



Cory-Rawson Local Schools

April 28, 2020

Heath Huffman, Superintendent

CLASS OF 2020

Good Evening:

Below are several questions and responses to various topics related to the Class of 2020's graduation. This information is provided in addition to an email sent to all senior parents on Saturday, April 25th. A copy of that information is shared below. The information shared in this email is tentative as the guidelines provided by Governor DeWine and/or the Ohio Department of Education changes on a weekly, if not daily basis.

When will the graduation ceremony/activities take place?

Barring any other orders from the state of Ohio, Cory-Rawson High School will celebrate graduation via a ceremony and possibly other activities on **May 24, 2020**. We had set a potential date in July, however, several members of the senior class cannot attend a ceremony at a later date due to armed services commitments, and other unchangeable obligations. Additional activities may take place in July or August if public health orders permit. Please plan accordingly.

What type of graduation ceremony/activities are being planned?

At this time, we are not 100% certain about what type of ceremony will take place. Why? On Thursday, April 23, 2020 the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) provided guidance stating that graduation ceremonies should be virtual. ODE further stated in-person ceremonies should not be held.

Today, however, Governor DeWine potentially opened the door for in-person ceremonies to be held "if a school can do the (social) distancing, if they could figure out how to do that -- you know, they could, they can certainly do graduation" (DeWine, April 27, 2020 Press Conference). Please see the article below for further information on the governor's comments.

Cory-Rawson Schools expects additional clarification from Governor DeWine and/or the Ohio Department of Education this week, but preliminary information out of Columbus seems to indicate the 10-person gathering limit may still apply to in-person graduation ceremonies.

What options are on the table for graduation?

First and foremost, we are waiting for additional guidance and clarification in the next several days. If initial "rumors" hold true, one viable option for which preliminary planning has begun would be....

- ▶ A professional videographer agreed to video (prior to May 24th) key components of our traditional ceremony that would take place in family groups (class speaker, virtual singing of the alma mater and potentially instrumental pieces, faculty speaker, and diploma dissemination within confines of public health orders (masks, temperature taking, social distancing, etc.). For instance, Class of 2020 masks (with graphic) would be provided to graduates and guests. All graduates would receive a complimentary copy of the virtual ceremony.
- ▶ Graduates and a limited number of guests would attend a short ceremony on May 24 2020 (at the football field in vehicles) for a "whole-class" recognition of graduation from high school with appropriate health and safety precautions.
- ▶ After the brief ceremony at school, the Southwest Hancock Joint Fire District would lead a senior parade through Mt. Cory, Rawson, and Jenera.
- ▶ We have made preliminary contact with a local drive-in to discuss the potential "showing" of the virtual ceremony to graduates and their guests during the evening of May 24th. At this time, management at the drive-in stated they "would be happy to talk about the plan but are just not sure how soon they will be allowed to have patrons at the drive-in." If this cannot occur, families could view the virtual ceremony at their leisure through the copies provided.
- ▶ A large group celebration to celebrate the Class of 2020 would be held at a later date when safe to do so.

Who's involved in making the decisions regarding graduation?

The Cory-Rawson School District has a legal responsibility to follow guidelines from state governmental agencies. Beyond that, however, the board of education, administrative team, staff, the Class of 2020 (and its officers), and senior parents have had (and will continue) to be provided opportunities to provide input related to our local graduation ceremony.

Why hasn't a firm decision been made and is there information that is not being shared?

First and foremost our district is committed to honoring the Class of 2020 with a well-developed plan that keeps all involved safe and healthy. Schools were closed for the year just one week ago, and graduation guidance was released only five days ago (with Governor DeWine adding additional comments today). We want to get this RIGHT for our senior class. Getting this right takes time and planning. With that in mind, we are being completely open and transparent regarding the graduation planning process. Please don't assume a lack of concrete information means there is a lack of commitment (or planning) to offering the best graduation experience possible during this unprecedented time. With this in mind, we ask two things. First, please contact us (email addresses below) if you have any specific questions, comments, or concerns. Secondly, while this is a frustrating time please trust the process and be patient as we all navigate uncharted territory.

What's next? When will we know what's going on?

Again, it is expected that Governor DeWine and/or the Ohio Department of Education will clarify guidance in the next couple of days. In the meantime, a senior class officer virtual meeting was held today, a senior class virtual meeting will be held Thursday night at 9:30PM (in an effort to allow all students to participate), and parents will continue to have the opportunities to share feedback as well. A link to the senior parent survey can be found below in hopes of garnering additional responses beyond the seven received at this point. The board of education and the administrative team recognizes the importance of involving stakeholders as we strive to balance our strong desire to honor the Class of 2020 while promoting individual/public health.

Who should I contact if I have questions about graduation?

If you have any questions about graduation or any other topics related to our district, please contact Mrs. Gaietto or Mr. Huffman.



Read about Governor Dewine's Graduation Comments on 4.27.20

View the April 25, 2020 Senior Parent Email Information

Senior Parent Survey Form

Email Mrs. Gaietto, CRHS Principal

Email Mr. Huffman, CRLS Superintendent

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