

# Rolling Hills Middle School

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Dear 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Families,

We recognize the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion Ceremony has been on our community's mind.

For several weeks, CUSD and RHMS have studied options... looking at our Santa Clara County guidance regarding events of this nature, contacting neighboring middle schools, walking our sites while using Google Earth images, and visiting alternative venues including Westmont High School.

For the 28 families who attended Thursday night's PTA meeting, I shared several promotion complexities. While our county has moved into the Yellow Tier, guidance for public schools remains the same. Guidance for ceremonies includes six feet of spacing between all promotees, six feet of spacing between guests from different households, strict assigned seating for potential contact tracing of all participants, documentation that guests are free of COVID symptoms and will adhere to social distancing and mask mandates, and an orderly dismissal of all guests to name several.

While hoping some of the guidance would be loosened, we studied how to structure a promotion with that guidance, while keeping our students at the forefront of our decision. Because of required spacing, the capacity of the RHMS quad was far too small, and moving this event to the field was to have the guests beyond 70 yards of the podium. The ability to see and hear the ceremony would be compromised. Though the high school was considered, the logistics did not actually allow greater attendance.

With that, we fashioned a few options for our students and sought their input during homeroom on a Google Form two weeks ago. Their collective voice supported a promotion party and single livestreamed ceremony without guests, versus a single ceremony with one guest or two ceremonies where the class was to be split in half with two guests. With 236 votes, the single ceremony without guests was preferred.

While this may disappoint some, COVID restrictions and event guidelines have made the desired option of our students our best option. Students commented...

- "It's important to be with your friends... so we shouldn't be divided into two ceremonies."
- "With livestreaming, the whole 8<sup>th</sup> grade class would be all together."
- "I can have family members from out of California also watch."

- “Livestreaming gets rid of having to just choose one family member to be a guest.”

The most astute comment was that CUSD should, “Select the easiest to organize with safety precautions and is easiest to view.”

Again, while this may be a disappointment to some, it is an improvement from last year’s recorded event, where teachers read names. . With slightly looser restrictions than last June, we believe we are able to do more for this year’s promoting class.

To make this day a little more special and safe, we are working to provide:

- a bbq lunch with chips, and drinks, and dessert
- distribute autograph pages for students to sign
- music
- a photo of each 8<sup>th</sup> grader
- livestream of the promotion ceremony

We will communicate more details as we confirm the finer points of this day, tentatively scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup>.

While it may be easy for some to see this decision as one that is half empty, I prefer to think of it as half full. Just twelve weeks ago, there were no students on our campus, and an event of any nature was out of the question. Fortunately, eight weeks ago we welcomed students back in the cohort model. We are excited to be able to offer our 8<sup>th</sup> graders a safe party and celebratory event with each other as they move beyond us and on to high school.

Respectfully,



Ted Cribari III



Amy Vanderbosch