



Published May 27th, 2020

AUHSD makes graduation happen for seniors

By Sora O'Doherty

Mindful that high school graduation ceremonies are an important part of student life, the superintendent and principals at the Acalanes Union High School District have been hard at work to make something happen for this year's seniors, caught in the an unexpected pandemic. So, on different days during the first week of June, seniors at all AUHSD schools will have an opportunity to walk across a stage and collect their diplomas, and then follow the tradition of moving the tassels on their caps from right to left. However, this won't be a traditional commencement ceremony, but one designed with safety as the first priority.

The order of the graduations will be, Miramonte High School (June 1), Campolindo (June 2), Las Lomas (June 3), and both Acalanes High School and Acalanes Center for Independent Study (June 4).

The unusual ceremony was explained by Campolindo Principal John Walker: "The actual ceremony will be a hybrid: a webcast and a live event. The webcast will begin at 9 (a.m.) with pre-recorded speeches, music, and the formal presentation of the class. Students will then come to campus, 25 every 30 minutes, to walk across the stage on the field and receive their diploma. They will of course be at least 6 feet apart. As of now, students will simply receive their diploma from a decorated table on stage, not from a school official. This could change by June 2. With our social-distancing requirements, the whole ceremony will take approximately 7 hours. The other schools are using a similar format, just different campus locations."

Owing to social distancing guidelines, students and their families will not be on campus for every facet of the ceremony. To ensure proper social distancing, students and their immediate family members will be invited to campus during a specific timeframe to participate in a diploma presentation. Professional videographers will film every component of the ceremony and present it via a live webcast. Photographers will also be on site to capture the moment. The webcast will be recorded by professional videographers and will be available, in a condensed format, after graduation.

Miramonte students started their celebrations on May 20, according to Vice Principal Sarah Harris. Beginning with a drive-through parade, Miramonte seniors picked up breakfast burritos at Orinda Intermediate School, then came onto the Miramonte campus to pick up their caps and gowns, panoramic pictures, nice sashes, and to meet their teachers. Seniors also had an opportunity to meet with their teachers in one-on-one Zoom sessions.

Only immediate family and support staff will be allowed to witness students graduating. Students will have their names called out and walk across the stage to get their diplomas, one at a time, with social distancing. The proceedings will be live streamed.

The principals have vowed to work closely with school staff as well as AUHSD staff to plan and facilitate the ceremonies. As the expectations for maintaining safe social distancing evolve, they will continue to collaborate with Contra Costa Health Services and local officials to ensure that they are following the most current guidelines. (See a list of graduates on Pages B2-B3.)

Miramonte Peer-to-Peer club hopes students will stay safe this summer

Members of the Miramonte High School Peer-to-Peer club have put a video up on YouTube, wishing students a safe summer and hoping that when school returns, some will decide to join the peer-to-peer club. The club meets under the auspices of Jamie Rich, Environmental Prevention Program Director at Contra Costa County's Center for Human Development. Throughout the school year club members seek to educate and advise the student body about the dangers of substance abuse, including alcohol and vaping. The club's final video of the year can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/27pEEzyC9mY> -Sora O'Doherty

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA