

2027 NETHEA Graduation

<http://ne-tnhea.org>

Revised 8/19/2026

Please read through this information thoroughly and keep it handy to reference later. This packet contains details about graduation and descriptions of the parent-led teams involved in planning the graduation. Parents are required to help with organizing and planning the ceremony. Graduates are encouraged to participate in the planning, as well.

Graduation Ceremony:

Saturday, May 15, 2027

10:30 a.m.

Temple Baptist Church, 2200 Memorial Court, Kingsport, TN

**Graduation Rehearsal is Friday, May 14, 2027. Time TBD.

Cost:

Early Discount Deadline

Postmarked by November 16, 2026

\$85 (if paying by check)

\$89 (if paying through the website using PayPal)**

AFTER November 16, 2026

\$115 (if paying by check)

\$119.50 (if paying through the website using PayPal)**

*(**PayPal charges a service fee for transactions.)*

ALL REGISTRATIONS ARE DUE BY DECEMBER 31, 2026

Late applications will be accepted on a case-by-case basis (if space allows).

Graduation Leadership:

NETHEA Coordinator: Amy Ramey, nethea.grad@gmail.com
423-389-4786

NETHEA Treasurer: April Kliesch, treasurer@ne-tnhea.org

The email for all graduation correspondence is nethea.grad@gmail.com. If you aren't receiving emails from NETHEA regularly, please check your spam folder or contact the NETHEA coordinator. Email is the primary means of communicating with graduate families.

For planning purposes, a list of important dates is provided at the end of this packet. Also included are descriptions of each “Team,” the responsibilities of parents and students, and deadlines.

NETHEA is the Northeast Tennessee Chapter of the Tennessee Home Education Association (THEA). THEA/NETHEA is a Christian organization. Our graduation ceremony upholds those Christian values found in the Bible and also the creeds and confessions of our faith. We also hold our ceremony in a church. You do not have to be a Christian to participate however, you must be aware that our purpose is to honor God first and celebrate our graduates.

STEPS TO COMPLETING REGISTRATION

****Step 1. If you are not a current member of NETHEA, you will need to join! You can join through our website <http://ne-tnhea.org> by completing the form and paying the dues for this year. Membership is for one calendar year. The cost is \$32 per year. You can pay by check or pay through the website (\$35 with service fee). NETHEA is the Northeast Tennessee Chapter of THEA. Our parent organization represents homeschool families in the state and is actively involved in contacting legislators, seeking clarification on homeschool law and answering the questions and concerns of its members. If you are a current member, proceed to step 2.**

Step 2. You can register for graduation. Complete the form found through the link on the website <http://ne-tnhea.org> and pay your graduation fee either on-line or send it to our treasurer.

To pay the membership dues and/or graduation registration fee by check, please complete the registration form on-line and send your check to

April Kliesch
885 Shady View Rd
Kingsport, TN 37664

MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO TENNESSEE HOME EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

Step 3. To complete the registration form you will need to choose a team to join. There are details about each team in this packet as well as details about what the parents need to do. Please read this carefully!

More details about the graduation ceremony:

The ceremony is on May 15, 2027, 10:30 a.m. at Temple Baptist Church, 2200 Memorial Court, Kingsport, TN. There is a **MANDATORY** graduation rehearsal on Friday, May 14, 2027. The rehearsal will be in the evening; a specific time will be decided later. The church graciously allows us to use their gymnasium for a reception area for the graduates. Each family can set up a memory table display for their graduate prior to rehearsal. The church will be open before the rehearsal for set up.

The Teams:

Teams are comprised of parents/family members and are essential to planning this ceremony. Every team must have a team leader. If no one signs up to be a team leader, that area may be dropped from the ceremony. When you choose the team, think about your own skill set and choose accordingly. If you don't choose a team or if the team you've chosen is full, you will be assigned to a team.

Once teams are assigned, you will be responsible for reaching out to your fellow team members to start planning. You will receive an email with a list of teams and the team members and all of their contact information.

The Tennessee Home Education Association gives out an Outstanding Student Award to a student from each chapter.

OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD

DEADLINE: December 31, 2026

- The Outstanding Student Award application will be emailed to graduates participating in graduation in the fall.
- Applications should be sent to the NETHEA coordinator (along with their references) by December 31.
- Once a student is chosen from the applicants, they will be invited to participate in Rally Day activities in Nashville, as well as receive a certificate and a cash award of \$100. Rally Day is scheduled for March 16.

- The student's name and picture will be printed in the program book. He or she will also be recognized during the graduation ceremony.
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The NETHEA coordinator/graduation coordinator will secure the photographer, set-up the supplies link and coordinate with the Civil Air Patrol's Color Guard.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Graduation Coordinator will schedule.

DEADLINE: October 2, 2026

- The graduation/NETHEA coordinator will secure a photographer for both the rehearsal and the ceremony. If the cost of the photographer exceeds \$800, parents will be asked to help with making the decision to find a different photographer or contract the one found by the coordinator.
- In the past, NETHEA has used Mike Bowling. He is well-known in the homeschool community and is familiar with our graduation and offers individual and family packages. He is tentatively scheduled for the 2027 graduation.

FOR PARENTS: The following is included in your graduation fee:

- Group photos of the senior class.
- Parent and graduate photos of the presentation of diplomas during the ceremony.
- Memory table photos and random photos throughout the rehearsal and ceremony.
- NOT INCLUDED: If the photographer offers individual graduate and family photos, it is the responsibility of parents to arrange the time for photos and pay for the package. More information about this option will be emailed to you closer to the day of graduation.

SUPPLIES

Graduation Coordinator will set up link.

DEADLINE: For setting up the link 10/31/2026

- The website is www.homeschooldiploma.com
- The graduation coordinator will share the link with parents to distribute to families.

FOR PARENTS:

- A basic package will be set-up that includes a cap, gown, tassel, diploma cover and if applicable, an honor cord. (See Honors Team for more info).
- Families are free to add to this package (invitations, announcements).

- Each family is responsible for ordering their graduate's supplies and will pay the company directly. Orders will be shipped directly to the families.
- *FYI: The company we use changed the shade of royal blue slightly in 2023. Therefore, you can't use caps and gowns purchased before 2023.*
- Usually graduates don't have their diplomas at the time of the ceremony. Therefore the parents hand their graduates an empty diploma cover.
- NETHEA families do receive a discount on the supplies. The earlier the order, the bigger the discount. So be aware of those dates.
- **DEADLINE TO ORDER: March 2027**

COLOR GUARD

Graduation Coordinator will schedule.

DEADLINE: 1/31/2027

- The graduation coordinator will contact the Civil Air Patrol and arrange to have a color guard for the ceremony and coordinate with the CAP arrival times for both the rehearsal and the ceremony.

The following teams will be led by parents:

****There are two different deadlines for each team—one for the team to submit details/files to the coordinator and the other is for parents when submitting details/files to the team.**

SENIOR SOCIALS TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: Start planning ASAP

- Team leader and members will plan activities for the seniors leading up to graduation.
- Team will reach out to seniors for ideas, available dates and times.
- These activities can be held monthly, once or twice—whatever works for the graduates. The team will be given contact information for families for planning purposes.
- The team leader will send dates to the coordinator to make sure parents stay informed.
- Activity ideas include: Game nights, bowling, skating, picnics, Bible studies/devotions/prayer time, movie nights, family potlucks, putt-putt, coffee shop, Gelly Ball, etc.

- The team will work with the ceremony music team if there are plans for a senior choir. During socials, there may be opportunities for choir practice. They will also work with the senior speeches team if the graduates decide to give their speeches for an in-person vote.

HONORS STUDENT TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 2/28/2027

- This team will collect transcripts of students who wish to graduate with honors. The transcript will serve as proof of the graduate's GPA. The transcript will be used to verify the student's honors status.
- The team will forward a list to the NETHEA coordinator by 2/28/2027. The honors students will be listed in the program book.

FOR PARENTS:

- If you want your senior to graduate with honors, you must forward a copy of their transcript to the team leader of the Honors Team. If your child is a part of a National Honor Society, you may use that documentation to verify your child's honors status.
- Once your senior is approved, you may order an honor cord to be worn on graduation day. The honor cord can be ordered along with your graduate's cap and gown.
- Honors designation:
summa cum laude: 3.90-4.0
magna cum laude: 3.75-3.89
cum laude: 3.5-3.74
- **DEADLINE: 2/15/2027**

MAIN SPEAKER & MASTER OF CEREMONIES TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 2/12/2027

- The team will find a main speaker for the ceremony AND a Master of Ceremonies.
- For MAIN SPEAKER
 - This individual should have ties to the homeschool community (former student, parent, pastor, etc).
 - The message of the speaker should be no more than 10 minutes.
 - NETHEA budgets \$200 for the speaker. If the speaker fee is more than \$200, the team leader will contact the NETHEA coordinator who will inform the parents and ask for a vote. This must be done before a speaker is finalized.
 - The team leader will obtain a photo and a bio for the speaker which will be printed in the program book and send it to the Program Book team.

- The team leader will communicate with the speaker about the graduation rehearsal and ceremony and send any files/power point presentation to the NETHEA coordinator and pastor of Temple Baptist.

- **For MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC)**

- The MC can be a family member of one of the graduates or a leader from the homeschool community.
- The MC is in charge of directing families during the ceremony, announcing the graduates, introducing the main speaker, etc. Basically, the MC keeps things moving along during the ceremony.
- The team leader will obtain a bio and a photo of the MC for the program book and send to the program leader.

STATE LIAISON TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 3/5/2027

- Each year the State of Tennessee gives recognition certificates to graduating seniors in all public schools. Tennessee representatives can secure these certificates for us.
- The team leader will contact the legislative liaison, Nathan Rogers at Tim Hill's office (Nathan.rogers@capitol.tn.gov) to secure these certificates. The team leader will email a list of the graduates' full names to the liaison.
- Certificates will be sent to the team leader who will check the spelling of graduates' names and if there are errors, will have them corrected.
- The team leader will bring certificates to the NETHEA coordinator on the night of the rehearsal and they will be placed with each graduate's memory table display.

PROGRAM BOOK TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 3/31/2027

- The program book is given to families and guests with the graduate's photo and bio, student & parent reflections.
- The team leader will work with other team members to collect the following: a senior photo, biography, parent reflection, senior reflection, photo of the Outstanding student, program cover photo and photos and biographies of the main speaker and MC.
- The team will design the program book using a template and design software, converting the book into a pdf (or using a different program that has been approved by the printer).

- The team leader will send the file to the graduation coordinator by 4/15/2026 who will forward to the printer.
- The team leader will also ask for entries for the program cover photo contest and distribute the photos for a vote amongst the seniors.
- The team leader will send a pdf of the program book to parents for proofreading.
- The program book takes the most time of all the other teams but it is VERY important to families. A person with design experience really needs to be on this team! There is a template. The printer prefers using a publishing software like Canva or Adobe.
- The Graduation Coordinator will assist this team

FOR PARENTS:

- Senior pictures are the responsibility of each family. NETHEA does not offer senior picture photo shoots.
- A sample of the program book will be sent out to the parents and graduates as soon as registration is completed for all students.
- The parents and graduate will provide the following to be printed in the program book:
 - Senior reflection: a short paragraph reflecting on your time as a student. (200 words max).
 - Parent reflection: a short paragraph reflecting on your experience as a homeschool parent. (200 words max).
 - A bio of the graduate: experiences, hobbies, future plans, etc. (200 words max).
 - Your graduate's favorite scripture or appropriate quote (50 words max)
 - Senior picture (4 x 6 or 1200 x 1600 pixels). It will be resized to fit on the page. This picture should be in grayscale however the team can edit the photo.

- **DEADLINE: 3/5/2027**

COVER PHOTO CONTEST

- Encourage your senior to enter the cover photo contest for the program book. Entries should be emailed to the NETHEA coordinator/graduation coordinator so it can be distributed for a vote.

- **DEADLINE: 3/5/2027**

CEREMONY MUSIC TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE(S): FOR SPECIAL MUSIC—3/1/2027

FOR CEREMONY MUSIC—3/15/2027

- The team leader will work with other team members to find appropriate music to be played before/during/after the ceremony.
- The team will work with the media presentation team to find appropriate music to be played during the slideshow (approx. 15 minutes of music)
- This includes the following:
 - Music to be played while guests are being seated before the ceremony. (approximately 10 minutes of music).
 - Parent entrance
 - Graduate entrance (Pomp & Circumstance—provided by the church).
 - Music during the line up of the graduates and parents.
 - The National Anthem after the presentation of the colors by Civil Air Patrol.
 - Special music: A choir made up of the graduates, soloists or a duet (could be graduates), instrumental (strings), Tri-Cities Band. Sometimes graduates want to perform during the ceremony. If more than one volunteer, it would need to be voted on by the graduating class.
- Music should be emailed to the pastor or dropped off on a flash drive prior to graduation day.
- A list of music used in previous graduations will be sent to the team for examples of music.

SENIOR SPEECHES TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 3/31/2027

- The team leader along with the team will recruit seniors to give speeches during the ceremony.
- A total of two (2) speakers can be chosen.
- Seniors will vote on the speakers and the vote can be virtual (senior makes video of speech) or in-person during a senior social.
- The speeches must be presented before-hand—no surprises!
- The speeches are to be approximately 3 minutes long.
- Once the speakers are chosen, the team leader will provide the names to the NETHEA coordinator who will have them included in the program book.

FOR PARENTS:

- Parents should encourage their graduates to participate.

PRAYER TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 3/31/2027

- The team leader along with the team will find graduates to offer the prayers— invocation (beginning) and the benediction (end) during the ceremony.
- The team leader will provide the NETHEA coordinator with the names to be included in the Program Book.

FOR PARENTS:

- Encourage their graduates to participate.

JUNIOR USHERS TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 3/31/2027

- The team leader along with the team will find ushers for the day of the ceremony.
- The ushers will pass out programs, direct people to the sanctuary and the memory table display afterwards, and answer questions.
- The ushers are typically sophomores or juniors in high school—siblings of the graduates, or upcoming seniors who will graduate with NETHEA the following year.
- Ushers from families will be able to sit with family and friends once the guests have been seated.
- Ushers should be dressed appropriately (think Sunday dress).
- The team will communicate with the ushers, letting them know the times they will need to come to the church. We prefer that they attend the rehearsal so that they are familiar with the layout of the church, their responsibilities, etc.
- The ushers will also be asked to tidy the sanctuary afterwards and help with clean-up (if necessary).
- The team leader will give the names to the NETHEA coordinator to be included in the Program Book.

FOR PARENTS:

- If you have a son or daughter who is a sophomore or junior, please consider asking them to volunteer and let the Junior Usher team know.

MEDIA PRESENTATION (SENIOR SLIDESHOW) TEAM

TEAM DEADLINE: 4/16/2027

- The team leader and the team will create two (2) slideshow presentations for the ceremony.

- This team will coordinate with the ceremony music team to find 10-15 minutes of music to be played during the first slideshow which is to be shown while guests are being seated.
- The team will collect three (3) pictures of each senior: A senior picture, a baby/youth picture, and a picture of the graduate participating in an activity, sport, dance, Scouts, etc. These pictures may be in color or b & w.
- The team will assist the team leader with creating a 2nd slideshow to be shown during the presentation of the graduates as they receive their diplomas. This slideshow will include their full name, a senior picture and the baby/youth picture.
 - Slideshow #1
 - One slide per student with their full name and all 3 pictures.
 - The slides must be in alphabetical order.
 - Other appropriate pictures of the graduates may include pictures taken during KACHEA formal, football/basketball/baseball games. This is optional.
 - This slideshow will be played before and after the ceremony (while guests make their way to the memory tables).
 - There will be music playing with this slideshow.
 - This slideshow will be played like a movie and will not need to be manually cycled by the AV team.
 - Slideshow #2
 - This slideshow will be played during the presentation of graduates and diplomas.
 - One slide per student with their full name, baby/youth picture and senior picture.
 - There will not be music played with this slideshow.
 - This slideshow needs to be manually cycled through with each graduate.
 - The slides must be in alphabetical order.
- The team leader will double-check the spelling of each graduate's name and fix any errors they find.
- The team leader will save the slideshows on a flash drive (thumb drive) and will arrange a time to deliver the drive to the church or to the NETHEA coordinator before the ceremony. Or the slideshow can be emailed directly to the pastor of the church. This way if there is a problem with running the slideshow, it can be fixed.

- Last year, the team used Canva to create the slideshow. You can also use PowerPoint. If you use different software, the team leader must contact the church to make sure it's compatible with their system.

FOR PARENTS:

- Parents will send 3 pictures of their graduate to the media presentation team.
- These pictures are a senior picture, a baby/youth picture and a picture of them doing an activity.
- Pictures taken at senior social events, KACHEA formal, sports, etc. can also be emailed to the team and it is their decision if they want to use them.
- Parents will confirm with the media presentation team the correct spelling of their graduate's name.
- **DEADLINE: 3/31/2027**

MEMORY TABLE/RECEPTION TEAM

DEADLINE: 5/14/2027 AND 5/15/2027

- The team leader will take the lead in setting up the memory tables in the church's gymnasium.
- The team leader will use an alphabetical list of the graduates and create place cards to be put on the designated tables.
- Each table will be assigned two (2) graduates for their displays.
- The tables will be labeled on the night of the rehearsal.
- The team leader along with the team will help clean-up and assist families in putting table away, if necessary.

FOR PARENTS:

- One or two graduates will be assigned to each table (depending on the final number of graduates).
- Each graduate will have the opportunity to set up their display on 5/14/2027 (rehearsal night).
- The displays are usually pictures, awards, certificates, etc. Families usually use a presentation board found in the school supply/office supply section of stores.
- Each family is responsible for clearing their tables and putting the tables away.
- The tables are 70" ROUND tables. A floor-length tablecloth will be needed and arrangements are being made with KACHEA to borrow their tablecloths.

Graduation 2027 Calendar/Timeline

October 2, 2026	Photographer finalized
October 12, 2026	Parent meeting via Zoom
October 31, 2026	Supplies link ready
November 16, 2026	Early Discount Deadline
December 31, 2026	Graduation registration ends
December 31, 2026	Outstanding Student Application deadline
January 11, 2027	Parent meeting via Zoom
January 31, 2027	Color Guard Finalized
February 15, 2027	Honors Student parent deadline
March 1, 2027	Parent meeting via Zoom
March 1, 2027	Graduation Supply Order deadline
	Special music deadline for music team
March 5, 2027	State Liaison Team deadline
	Program Book parent deadline
	Program Book cover photo deadline
March 12, 2027	Main Speaker & MC team deadline
March 15, 2027	Ceremony music deadline for music team
March 31, 2027	Program Book team deadline
	Senior Speeches team deadline
	Prayer team deadline
	Junior ushers team deadline
	Media presentation parent deadline
April 16, 2027	Media presentation team deadline
April 20, 2027	Parent meeting via Zoom
May 14, 2027	Memory Table team helps with set-up
	Graduation Rehearsal. Time TBD. The church will be open at 4:30 p.m. for memory table set-up.
May 15, 2027	Graduation Day! Graduates and parents will need to be at the church by 9:30 a.m. The ceremony usually lasts between 1.5-2 hours.

There may be additions or changes to this calendar. Updated timeline will be distributed if necessary. This calendar does not include senior social events, choir practices (if applicable) or deadlines for individual teams.