

Graduation FAQs

Where is graduation? Tropicana Field, 16th Street S at 4th Avenue S

When is graduation? Friday May 17th 3:30PM. You need to be at Gate 1 ready to line up at 2:30PM. We need to move quickly and efficiently. The ceremony will begin promptly at 3:30PM. If you are late, you will be at the end of the line, if permitted to participate at all.

Can I participate in the graduation ceremony? Participating in the graduation ceremony, per Pinellas County School Board policy, is a privilege, not a right. The graduation ceremony is reserved for students who have earned a Diploma or a Certificate of Completion. Students who have not earned all required 24 credits (including four math credits, Biology and 2 additional Science Credits, Economics, American Government and English IV) will not participate in the graduation ceremony, nor will students who are still awaiting test scores, course completion through online means, or other circumstances that do not guarantee all requirements are met prior to the ceremony. In addition, students who are suspended or are otherwise deemed ineligible by the Principal may not participate in the ceremony.

What if I owe money and am on the “Hold List?” If you owe any fees to the school (books, library fines, grad fees, uniforms, club fees, fundraising money, etc) you may not be allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony.

What should I bring with me? Your gown and cap with tassel. You may also bring your car keys, but no purses, cameras, cell phones, sunglasses, etc. We will hold keys and cell phones in a bag labeled with your name during the ceremony if necessary, and you can pick these items up after the ceremony when you pick up your diploma. You will receive your final name card and your medallion from guidance counselors upon entering the gate area.

What should I wear under my robes? Business dress. For women, this means a dress, a blouse and skirt, or blouse and pants (no shorts-this includes rompers). For men, this means a dress shirt and dress pants (no cargo pockets, no jeans, no shorts). Appropriate footwear is required-NO flip-flops, Crocs, or tennis shoes. No, I don't care if they're your brand new Jordans.

Can I decorate my cap and wear outside paraphernalia? No. You may not wear a tassel other than the Northeast High School red, black, and white tassel. You may not decorate the top of your caps; this is an honor we will reserve for when you graduate college. You may not wear any ribbons, cords, stoles, or any other paraphernalia that was not pre-approved through Northeast High School.

What about shoes? Women may wear heels, platform heels, pumps, or sandals with a strap in the back. Just remember, you will be walking across the grass and Tropicana is a large stadium. You will want to wear comfortable, easy to walk in shoes. Men must wear dress shoes (this means leather or leather look-alike) or loafers. No sandals, flip-flops, tennis shoes, leather sports shoes, hiking boots, etc. Cowboy style boots that fit INSIDE your trouser leg are acceptable. Remember that you are walking around Tropicana, and you want to wear shoes that are not going to hurt you or impede your ability to walk around.

What if I choose to wear something unacceptable? Then you have chosen not to participate in the ceremony. If you have doubts about correctness, bring the outfit to Dr. Duszynski for approval **prior** to final exams.

How many guests can come? There are no guest limits, all are welcome. Please notify Dr. Duszynski if your guests have special needs such as an **American Sign Language interpreter**. Guests with disabilities who may not be able to walk the distance from the parking lots may be dropped off at Gate 4. **There are NO wheelchairs available at Tropicana for this event.**

Do we have to pay for parking? Yes, \$10. We recommend that you carpool to save money, parking spaces, and time. Parking will be available in lots 6&7. General Public will enter through gates 1 and 5. LOT 3 is the “Rideshare Lot” for people using taxis, Uber, Lyft. **LOTS WILL ONLY ACCEPT CARDS FOR PARKING PAYMENT. NO CASH PARKING IS AVAILABLE.**

What about pictures? Pictures are taken by Modern Tassel Inc., and a video will be livestreamed. You will receive a photo of Mr. Hernandez handing you your diploma, and an additional photo at the opposite end of the stage holding your diploma. You will be able to download any and all photos you would like, free of charge, 48 hours after the ceremony. The QR code to access these photos is included in the graduation program and a link will also be sent out through Remind once the photos are ready. **No one except contracted services may take pictures on the field during the ceremony.**

What about a video? There are no videos available for purchase, but there will be a YouTube link to the live feed. The link will become available the day of graduation.

What happens on graduation day?

- You should arrive by 2:30PM ready to line up. You will pick up a card with your name and lineup position as you check in at Gate 1.
- You will stand in rows in alphabetical order until we enter the final staging area. There will be teachers waiting to help you find your place. This should not take more than 10-15 minutes if you come prepared.

Graduation:

- A commencement marshal (teacher) will lead you to chairs set up on the field. You will wait to sit until all students and faculty are present.
- Rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Remain standing during the Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem and Alma Mater. Boys are to remove their caps and replace them before resuming their seats.
- After the Pledge of Allegiance, various introductions, and speeches, you will proceed by row, to the stage to receive your diploma cover.
- Remain seated until the marshal for your row instructs you to stand. Your marshal will then escort you to the stage. Have your name card ready to hand to the reader. You are NOT to keep this card.
- If the reader asks your name, or it is difficult to pronounce, please state your name quietly and listen as they repeat it to you.
- You will go up the steps behind the stage, calmly walk across the stage to receive your diploma from Mr. Hernandez (Picture taken here). If you decide to “perform” at any time during the ceremony or distract from the ceremony your diploma will be held until you and your parents meet with Mr. Hernandez later in June.
- You will exit the stage, calmly walking down steps at the right side, and have another picture taken. You will walk calmly to your chair and wait until the rest of your row arrives before sitting.
- After all diploma covers are presented, Mr. Hernandez will instruct everyone to move their tassels to the left side of their caps. Please be sure to WAIT so that everyone does this at the same time.
- Do not throw your cap at the end of the ceremony.
- Stand after the farewell but REMAIN AT YOUR SEAT. You will be dismissed by rows.

Recessional

- When the recessional music begins, the faculty will leave followed by the graduates. All graduates are to follow the marshal’s instructions and exit down the center aisle ONLY! You will exit in the SAME ORDER as you entered. First row (the one closest to the stage) exits first, etc.
- The faculty and administrators will meet you in the area immediately before the diploma table.

After the Ceremony:

- Go to the diploma distribution area where you will find tables labeled with letters of the alphabet organized by last names. Your diploma must be picked up by you and signed for at the tables. (Only graduates will be allowed in this area.) Please do this promptly to enable you to return to your parents and guests as quickly as possible.

GUESTS:

- **Parking:** Lots will open 1 hour prior to the beginning of the ceremony. \$10 to park each vehicle. NO CASH PARKING IS AVAILABLE, PAYMENTS CAN ONLY BE MADE BY CARD. Consider carpooling to save money. Park in lots 6, & 7
 - Lot 3 is the “Rideshare Lot” for people using taxis, Uber, Lyft.
- **Guests** should enter the stadium between 2:45PM and 3:00PM.
- **Guests must enter at Gates 1 and 5** and will seat themselves. No reserved seating other than at the rail for guests with disabilities.
- **UPDATED INFO for SPRING 2024:** Backpacks, coolers and bags of any kind exceeding 16" x 8" are not permitted through Tropicana Field security. Personal bags smaller than this size, medical device bags and diaper bags accompanying a young child are permitted. For more information, visit raysbaseball.com/security. BALLOONS are also not permitted.
- **Strollers** will not be permitted in the arena. We will have secure “parking” for strollers inside all entry gates.
- **Disabled guests**—guests wishing to drop-off a family member(s) who is unable to walk from the car may use the car circle in front of **Gate 4** to drop off the family member(s). Tropicana does not provide wheelchairs, please ensure guests bring their own wheelchairs or other ambulatory assistive devices. If you have a relative who needs special accommodations due to disability, you must inform Dr. Duszynski immediately. We can arrange to obtain an American Sign Language interpreter.
- **No filming, video or still, is permitted on the field except by the contracted photographers.** Guests may film and take pictures from the seating area. Students will be shown crossing the stage on the jumbo-tron, so it will not be necessary to leave your seat to see your graduate cross the stage.
- **Expect to remain for the entire ceremony.** Leaving prior to the completion of the ceremony disrupts the vision and hearing of other guests and is unfair to the graduates who have worked so diligently to reach this special occasion. If you must leave, please do so quietly and unobtrusively.
- **No posters, banners, balloons, air horns, confetti, etc.** are allowed at the ceremony. Banners and posters can obstruct the view of others; air horns, cow bells, and other noise-making items preclude others from hearing the announcement of their graduate. Tropicana security personnel will confiscate any unauthorized items.
- **Security** will be checking all bags and wandng all guests at the entry gates.
- **First Aid** is available on the main concourse level.
- **Concession stands** will be open for limited sales during the ceremony this year.
- **No coolers, cans, bottles, etc.** will be allowed in for the ceremony.
- **Smoking areas** will be located outside of gates 1 and 5.
- **NO PERSONAL ITEMS may be brought into Tropicana Field/no concessions available:**
 - No signs, flowers/gifts or air horns may be brought into the stadium.

Prohibited Items- Prohibited items will not be stored. If you have any of these items with you, they may be returned to your vehicle or discarded. All people and packages are scanned before entry to Tropicana Field. The following items are prohibited from being brought into the ballpark:

- Backpacks, coolers and bags of any kind exceeding 16" x 8"
- Alcoholic beverages
- Weapons of any kind, including firearms, knives and chemical sprays larger than .5 ounce.
- Fireworks or other explosives; Items that could be projectiles
- Cameras with lenses longer than 12”
- Bullhorns, airhorns and other excessively loud noisemakers
- Lasers
- Brooms longer than 3’
- Anything that can obstruct the view of other fans
- Wrapped presents or gifts
- Footwear with wheels
- Other items as determined by Tropicana Field security and Rays staff