



Norfolk Public Schools

The cornerstone of a proudly diverse community

May 13, 2020

Dear High School Seniors and Families,

Congratulations on nearing your journey's end in Norfolk Public Schools! I am proud of your dedication and resolve to finish your senior year with grace and tenacity. I admire your flexibility and resiliency as we navigate this uncertain time together. In a few weeks, you will be noted by historians as the graduates of the Class of 2020 who despite a pandemic, successfully fulfilled their academic requirements and learned invaluable lessons in so doing.

Norfolk Public Schools is excited to salute you and your success! Based on your recent survey feedback, we are offering a variety of graduation celebrations. Although constrained by current health guidelines, we hope these celebrations will be meaningful and memorable for you and your families.

Here is what we have planned for you:

Cap and Gown Distribution – Month of May

Every high school has its own process in place for distributing caps and gowns to seniors. Principals will be contacting seniors directly with their individual school's specific process for picking up caps and gowns.

Virtual Graduations – June 8 and 9

Every high school will be hosting its own virtual graduation on the same date and time as originally scheduled. The virtual ceremonies will feature pre-recorded speeches, music, and a PowerPoint slideshow of each senior's picture, name, and additional graduation information. Seniors and families can gather in their homes to watch the ceremony and celebrate together. Seniors will also be able to commemorate this special time with their classmates by posting celebratory comments and photos of graduation festivities using an online tool called Padlet (details to come).

Each high school's virtual ceremony will be livestreamed on the date and time that the graduation was originally scheduled. Reruns of the ceremony will be available on the NPS YouTube channel as well as on Channel 47.

Mementos and Memories Event – June 11 and 12

Each high school will hold a special event whereby graduates and their families can schedule an appointment to pick up diplomas and graduation programs, and pose for



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professional photos in their caps and gowns. This event will be organized in alignment with current health guidelines. Seniors will also have an opportunity to turn in their mobile devices, library books, athletic equipment, and other school property, if they have not already done so.

A Video Salute to Seniors – Week of June 22

Seniors, families, and friends can enjoy a video montage that will feature photos of graduates posing in their caps and gowns at landmarks and places around the City of Norfolk. Principals will provide details regarding where to send photos and the deadline for the submission of photos. The compilation video will be posted on the NPS YouTube channel and broadcast on Channel 47 beginning the week of June 22.

An In-Person Graduation Ceremony – August 3-4 *(Only if permitted under the directives of government officials, advised by medical experts, and supported by state health guidelines)*

Family and friends can celebrate the Class of 2020 in an in-person graduation ceremony at the Chartway Arena on the Old Dominion University campus. There will be limited seating with social distancing. More details to come as plans are available.

We are looking forward to celebrating the Class of 2020 through these exciting special events! Please watch for e-mails from your school regarding many of these details. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong
Superintendent