May 8, 2020

Dear Parents and Seniors,

The faculty and staff at Lee County High School have been thinking of you all during this unprecedented time. We appreciate the hard work of our students and staff as they have overcome multiple obstacles this semester. Your commitment and dedication has not gone unnoticed and we are working on plans to celebrate your accomplishments. This letter is to share with you the status of several Senior items.

We appreciate your understanding that many of the decisions made about events for the Class of 2020 were dependent upon guidance we received from our state leaders and health officials. The safety and well-being of our students, faculty, families, and community is our top priority.

**Final Grades for Spring Semester:** Seniors must still meet all state requirements for graduation including the number of credits earned and satisfactory completion (grade of 70) of all required courses. Please refer to the Student Learning Plan letter dated April 17, 2020, for additional information regarding student course grades. If you are failing a course required for graduation, please contact your teacher immediately via email to develop a plan of action. We will start finalizing many of the senior grades on **Wednesday, May 13th**. The final numeric grade for all courses completed during grades 9-12 will be used for the purposes of computing the student’s overall grade point average, HOPE, Honor Graduate status, and overall class rank for this year.

**Sending final transcripts to post-secondary institutions:** Once grades have been finalized and transcripts verified, your final high school transcript will be available for release. As part of our end of year procedures, we will upload all student transcripts to Ga Futures, NCAA, NAIA, and Parchment. It is recommended that you check your Ga Futures account to ensure correct calculations for the HOPE Scholarship. All in-state institution requests must be made through Ga Futures. Even if you have already requested the transcript release for admission purposes, you must request a final transcript as well. Parchment has offered us their services free of charge for 2020 graduates to send transcripts to post secondary institutions outside of Georgia. If you have any questions, please contact the guidance office. Transcripts will be sent to postsecondary institutions by **June 10th**. Please do not delay.
**Graduation**: Students must meet the graduation course requirements set forth by the state of Georgia. I have been involved in graduation ceremonies at Lee County High School since 2003. Graduation is a milestone and I want to celebrate this important accomplishment with you. In typical Lee County High School fashion, we are trying to go beyond the basics, and bring a variety of venues to you while keeping you safe based on guidance from state leaders and health officials.

**Option #1: Virtual Graduation**: We are scheduled to celebrate your graduation at **7:00 pm on Friday, May 22nd**. The virtual graduation will be a prerecorded event to air on WFXL and stream on WFXL.com and will include many of the traditional elements of your ceremony. Speeches and greetings from school administration, student leaders, and others will be combined with video elements that are unique to our school. Each graduates’ picture and name will be displayed during the ceremony. You and your family can celebrate your graduation from the comfort of your home.

- **Seniors**: We need a digital cap and gown picture of you by **Thursday, May 14th** to include in the graduation ceremony. Here are specific details for your photo:
  - Please have someone take your picture (no selfies).
  - Pictures in front of a solid background are best, but not required.
  - No additional props or enhancements please.
  - Do not digitally alter the pictures (No doe-eyed filters)
  - Higher resolution pics are preferred and any picture taken with a smartphone will be more than adequate provided you send it in its original size.
  - Each photo will be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the dignity of the ceremony.
  - Pictures will be used by the school and media as part of a virtual graduation event, to which the public will have access via social media and the internet.
  - The picture must be sent to the email seniors2020@lee.k12.ga.us by **May 14th**. This deadline can not be altered. If you do not submit a photo of yourself in your cap and gown by the deadline, the school will use your senior yearbook photograph. If you do not have a senior yearbook photo, then your name will be displayed during the ceremony with a preformatted background. If you previously submitted a picture and would like to send a different background, please do so immediately so we can switch the photos.

**Option #2: Parade**: Pending good weather conditions and guidelines for social gathering restrictions, we will celebrate your graduation with a parade at **7:00 pm on Friday, May 22nd**. We want you to have the opportunity to experience something larger than expected as you tune in online to your virtual graduation. We are inviting you to take part in a car parade with **one more lap** around the stadium.

- **Seniors**: For those wanting to participate in this portion of graduation night with family and friends, basic details are below. You can watch the ceremony online on your phone as you participate. The plan involves you loading up your family and coming to the school. Tip: let someone else drive so you can experience the moment without worrying about the car in front of you.
○ Place your names (last name first) on the passenger side, back window. This will facilitate your check-in at the visitors gate and final diploma process.
○ You are asked to decorate your car - paint, signs, banners, etc. GO BIG and school appropriate. You are a creative, expressive group.
○ Students may wear their cap and gown. You can decorate your hat, wear your prom dress or your favorite school appropriate outfit.
○ You will be allowed ONE motor vehicle per student to participate in the parade. Family members must be inside the same car as the student. Keep it street legal and able to enter the stadium (ex: no one riding in the truck bed, no tractors, no bicycles, no golf carts, etc.).
○ Students and families may begin arriving at 6:30 pm. and the event will begin at 7:00 pm.
○ No person may exit their car during any portion of the parade.
○ Vehicles will enter through the gate near the bus loop and visitors' side entrance.
○ You will circle around the track and receive your diploma on the Home Side
○ You will exit through the student parking lot to Peach Ave.
○ Vehicles will not be allowed to drive on the turf inside the stadium and will follow all signs and personnel.
○ You may not congregate before or after the parade. We must adhere to social distancing policies.
○ No family, friends, or community will be allowed to line the streets in cars or in person. Law enforcement will be on hand.
○ We will NOT be allowed to open the building. Restrooms are not available.

We are working hard to ensure the safety of our students, staff and community throughout the event. Social distancing expectations will be enforced along with school expectations for student behavior. Please be respectful of others while enjoying your moment.

Option #3: Traditional graduation: We will continue to monitor the safety and wellness guidelines put forth by state leaders and health officials. If a gathering of our staff, 500 graduates and their families is allowed during the month of June, we will proceed and develop plans for a traditional graduation. We encourage seniors to take advantage of the other celebrations planned.

Diplomas: Students not participating in the parade will be able to pick up their diplomas the following week.

Honor Graduates -- Honor Graduate status will be determined at the end of the school year based on final semester academic averages. The traditional gold cords and tassels are a part of the traditional ceremony and have been provided to students meeting the requirements with their current 2nd semester scores. Students meeting the guidelines based on final scores will be provided the regalia of an honor graduate.

Golden Apples: Honor Graduates will select a faculty or staff member upon which to bestow this
honor. Additional details regarding this ceremony will be sent to Honor Graduates via student email.

**Senior Parade:** This tradition, albeit very different from what we have done before, will still be held as the Graduation Option #2.

**Honors Night:** A Class of 2020 Honors Night Virtual Program will be held next week. The tentative plan is to include the program with our Monday parent/student newsletter.

**Senior Obligations:** All outstanding financial obligations will need to be paid prior to Graduation and diploma recognition. Additionally, students will need to return all school property such as uniforms, textbooks, instruments, etc. Our first drop off date was Wednesday, May 6th. Teachers will be placing holds on all missing material next week. If a hold is placed on your record, you may return the missing item on **Thursday, May 21st from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.** If you do not have the missing items, you may pay for them through your portal account.

**Yearbook Distribution:** Our dedicated LCHS Yearbook staff kept working on your 2020 yearbook after on-campus school was cancelled; however, the printing facility and shipping lines have been delayed along with the rest of the business world. We anticipate that our copies will be shipped sometime in June. Once we are in possession of the Yearbooks, we will distribute them as soon as we are able to do so. Distribution will be based on directives from state and local leaders as well as health officials following all safety protocols. If you would still like to purchase a Yearbook, you can do so at www.jostensyearbooks.com. The Trojan20 yearbook tells the story of your unusual year, including the historical pandemic and its effect on your year.

**Other Support for Students and Families:** With financial stress from job losses, anxiety related to concerns surrounding this virus, and grief issues many people will face, the need for emotional support will exponentially increase. Please know we are here for you. Students, please email your counselor. For families, the Georgia COVID Emotional Support Line provides 24/7 free and confidential assistance to callers needing emotional support or resource information as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. To talk with someone at the COVID Emotional Support Line, please call 866-399-8938.

Students, we have tried to address as many questions or concerns as possible. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding. These decisions are not easy ones to make in an ever-changing environment. We are working diligently to support you as we look forward to eventually celebrating, all together, the Class of 2020!

Sincerely,

Dr. Hancock
LCHS Principal