

May 4, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of Class of 2020 Seniors:

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. I know this is an exceptionally difficult time for our seniors (and parents/guardians) who should be celebrating all the rites of passage that a student who is coming to the end of their K-12 school career should be experiencing right about now. We, as a district, are deeply saddened that we are unable to provide those same experiences for our students due to the school closure and stay-at-home order caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know many of you have questions about those celebrations, namely graduation, Honors Night and prom and this letter is meant to address at least some of those questions.

### **Graduation/Senior Honors Night**

Let us start with graduation. It is our sincere hope that we are able to provide some type of graduation ceremony for our seniors. However, due to the current stay at home order and social distancing guidelines, this year's ceremony will more than likely be much different than those commencement exercises held in past years. Since we do not fully know what guidelines will be in place in June, or even later for that matter, we have given careful thought and have come up with three possible options. For the sake of remaining positive, we are labeling these as "Good," "Better" and "Best" case scenarios.

Let's begin with the Best Option #1. We have reserved June 29, 2020, at the Dort Federal Credit Union Event Center to hold our graduation. In the event that we are unable to hold the ceremony on that date, we have reserved July 13 as a backup date.

If we are unable to provide the "Best" option, we will go with Option #2 or Better, and that would be to hold our graduation ceremonies outside at Cardinal Stadium. The dates would remain the same: June 29, 2020, with a backup date of July 13 in case of inclement weather. We have also planned a back-up location, which would be Collins Field as we do not know yet if construction will be taking place on projects slated for Cardinal Stadium.

Our third or Good option would consist of a virtual graduation ceremony. DTV would pre-record speeches and Assistant Principals Mrs. Malenich and Mr. Fischhaber would read the names of the graduates and include any awards or scholarships they are receiving and the graduate's future plans. Instead of our seniors walking across the stage, we would show their photo on the

screen. In order to help us accomplish this, please watch for a Google Form that we will be sending out to collect that information from our seniors.

Due to the probability that we may need to limit crowd size and continue social distancing practices options Best (1) and Better (2) may look very different than our traditional ceremonies. We may need to limit attendance, spread people out and do away with some of the things, such as the band and choir performing, faculty and staff participating in the event and handshakes as the students cross the stage to accept their diplomas, that have in the past been part of commencement.

Again, our preference is the Best Option (1), but it is important to note that in all of these scenarios, we do not yet know what, if any, social distancing guidelines may be in place. If we are allowed to hold a ceremony, please be prepared as we may have to limit attendance or even split the class up and hold multiple ceremonies as certain restrictions on how many people can be gathered in one place may be in effect. More than likely, students and guests will be required to wear a mask and gloves.

It should also be noted that since we know some students or their family members have special circumstances and may not feel comfortable attending a large public gathering even if social distancing guidelines are relaxed, participation in the ceremony at DFCU Event Center or Cardinal Stadium/Collins Field is optional (although we would LOVE to see all of our graduates participate.)

Rather than trying to hold an additional Senior Honors Night and because we will not be shaking hands with students as they cross the stage to pick up their diploma, the high school assistant principals will announce all the awards/scholarships a student is receiving as they are walking across the stage to pick up their diploma.

### **Caps and Gowns/Jostens Orders/Locker Cleanout**

Another question that I know many of you have is when can my student get his/her belongings from lockers and pick up cap and gown/orders from Jostens.

Seniors will be receiving information soon with a designated time to pick up their items on May 26 and May 28. In order to keep our students and staff safe, we will be giving each senior a designated time to pick up their items. Students will need to wear a mask and observe social distancing guidelines in keeping six feet away from others. I know this will be hard to do as many have not been able to see their friends but, please, for everyone's safety, we ask that students do not congregate or gather at the High School on these days. Each student will have about a 15-minute window to retrieve items from their locker, pick up their cap and gown and any other orders from Jostens as well as cords for honors, community service, etc. This time will also be an opportunity to turn in textbooks and pay for any fines that the student has.

### **Diplomas**

We will also hand out diplomas when we issue the caps and gowns on May 26 and 28. While our preference would be to wait and give these out at graduation, we know that many students need to have their diplomas in order to start certain job and career training opportunities. Please remember that students must have all fines paid and have met the academic requirements for graduation in order to get their diploma on this date.

### **Scholarships**

We are so very grateful to our community for continuing to fund their traditional local scholarships despite the times we are in. Any student that is scheduled or selected to receive a scholarship will be contacted by the scholarship provider on or before June 4 (the original date scheduled for Honors Night). The district will also be publishing the names of our scholarship recipients on June 4 on the website and via social media. Congratulations to our scholarship recipients!

### **Prom**

This is a very tough decision for us to make but at this time we have cancelled any plans to hold a prom this year. There is simply no way to ensure that social distancing measures can be enforced with this type of social activity. We are sincerely sorry that we are not able to offer this activity at this time. If circumstances change and we can figure out a way to make a senior prom happen we will.

### **Project Graduation**

Lastly, I want to discuss Project Graduation. Just as with Prom, this will be a very challenging event to hold while ensuring social distancing. I have been communicating with the parents organizing this event and we have decided that rather than try and figure out a way to hold Project Graduation they are planning to take the money raised and purchase gift cards for senior that can be distributed either at a graduation ceremony or on May 26 and 28 when students come in to clean out their lockers, return their books, etc.

In closing, I think we can all agree that our school year did not end the way we wanted. We did not get a chance to say goodbye and we will all wrestle with finding that closure that those end-of-the-year celebrations provide us. But while the current situation we find ourselves in is not ideal, we are determined to remain positive and make the best of our current situation. We miss all of our students and wish our seniors nothing but the very best in their future endeavors.

Go Cards and Stay Safe!

Ron J. Jacobs, Principal  
Davison High School