

May 4, 2020

Dear Grade 12 Students and Parents and Guardians:

The Richmond School District has a deep appreciation for the significance of graduation for our Grade 12 students, their families and for the extended communities at each of our ten secondary schools. After 13 years of hard work and personal growth, our graduates are standing on the threshold of exciting new pathways and opportunities. Graduation should be a time for celebration with friends, classmates and family, and with your teachers and schools. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic will prevent our schools from offering any face-to-face graduation events that involve the gathering of large groups of students, staff and families for the class of 2020.

Due to significant public health restrictions regarding large group gatherings and physical distancing, all non-essential events such as those relating to graduation cannot proceed. All school districts are required to abide by these restrictions and it is not anticipated by public health officials that these restrictions will change by the end of the summer or into the fall. Unfortunately, this will directly impact important life events such as high school and post-secondary graduation ceremonies. As a result, all Richmond public secondary schools will be cancelling events that require large gatherings of students and staff. This includes events such as valedictory or commencement ceremonies as well as grad boat cruises, grad dinner and dance, and dry after-grad. I know this is very disappointing and is not what any of us wanted.

I have asked each secondary school principal to reach out to their student grad committees and other grade 12 students to discuss the possibilities of organizing an adapted or virtual commencement/valedictory celebration. I know that our schools are full of very creative and capable people and I have encouraged schools to consider organizing a safe, inclusive and virtual way to recognize the graduates of 2020 that honours the important achievements of our graduates. Each school will communicate their alternate plans to Grade 12 families by mid-May. As soon as it has been determined what alternate event arrangements can be made, schools will also process refunds for students and families. If students or parents have questions, I would ask that you reach out to your school principal.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the graduates of 2020. A global pandemic has made you a unique and special group in the history of the Richmond School District. I encourage you to complete your current studies to the best of your ability and to move forward with your post-secondary plans – the pandemic will end and I know that your lives will go on in exciting and positive ways.

Sincerely,



Scott Robinson
Superintendent of Schools