

Westlake High School

Mt. Pleasant Central School District

825 Westlake Drive
Thornwood, NY 10594
Telephone: (914) 769-8311
Fax: (914) 747-3074

Mr. Keith Schenker
Principal
Email: kschenker@mtplcsd.org

Mr. Kenneth Amann
Assistant Principal
Email: kamann@mtplcsd.org

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Dear Parents and Students,

I hope this letter finds everyone in your family healthy and in good spirits. We have been working on plans over the last few weeks to address the many culminating events that are typically calendared for the latter part of May and the month of June. I want to thank Dr. Kotes, the student, parent, and faculty members of the Ceremonies Committee, the PTA, my administrative colleagues, and the many parents who have reached out, for their suggestions, creative ideas and most importantly their willingness to volunteer. While we are aware that the current restrictions placed on large gatherings may hopefully be eased over the coming weeks, certain ceremonies need to be planned under the current reality. Our guiding philosophy at the High School was to try and provide options for these important events to occur as "live" and in-person as we would be allowed. The following is an overview of the event options for Westlake High School.

Class of 2020 Graduation Ceremony:

After conversations with our senior class and with parent representatives it was very evident that our students want to avoid a virtual graduation at all costs. With that premise in mind we have the following options in order of preference:

- Hold graduation on June 26, on campus as planned, with health restrictions still in place, a minimal audience would only be allowed, graduates spread out on the main field. Graduates would have their picture presented on screen and accolades announced with diplomas already placed at their assigned seat. Ceremonial addresses by speakers.
- If this is not possible due to no easing of restrictions then we postpone graduation to a later date in the summer (proposed for July 30, rain date July 31). Audience size and composition informed by the level of health restrictions in place at the time. Same ceremony as above.
- If this is not possible due to no easing of restrictions (decided by July 15), then students would rather have a senior graduation motorcade through the heart of town.
- Only if none of these events can occur, we would have a virtual graduation ceremony during the week of August 3.

Senior Prom:

Given the nature of Prom and the likelihood that Glen Island Harbour Club would be open and able to host a Prom event is unlikely before the planned date of June 11, the following is being proposed:

- If restrictions on large group gatherings are lifted, we hold a Prom-like event in the WHS Gymnasium during the week of graduation, June 22-25. Use existing class funds to purchase decorations, a DJ and catered food. We would enlist support from volunteers to help decorate.
- If this is not possible due to no easing of restrictions, a senior social will be organized on campus as a senior send-off to college and occurring during the week leading up to the graduation ceremony in July. This would be a daytime event, BBQ and catered food, with DJ and other activities planned. Use existing class funds to cover expenses.
- If neither of these events can occur, then the event will be cancelled.

Senior Awards Ceremony:

We have already been informed that the Crowne Plaza cannot hold any events through July. We still, however, have many community-based scholarships and departmental awards to honor our seniors. The following options are proposed:

- Restrictions on large gatherings are eased and the senior awards ceremony is done in the Auditorium during the week of June 22. Limit attendance to just invited seniors. The event will be recorded for families to view on the district website.
- If this is not possible due to no easing of restrictions, we hold a celebration on campus using a pick-up processional in front of the High School (student recipients remain in cars) and awards are delivered and captured on video or our Scholarship Committee Representatives deliver awards to recipients' homes. Both events occur during the week of June 22. Video of students receiving scholarships is posted on our district website.
- If neither of these are possible then we blend senior awards recipients into the graduation ceremony (if the ceremony is held on campus). Awards announced with the awarding of their diploma and listed in the graduation program.

Underclassmen Awards Ceremony:

Following our goal of maintaining personal events and given the nature of this year and what this awards ceremony recognizes, the following plan is in place:

- We postpone the event until October 2020 so we can hold the ceremony as we normally would.
- If this is not possible due to no easing of restrictions in the fall of 2020, we will hold a virtual awards ceremony recorded and placed on the district website.

Incoming Freshman (Class of 2024) Orientation:

We were able to hold our annual Parent and Student Orientation in December, but the building visit that typically occurs in Spring will unfold as follows:

- There will be a virtual orientation planned for the end of May. It will include video segments from PALS (peer leaders) and live interaction segments with PALS as well as a welcome from the Principal and Assistant Principal. Additionally, we will maintain our August in-building orientation during the week of August 24.
- If this is not possible due to no easing of restrictions by August, we are proposing an opening day schedule with a 1-hour delayed opening for grades 10-12. Freshman arrive at 7:45 for a formal orientation and meeting with PALS, administration and teachers.

Again, it is important to stress that the situation with regard to large gatherings and social distancing requirements is ever unfolding. I, along with my committee members, and Dr. Kotes will continue to monitor the announcements from the Governor's office and the health and safety requirements in an effort to hold these vital and celebratory events while maintaining the safety of our students, staff and community.

Thank you as always for your understanding and support and offers of help, it is greatly appreciated.

Stay well,



Keith Schenker