GRADUATION/END OF YEAR CEREMONIES

Updated 4/29/2021

Decisions around whether to host graduation ceremonies will remain at the discretion of local school boards and superintendents and must be conducted in accordance with Governor Mills’ Executive Orders and DECD and CDC guidelines. As we remain in a state of civil emergency, planners of important events are urged to consider the fact that regulations and recommendations are subject to change, due to the dynamic nature of this situation.

The following guidelines must be taken into consideration when planning events: Large Venue/Ticketed Events Checklist includes guidance for graduation events in a public venue or school setting. Capacity limits for indoor spaces will be 75% as of May 24th, and 100% capacity for outdoor venues.

- Physical (social) distancing of at least 6 feet between people (or household groups of up to 10 people) must be maintained at all times.
- Cloth face coverings must be used indoors, and are recommended in outdoor settings if 6 ft. of distancing cannot be maintained.
- Some municipalities have additional requirements and guidelines that must be followed.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS and CONSIDERATIONS

- Provide a professional photographer to provide commemorative photos for families.
- Record music and speeches ahead of time and stream to the audience.
- Communicate and coordinate with town/city public safety officials as needed.
- Limit the number of participants, staff, and guests.
- Develop accommodations, with increased distancing and precautions, for those with underlying health issues.
- Mark the standing locations of graduates waiting in line and during processional at 6-foot intervals.
- Ensure additional staff support to monitor and maintain acceptable distance.
- Utilize one-way direction of movements and use separate entrances and exits if possible.
- Consider how diplomas will be collected when a student’s name is called. Staff may consider placing the diploma on a table for the student to collect. Students may walk across the stage, collect the diploma from the table, and pose for a picture individually or appropriately distanced from a school/district official.
- Communicate expectations and guidelines in advance to ensure understanding and compliance.
- Develop plans for use of restrooms and access to soap and water for hand washing with marked waiting spaces at 6-foot intervals to avoid crowding at bathroom stalls or sinks. Arrange for a custodian to monitor and replenish soap/paper towels.
- Provide hand sanitizer in multiple areas.
- Contact your local law enforcement to help with planning and crowd control.
Consider designating a single person to take an official photo/video of each graduate receiving their diploma and prohibit others from approaching the area to take their own pictures or video.

Consider other creative options for honoring graduates:
- Virtual Ceremonies or video tributes: Ask seniors to send individual videos with short messages to their graduating classmates. This can be compiled with more traditional speeches that can be done by video or livestream to create a keepsake video.
- Hashtag Campaigns: Highlight seniors on social media each day with special hashtags that allow for family, friends, and community members to congratulate individual students (who agree to participate) with photos and messages.
- Yearbook Highlight Reel: Utilize senior photos, quotes, and senior projects for a highlight reel to display the senior class. This provides students an opportunity to showcase their work. This can be playing as added entertainment and be shared with families.