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May 11, 2020

Dear Class of 2020 Parents and Seniors:

Thank you for participating in the survey last week to give input on this year's graduation ceremony. The survey results are in, and both parents and students overwhelmingly chose the option to graduate at the stadium with limited guests. Now that we know your preference, we are better able to plan a ceremony to honor our Class of 2020 graduates.

Based on your feedback, we will plan to hold ceremonies at our stadiums June 17-20, 2020. This timeframe was chosen because it is after the expiration of Governor Kemp's current ban on large gatherings. A schedule will be created to set the date and time for each high school. This schedule will be announced on the district website by this Friday, May 15.

Graduates who are unable to participate in the ceremony will be offered virtual recognition during their high school's commencement. In addition, all of the ceremonies will be live streamed online as usual.

Our goal is to provide an experience which honors each graduate and gives family and friends an opportunity to see their senior graduate. Ceremonies will be similar to traditional commencements, with pomp and circumstance befitting of the occasion, speakers such as the valedictorian and principal, and the turning of the tassels before singing the alma mater. Every high school will also have a professional photographer onsite to photograph each graduate.

Seating at the stadium will be limited due to social distancing requirements. Each graduate will receive a set number of tickets. The exact number will be determined and announced closer to the event date based on the most current safety guidelines.

Please know that these plans are contingent on the situation at the time with the COVID-19 pandemic and any executive orders issued by Governor Brian Kemp. Our number one priority is the safety of our students and employees. Safety precautions for the ceremonies will be established based on current recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and the North Central Health District. A contingency plan will also be prepared in the event of a public health reason, inclement weather, or other incidents beyond our control.

Thank you for your patience as we work through the best way to honor our graduates during this public health crisis and school closure. We are so proud of our students and congratulate each member of the Class of 2020! We look forward to honoring them soon.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Scott, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Houston County School District