



# Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians  
From: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent  
Date: March 14, 2021

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Every day I read the headlines of school systems in other states that remain closed and I truly feel terrible for those students, their parents and the educators who are continuing to do all they can to teach virtually.

I'm so grateful that's not the case in Florida and that our employees returned to brick and mortar teaching, to enable in-person learning, back in August. I'm also grateful for the bus drivers, classroom paraprofessionals, office staff members and others who are so "mission critical" to what we do for our students. I know that returning to brick and mortar attendance has not been easy for some of our employees but I hear every day from parents who are so thankful that their children have some semblance of "normal" after so many challenges.

To that end, we're also planning to host proms, graduations, senior recognition events and field days throughout the district this spring. While the actual events may look a little different than in the past, we do plan to do everything we can to keep these traditions, host these events, and continue to keep our students connected to vestiges of "normal." We continue our focus on safety, however, and want to do all we can to ensure these events are as safe as possible for our students, our staff and our families.

Field days will be going on this spring at our elementary schools and we're very excited about those. Parents and grandparents will be able to attend to watch students compete. However, masks will need to be worn by visitors and students when social distancing is not possible and all events will be held outside. Students will not wear masks when they are competing but will be expected to wear masks when they cannot social distance between events. Snacks served must be pre-packaged, single-serving size, and will be served by volunteers wearing masks and gloves.

Our high schools are currently planning their annual proms, another important tradition for our students, and are working with the district to ensure these events are as safe as possible. Several schools are planning outdoor events (like the Bay High prom that was held outside earlier this month) and most are working on ways to ensure masks are worn when social distancing isn't possible and that temperatures of participants are checked in advance. I'm so glad that students who want to participate in the events have the chance to do so this year.

Senior Recognition is another rite of passage for our graduates and I'm pleased to announce that those events will be held this year as they have in the past albeit with a few adaptations. Some schools are planning to hold their Senior Recognition events after hours and only for those students who want to participate. Others are planning outdoor events to maximize social distancing and others are planning to host their seniors "in person" during the school day while inviting guests to participate virtually. If you have questions about the event being planned by your student's high school, just reach out to the school directly.

Similarly, we're planning graduations (mostly outside as usual) for the Class of 2021. We may have to cap attendance firmly, as we did last year, depending upon the level of community Covid-19 spread at the time of graduation but we're hoping to include as many people as we can possibly safely host at our venues. Again, more information about these events will be shared with this year's senior class as we get closer to the events themselves.

By now, as a community, I hope you've recognized the incredible passion and dedication of ALL of our employees who are truly selflessly committed to saving as much of this school year as possible for our students. Whether volunteering as prom chaperones, supervising field day or coordinating recognition events, our employees continue to go above and beyond for our students. Speaking for the School Board, I can tell you that we sincerely appreciate all of our employees.

Thank you for your continued support as well. We are only as strong as our collective partnership with our stakeholders and we appreciate your continued trust and support.

Stay safe and God Bless!