

GLOVERSVILLE ENLARGED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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David Halloran
Superintendent

July 2, 2020

Dear Graduates and Families,

First, I would like to personally congratulate all of you on your recent completion of high school. As a graduate of Gloversville myself, I can say with pride that you are now part of an extensive, talented, diverse group of alumni. I have no doubt you will all go on to leave your mark. Please go make the world a better place. In the short term, we have the issue of your pending graduation ceremony to address. That is the purpose of this letter.

We delayed having a late June graduation ceremony in the hopes that phase four of New York State's reopening would allow for larger groups of people to congregate. I was told it was the wish of the senior class to be together one more time. As you likely know, COVID-19 has not faded as we had hoped, but rather has seen a resurgence across the country, including areas of New York State. A graduation ceremony in southern New York has even been identified as the source of an outbreak.

In recent days, the Department of Education has made it clear that school districts planning ceremonies beyond the 150 person limit (which was articulated in the Governor's Executive Order), were placing the school district at risk of liability and the district's Executive Officer's (me) professional certification at risk. As much as I would love to hold an in-person ceremony with students, family and friends, at this time it would be totally irresponsible in regards to public health, and would place the district and me in a very poor position. I hope you can understand and appreciate why I am not willing to do that.

We have been working diligently on contingency plans for your graduation ceremony since early June and have developed a solid plan to celebrate your accomplishments properly. This letter constitutes the final decision on your ceremony, so you are welcome to make family plans in accordance with the following schedule of events.

Friday, July 10, 2020 at 9:30 am (weather permitting, rain date Monday July 13th), we ask all graduating seniors to arrive at Park Terrace with caps/gowns. Gowns will be available for those who do not have them. We have 143 graduates, so unfortunately no family or friends will be allowed to attend this portion of our celebration. We will have students lined up by the school (6 feet apart with masks) then proceed to Husky Stadium and sit six feet apart in the bleachers. The processional will be recorded and a class photo will be taken via drone. A few words will be spoken, official diplomas will be handed out and the class will be dismissed. Detailed guidance on this day will be forthcoming from building administration.

Video footage of the Husky Field event on July 10, 2020 will then be added to the virtual ceremony that was recorded in the HS auditorium in June. The final GESD 2020 Commencement Ceremony will be held at the Ozoner Drive-In on Route 29 in Broadalbin at 9:00 pm on Monday, July 20, 2020. Each graduate is welcome to attend the ceremony at the Ozoner Drive-In with up to four family members in a single vehicle. Attendees will be allowed to sit in lawn chairs close to their vehicle, but social distancing measures will still be in place at the ceremony. Again, more details on this event will be forthcoming.

We are confident that our virtual ceremony will be a quality production and that your graduation from Gloversville will be memorable. We regret that your class lost months of your senior year and we wish we could have offered the large in-person ceremony you desired. The event at Husky Field on July 10, 2020 allows your class to be together one more time. The recording of the issuance of your diplomas in June, with parents/guardians present, provided a very intimate opportunity for them to share in your accomplishments. The recorded ceremony at the Ozoner Drive-In on July 20, 2020 will afford you the opportunity to experience the culmination of your school experience together with friends and family in a safe and responsible manner.

As stated, this is the final plan for the celebration of our Class of 2020 and I encourage everyone to plan accordingly. I appreciate the patience and understanding exhibited by your class and families during this difficult time. This pandemic will indeed pass, but unfortunately, nature does not adhere to our timelines. Stay healthy and be responsible. Once again, congratulations to all of you! I wish you the best in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Halloran", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

David Halloran
Superintendent of Schools

Friday, July 10, 2020 Husky Field 9:30 am (rain date Monday, July 13, 2020) - Class of 2020 picture/video. (Graduates only)

Monday, July 20, 2020 Ozoner Drive-In 9:00 pm - Virtual Commencement Ceremony (1 vehicle per family)