

Imperial High School

Home of the Tigers

Memorandum

TO: Bryan Thomason, Superintendent
FROM: Joe Apodaca, Principal
DATE: Friday, May 1, 2020
SUBJECT: Final Proposal for Class of 2020 Graduation during COVID-19 Closure

In collaboration with IUSD Superintendent, the I.H.S administrative team, class advisers, and student leadership have met multiple times to explore possibilities to honor the Class of 2020 as they end their K-12 careers. Social distancing and stay-at-home restrictions have made the traditional ceremony an unlikely option; however, after multiple meetings and consideration, we have come up with the following alternative: A virtual “live” Graduation Ceremony followed by a Ceremonial Car Parade (parade suggested by the parents and over 400 signatures in support). This is a bulleted breakdown of the tentative plan:

- Josten’s will provide us with Zoom access for up to 1000 people, which will allow us to have the ceremony live. Students, along with their families, will participate from their homes in full regalia. The virtual ceremony will be recorded.
- The ceremony will include this tentative itinerary: a “live” welcome by Mr. Apodaca (principal). After the welcome, we will move with the following: The Pledge of Allegiance (ASB), the singing of our National Anthem (Mr. Dennis Gibbs), Recognition of staff, personnel, and dignitaries (Mr. Apodaca), Salutatorian Address, Valedictorian Address, and Exchanging of the Flags with Foreign Exchange Student, A-G recognition, and Conferring of Diplomas.
- Next, each graduate’s name will be called out and a photo of the graduate will be displayed on the screen, along with a quote and or where they will be attending after graduation.
- After the last graduate is announced, graduates will be asked to move their tassels and all will be asked to take a video of themselves throwing their caps into the air.
- The virtual ceremony should last approximately 60 to 75 minutes and is tentatively set to begin at 4:00 PM.
- Upon completion of the ceremony, and in collaboration with the City of Imperial, we will honor the Class of 2020 with a car procession down Barioni Ave and into the I.H.S campus.
- The procession will begin at 7:00 PM in front of Donut Avenue with the Top 20 Graduates first and led by a decorated school bus. The Valedictorian will lead one line, followed by the top 10 and the Salutatorian another, and followed by 11-20, thereby creating two lines. The remaining vehicles will follow in no specific order. The lines

will move westbound on Barioni Blvd. and enter the I.H.S campus via the south staff parking lot. "Pomp and Circumstance" will begin to play when the first vehicles enter the I.H.S parking lot and will continue to play until the end of the procession.

- The procession will move north bound through the campus toward the north exit where there will be tables arranged and the graduates will obtain their diploma cases. If social distancing parameters are relaxed by then, we can have members of the Board of Trustees there to greet the graduates and hand them the diploma cover. If not, the graduates will be able to take them from the tables.
- Only one vehicle per graduate will be permitted.
- All participants will be asked to wear face coverings – the graduates will be provided with masks created especially for them and for the occasion.
- We will encourage spectators to please support our graduates by staying indoors, if restrictions have not been removed or relaxed. We are in the process of exploring the possibility of live streaming the procession in a similar way that we have live streamed the ceremony in past years. (TENTATIVE)
- We are also in the process of capturing the parade by video, creating a slide show, and posting it on youtube. (TENTATIVE)
- We will collaborate with the City of Imperial/ Imperial Police Department for support with the logistics of the procession and temporary closure of streets.
- Fireworks will be released during the procession in sporadic times while graduates obtain their diplomas, as opposed to all at one time.
- When each graduate obtains the diploma cover, their vehicle will exit via the north gate and they will proceed to go home to celebrate with their families.

For Consideration:

- The procession is contingent on whether or not more strict parameters are issued by local and or state authorities. By the same measures, if restrictions are lifted or relaxed, we may consider more relaxed options. This event adheres to social distancing parameters and all safety measures will be taken and enforced.

Class of 2020 Virtual Graduation and Ceremonial Vehicle Procession
Friday, June 5th, 2020
Guidelines and Parameters

The Virtual Graduation Ceremony: This event will take place at 3:00 PM on Friday, June 5th and will be followed by a Ceremonial Vehicle Procession, which will begin at 6:30 PM. Graduates will be provided with access to Zoom in order to watch the ceremony from home and provide family members access. The Virtual Ceremony will consist of a Procession, Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem, Opening Remarks, Speeches by the Class Salutatorian and Valedictorian, Presentation of the Class, the announcing of each graduate with a photo displaying on the screen when their name is announced, conferring of diplomas, and conclusion. ***The ceremony will be recorded and access to the link will be provided.***

Ceremonial Vehicle Procession: Each student, along with no more than two family members, will drive their vehicle to the staging area by Frank Wright Middle School. Personnel will be there to assist in placing vehicles in order. There will be two lines, side by side, one led by the class Valedictorian and the other by the Salutatorian. The top 20 scholars will follow, then CSF Scholars. From there, vehicles will align in any order. Once the procession begins, vehicles will be led by an Imperial Fire Truck and will end up moving westbound on Barioni Blvd towards Imperial High School, where vehicles will turn into the south staff parking lot and proceed to move north toward the gymnasium and library buildings. On the north end of the school, there will be two stages, one on the right and one on the left - one for each line of vehicles. The graduate will be guided to exit the vehicle, show the reader an index card with their name on it, and walk onto the stage when his or her name is read. On the stage, members of the Board of Trustees will greet the student (6 feet away and no hand shaking), the graduate will obtain a diploma cover from a table and pose for a photo. The graduate may remove the face covering **ONLY** for the photo. Once the photo is taken, the face covering must be placed back. The graduate will promptly leave the stage and return to the vehicle and exit the north gate and leave campus. Please note that this will need to be done expeditiously in order to avoid back up of traffic. It should take no more than 30 seconds from the announcement of the name to the graduate re-entering the vehicle. It is important that graduates and parents go home for the evening. **All Students, family members, and any staff will be required to wear protective face coverings.** This event will be live streamed so family members may watch from home. The event will also be recorded, and a link will be shared.

Fireworks Display: To honor the Class of 2020, there will be a fireworks display upon the ending of the procession. We are asking that no one convene or congregate in the city streets for this as it is purely to honor our graduates. Please be advised that if groups of people begin to form for the display, it will be cancelled and the class will not be refunded the money invested in the show, so please help us by going home and watching the display from your homes. The display will be live streamed, recorded, and included with the link to the Vehicle Procession.

NON-NEGOTIABLE PARAMETERS:

- Only two guests may accompany the graduate in the vehicle and only **ONE** vehicle is permitted per graduate. We ask that the graduate sit in the front passenger seat.
- All participants must sit inside the vehicle. No one is permitted to sit on beds of pickups/ trucks or outside of any vehicle. Failure to adhere to this will result loss of participation.
- Vehicles may be decorated as long as the decorations are appropriate.
- We are asking graduates to dress in their Cap and Gown, with decorated Caps, sashes, and stoles.
- This is not a "parade" designed for spectators; it is a procession to allow our graduates and their two escorts to make their way to Imperial High School. Please ask members of extended family to remain at home and watch it via live stream.
- If large crowds begin to congregate, the event will be cancelled - *Please help us celebrate our graduates by staying at home.*
- The Valedictorian and Salutatorian vehicles will lead the procession, followed by the top 20 and CSF Top Scholars. From there, vehicles may form in any order. There will be "two" lines of vehicles.
- Graduates are to write their names on a large index card in large print to show the reader to announce their names.
- The procession will begin at 6:30 PM, so we will ask for participants to arrive in the staging area at least one hour prior to starting.
- All participants (graduates and family members) are required to wear face coverings without exception.
- The graduate may only remove the face covering once on the stage and for the photo. The covering must be placed back after the photo.
- No one is allowed to exit the vehicle, without exception, except for the graduate to take a photo on the stage.
- When the graduate steps on the stage, the vehicle will move in front of the stage so that the parent may take video or photo with their phone.
- Upon the graduate leaving the stage, he or she is to enter the vehicle, exit the north gate, and return home. Please do not remain in the city streets.
- Do not congregate for the Fireworks Display. If crowds begin to form, the display will be cancelled.
- Only approved IUSD staff are permitted on campus. Any unauthorized individuals will be charged with trespassing.

We want to thank all of you for all of your support. We have been fortunate to work with the Great City of Imperial, The Imperial Police Department, and The County Health Department to ensure that we may provide our graduating seniors with a ceremony that they deserve. They have endured a lot and have faced this unprecedented ordeal with great courage. We want to make sure that we are all adhering to the parameters established herein so that they may enjoy this great milestone in their lives. **TIGER PRIDE!**



Imperial County Public Health Department Early Guidance Regarding COVID-19 and Graduation Ceremonies May 19, 2020

The outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent school site closures for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year have created questions related to graduation ceremonies. Decisions to host safe and socially distanced graduations will remain at the discretion of local school boards and superintendents. Districts and schools may choose to postpone graduation ceremonies, although it is not known when large-scale in-person events will be able to be safely held. Alternatively, districts and schools can choose to honor graduating students in a way that prioritizes the health and safety of participants and follows local and state physical/social distancing orders and other guidance.

Understanding the milestone that graduation ceremonies represent, the Imperial County Public Health Department is providing the following guidance for public school districts, public and private schools to consider when navigating concerns while honoring graduations and at the same time following current [local and state] guidance.

VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Districts and schools can honor graduating students virtually. Virtual graduation ceremonies are the safest. This approach is strongly recommended to maximize the safety and health of everyone involved. There are many good examples to be found on social media of virtual graduation ceremonies using technology. Examples include:

Online: Schools can hold an online virtual (YouTube, Facebook Live etc.) ceremony similar to traditional graduation ceremonies in terms of commencement speakers, special presentations, and any acknowledgements of awardees. Viewing information can be disseminated to the graduates and their families.

Videos: Graduates, teachers, principals, etc., can create short videos with messages and send to their graduating classmates. This, with recorded speeches by invited speakers, can be used to create a longer film highlighting the graduates' school experiences and provides a long-term memento.

Social Media: Highlight graduates 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.

DRIVE-THRU AND DRIVE-IN GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Virtual events are strongly encouraged, although we recognize this may not be possible in all situations. Alternative celebration events may include:

Drive-thru ceremony: Students, and their immediate household members (not family members who live elsewhere), should arrive in waves and leave after the student is recognized. Students may not exit cars. This type of event will require precise scheduling, traffic control, and safety personnel, etc. and may be appropriate for small to medium-sized graduation classes in less trafficked areas.

Photo opportunities during drive thru ceremony: If a picture is desired, only the student gets out of the car for a picture. The student needs to be wearing a facial covering and practices social distancing. The student may take off his/her facial covering only for the picture. The photographer needs to be at least 10 feet away from students at all times. Once the picture is taken, the student returns to the car and proceeds out.

Drive-in ceremony: Students, and only their immediate household (not family members who live elsewhere) should arrive and remain in cars for the entire ceremony. These ceremonies can be done at drive-in movie theaters, school parking lots, or other large parking lot venues that could be exclusively used for the graduation event. Multiple ceremonies may be needed depending on the class size. Large projection screens and sound equipment may be required. Coordinating with a local radio station to broadcast the ceremony may be an option. Students and families without vehicles would need alternative accommodations and transportation that complies with social distancing requirements.

GENERAL SAFETY PRACTICES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

The recommendations below must be employed, as appropriate, if drive-through or drive-in ceremonies are held.

- Districts and schools must ensure that students receive diplomas and caps and gowns in advance through the mail or delivery so they can arrive dressed and with their diplomas in hand. Students or families may also collect these items at the school during meal distribution or locker clean-out. Please ensure social distancing guidelines are followed.
- There should be no person-to-person contact during the ceremony. Individuals may not hand diplomas or any other items or shake graduates' hands.
- Students or families should not exit their car.
- School officials should remain at least six feet apart at all times.
- School officials should clearly communicate expectations and procedures related to photography. Districts and schools should provide someone to take multiple pictures of all individual graduates and provide the photos free of charge to families in order to reduce concern of missing these important moments. Please ensure students and

families are aware of photography policies.

- Only staff should be allowed outside of their cars.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider available space in order to calculate capacity and determine the number of ceremonies needed.
- Consider limiting attendance and broadcasting the ceremony via a livestream platform and recording the ceremony to provide access to those not in attendance.
- Consider the timing of when ceremonies take place.
- For school officials not in cars, consider weather conditions, such as sun exposure, heat, and rain. Take appropriate precautions related to weather protection. Consider if cars need to be turned off during the ceremony.
- There should be no restroom access or refreshments to prevent areas of congregation and additional areas to monitor. Students and families should be advised in advance that restroom facilities and refreshments will not be available.
- Ensure that facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities and provide all necessary accommodations for students with special needs.
- Set expectations, policies, and guidelines in advance, and reiterate those before the ceremony day and at the start of the ceremony, to ensure overall health and safety.
- Districts should consult with the local public health department, law enforcement, and other officials when planning these events to ensure that health and safety protocols are followed appropriately.

