

**PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS
GRADUATION CEREMONY PROTOCOLS
VIDEO TRANSCRIPT**

SUPERINTENDENT MICHAEL GREGO:

Hi. I'm Pinellas County Schools Superintendent Michael Grego. Congratulations once again to the Class of 2020! Just a few short weeks ago, we were not sure we would be able to host in-person graduation ceremonies. But I am thrilled that through a collaboration with the Florida Department of Health and the Philadelphia Phillies, we have been able to put a plan together that will celebrate our seniors, while protecting the health and safety of our students, staff and families.

Graduates: you will have the opportunity to dress in full graduation regalia, enjoy Pomp and Circumstance as you process across the stage, and have family members participate, up close and personal, as you mark this tremendous milestone at Spectrum Field.

As we prepare for the ceremonies, I want you to be aware of the health and safety protocols that we will follow, to ensure that our students are recognized while following all recommended safety guidelines.

First and foremost, please note that these graduation ceremonies are optional. No one should participate if they do not feel well or are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.

To review the protocols, I'd like to introduce Dr. Rita Vasquez, Executive Director of High School Education. Thank you Dr. Vasquez, for your work to recognize our outstanding graduates.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION RITA VASQUEZ:

Thank you Dr. Grego. Pinellas County Schools is working hard to make the Class of 2020 Graduation Ceremonies special and safe for all involved. Please note that all safety protocols are based on CDC guidelines and have been made in partnership with the Department of Health.

To keep the assembly size down, only the graduate and up to four family members will be allowed to enter the stadium. The ceremony will also be abbreviated to limit exposure.

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Each graduate will be assigned a check-in time, as well as a parking and entry gate (either red or blue). Please do not proceed to the entry gate prior to your check-in time to avoid crowding at the gates.

At your check in time, please move to the assigned gate. The graduate will be issued a commemorative Class of 2020 face covering. Everyone will be required to wear a face covering or mask throughout the ceremony. Bags, backpacks and purses will not be allowed in to the stadium to ensure an efficient check in process.

Once checked in, graduates and their families will process across the field to the stage area. The graduate will cross the stage to receive greetings from their principal and have their professional photograph taken. Although it will be hard, no handshakes or hugs will be permitted.

Families will walk directly in front of the stage and will be able to take their own close-up photos and video of their graduate.

Graduates and guests will be moving throughout the ceremony. We ask you to maintain social distancing at all times. Also, please wear flat shoes as you will be walking on grass throughout the procession. If you or a member of your family needs an accommodation, please alert your principal right away.

Once you cross the stage, we ask you to exit the stadium and proceed directly to your car. Gathering outside the stadium will not be permitted. Diplomas will be available for pick up immediately following the ceremony at nearby Clearwater High School.

The decision to host these in-person graduation ceremonies was not taken lightly. We recognize the importance of celebrating this accomplishment, but also have a duty to do it safely and responsibly. Every option was carefully considered, and every decision was made putting the health and safety of our students, families and staff first.

We know this will not be a typical graduation ceremony, but the Class of 2020 is not a typical class. You've persisted and persevered through a global pandemic and have made history in the process.

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DR. GREGO:

That's right, the Class of 2020 is unlike any other, and I am so proud to be your superintendent.

We are doing everything we can to celebrate your achievements while taking all recommended precautions. But for anyone who does not feel comfortable attending in-person, these ceremonies will also be livestreamed on the district's You Tube page.

Additionally, every graduate will receive a free copy of their school's virtual graduation ceremony, which includes a video recap of the year, as well as speeches from their principal, valedictorian and other special guests.

For more information about the upcoming ceremonies, please visit our website at www.pcsb.org/graduation.

Class of 2020, we are so proud of all of you and can't wait to share this moment with you in person. We will see you very soon at Spectrum Field.