



THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

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ROBERT W. RUNCIE
Superintendent of Schools

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Broward County, Florida**

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April 22, 2020

Dear Broward County Public Schools Class of 2020,

Congratulations to each and every one of you. After completing more than a decade of schooling, you have reached a proud milestone and are ready to jump into the next chapter of life. With the education and training you have received, you are well prepared to be successful on whatever path you take.

As your senior plans have been abruptly disrupted, I know it is a challenging and confusing time that at moments seems surreal; however, the Class of 2020 is no stranger to facing adversity and uncertainty. You have weathered hurricanes, economic recessions and the shifting landscape of high-stakes state mandated assessments.

Now, as you are close to graduation, schools are closed again, this time due to the coronavirus. To safeguard our students, teachers and the community, you are attending classes remotely and completing your coursework at home. I know this new learning environment has put pressures on you and your families. It is painful being separated from your friends, teachers and administrators who support and love you. I have heard from so many of you who are heartbroken that your senior year activities, including prom and Grad Bash, have been cancelled.

The American educator and reformer Booker T. Washington said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome." I have seen your strength and ingenuity, and your ability to overcome challenges and move forward. The Class of 2020 is strong and resilient.

Along with teachers and administrators, I have met with many of you over the past few weeks to discuss what to do about graduation ceremonies, since large gatherings are not safe at this time. We looked at graduation options from every perspective. Thank you to everyone who joined our brainstorming meetings, emailed, called, tweeted and texted your ideas. Hearing a traditional graduation is your preference, we considered moving the date to as late as August but realized this decision would still not ensure we would know if restrictions would be lifted. We felt it was important to establish a timeframe now, so you and your families will have time to plan and prepare.

It was an arduous decision, but with your ideas behind our thinking, we have agreed to hold virtual graduation ceremonies for each high school between Monday, June 15 – Sunday, June 28, 2020. The date of each school's graduation will be announced on May 1, along with more details.

Our goal is to use technology to make your graduation personal and memorable.

We know photos of you in your cap and gown are important. All graduation regalia (gowns, cords, stoles, medallions, etc.) will be distributed to seniors in May to enable you to take individual graduation

pictures with your families. Your principal will be reaching out to you during this time to keep you up to date on your school's graduation plans.

Building up to graduation day, short, personal video clips from our seniors will be gathered. Principals will create brief videos that share their perspectives about graduation and your amazing class. The clips will be merged into an hour-long program entitled, "Preview of the BCPS Class of 2020 Graduation." It will be aired on the District's BECON-TV, which will become the "Graduation Channel," and posted on a website that will be created for your graduations.

Each graduation will be promoted on BECON, so the community will know the graduation schedule. Every graduation will broadcast live on BECON. The ceremonies can be viewed in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties. WBEC-TV broadcasts on channels 63 on public access, on AT&T U-verse, Direct TV and Dish Network, and channels 19 and 488 on Comcast. Ceremonies will also be streamed live via YouTube with a live chat window. This way, you can invite your family and friends – whether they live locally, across the country or all over the world – to watch and celebrate your graduation together at the same time. And, since it will be aired in real time, you can enjoy chatting about it on social media.

The virtual graduations will be structured using the format of our traditional graduations and include:

- Presentation of Colors, National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance
- Welcome (Student Government Association President)
- Superintendent Greeting
- Welcome/Address (Principal)
- Senior Address (Senior Class President)
- Salutatorian Address (Salutatorian for the Class of 2020)
- Valedictorian Address (Valedictorian for the Class of 2020)
- Presentation of the Class of 2020 (Principal)
- Certification of Class and Remarks (School Board Members)
- Roll Call of Graduates (Select Staff)
- Turning of Tassels (Senior Class President)
- Alma Mater (Screenshot with Words)
- Closing (Congratulations slide with rolling senior class pictures)

Although I will not get to personally shake your hand and congratulate you as you proudly walk across the stage, I am comforted by these words from Helen Keller: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, but just felt in the heart." The beauty of the Class of 2020 will live forever in our hearts. Our School Board members and I are proud of all of you for your strength, your perseverance and your capacity to hope, dream and fight for a better world.

Cheers to your success,



Robert W. Runcie, Superintendent
Broward County Public Schools