HCPS Graduation 2021
Protocols and Procedures for Families

GRADUATION VENUE - FLORIDA STATE FAIRGROUNDS EXPO HALL

Seating
- Guest seat availability for the HCPS graduation layout will be 1,500 usable seats.
- Guests will be seated in checkerboard fashion with adequate social distancing space. Seats not available for use will be secured and marked with appropriate signage. ADA accommodations will be made for students and guests.
- Students will be seated on the “floor” of the EXPO Hall with appropriate social distancing between the chairs in a grid.
- The number of district staff in attendance at each ceremony will be at a minimum with preference given to school staff for attendance.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

HVAC (Air Conditioning)
- Two (2) chiller units and cooling towers and fourteen (14) air handlers service EXPO Hall. Ten (10) of the fourteen (14) air handlers provide 100% fresh air return.
- The EXPO Hall A/C systems will have MERV-13 filters installed prior to HCPS graduation ceremonies. MERV 13 filters, recommended by the CDC, is thicker and filters out different particles.

Limited Tickets for Guests
- Each graduate will receive two (2) paper guest tickets that are pre-assigned to the north or south entrances and seating areas in EXPO Hall. This will reduce congregation of guests at entrance doors and the need for guests to search for a seat.
- Schools will develop a system for tracking which tickets are distributed to which student.
- Guest seating will not be available in Entertainment Hall. This space will be used in the case of inclement weather.
- FSFA staff will serve as ushers to assist with seating.

Adjusted Commencement Schedule
- To allow the FSFA staff adequate cleaning time in between each ceremony, the graduation schedule has been revised to provide four (4) hours spacing between start times. See the Revised Graduation Schedule.

Clearing and Cleaning the Venue
- HCPS Security and the Hillsborough County Sherriff’s Office (HCSO) will assist in clearing the venue within a projected timeframe of 30 minutes. Once cleared, the Florida State Fairgrounds Authority (FSFA) staff will clean and disinfect all spaces with a CDC and HCPS Safety Office approved product.
**Hand Sanitizer**
- EXPO Hall has sixteen (16) permanent hand sanitizing stations and fifteen (15) portable stations, with three (3) dispensers on each to be placed throughout the venue. FSFA staff will ensure that hand sanitizing stations are stocked.
- FSFA staff will ensure that bathrooms are cleaned and stocked regularly throughout each event.

**Signage**
- Appropriate signage will be placed throughout the venue reminding all graduates, guests and staff the importance of social distancing, washing hands, using hand sanitizer and wearing a mask that covers the nose and mouth.

**Masks**
- Masks will be required of all graduates, guests, and staff at all times while in EXPO Hall.
- Disposable masks will be provided for guests who arrive without one.

**Prior to Arrival**
- In person temperature checks will not be included in the protocols at EXPO Hall. All graduates, guests and staff attending the graduation, will be asked to monitor their temperature prior to leaving their home for the venue. If a temperature measures above 100.4, graduates, guests and staff are asked to stay at home and participate in the ceremony via our live stream platform on our district website.
- Additionally, graduates, guests and staff will be provided the following 4 questions to ask themselves before they leave their house. If the answer to any question is yes, graduates and guests are asked to view the ceremony through our live stream platform.

1. **Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours:**
   - Fever or chills
   - Cough
   - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
   - Fatigue
   - Muscle or body aches
   - Headache
   - New loss of taste or smell
   - Sore throat
   - Congestion or runny nose
   - Nausea or vomiting
   - Diarrhea

2. **Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact (6 feet or closer for a cumulative total of 15 minutes) with:**
   - Anyone who is known to have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19
   - OR
   - Anyone who has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19?
3. Are you isolating or quarantining because you many have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19?

4. Are you currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test?

Medical Assistance for Guest, Graduation or Staff
- The FSFA will arrange for medical staff to be on site to assist graduates, guests, and staff, if needed during all events. Medical staff will be in a space that provides for isolation, if needed.

PARKING AND ARRIVAL
Staggered Guest Arrival
- Each school will develop and communicate a system for staggering the arrival of their graduates and guests.

Ceremony Parking
- FSFA will provide all parking attendants.
- Graduates/guests will use the Hwy 301 gate for the ceremony ONLY. Gates will open at 6:15 am and doors to Expo Hall will open at 7:00 am. There is a $6.00 parking charge for all commencement exercises. Cash or card accepted. Exact change or cards preferred.
- FSFA staff will distribute disposable masks as cars arrive to park, Masks will also be available at the entrance to the hall.
- Guests will be encouraged to remain in cars until their individual arrival time. Seating areas are pre-assigned.
- Remember, all guests must have their paper ticket and mask for entry.

Graduate Arrival
- Students will arrive, wearing their cap and gown, and move directly to their pre-assigned “floor” seat. There will not be a processional due to health and safety protocols.
- Graduates do not need a ticket. Graduates must wear a mask.

PROTOCOLS FOR THE CEREMONY
Processional
- There will be no processional.

Walking
- All students will cross the stage in the same direction, spaced out six feet between graduate. Diploma covers will be handed to graduates but handshaking will not be permitted.

Music and Performances
- District staff is working collaboratively with school based staff to review the Updated Co-Curricular Guidelines to determine how a school chorus, band and/or orchestra members can safely participate in the singing of national anthem, performance of Pomp and Circumstance and Alma Mater, if not, music will be provided pre-recorded.
Each school will present their colors. Those in the color guard must be socially distanced and wear masks.

**GRADUATION REHEARSALS**

- Due to cleaning and safety protocols, we are unable to offer in person rehearsals for all our school sites. Schools may schedule graduation rehearsals at their school site, abiding all CDC health and safety protocols.
- Those schools with new principals or “new to graduation” principals will be scheduled to have the administrative team from the school site spend 30 minutes at EXPO Hall.

Additional information regarding graduation will be provided as details are finalized.