

## A graduation message from Mrs. Jones

We hope that this finds you healthy and well. The Class of 2020 will go down in history as the class that endured a global health pandemic to get to the finish line of their high school career. We could never have anticipated this end to our school year, but are grateful for the resilience, creativity and persistence of students, families, and staff to end the year on a strong note.

While Governor Inslee's orders will prevent us from having a traditional graduation ceremony at the Puyallup Fairgrounds on June 6, we have come up with a safe and thoughtful plan to honor graduating seniors in a variety of ways. We have some very important details to share with you regarding GATES upcoming graduation, so **please read carefully**.

Obviously, this pandemic has changed everything! The opportunity for students to learn face-to-face with their teachers and classmates came to an abrupt halt. Still, seniors have had to press on to complete their graduation requirements to earn their diploma. This means completing course work, meeting state assessment standards, and conducting their graduation candidate interview. Students have until the last day of school, June 19<sup>th</sup>, to complete all the graduation requirements. **However, to participate in the graduation festivities, they will need to have completed all requirements by June 6<sup>th</sup>. Exceptions may be made for students who are close to meeting requirements and have been continuously working towards meeting these requirements, however, principal approval will be required.**

**PRIOR** to our graduation walking ceremony, all seniors who have met graduation requirements are required to turn in their laptops and chargers. Those who do so at the designated time and location (see below) and have no other outstanding fines, ***will receive their diploma with their cover at our ceremony***. Those who do not, will just receive their diploma cover and their diploma will be held.

### Computer check in:

Date	Time	Location
June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	11:00-3:00	GATES High School
June 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	2:00-5:00	GATES High School

- Computers will be checked on site, only computers with charger and no damage will be considered as turned in.
- Damaged computers or computers without chargers will be assessed a fine and diplomas will be placed on hold.

## 2020 Virtual Graduation Ceremony

Since we are unable to gather in a large group to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2020, we are creating a virtual ceremony that will capture traditional elements of a graduation ceremony as well as a collection of memories and images unique to the class of 2020. This professionally produced video will include student and staff speeches, recognition of each student graduate, and footage that includes student highlights from this year’s graduating class. The premier of this virtual graduation will be announced soon, so be on the lookout. This virtual production will be made available online so that students, friends and family can watch simultaneously and access it in the future. Additional links and information will be made available on Friday, June 5th.

## Graduation Walking Ceremony:

- GATES students will have an opportunity to “walk across the stage” — where they will be dressed in cap and gown, have their name called, and walk across the stage to receive their diploma cover and have a graduation picture taken. Students will need to sign up for their time to walk and adhere to all Pierce County Health Department health safety guidelines.
- Following the walk across the stage event, all are invited to return to GATES High School for a Graduation Parade to take place on a designated route (maps will be provided). This event is limited to 30 vehicles please call 253-298-4000 to sign up if you want to participate. **Once we reach 30 vehicles, we will close the sign up process, and participants will be encouraged to participate along the route with signs and encouragement.**

Date	Time	Location
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June 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	11:00-4:00 (Students will sign up for a designated time)	Washington High School Performing Arts Center 12420 Ainsworth Ave S, Tacoma, WA 98444 (Please park in lot off of Tule Lake Road)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student should be dressed in cap and gown.</li> <li>• Students may invite up to five immediate family members.</li> <li>• Students and family should come in one car.</li> <li>• All must wear face masks.</li> </ul> <p><b>**Families may choose to decorate cars for the parade taking place at 5:00, while honoring appropriate social distancing at this time.</b></p>		

We understand the importance of truly celebrating the wonderful accomplishment of all our seniors. With that in mind, we will hold a **Gator Grad Parade**, the evening following our walking event.

**Gator Grad Parade:**

Date	Time	Location
June 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	5:00 Start	GATES High School Parking Lot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parade will be limited to 30 cars and advance sign up is required.</b></li> <li>• Parade procession will begin at 5:00 and students will receive a Grad Goodie Bag at the end of the route. All participants will be required to stay in their cars for the entire event.</li> <li>• A route map will be posted to our website soon.</li> <li>• Family and community members are invited to observe and cheer along the route.</li> </ul>		

GATES is very fortunate to be a part of this milestone and life/educational transition for all our seniors. While we cannot control our current circumstances, we know that “Gators got grit”, and it will take more than a pandemic to keep you from your goals and your dreams. Finish strong Gators and know how very proud of you we all are!