



PALO ALTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

50 Embarcadero Road Palo Alto, CA 94301
(650) 329-3701 Fax: (650) 329-3753

Adam Paulson
Principal

April 26, 2020

Dear Paly community,

I wanted to provide an update regarding the graduation ceremony for the class of 2020. We have made some preliminary decisions on how we will proceed with celebrating this year's graduating class.

The feedback from the graduating class of how they wish to see the school leadership proceed with their graduation ceremony was overwhelmingly in support of postponing the event. With their feedback in mind, we have decided to postpone the graduation ceremony until December 2020. Further decisions about the event date and the type of event will be made, with student input, at the start of the 2020 - 2021 school year. The decision will be based on the social distancing and event restrictions required by the county and the state at that time.

To ensure we also celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of the class of 2020 in conjunction with the end of their school year, we will have a senior send-off/celebration week during the week of June 1 – 5, 2020. The ASB and school administration are working together to define the events of this week. As the students develop their ideas and work with school administration around the events, we look forward to parent support in making these events a reality. We will reach out as we know more about the events and what support might be needed.

Thank you for your patience as we have evaluated the current situation and come to the best decision that reflects the student's wishes and works within the current reality of social distancing requirements and event size restrictions. We are incredibly empathetic to the class of 2020 and the fact that all of the culminating events of their high school experience have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Please know we are making the best decisions we can in the face of a difficult situation.

Please see the following FAQ for further information.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Paulson".

Mr. Paulson

Frequently Asked Questions

Why don't you offer a virtual graduation on zoom or other online platform/supplier?

Simply, the students rejected this idea and some flatly stated they wouldn't want to participate even if it was offered. The voice of student body was that they do not want an imitation ceremony.

Why don't you schedule graduation for the end of the summer?

We are making decisions based on the information we have at hand today. At this point, we are still in a shelter in place with no group gatherings at any size permitted by the county and state. It is not foreseeable that within 3 months that these restrictions will permit 2000+ person events. Public health officials support this rationale and advise against planning events during this time period.

Why don't you offer a ceremony just for senior class in June 2020 with no audience?

The school is strictly abiding to the shelter in place and event size requirements at this time. We can't offer a school event where staff and students have the opportunity to come in contact with one another.

Why don't you organize a car or bike procession?

We have been prohibited from proceeding with these ideas from public health officials.

Will baccalaureate or prom be postponed or rescheduled as well?

No, unfortunately we are not able to reschedule or postpone any events other than graduation.

I would like to help, how can I do so?

At some point in the near future, we will appreciate parent/community involvement and participation. This will be coordinated with the class of 2020 parent network and PTSA.

What will the senior celebration/send off week look like?

At this time, the vision is to have a daily schedule of thoughtful ways we can recognize and celebrate the senior class as a community. We have preliminary ideas on how to do so that have come from students, parents, staff, and various professional networks. Our first step will be to vet these ideas and brainstorm with the ASB. We will then include PTSA and the class of 2020 parent network. [If you have an idea, feel free to submit it here.](#) Given the volume of opinions and ideas around this topic, this is our preferred way of communication with both Mr. Hall and school administrators.

What about cap and gown distribution?

See Mr. Hall's email message.

What are about diploma and diploma jacket distribution?

Logistics will be announced in a separate message.