

Published May 26th, 2021

Graduations planned with as much pomp and circumstance as possible

By John T. Miller



Students mingle in the courtyard in front of Acalanes High School the week before graduation, signaling a small return to normalcy at the local schools. Photo John T. Miller

Local high schools will be holding more traditional graduations this year, with as much pomp and circumstance as possible, considering reduced capacity. Families are advised to carpool, but parking won't be quite the problem as usual. The senior classes returned to school recently, and many of the students gained a sense of normalcy after over a year of remote learning.

The following is a rundown of each of the school's activities leading up to and including graduation (see list of graduating seniors from the three Lamorinda public high schools on Pages B4 and B5). None of the public high schools will be holding the traditional "Grad Night" after the ceremonies.

Acalanes

Acalanes High School will graduate 338 seniors on Friday, May 28 at the stadium. Students will be allowed four guests each. Speakers at graduation will include ASB president Luke Watson, senior class president Leda Abkenari, and students Katie Bettencourt and Summer Helvey. Principal Travis Bell, who is leaving Acalanes at the end of the school year, will also speak.

The school hosted a Senior Prom on May 15 with over three-quarters of the class in attendance. Senior Awards was held on May 20, and the second annual Senior Car Rally through downtown Lafayette was held on May 21. A Time of Reflection was held last Sunday, while Senior Sunset yearbook signing will take place on Wednesday, May 26.

Leadership Advisor Catherine Walton said, "With this last month of day-to-day hanging out at lunch and the special activities, the students were able to get more of a feeling for their senior year."

Campolindo

Campolindo High School will graduate 363 seniors Friday, May 28 at Bob Wilson Stadium.

The school sponsored a "Campo Land" outdoor festival May 15 with a carnival atmosphere that was thoroughly enjoyed by the senior class. Last Saturday, May 22, the annual Time of Reflection was held, with student and staff speakers, musical performances, and other activities.

Associate Principal Valerie Knight said, "Having the festival with their friends and a more traditional graduation helped them come together as a class."

Miramonte

Miramonte will graduate 297 seniors at the campus Stadium Field on Friday, May 28, with 33% capacity. Although parking will be easier, those parking on school grounds without a guest pass will be ticketed.

The school will hold a "Goodbye Rally" the day before graduation on the football field, where seniors and faculty will have the opportunity to say goodbye to each other. The rally is open to all the students, but with no parents.

Orinda Academy

The private school will graduate 23 seniors on campus on Friday, June 4. Each student will be allowed three guests and parking will be at the Masonic Temple next door. Families are advised to drop everyone off at the school and the driver can walk back after parking. An awards ceremony will be held June 1, and parents are invited.

Head of School Sue Porter said, "Traditionally, each senior has a member of the faculty speak on their behalf. This year, we will record these speeches and have them available so that every student will get their personalized tribute."

Students were all invited to a "Prom/Not Prom" on campus last Saturday, May 22. The event was held at their newly landscaped garden patio. Participants had the option of going full-on prom, or dressing casual.

Holden High School

Of the six graduating seniors at Holden High School, a small private school in Orinda, three of them have opted for a virtual Zoom ceremony on Thursday, June 3 so that family and friends worldwide can share the experience, while the other three have chosen to participate in a live observance on Friday, June 4.

The live graduation will take place at the Orinda Community Church outside on the courtyard, limiting the event to the immediate household, expecting about 12 guests, 11 staff, and the three graduates.

One special event is scheduled for the seniors, with a dinner being held outdoors at the school on June 2. Graduates and staff will eat together, symbolizing how the seniors have transitioned from being a student to being peers.

Co-director Kate Knox issued praise to the students and staff for their flexibility this year. "We went from remote learning to a hybrid model many times and gave every person the option to be on site or remote. Hallelujah we made it through the year."

Editor's Note: Lamorinda Weekly reached out to Bentley School, but there was no reply.

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