

Graduation 2020 Q & A

Why not wait until July or August for a graduation ceremony?

We thought long and hard about this possibility, but, in the end, realized that it is important to have closure for our seniors at the end of June. In addition, we have seen the landscape of this pandemic and the restrictions placed on gatherings, which seem to change weekly, if not daily. We would be taking a big chance waiting to honor our seniors until some time in the summer just hoping things might be better. Also, with members of the Class of 2020 beginning to follow their varied paths, it would be almost impossible to count on having everyone together when in fact some would likely be unavailable due to commitments for college, work, or the military.

Will we be able to get together over the summer?

Right now we have a “save the date” for July 25th for a Senior 2020 gathering here on campus. Obviously we would have to be in a place that allows large gatherings. Right now they are restricted to 10 people. We hope it will happen but are also prepared to do an expanded alumni tea and reception for the senior class prior to the holidays in December. If December doesn’t work, we will do it in May of 2021.

Why are we limited to the number of family members that can watch our stage walk?

The Governor’s executive order allows non-essential gatherings of no more than 10 people to take place. With the other personnel necessary in the auditorium at the time of your stage walk (Mr. Durkee, Mrs. Brantner (reading names), a videographer, photographer and someone working the door and disinfecting), we have to limit who enters to keep it to 10 people maximum. Adding a graduate and 4 family members brings the total to 10.

Will the graduate be required to wear a mask?

While family members will be required to wear masks, the graduate will not so that photos can be taken. School staff without masks on will remain 6 feet away from anyone entering the auditorium. These procedures all comply with the guidance issued by the county.

Why was the scenario decided upon chosen in the first place?

The guidance from the county coupled with mandates in the Governor’s executive orders dictates that “drive through” graduations are the most acceptable method for graduation. Large scale in person ceremonies are not permitted at this time. We placed our own twist on the drive through ceremony, one that honors the tradition of each senior walking the stage in front of their closest family members. It also allows us to capture the moment on film (video and photograph) to splice together to create a complete graduation ceremony video that includes each stage walk, speeches, and a senior slideshow. That video will drop on Sunday, June 28th, our previously scheduled date for graduation. Hopefully, you will be able to gather with your family to watch the video and celebrate your accomplishments together.

What exactly is the plan?

We have set aside both June 23rd and 24th and have given each member of the senior class a time slot to come to campus with up to four family members to have their stage walk. There will be people on campus, including our School Resource Officers, helping to direct you. We ask that you NOT arrive more than 5 minutes ahead of your scheduled time, park where you are directed in the student parking lot and wait in your cars until called to enter the auditorium through the door leading to the pit and stage area.

Will we be able to take photos?

We will have two photographers at the event. One will be in the auditorium and will capture the receipt of your diploma. Each family will receive a print of that moment. We will also have a photo area in the lobby of the auditorium. Each family will have 1 minute to be photographed there as well. Those images will be available to download as you choose. Family members are also more than welcome to film or take photos during the stage walk portion of the mini ceremony.

Did we have to have our “plan” for graduation approved by someone?

School districts were originally told that there would be guidance coming out from the Governor’s office. After waiting for a couple of weeks, we were then told, guidance would be issued at the county level. Then, it was indicated that all school districts should submit plans to the county for approval. Later, we were told (after submitting the plans and waiting for approval) that they would not be approving the plans per se, but that we were expected to make sure our plans followed guidance the county would be issuing. Once that guidance was published (May 27), we compared the guidance to our plan. There were a couple of discrepancies so we reviewed our plan with our school attorney, made adjustments and then prepared to share our plans with all of you. So, while we did not get official approval from anyone, we can say that our plans comply with the directives we have been given.

Do I have to take part in this ceremony?

Any student who has met the state and local requirements to receive a diploma may participate in Commencement. Having said that, the ceremony is voluntary and graduates may opt to not participate in the event. However, it is our hope that you would participate. Your graduation is a once-in-a-lifetime event. Even though this is not the traditional way of graduating, if you have earned it, you deserve it. In addition, some families may be practicing stricter social distancing than this type of event allows for. In the event that you wish to find another way to honor your graduate, we respect your decision and will do everything in our power to assist you. Please reach out to us if this is the case.