

Eagle River Christian Homeschool Association
2009–2010 Graduation Policies & Guidelines

Purpose

Each spring, ERCHA hosts a graduation ceremony for its member families' graduating seniors. The purpose is to honor the graduates and their parents for this milestone accomplishment. The ceremony is intended to recognize the achievements of these students and also to inspire and encourage homeschool families, their extended family, and friends.

The graduation ceremony is not an endorsement of any one educational program or a validation of individual success in the completion of any courses of study. Rather, ERCHA provides the opportunity for parents to present diplomas to their graduates in a meaningful Christian venue. The intention is to let our light so shine before men that they might see our good works (home education is a good work!) and glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

ERCHA Graduations are to be guided by Christian principles and the components of the ceremony should be those that represent Christian values. Recognizing that the planning will be done by several families with different ideas, gifts, talents and resources, all involved are encouraged to work together and “Be kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” (Romans 12:10).

Registration

To participate in the ERCHA graduation, download a *Graduation Registration Form* from the ERCHA website – www.ercha.com/graduation.php - and return it to any Board Member. Forms are also available at our monthly meetings or on the ERCHA Member Yahoo Group in the Files section. Families of participating seniors must be ERCHA members. The first planning meeting will be held in early December. Registrations are due before that meeting. After that date, decisions about accepting registrations will be made by the Graduation Coordinator. Should it be necessary for a student to withdraw from participating, please let the Coordinator know as early as possible. Many decisions are made based on the total number of graduates and since expenses are shared, money contributed may not be able to be refunded.

Planning

The planning process will be a collaborative effort between the graduates, their parents and the ERCHA Board. Graduates are encouraged to attend all planning meetings and required to attend the rehearsals. Board Advisors, whose child(ren) have participated in the past, are also available for consultation.

A Graduation Coordinator will be selected by the graduates' parents (a.k.a. Parent Team) by consensus and may be one of the graduate's parents or an ERCHA member who is willing to serve. If you wish to serve as the Graduation Coordinator, please contact the ERCHA Chairman. You will be asked to submit a brief summary as to why you would like this position. Your statement will be sent to all registered graduating families before the first meeting so that an informed vote can be made at the first planning meeting.

A *Graduation Planning Guide* is available to assist parents and graduates in the planning. As a matter of policy, there are certain elements of the graduation that are standard:

1. Prior to extending invitations to speak, keynote speakers are to be confirmed by the Board.
2. Traditional caps and gowns are worn over dress clothes with the choice of gown and tassel color to be determined by the graduating group.
3. Out of consideration for the audience, the ceremony should be planned for a length of 90 minutes or less.
4. The Parent Team reviews all student speeches. They may also request to preview any musical or other presentations.

5. If planning a slide show presentation as part of the ceremony, the goal is to keep it under 15 minutes. The Parent Team is in charge of confirming accompanying music selections for the ceremony with any lyrics provided to them in writing.
6. Please include the following statement in the graduation program for clarification purposes: Eagle River Christian Homeschool Association (ERCHA) is a local homeschool support group offering encouragement, advice and fellowship for families who have made the decision to educate their children at home.

ERCHA's purpose in hosting this graduation ceremony is to honor the graduates and their parents as well as to inspire and encourage homeschool families and friends by providing a meaningful opportunity for parents to present diplomas to their graduates. This event is not an endorsement of any one educational program or a validation of individual success in the completion of any courses of study.

Calendar

The Coordinator will develop a calendar with the graduates and their parents that lists meetings, deadlines and rehearsals. Graduates are asked to make every effort to meet deadlines so others are not held up in the completion of their tasks.

A draft program, transcripts of student speeches and a DVD of the slide show should be submitted to the Board at least three weeks prior to the ceremony.

Finances

Expenses associated with graduation are financed primarily by the participating families. ERCHA will contribute a portion each year to help offset these costs. A treasurer should be selected from among the Parent Team in order to collect all contributions and to keep records of receipts and reimbursements. Recordkeeping
A Secretary should be chosen from among the Parent Team to take minutes of each graduation meeting and submit for correction/approval to families and ERCHA Chairman. These notes will also be helpful and beneficial to future Planning Teams.

Deposit

A deposit of \$50 is requested and due in January unless otherwise decided by the graduation participants.