



SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS FINALIZE PLANS FOR IN-PERSON GRADUATION EXPERIENCES FOR CLASS OF 2020

In our continued effort to recognize the significant achievements of the Spotsylvania County Public Schools (SCPS) graduating class of 2020, each of our high schools will be offering seniors the opportunity to participate in an in-person graduation experience. These personalized opportunities will be held in a controlled setting in which social distancing and other recommended safety measures are practiced. Courtland, Chancellor, Massaponax, Riverbend and Spotsylvania high schools will conduct these private graduation events for over 1,700 graduates during the weeks of May 18 - 29.

Graduates and their families will receive information from their high school principal outlining the specific details relating to this in-person opportunity. Although these ceremonies cannot be open to the public as per social distancing guidelines, each graduate will wear their cap and gown, hear their name announced, walk across the stage, receive the diploma they have earned, turn their tassel and have their photo taken. Graduates will also be able to include four immediate family members to accompany them for their special moment.

To further commemorate these ceremonies, a video that includes the speeches and other unique traditional aspects of each commencement exercise will be produced for our graduates. As in the past, the graduation commencement videos will be posted on the school websites throughout the summer. To further recognize their graduates, each high school will again honor the class of 2020 during their homecoming football game in the fall. Principals will provide additional details to students and families as the date approaches regarding this opportunity.

“Despite the unprecedented challenges, seniors and their families deserve the best we can provide in honoring their monumental achievements. Their deep disappointment in having the final months of a long journey cut short, is more than understandable. Yet, throughout the last 6-7 weeks, our graduates and families have demonstrated extraordinary patience and resilience. I know that I speak for all of our leaders and school board members when I say that I

am so proud of every Charger, Cougar, Panther, Bear, and Knight who has earned their diploma,” said Dr. Scott Baker, Spotsylvania County Public Schools Superintendent.

Due to the pandemic and guidance set forth by the Governor, it is not possible for Spotsylvania County Public Schools to hold traditional commencement exercises. The Governor’s Order 55, which is in effect through at least June 10, prohibits all public and private in-person gatherings of more than 10 people whether they occur indoors or outdoors. While delaying and rescheduling the ceremonies was considered, holding the events in the summer or fall also presents a variety of challenges with no guarantee that we will be able to host large gatherings at that time due to the phased approach that will be taken to reopen Virginia over an extended period of time.

“Ideally, we were hoping that the scheduling of a traditional graduation ceremony might be possible. Unfortunately, there still exists a high degree of uncertainty regarding when it might be possible for a mass gathering to take place. As the safety and well-being of our students remains the highest priority, we believe that the opportunity being provided allows for a memorable experience in a secure environment,” shared Dr. Baker.

“I thank our high school principals for working together in collaboration with division leadership, students, and parents. They care deeply for their students and are so excited to facilitate graduation and other celebratory activities in the coming weeks. I sincerely appreciate how they developed thoughtful and creative ways to honor each student,” continued Dr. Baker.

The modified plan for commencement ceremonies planned by Spotsylvania County Public Schools will provide graduates an opportunity to celebrate this significant occasion in a safe way and memorable manner.

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**POC: René P. Daniels, Director of Communications & Community Engagement
rdanels@spotsylvania.k12.va.us**