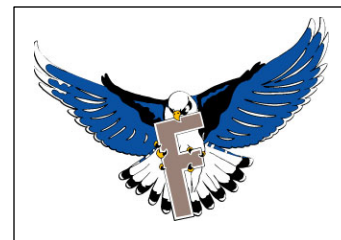


FLHS Class of 2020 Graduation Plans!



After much deliberation, planning, revising, voting, negotiating, committee meetings and cooperation, we are so proud to announce the Class of 2020 graduation plans.

Prior to this week, we were left with the untenable choice between having the graduates all be present in cars with only their names announced, OR have students have an opportunity to walk across the stage one-at-a-time at much smaller ceremonies. The state guidelines restricted us from doing both. HOWEVER, we are pleased to announce that with some loosening of the guidelines and some expert help from town officials, we can now have all FLHS seniors together AND offer a chance to walk across a stage!

IMPORTANT: CHANGE OF DATE/TIME

In order for both high schools to utilize the same set up and make sure we could secure a bad weather date, the FLHS Graduation will now take place on **JUNE 16 at 8:00 pm at Jennings Beach.** The rain date will be Thursday, June 18. The Fairfield Warde graduation will take place at Jennings Beach on June 17.

Before providing the details, I ask each family to take into account that school and town officials have done an incredible amount of work to ensure our graduates have the greatest and most comprehensive ceremony possible under state guidelines. It is not the traditional ceremony we all hoped for. We ask everyone to be understanding of some of the sacrifices that have to be made to keep our students and families safe but also to celebrate how much we have been able to provide to make this a memorable experience.

The details:

- Graduates and parents may arrive at Jennings Beach parking lot as early as 1 hour before the ceremony starts (7:00 pm). Parking attendants will guide you to a spot. We designed a special parking arrangement with the town engineer in order to fit everyone in the designated area, abide by guidelines for social distancing, and improve sight lines. We can only allow ONE CAR per graduate or else not all graduates will fit. Therefore, you must park where instructed. In order for windows to be open, cars must be spaced 6 feet apart. The parent committee will be sharing suggestions for car decorating to add to the festivities.
- All attendees must have face masks. Family members must stay in the car at all times. Bathroom facilities will be available (porta pottys) in the back of the parking lot for

emergencies. If you leave the car for any reason, you must be wearing a mask. Graduates will be provided an official FLHS mask as a keepsake and to use during the ceremony.

- The ceremony will be similar to a regular graduation, including speeches by students and the announcing of names. Activities taking place on the stage will be projected onto two large screens for all to see. The ceremony will be recorded to share with other family members who are not in attendance. The speeches and the announcing of names will be broadcast through an FM transmitter. Bring a radio with batteries! Cars are not allowed to idle during the ceremony, and you don't want to drain your car battery.
- Students will be called forward by homeroom in a staggered fashion and line up behind the stage six feet apart. We will assign a number to each graduate (provided in the future) and graduates will line-up on the number, in alphabetical order within your homeroom. Each graduate will be called forward by Mr. Hatzis and will collect a diploma envelope as they walk across the stage. We will provide all families a list of the order of how homerooms will be called as we get closer to graduation. Lights will illuminate the walkways to the stage and the stage itself. Graduates are only allowed out of their vehicle when directed when it is time to proceed to the stage area.
- We will start the ceremony at 8:00 pm sharp. The reason for the later start time is to ensure the images of graduates crossing the stage can be seen on the screens. With sunset occurring on 8:28 pm on June 16, you will not see the screens with the sun shining on them if we start earlier.
- A professional photographer will be taking pictures of the graduates walking the stage. Students will be allowed to remove their masks prior to crossing the stage. Parents will have the option to purchase pictures as they have for ceremonies in the past. Families are not allowed to leave their cars to take pictures at Jennings beach, so family photos should take place before the ceremony off the beach property.
- FLHS faculty members who are able to attend will be invited to line the pathway entering the parking lot from 7:00-8:00 pm to greet our seniors. Look for the blue t-shirts honoring the class of 2020.
- Unfortunately, State guidelines will not allow us to have a traditional "throwing of the caps." But we encourage all students to keep their caps for an opportunity to do this at a future event organized for the Class of 2020.

Entry and Egress

- Jennings Beach will be closed to residents at 5:00 pm. Residents will not have access to the large lot where the ceremony is held during the day of the ceremony.
- Cars will enter the parking lot through the South Benson Road entrance. The graduate dressed in their gown must be in the car with the family for entrance to be allowed. Parking attendants will direct all cars.
- Cars will be parked six feet apart in a checkerboard configuration to adhere to social distancing guidelines
- Cars will exit the parking lot at the conclusion of the ceremony through both the South Benson Road and Fairfield Beach Road exit gates.
- Gates will be set up from all beach entrances (J1-J7) and neighborhood entrances to prevent “walk-in” guests attempting to view the ceremony.

Here is an aerial image of the ceremony area. Please know that this is not fully drawn to scale. It is just to provide you a rough idea of the layout. You’ll notice every other parking spot is blank.



It is important for all families to be mindful and respectful of other families. This includes noise, blocking of views, impacting one’s ability to hear their graduate’s name read, and most of all, safe social distancing and not exposing anyone to danger.

Other general information/ Answers to questions:

School officials will be focused on the ceremony, so we ask all families to self-monitor or encourage others to abide by these guidelines to ensure a fair, safe and enjoyable experience for all.

- Any open top vehicle or general open exposure requires the use of masks during the ceremony. Families inside vehicles with only the windows down do not require masks.
- Party busses or any excessively oversized vehicles are not allowed. Anyone in violation of this will be asked to leave or may be parked in the back of the parking lot after other cars have entered. There will be no list provided of “allowed vehicles.” This will be a decision made by the gate attendants at the event.
- Cars must remain off during the ceremony.
- All cars must stay for the duration of the ceremony and cannot leave early.
- Honking of horns is not allowed. This is about respecting each family’s right to hear their own graduate’s name being announced.
- No loud music should be played from cars during the ceremony.
- Alcohol and tobacco products are not permitted. This is a school event, and school rules are in effect.
- Pets are not allowed to attend the ceremony.
- The ACTUAL diploma will not be issued at the ceremony. They will be mailed home once we have determined all obligations have been met.
- The Fairfield Police department, Fire department, and AMR (ambulance) services will be present during the ceremony to enforce all guidelines, protect all families, and provide support as necessary.

One thing we try to instill at FLHS is that their “Falcon Footprint Matters!”. The Class of 2020 has left an indelible and memorable footprint for their resilience and ability to stay positive through one of the greatest challenges we have ever seen.

They deserve an amazing ceremony, and it will take EVERYONE’s best efforts to pull this off. We thank all families for following the directions and guidelines outlined in this letter. Please read through the letter carefully before submitting any questions. We will have follow up communication as we get closer to the ceremony.

We want to thank the amazing group of parent volunteers who were instrumental in providing input toward this outcome and for organizing so many little ways of making this a special experience.

I look forward to seeing everyone on June 16.

Greg Hatzis