

## Notes on the 2020 Graduation (COVID-19)

The Carlisle Schools closed for the academic year on March 1, 2020. Graduation was scheduled to take place on Friday, June 19. Unfortunately, the ceremony could not be held at the school as the school was still closed. The state of Massachusetts did not permit schools to hold gatherings for graduation - inside or outside. And so the graduation committee and the principal had to get creative.

After a few weeks of tossing ideas around, the following events comprised the 2020 CPS 8th Grade Graduation:

Tuesday, June 16:

Writing Treasury and 'Slide Show'

Marcella Pixley, 8th Grade LA Teacher, hosted a zoom gathering for all graduating students and their families. She began with some recognition of the challenges the class experienced due to the stay at home order. She then invited families to stay on the zoom gathering while each took some time to go through their writing treasury. After everyone had a chance to see their treasury, the 'slide show' was presented. It was a great idea to combine the two events.

Wednesday, June 17

Graduation was a drive-in event on the field of a Carlisle family whose son was part of the graduating class. Families drove in, collected diplomas, yearbooks (if the student ordered one), a graduation program and a pennant on their way. Volunteers and police guided cars to parking spaces arranged in a checkerboard pattern to allow for safe distancing and so that everyone could see the stage. Graduation music was playing on the large speakers on either side of the stage. Once parked, families were asked to stay within arms length of their car. Some backed up to sit in 'tail gate' fashion, others brought lawn chairs and set them up close to their cars.

The stage was set with a podium, flower arrangements flanked the podium. The ceremony was very similar to the traditional CPS graduation ceremony; the principal welcomed everyone, student speakers spoke, yearbook dedication presented, scholarships presented, superintendent spoke, graduate names read (no one was handed a diploma from the podium) and the ceremony ended.

Music blared again while cars filed out of the field.

Also...

- A photographer was on hand to capture parts of the ceremony and candid photos. No portraits were taken. However the photographer did offer to do portrait sittings once he is able to resume his business.
- The graduation committee provided a graduation itinerary to the Carlisle Mosquito, Carlisle Police, and Minuteman Media Network (to record the event).
- A parent provided a drone to capture the event from above. This parent provided images to the Carlisle Mosquito and footage to Minuteman Media Network for the final video.

Equipment & Details

- The school brought the stage, speakers, microphone, podium, stage skirt, and lots of extension chords.
- The fire department brought their generator as a back up in case the power failed.
- The graduation committee prepared and ordered the programs, ordered and provided the pennants, created the signs to guide cars to the field and purchased two plant arrangements for the stage. Plant arrangements were given, with notes of thanks, to the two families who own the field after the ceremony.
- The host family provided small markers on the field for the cars to know where to park.

Overall, it was a meaningful graduation for the students and a proud moment for parents and guardians. It was not a traditional CPS graduation, but it was better than we thought it could be when we learned it could not be at the school.

Many thanks to everyone who made the celebrations possible!