SART) Meetings

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention:

- Tailored school/community based referrals
- Case management
- Housing stability supports
- School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
- Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation

Sample Certificate of Completion

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
_____ MIDDLE SCHOOL

Certificate of Completion

This certificate is awarded to

Who has satisfactorily completed the Course of Study
for grade eight as prescribed by the
Los Angeles Unified School District
This __ of June, two thousand ____



Principal

Counselor

**Request to Implement Additional School-Site Criteria for Participation in the
Culmination Ceremony**

Name of School	Effective with culminating class of:
Description of Additional School-Site Criteria:	
<i>Include attachments as needed</i>	

Principal Signature	Date	E-mail Address
Approved by: Region Director	Date	E-mail Address
Approved by: Region Superintendent	Date	E-mail Address

Send this completed form annually to your Regional Director no later than the 5th week of the fall semester.

**VERIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS
 ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CULMINATION REQUIREMENTS**

School Name:			
	6th graders	7th graders	8th graders
Number of Parent/Guardian Letters Sent			
Percent of Parent/Guardian Letters Returned			
Ways these requirements were communicated to students and parents/guardians			

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Send this completed form annually to your Regional Director no later than the 10th week of the fall semester.