

March 2021

Dear Hillsborough County Public Schools Families,

This year, more than 14,000 students will graduate from Hillsborough County Public Schools. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all Seniors, parents, teachers, and staff, as each of you has played an essential role in achieving this milestone of distinction.

Our school district leaders, administrative staff, and teachers are working to ensure that at the close of this tumultuous academic year, all Seniors will have the opportunity to experience a graduation ceremony that safely encompasses all health and safety measures as outlined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

We are excited to join many other educational institutions, both at the local and state levels, in returning to in-person graduation ceremonies. Hillsborough County Public Schools graduation ceremonies will ensure that students will be individually recognized as they walk across the stage to celebrate their accomplishments.

The Class of 2021 graduation ceremonies will be held at the Florida State Fairgrounds EXPO Hall. Necessary modifications will be made to meet (CDC) guidelines to ensure the health and safety of all attendees. Current guidelines require masks being worn at all times and socially-distanced seating being upheld.

The decision to return to in-person ceremonies was not made without thorough research of many different options. We are in regular communication with our health partners at Tampa General Hospital (TGH) and USF Health, and have developed a plan that meets all recommended health and safety protocols in cooperation with the Florida State Fairground Authority.

Individual schools will provide each graduate with two (2) paper tickets for guests to attend their graduation ceremony. A mask and a ticket will be required for guest entry into EXPO Hall; students will not need a ticket for entry. Additional tickets will not be available; however, each ceremony will be live-streamed from our district website for the enjoyment of extended family and friends.

To ensure adequate cleaning and disinfecting time between each of our thirty (30) ceremonies, the schedule for ceremony start times has been revised to allow for a four-hour interval between events. The revised graduation schedule is attached, along with the required procedures and protocols for attendees. Individual schools will communicate their respective rehearsal plans directly with students.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to refine the details of graduation day. We will keep you apprised of any updates. We look forward to celebrating this momentous event with our Seniors and their families safely and extend our congratulations to all!

Respectfully,