



June 26, 2020

Dear Members of the Class of 2020 and Families:

Congratulations again on becoming graduates of the School District of Janesville (SDJ). While not like any other graduation season in recent memory, managing the recognition and celebration of this important milestone for the graduates has certainly been a unique experience for everyone.

We hope you were able to enjoy the video graduation ceremonies produced by Drywater Productions. These videos remain viewable on the SDJ YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/c/JanesvilleSchoolDistrict>. If you would like to purchase a DVD or Blu-Ray copy of your school's virtual graduation, please visit: <http://drywaterproductions.com/2020-graduation-dvds-and-blu-rays/>.

When we first began planning for senior celebrations while considering the impact of COVID-19 on the community, we felt, and our parent/senior student survey confirmed, that we could proceed with creating the virtual graduation videos, and if at all possible, host a live in-person graduation event later in the summer. This live event was contingent on our community reaching 'Phase III' of the Rock County Public Health Department's reopening guidance.

Currently, per the Rock County Public Health Department, the area remains in 'Phase II' of reopening. We do not know when the county will go into 'Phase III' or if we might return to 'Phase I' should the incidence of COVID-19 increase in the community again. We cannot wait to make a "go or no-go" decision as hosting a graduation ceremony requires advance work and effort by many, and of course, we must consider families making plans and arrangements for potential out-of-town guests.

Therefore, with disappointment, we must notify you that our schools are not going to be able to host a modified in-person graduation on Saturday, July 25, 2020. We have a commitment and expectation to maintain and promote the health and safety of our greater school community, and with the continued unknowns regarding COVID-19 in the nation, hosting a large gathering of people would be irresponsible.

Additionally, the logistics of making substantial accommodations and modifications to a graduation program being held at Monterey Stadium to satisfy appropriate physical distancing and health and safety guidelines are prohibitive. We know we cannot provide you with the graduation event you imagined, and anything less is disappointing.

(more)

SDJ letter to the graduates of the Class of 2020

This is not how we wished your senior year to end. As principals, one of our greatest joys is to participate in graduation and help our students and their families celebrate their success. We are thrilled knowing that you are graduates—that you have earned your high school diploma. We did not come to this decision easily, and we truly regret not being able to hold a ceremony like in years past. However, for the health and safety of our students, staff, and the greater Janesville community, we cannot responsibly host the event.

We again wish you, the truly unique Class of 2020, the best of luck. We are proud of how you handled yourselves throughout this past school year, and especially the last three months. Your ability to navigate through adversity will serve you well in life.

Sincerely,

Chris Laue
PHS Principal

Alison Bjoin
CHS Principal

Patty Hernandez
TAGOS Principal

David Parr
ARISE Principal

Lisa Peterson
RRCS Principal

Kolleen Onsrud
RUHS Principal

Steve Pophal, Superintendent
School District of Janesville