



Pinellas Parent Educators Association

STRONG ROOTS. BEAUTIFUL LEAVES

Class of 2027

Graduation Handbook

"Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."
Colossians 2:7

Questions? We're Here to Help

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Dear Senior Families,

Welcome to one of the most exciting and memorable seasons of your homeschool journey!

Reaching your senior year is a remarkable accomplishment. It represents years of dedication, perseverance, growth, and countless moments of learning together. As parents, you have faithfully invested your time, energy, and love into your child's education. As students, you have worked diligently to reach this important milestone. We celebrate this achievement with you.

At PPEA, we believe graduation is much more than a ceremony—it is the culmination of a family's homeschool journey and the beginning of an exciting new chapter. Whether your graduate is pursuing college, a trade, military service, missions, the workforce, or another calling, we pray they will step confidently into God's plan for their future.

Our desire is to make this senior year one your family will always treasure. Throughout the year, graduates will have opportunities to build friendships, create lasting memories, and celebrate together through special events and traditions. From senior gatherings and the graduation brunch to rehearsal, the commencement ceremony, and cherished senior traditions, we hope each experience strengthens the bonds within our graduating class and reminds our students that they are part of a supportive Christian community.

This handbook has been created to guide you through every step of the year. Inside you will find important deadlines, graduation requirements, event information, photography details, ceremony expectations, and helpful resources. We encourage you to keep this handbook handy and refer to it often throughout the year.

We also invite every family to play an active role in making this a meaningful experience for all of our graduates. Your involvement, encouragement, and willingness to serve help create the welcoming, family-centered community that makes PPEA graduation so special.

As we begin this journey together, we pray that God will continue to guide your graduate, grant wisdom for every decision ahead, and remind each student that their identity and purpose are found in Christ.

Thank you for allowing PPEA to celebrate this incredible milestone with your family. We look forward to walking alongside you throughout this unforgettable senior year and celebrating the Class of 2027 on graduation day.

With gratitude and blessings,

Neisha and Joanne

Welcome to the Senior Year

This handbook is your guide through every step of the senior year as we celebrate this incredible milestone together.

Our Graduation Vision

Graduation is more than a ceremony—it is the celebration of a family's homeschool journey. Our vision is to create a Christ-centered senior experience filled with meaningful traditions, joyful celebrations, lasting friendships, and memories your family will cherish.

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1. Graduation Overview

Date: Saturday, May 15, 2027

Time: 10:00 AM

Location

Starkey Road Baptist Church
8800 Starkey Road
Seminole, FL 33777

2. Important Dates

Date	Event
November 30, 2026	Early Registration Ends
February 13, 2027	Graduation Registration Deadline
February 13, 2027	Ceremony Participation Requests Due
February 28, 2027	Senior Biography, Photos & Parent Charge Due
April 10, 2027	Graduation Brunch, Class Photo & Cap/Gown Distribution
May 14, 2027	Mandatory Graduation Rehearsal
May 15, 2027	Graduation Ceremony

3. Graduation Registration

Graduation registration is complete once the Graduation Registration Form and applicable Graduation Fee have been received.

Following registration, each graduate must also submit the required graduation materials by the published deadlines:

- ☐ Senior Biography
- ☐ Parent Charge
- ☐ Senior Thank You
- ☐ Required Photos

Failure to meet published deadlines may result in information, photos, or personalized elements being omitted from the graduation program or ceremony. Failure to complete essential participation requirements or attend mandatory events may affect a student's ability to participate in commencement

4. Graduation Fees

Early Registration (through November 30, 2026) — \$275

Regular Registration (December 1, 2026–February 13, 2027) — \$300

Late Registration — \$335, if approved

Requests received after February 13 may be considered on a limited, case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. Families requesting late participation must email admin@myppea.com to determine whether accommodations can still be made.

5. Your Graduation Fee Includes

- Official PPEA Cap, Gown & Tassel
 - Graduation Handbook
 - Planned Senior Class Events
 - Graduation Brunch
 - Graduation Rehearsal Dinner
 - Optional Reserved Senior Display Table Space
 - Reserved Family Seating
 - Full-Color Graduation Keepsake Program
 - Professional Ceremony Photography Package
 - Ceremony Venue Rental and Technical Crew
 - Graduation Livestream & Shareable Guest Link
 - Downloadable Ceremony Recording
 - PPEA Commencement Certificate of Participation
-

6. Senior Year Activities

One of the best parts of graduation is celebrating together throughout the year.

Each graduating family is asked to coordinate at least one senior activity or gathering. These events help build friendships and create lasting memories.

Ideas include:

- Senior Sunrise / Sunset
- Christmas Party
- Game Night
- White Elephant Exchange
- Ornament Exchange
- Escape Room
- Bowling
- Rock Climbing
- Go-Karts
- Airsoft
- Beach Day
- Community Service Event
- Cap It Off (Cap Decorating)
- Senior Board Decorating

7. Graduation Participation

Students who wish to participate during the graduation ceremony should notify the Graduation Committee by **February 13, 2027**.

Opportunities include:

- Opening Prayer
 - Singing of the National Anthem
 - Signing the National Anthem ASL
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Senior Speech
-

8. Required Student Submissions

Due by **February 28, 2027**

Samples of the biography, parent charge and thank you can be found on the PPEA website or the appendix of this handbook.

Senior Biography

Maximum 150 words

Your senior biography is a brief overview of your student's homeschool journey, accomplishments, interests, and future plans. It will be included in commencement materials and may be read or referenced during the ceremony.

Can Include:

- Birth information
- Accomplishments / Academic Achievements
- Extracurricular Activities / Volunteer service / Hobbies / Special Interests
- Future Educational Plans or Career Goals
- Expressions of Gratitude
- Favorite Bible verse - verse not included in word

Parent Charge

Maximum 150 words

A Parent Charge is a special message written by a parent or guardian to their graduating senior. This meaningful message will be read aloud by our speaker during the diploma and tassel presentation at the commencement ceremony.

Your Parent Charge may include:

- A favorite Bible verse or passage
- A prayer, blessing, or words of encouragement for your senior
- Reflections on your student's journey and accomplishments
- Inspirational, heartfelt, or even humorous memories and advice

Graduate Thank You - Written Message Due February 28, 2027

Maximum 75 words

One of the most meaningful moments of the commencement ceremony is the **Graduate Thank You**. Each graduate will prepare a personal message of appreciation of 75 words or fewer. The written message must be submitted by February 28. Graduates will record their message at the Graduation Brunch on April 10 for presentation during the commencement ceremony. Your recorded message should be **75 words or fewer**.

This message should come from **your heart** and reflect the graduates' own words. Think about the love, encouragement, sacrifices, guidance, and support your parents or guardians have given you throughout your homeschool journey.

Please **do not ask your parents to proofread your message or email it for you**—we want this to be a heartfelt surprise they will hear for the first time during the ceremony.

Senior Picture Submission (5 Photos Required)

The senior slideshow is one of the most meaningful parts of the commencement ceremony. These photos allow family and friends to watch each graduate's journey from infancy to graduation.

Please submit **five (5) high-quality digital photos** in the following order:

1. **Baby Photo** (Infant or toddler)
2. **Growing Up Photo #1** (Early childhood)
3. **Growing Up Photo #2** (Elementary or middle school years)
4. **Growing Up Photo #3** (Later middle school or high school)
5. **Senior Portrait** (Current senior photo)

Photo Guidelines

- Submit **high-resolution digital images** whenever possible. Original files are preferred.
- Photos should be **clear, well-lit, and in focus**.
- Avoid screenshots, photos of printed photographs, heavily filtered images, or images with text or graphics added.
- Please choose photos that are appropriate for a family-friendly graduation ceremony. While that adorable naked baby picture may be a treasured family memory, please select a photo where your graduate is appropriately clothed.
- Whenever possible, choose photos that prominently feature **only the graduate**. If others appear in the image, the graduate should remain the clear focus.

- Both color and black-and-white photos are welcome.

Tips for the Best Slideshow

- Select photos that highlight different stages of your graduate's life.
- Include a variety of smiles, hobbies, interests, or milestones that reflect your graduate's personality.
- If your senior portrait is professionally taken, submit the original high-resolution file whenever available.

Please label your files in the following format:

- LastName_FirstName_1_Baby
 - LastName_FirstName_2_GrowingUp
 - LastName_FirstName_3_GrowingUp
 - LastName_FirstName_4_GrowingUp
 - LastName_FirstName_5_Senior
-

9. Professional Photography & Ceremony Video

Professional photography is included with every graduate's registration, allowing families to relax and fully enjoy the commencement ceremony while every special moment is professionally captured.

Your graduate's gallery will include:

- Candid photos before the ceremony
- Processional photos
- Diploma presentation
- Family photo on stage
- Post-ceremony candid photos
- Class group photo

Approximately two weeks after graduation, families will receive:

- High-resolution digital photo gallery
- Unlimited downloads
- Printing rights
- Downloadable video of the commencement ceremony

Guest Photography Guidelines

To ensure every family has an enjoyable viewing experience and our photographer can capture each graduate without interruption:

- Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony.
- Guests should remain seated and refrain from standing in aisles to take photos.

- Please do not block the view of other guests or interfere with the professional photographer.

Thank you for helping us create a respectful, memorable ceremony for every graduate and their family.

10. Class of 2027 Communication Groups

Throughout your senior year, we encourage all graduates and their parents to stay connected through our two Class of 2027 communication groups:

Class of 2027 Facebook Group

Our private Facebook group is a fun place to connect with classmates, share photos from senior events, celebrate milestones, ask questions, and build friendships throughout the year.

Use the QR code below to join the PPEA Class of 2027 Facebook Group



PPEA Class of 2027 Senior Hub (PPEA Website)

The Senior Hub is our private member area on the PPEA website and serves as the official source for graduation information. Here you'll find important announcements, deadlines, downloadable forms, graduation resources, event details, and other information related to the commencement ceremony.

We encourage every senior to participate in as many class and high school events as possible. The friendships and memories you build throughout the year will make your graduation experience even more meaningful. Parents are also encouraged to join both groups to stay informed and connected throughout the year.

Please note that not every event shared in the Facebook group is an official PPEA event. Official PPEA-sponsored events will always be posted on the PPEA website with a registration or sign-up page.

As you use these groups, please be respectful, encouraging, and inclusive. If you are planning a gathering that is open to the entire graduating class, feel free to share it in the Facebook group. If you are organizing a small get-together with a few friends, we encourage you to coordinate those plans through private messages or personal social media pages.

To access the PPEA Class of 2027 Senior Hub, login to the member portal at www.myppea.com and search groups.

11. Graduation Shirts

Commemorative PPEA Class of 2027 shirts will be available for purchase.

A link to order will be emailed once the design has been finalized.

12. Reserved Family Seating

Each graduate receives **six (6) reserved seats** for family members.

Reserved seating is intended for:

- Parents
- Siblings
- Grandparents

Parents should plan to sit on an aisle, as they will be invited to join their graduate on stage during the **Presentation of the Diploma** and **Turning of the Tassel**. Siblings and grandparents will remain seated while parents participate in this special portion of the ceremony.

Need More Than Six Seats?

We are pleased to offer additional open seating throughout the auditorium. Families who require more than the six reserved seats are welcome to invite additional guests.

Additional seating is available on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Guests wishing to sit together are encouraged to arrive early to select seats in the open seating sections before the ceremony begins.

Our venue offers ample seating, and we look forward to celebrating this special day with all of your family and friends!

13. Graduate Seating & Processional Requests

Graduates will be assigned seating for the commencement ceremony and rehearsal. If your graduate would like to sit next to a particular graduate or walk in the processional with a friend, please submit your request to PPEA no later than the Graduation Brunch on April 10, 2027.

While we cannot guarantee every request, we will do our best to accommodate reasonable requests when creating the seating chart and processional lineup.

14. Senior Display Table Space (Optional-Available by request only)

Families who wish to create a special display honoring their graduate may reserve a shared **Senior Display Table Space**. Set up in the multipurpose room for viewing after the commencement ceremony, this optional display provides an opportunity to celebrate your graduate's journey and share memories with family, friends, and fellow graduates attending the commencement ceremony. If you would like to share a table with another graduate, please indicate this when requesting table space. We will do our best to accommodate your request.

Your display is a reflection of your graduate's unique story and can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. It may include a **memory board, trifold display, framed photos, scrapbook, memorabilia, keepsakes, or a combination of these items**. There is no required format—families are encouraged to create a display that best represents their graduate.

Ideas for your display include:

- Baby, childhood, and senior photos
- School memories and milestones
- Awards, achievements, and certifications
- Extracurricular activities, sports, clubs, and volunteer experiences
- Hobbies, interests, and talents
- A favorite Bible verse, inspirational quote, or life motto
- College, career, military, or future plans (optional)
- Photos with family and friends

Display Guidelines

- Each graduate will be provided approximately **3 feet of table space**.
- Tables are covered with a black tablecloth and are typically shared with one other graduate.
- Families may bring an additional decorative table covering if desired.
- Please keep all items within your assigned space.
- Clearly display your graduate's name.
- Candy, a guest book, and a card basket are welcome.
- Electrical outlets are limited. If your display requires power, please bring an extension cord.
- Please review all photos and wording to ensure they are appropriate for a family audience and reflective of the Christian values of our commencement ceremony. Nude baby photos are not permitted.

15. Graduate Cap, Gown and Dress Code

To ensure a polished and unified appearance, all graduates participating in the PPEA Commencement Ceremony are required to wear the official PPEA cap, gown, and tassel provided through the PPEA Graduation Program. Personal caps, gowns, or tassels may not be substituted.

The following dress code applies to **both the Senior Brunch (official class photo) and Commencement**.

Ladies

- Dress or skirt no shorter than 5 inches above the knee and no longer than the graduation gown.
- Dress shoes (open or closed toe).
- No flip-flops, tennis shoes, or boots.

Gentlemen

- Dress shirt and tie.
- Dark dress pants.
- Dark dress shoes.

Commencement

- Your official PPEA cap, gown, and tassel.
- Graduates are encouraged to wear business or dress attire beneath their gown.

Graduation Cap Decorations

Graduates are welcome to decorate their graduation caps. Decorations must follow these guidelines:

- Must remain entirely on the top (flat surface) of the cap.
 - May not extend more than **1 inch** above the cap.
 - May not hang over the edges of the cap.
 - No exposed cords, wiring, or moving parts.
 - Battery-operated lights are permitted but must remain **off** during the ceremony.
 - Decorations must be appropriate for a family-friendly event. PPEA reserves the right to require the removal of any decoration deemed inappropriate or distracting
-

16. Honors Regalia

PPEA recognizes the unique educational journeys of homeschool students and encourages families to celebrate their graduate's accomplishments.

Graduates may also wear approved honors earned through other educational programs or organizations, including:

- Honor cords awarded through a college or dual enrollment program, such as **St. Petersburg College**.
- Honor stoles or regalia awarded through homeschool programs or co-ops, including **Chosen, Classical Conversations, Wellmont**, or similar organizations.
- Military or service-related regalia earned through approved organizations such as **ROTC, Civil Air Patrol**, or similar programs.

Honor cords, stoles, and other academic regalia are not included with graduation registration and must be purchased separately by each family. Families may purchase honor cords and stoles from **any vendor of their choice**. Many families find **Amazon** offers the largest selection of colors at affordable prices.

More information can be found in the Appendix Section B.

Appendix A

Senior Submission Examples Biography • Parent Charge • Graduate Thank You

Sample Biography # 1

Lydia Anderson was born on April 11, 2000, in St. Petersburg. Lydia treasures the little things in life such as reading classics with her family, coffee with friends, Broadway musicals, laughing till her sides hurt, getting mail, that last piece of chocolate cake, old movies, and Disney's FastPass, but most of all, quiet mornings with an open Bible on her lap. She is both a black belt and a ballerina, graceful yet strong, and still always running into things. She has served on two mission trips. Lydia joined the Duke TIP, Eta Sigma Alpha, and Mu Eta Alpha societies. Lydia will be attending the Honors Program at USF this fall and has been invited to the Chancellor's Leadership Council. She is double majoring in Anthropology and History. Lydia has been abundantly blessed by her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in this chapter of her life, and as she closes it, she excitedly awaits His promises ahead.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11

Sample Biography # 2

Emily Johnson is graduating after twelve years of homeschooling. During high school, she participated in community theater, served as a volunteer at her local animal shelter, and enjoyed photography and creative writing. Emily was actively involved in her church youth group and completed dual enrollment courses at her local college. In her free time, she enjoys reading, hiking, and spending time with friends and family. Following graduation, Emily plans to attend college to pursue a degree in Elementary Education. She would like to thank her parents, family, and friends for their constant love, support, and encouragement throughout her homeschool journey.

Sample Biography # 3

Joshua Smith has been homeschooled since kindergarten and has enjoyed the flexibility and opportunities homeschooling has provided. Throughout high school, Joshua participated in robotics, volunteered with his church media team, and worked part-time at a local restaurant. He enjoys building computers, fishing, and studying history. Joshua earned several industry certifications while in high school and plans to pursue a career in information technology. He is grateful to his parents for investing in his education and to his siblings for making every day an adventure.

Sample Biography # 4

Sophia Martinez has been homeschooled for the past eight years and has loved the friendships and experiences gained along the way. Sophia participated in dance, served in children's ministry at her church, and enjoyed numerous field trips and community service projects through her homeschool group. She especially loves baking, traveling, and spending time with her

family. After graduation, Sophia plans to attend cosmetology school and eventually open her own salon. She would like to thank her parents, grandparents, and mentors for their unwavering support, prayers, and encouragement.

Sample Parent Charge (Challenge)

Sample Parent Charge #1 – Inspirational

Emily, our prayer for you comes from Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to give you hope and a future."

Watching you grow into the young woman you are today has been one of our greatest blessings. We have seen your faith, determination, and kindness shine in every season. As you begin this next chapter, remember that God created you with purpose. Trust Him in every step, seek Him in every decision, and never doubt His love for you.

Dream boldly, love deeply, and serve faithfully. Keep Christ at the center of your life, and let your words and actions always point others to Him.

We are incredibly proud of you and excited to see all that God has planned for your future.

Sample Parent Charge #2 – Humorous and Heartfelt

Joshua, Proverbs 3:5-6 has always been our prayer for you: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

From building forts in the living room to asking a million questions, you have always marched to the beat of your own drum. Never lose your curiosity, creativity, and adventurous spirit.

As you enter adulthood, remember a few important things: call your mother, do your laundry before you run out of clothes, and keep snacks in your car. Most importantly, continue to follow Christ wholeheartedly. When life becomes uncertain, trust Him to guide your path.

We love you more than words can express and are so proud of the man you have become

Sample Thank You

Sample Graduate Thank You # 1

Mom and Dad, thank you for believing in me even when I doubted myself. Your patience, encouragement, and constant support have shaped who I am today. Thank you for every lesson, every sacrifice, and every opportunity you've given me. I know this achievement belongs to all of us. I love you, and I hope I make you as proud as you've always made me feel.

Sample Graduate Thank You # 2

Thank you for choosing this homeschool journey and walking beside me every step of the way. You invested your time, your energy, and your hearts into my education and my future. I wouldn't be standing here today without your love, guidance, and prayers. Thank you for always believing I could accomplish great things. I love you more than words can express.

Sample Graduate Thank You #3

To my amazing parents, thank you for every early morning, every encouraging conversation, every challenge, and every celebration. You've taught me to work hard, trust God, and never stop learning. Your example has been my greatest lesson. Today is not just my accomplishment—it's yours too. Thank you for loving me so well. I will always be grateful.

Sample Graduate Thank You # 4

Every time my friends say, "Wow! You sound just like your parents!" my heart swells. You are my inspiration and the glue that holds our family together. Thank you for pushing me to reach for the stars, catching me when I fall, and reminding me to fight for the good left in this world. God knew I needed you. I hope to walk in your footsteps, for they were taken in strength and dignity.

Appendix B

Honors Regalia - Honor Cord Guidelines & Academic Recognition

PPEA recognizes the unique educational journeys of homeschool students and encourages families to celebrate their graduate's accomplishments.

Graduates may also wear approved honors earned through other educational programs or organizations, including:

- Honor cords awarded through a college or dual enrollment program, such as **St. Petersburg College**.
- Honor stoles or regalia awarded through homeschool programs or co-ops, including **Chosen, Classical Conversations, Wellmont**, or similar organizations.
- Military or service-related regalia earned through approved organizations such as **ROTC, Civil Air Patrol**, or similar programs.

Honor cords, stoles, and other academic regalia are not included with graduation registration and must be purchased separately by each family. Families may purchase honor cords and stoles from **any vendor of their choice**. Many families find **Amazon** offers the largest selection of colors at affordable prices.

More information can be found in the Appendix.

PPEA Suggested Honor Cord Guidelines

Because every homeschool student's educational journey is unique, PPEA provides the following suggested guidelines to assist families in recognizing academic achievement. These recommendations are intended to provide consistency while allowing parents the flexibility to determine which honors best reflect their graduate's accomplishments.

Please Note: These honor cord guidelines are suggestions provided by PPEA and are not intended to replace or supersede honors awarded by colleges, universities, homeschool programs, or other educational organizations.

- **English - White**

4 credits or more with a minimum GPA of 3.5

- **Mathematics - Light Blue**

4 credits or more of a college- prep mathematics program (Algebra I, Geometry, Advanced Algebra (II), Pre-Calculus and/or Calculus) with a minimum GPA of 3.5

- **Science - Burgundy**

4 credits or more of science with a minimum GPA of 3.5 including at least 2 of the following courses: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy & Physiology

- **Social Studies - Navy Blue**

4 credits or more with a minimum GPA of 3.5. Possible classes include: US History, Government, British History, World History

- **World Languages** - Red

4 credits or more of the same World Language with a minimum GPA of 3.5

- **Fine Arts** -Forest Green

Art: at least 3 credits with a minimum GPA of 3.5

Music: active in a band, vocal, choir or instrumental music program for at least 3 years with a minimum GPA 3.5

- **Technology** - Copper

3 credits or more of technology courses with a minimum GPA of 3.5

- **College Credit** - Royal Blue

Completing college classes that result in earning college credit

- **Business** - Red, White & Blue

3 credits earned in business classes with a minimum GPA of 3.5

Computer classes may be counted, as well as job experience

- **Community Service:**

Purple - 100+ Hours of Community Service

Silver - 250+ Hours of Community Service

- **Military** - Black

Participation in ROTC, Civil Air Patrol, or similar program

- **Perseverance** - Pink

Awarded to a student who has demonstrated perseverance

Honor Societies (Gold)

Graduates who are members of recognized honor societies may wear the regalia associated with those organizations. Examples include:

- **Eta Sigma Alpha** – <http://www.etasigmaalpha.com/>
- **Mu Eta Sigma** – National Homeschool Math Honor Society
<https://www.mathhonorsociety.com/>

Please refer to each organization for current membership requirements and eligibility.

Additional Resources

For families interested in learning more about traditional graduation honor cord colors and their meanings, the following resources may be helpful:

[Graduation Cap and Gown](#)



[Honors Graduation](#)

Appendix C

Graduation Timeline - Brunch • Rehearsal • Commencement

Saturday, April 10, 2027

Senior Graduation Brunch

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Starkey Road Baptist Church - Multipurpose Room

This event marks the official kickoff to graduation season and is an important planning meeting for all graduating seniors and their families.

During the Brunch

- Receive your cap and gown.
- Take the official Senior Class Photo for the graduation program.
- Graduates record their “Thank You” message.
- Select your senior display table.
 - If you have a request for a table partner please notify us so that we can plan the layout accordingly.
- Reserve seating for your immediate family. (Six Seats Max)
- Fellowship with fellow graduates
- Last chance to notify PPEA if you have seating or processional request

Students should wear dress attire that meets the PPEA graduation dress code, as the official Senior Class Photo will be taken during the Brunch.

Friday, May 14, 2027

Graduation Rehearsal

4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Starkey Road Baptist Church

Attendance is required for both graduates and parents. If you will be participating on stage during the ceremony, you must attend rehearsal.

This is a **dress rehearsal**. Graduates should arrive dressed as they will for graduation wearing the dress attire and shoes they plan to wear beneath their graduation gown. Please bring the

official PPEA cap, gown, and tassel separately as described below. Review the attire guidelines for PPEA graduates.

Cap & Gown Check-In

Bring your official cap, gown, and tassel to the **Rehearsal Dinner**. Gowns should be clean, pressed, and hung on a hanger. Place your cap and tassel in a bag attached to the hanger. Your cap and gown will be labeled with your name and stored in the graduates' dressing room until Commencement to help prevent anything from being forgotten on graduation day.

Graduation cap decorations are permitted provided they:

- Remain completely on the top of the cap.
- Do not extend more than one inch above the surface.
- Do not include visible cords or wiring.
- Have lights that remain off throughout the ceremony.

Rehearsal Schedule

4:00–5:00 p.m. | Senior Memory Board & Table Setup

All senior displays must be completed during this time.

Display Guidelines:

- Each graduate will receive approximately three feet of table space.
- Please stay within your assigned area.
- The table will be covered with a black tablecloth. Families may add their own decorative cloth if desired.
- Candy, a guest book, and a card basket are welcome.
- Be sure your graduate's name is clearly displayed.
- Most tables do not have electrical outlets. Bring an extension cord if electricity is needed.
- Please review all wording and photos to ensure they honor both your family and the Christian values of our graduation ceremony.
- We ask that families refrain from displaying nude baby photos.

5:00–6:00 p.m. | Dinner

A light dinner will be provided.

6:00–6:30 p.m. | Transition to Auditorium & Ceremony Preparation

Parents are asked to move into the auditorium and locate your pre-reserved seats. Graduates will line up in assigned order and prepare for processional.

6:30 p.m. | Full Graduation Rehearsal

We will rehearse the entire ceremony from beginning to end, including the diploma presentation and tassel ceremony.

Graduates will meet their parents on the church steps before going on stage. If anyone participating has difficulty using stairs, please notify us in advance so accommodations can be made.

Please plan to arrive on time and remain for the entire rehearsal. We will do our best to move quickly so everyone can get home as soon as possible.

We encourage families to bring a camera. Rehearsal provides an excellent opportunity to capture photos before graduation day.

Saturday, May 15, 2027

Graduation Ceremony

Graduation Day: 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Commencement Ceremony: 10:00 a.m.

Starkey Road Baptist Church

Graduate Arrival

- Graduates should arrive no later than **9:00 a.m.**
- Graduates must be fully dressed in cap and gown and in the choir room by **9:30 a.m.**

Please leave all cell phones, smart watches, valuables, and personal belongings with your family. These items should not be brought on stage or left in the staging area.

Reminder About Dress Code, Ceremony Expectations & Photography Guidelines:

- Graduates must follow the approved commencement dress code outlined in this handbook. Failure to meet the dress code requirements may result in being unable to participate in the ceremony.
- Graduates are expected to help maintain a respectful and distraction-free ceremony by leaving cell phones, food, drinks, gum, and other prohibited items behind.
- To ensure every family enjoys the ceremony, guests should remain seated during the program. Flash photography, standing in aisles, and blocking the view of others are not permitted.
- Our professional photographer will capture each graduate throughout the ceremony, allowing families to relax and fully enjoy this special milestone.

Commencement Ceremony

The **Commencement Ceremony** will begin promptly at **10:00 a.m.**

The processional will begin at exactly **10:00 a.m.** To honor the graduates and ensure a respectful ceremony, the sanctuary doors will be **closed** once the procession begins.

Guests who arrive after 10:00 a.m. will be asked to wait outside the sanctuary until all graduates have completed the processional and are seated on stage. At that time, ushers will reopen the doors and assist late-arriving guests with seating.

We encourage all guests to arrive early and be seated before 10:00 a.m. so they do not miss this special moment as the graduating class makes its entrance.

Appendix D

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I decorate my graduation cap?

Yes! We encourage graduates to personalize their caps as a fun way to celebrate this milestone.

To ensure everyone's safety and maintain a polished appearance during the ceremony, please follow these guidelines:

- Decorations must remain entirely on the top surface of the cap.
 - Decorations may not extend more than **one inch** above the cap.
 - Lights are permitted only if they can remain **turned off throughout the ceremony**.
 - No visible wiring or cords may hang from the cap or gown.
 - Decorations should be appropriate and reflect the Christian values of the ceremony.
-

Can I wear honor cords or stoles?

Absolutely.

As the homeschooling parent, you determine whether your graduate has met the requirements to wear honor cords, stoles, or other academic regalia. PPEA provides suggested honor cord guidelines within this handbook, but we recognize the flexibility and individuality of each homeschool program.

Students participating in another homeschool program or college may also wear approved honor regalia earned through those programs.

Can grandparents sit in the reserved family section?

Yes.

You will receive six (6) reserved seats for the graduate's immediate family, including:

- Parents
- Siblings
- Grandparents

During the Presentation of the Diploma and Turning of the Tassel, parents will be invited to join their graduate on stage. Parents should sit on the aisle. Grandparents and siblings will remain seated and enjoy the presentation from their reserved seats.

Can I bring my own diploma?

Yes.

PPEA provides each graduate with a **Certificate of Participation** during the commencement ceremony. Since PPEA is not a diploma-granting institution, families are welcome to purchase or create their own diploma through the vendor of their choice and use it during the ceremony if they wish.

How can family and friends watch the ceremony if they can't attend?

The commencement ceremony will be professionally livestreamed so family and friends can celebrate from anywhere. Prior to graduation day, each graduating family will receive a **livestream viewing link** that may be shared with family and friends who are unable to attend in person.

Following graduation, families will receive:

- A **downloadable recording of the commencement ceremony from the livestream**
- Their graduate's **professional high-resolution photo gallery**

Where should guests park?

Complimentary parking is available at **Starkey Road Baptist Church**.

After the ceremony, guests should exit using the **86th Avenue entrance**, which leads directly to the traffic signal on Starkey Road. This traffic pattern helps everyone leave the campus safely and efficiently.

Please share this information with your guests before graduation day.

What happens if I miss a deadline?

Graduation planning involves many people, printed materials, photographers, venue staff, and volunteers. Because of this, meeting deadlines is extremely important.

Missing a submission deadline may result in:

- Information being omitted from the graduation program.
- Photos not being included in presentations or printed materials.
- Delays in completing your graduation registration.

Missing mandatory events, such as the Graduation Brunch or Graduation Rehearsal, may affect a student's ability to participate in the commencement ceremony.

If an unexpected emergency arises, please contact the PPEA as soon as possible. While we cannot guarantee exceptions, we will do our best to work with families whenever circumstances allow.

How many guests may attend the ceremony?

There is **no limit** to the number of guests you may invite to celebrate your graduate's special day.

The commencement ceremony is open to family and friends. Reserved seating is available for immediate family, while additional guests will be seated in the general seating areas on a first-available basis.

We encourage guests to arrive early. The **processional begins promptly at 10:00 a.m.**, and the sanctuary doors will close once the processional starts. Late-arriving guests will be seated after all graduates have entered and are seated on stage.