

Dear Merrimack Families and District Staff~

I am happy to report that here are many good things to celebrate and acknowledge in tonight's message. For all the struggles that so many of us have encountered and worked through during this health crisis, there are almost as many successes and reasons to cheer. It's time to focus on some of those very good things. So here goes. . .

As many of you may have heard, at last night's school board meeting we announced plans for our Merrimack High School graduation in honor of our Class of 2020! Because a high school graduation is also, in many important respects, a celebration of an entire community whose collective supports of our students have helped bring them to this momentous occasion, I wish to share with all of you a few important details.

When: Saturday, June 13, 2020

Raindate: Sunday, June 14, 2020

Location: **Student Memorial Field**

Right now, and for the next many weeks, high school administrators, teachers, students, class advisors, class officers and other helpers will be working on a design to ensure the achievement of our two top goals for this most important event: The safety of ALL attendees and the maintenance, as much as possible, of important traditions. There is no doubt that graduation festivities across the country, for both high school and college students, have been fundamentally altered by the health emergency. That is the bad news. But the good news is that there are a lot of very good plans in place to safely and positively win back a bit of what this virus has taken. In Merrimack, those plans are underway right now. In the coming days and weeks we will provide information about very important details concerning things like:

- Time of graduation
- Logistics around attendance and parking
- Number of guests allowed for the event
- Required safety precautions
- And much more

But for now, here is the take away: We will have a safe event that will adhere to all requirements related to gatherings during this on-going health emergency. We will have a fun and festive event that will maintain as many of the traditions as the required safety protocols will allow, the most important of which is that **we will be at home, on our home field, on one date**. That alone is reason to celebrate. The Merrimack High School Class of 2020 deserves all that we can give them to honor this most important rite of passage. I am sure each member of our school and town community will do all that he or she can to help the graduation planners make this a wonderful celebration for this most outstanding class.

Here is more good news! Tomorrow night (Wednesday May 20) beginning at 6pm, from the high school, the Granite School Challenge team is going to take a "victory lap" around parts of Merrimack to celebrate their state championship!!!. Their route will take them through their neighborhoods and will end at Hayward's for a well-deserved sweet reward (courtesy of Haywards). If you have the opportunity, please take some time around 6

pm and cheer on our team if they pass by. They worked so hard to bring this win to Merrimack and we want to show them our thanks.

But that's not it. Tomorrow in Merrimack is a big day!

At 4:00 pm our senior spring athletes will also be honored for their achievements. These students will drive through an inflatable finish line arch and will be recognized for their contributions to their school and our town through their achievements. When they drive through, a timing camera will take a photo of each car/senior. The cars will be decorated to reflect their sport, their number, etc. Everyone will remain in their cars through this procession adhering to physical distancing requirements. Please stop by Merrimack High School at 4:00 to cheer on these great representatives of our high school and our community.

Over the next few days there will also be celebrations at our other schools to properly cheer on our students as this school year winds down. More information about these events will be shared by each school in the coming days.

Finally, we are very happy to welcome back our food service employees and custodians from their hiatus due to safety precautions concerning the virus. All are well and we couldn't be happier to have them back with us serving our schools and families through their very important work.

During difficult times it is so important to find reasons to celebrate. Today, as in so many days in the Merrimack School District, there are a lot of reasons to celebrate. So let's get to it.

Stay well.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent