

May 3, 2021

Dear Grade 12 Students and Families:

The Richmond School District has a deep appreciation for the significance of graduation for our Grade 12 students, their families and for the extended communities at each of our secondary schools. After 13 years of hard work and personal growth, our graduates are standing on the threshold of exciting new pathways and opportunities. Graduation should be a time for celebration with friends, classmates and family, and with your teachers and schools. Unfortunately, as was the case in 2020, public health restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic will prevent our schools from offering any face-to-face graduation events that involve the gathering of large groups of students, staff and families for the class of 2021.

Due to significant public health restrictions regarding large group gatherings and physical distancing, all non-essential large group events such as those relating to graduation cannot proceed. All school districts are required to abide by these restrictions and it is not anticipated by public health officials that these restrictions will change by the end of the June. Unfortunately, this will directly impact important life events such as high school graduation ceremonies. As a result, all Richmond public secondary schools will not be proceeding with traditional live events that involve large gatherings of students, staff and family members. This includes events such as valedictory or commencement ceremonies as well as grad boat cruises, grad dinner and dance, and dry after-grad. I know this is very disappointing and is not what any of us wanted.

I have asked each secondary school principal to reach out to their student grad committees and other grade 12 students to share the plans for an adapted or virtual commencement/valedictory celebration. I know that our schools are full of very creative and capable people and I have encouraged schools to consider organizing a safe, inclusive and virtual way to recognize the graduates of 2021 that honours the important achievements of our graduates. Each school will communicate their alternate plans to Grade 12 families by mid-May. If students or parents have questions, I would ask that you reach out to your school principal.

The district recognizes that valedictory ceremonies are very important to students and their family members. Although traditional live events will not be able to be held this year, the district understands that some parents and guardians may wish to witness their child crossing the stage while the virtual event is being recorded. In order to ensure a safe environment for everyone involved, the district must limit the number of family members present to a maximum of two per student. These two guests will enter the room where the stage is set up just prior to their student crossing the stage and then will be asked to exit the room before the next student crosses the stage. Specific details will be provided by your school principal.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the graduates of 2021. A global pandemic has made you a unique and special group in the history of the Richmond School District. I encourage you to complete your current studies to the best of your ability and to move forward with your post-secondary plans – the pandemic will end and I know that your lives will go on in exciting and positive ways.

Sincerely,



Scott Robinson  
Superintendent of Schools