*GRADUATION ALTERNATIVES*

**Alternative Graduation Ideas (Jostens)**

**Introduction**

* Current seniors are missing the most special weeks of their year
* What is usually plagued by senioritis is now plagued by a want to be back at school with their peers and to have a sense of normalcy
	+ Students are missing out on the *closure* element of the end of their senior year
		- Athletes are missing their final season, club leaders are missing their bigger productions, fine arts students are missing their last concerts and performances, CTE students are missing out on their ability to compete at the district, state, and national level
		- Events being missed: prom, senior skip day, senior trips, senior week, graduation
* Staff is also missing out on the closure of the year
* Emotions are high for students and their families

**Ideas for Ceremony**

* **Senior Parade/Drive Thru**
	+ Staff line the streets in their regalia
	+ Students wear their caps and gowns, fill the car with their family
	+ Students/families drive down street
	+ Pomp & circumstance playing, cheering, etc.
	+ Could involve law enforcement as escorts
	+ Consider making the parade route longer than you think it should be in order to allow for more community/family members to gather on street sides
		- Consider starting all families at ONE location (parking lot, fairgrounds, wherever a “virtual” graduation could take place (video playing, audio speeches, etc.)
		- From there, parade away from that location; create part of the route to go past landmark spots (downtown, high school building)
* **Consider closure for staff members, too**
	+ Many staff love graduation and seeing their students succeed - how can we involve staff so they have that same sense of closure?
* **Can something physical be given to students to commemorate the experience?**
	+ Physical touch can be powerful
	+ Example: students running out from the stadium at graduation and being able to “slap the tunnel” as they exit onto the field as a physical recognition that they’ve made it
	+ What could be given to seniors to create a sensation of graduation?
* **Consider not all staff/students will be able to come back to a rescheduled graduation**
* **Staff Video**
	+ Staff read the names of graduates in the graduation video
		- Compilation of student names/photos to replace walking across the stage
	+ *Digital senior vote on which staff members they’d like to read names at graduation*; *this could be done similarly in video style*
	+ Staff shouts out to seniors in a video

**Employ the Yearbook** adviser and students to be very present and involved in the efforts of 2020 graduation

[View More Alternative Graduation Plans from Jostens](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Frto7-0YWPshLAPEZ8ROBKjZXHITw4gf29kg7u0iSOo/edit?usp=sharing)

**Honor Students During Stay Home / Stay Safe Executive Order**

*The following is a running list of ideas for honoring seniors during the current stay home/stay safe order.*

* Social Media Week for Seniors
* Light up the Stadium
* Letters/Card to seniors from Principal / Supt
* Staff write and mail personal, handwritten letters to each senior to arrive on original graduation date (e.g., adopt a student or circulating the names of graduates to all teachers and staffers throughout the district, who then write notes to the students)
* Grateful Grad: students compose notes of gratitude to recognize and thank members of PK-12 staff for the impact on their life.
* Seniors submit pictures in cap and gown to include in a recorded screencast or Flipgrid.  SENIOR SHARING -Flip Grid with parting messages to the senior
* Senior Spotlights- seniors send in pics, info on what they are doing after graduation and a reflection of a memory from school. Put together a video for Youtube with music.
* Senior Moment - ask seniors to share a baby picture, senior pictures and short video clip of a school memory to be included in virtual celebration.
* Banners downtown on the light poles for our seniors
* Senior Goody Bags given out when parents come to pick up cap and gowns
* Yard signs delivered by staff/Grad Bash committee to each senior
* Parents decorate Front/Garage Door To Honor their Grade
* Banners for each senior on the driveway in front of schools, scrolling honor on digital signs in front of school.
* Staff put names of all students on a large athletic field and use drone to create video to post online.
* Post a message for seniors on a billboard that is in a prominent place in your community.
* Senior Reflections- some type of closure program. Could be done over a couple nights of showcasing talent by Zoom or some other media for DRAMA events, shows, choirs, bands poetry/writing , cheerleaders etc. that showcase SENIORS in those areas
* Virtual signing opportunities for students - not just athletics - Any postsecondary, military, employment opportunity gets a signing experience
* Virtual bequests- senior wills (leaving a legacy)

**After Stay Home / Stay Safe Executive Order Expires and/or is Relaxed to Allow Students on campus:**

*The following is a running list of ideas for honoring seniors after the current stay home/stay safe order expires and its safe for small group gathers*

* Seniors invited to pick-up cap and gown while teachers line the driveway of school to wave and see them off.
* “Show Me Your Walk” – live celebration for Class of 2020 in July or August (stream/record and post on youtube)
* Set up a Banner/sign and photographer the day of pick -up of cap and gown and have senior pics taken in front of school.
* [Filming each grad getting a diploma in advance and airing it on Grad day.](https://www.wlox.com/2020/04/17/gulfport-high-school-announces-alternative-plan-graduation/)
* Drive-in Graduation and then a fun movie night after.
* Race to the Finish Idea: check out your sports community venues and see if they could host your graduation at their facility
* Allow groups of 20-30 students set for a specific time period to drive around the school or track to come to the front of the building and be awarded their diploma and have pic taken. This is all recorded and then edited and put on YouTube
* Prom Substitute over the summer to be run by parents and hosted at barn venues.
* Car parade thru town after getting diplomas. Check out car clubs or new car sale places for help with cars and senior holding signs etc.
* Senior breakfast/banquet/cookout
* Building a scavenger hunt through Goosechase to allow students to be on teams (guys vs. gals, etc.) and see the results real time. Goosechase is an interactive scavenger hunt program that you can build events and challenges into Goosechase: <https://www.goosechase.com/>
* Senior Sunset in our parking lot/beach/airport