



Dear Students, Teachers, and Parents of Northwest Academy,

So, our black swan event appears to have become a black swan epoch, and ab- is the new normal, and where art once imitated life, in this era life will occasionally imitate art.

And, for the Northwest Academy Class of 2020, commencement exercises will be more or less a TV show about a graduation ceremony, starring our beloved senior class, and it will come live streamed to you where you are quarantined on the afternoon of Sunday, June 7.

Next week, we'll ask all NWA parents to complete a looking back/looking forward survey so that we can incorporate what we've learned this spring into future plans for whatever remote learning is needed. But this week I'd like to walk you through the planning for this year's graduation ceremony. Whatever else is true, I suspect that this year's senior class will remember their high school graduation in a way that few of us can lay claim to.

We've been working closely with a committee of graduating seniors, and we've been in touch with the class as a whole. We heard clearly their wishes to NOT graduate by zoom or google hangouts and to HOLD FAST to as many elements of the classic NWA graduation as possible.

Below you will find a draft run-through with some color and context. Our priorities have been to plan an experience that is (1) safe and protective of all, (2) memorable for the seniors and their families, and (3) in full compliance with the Governor's directives and the policies of the Oregon Department of Education.

Consistent with those priorities and the state's guidance, we are limiting participation to one car per graduate household, with those in each car limited to those who are quarantining together. We are saddened to have to discourage out-of-town and out-of-household attendees, and will try to give the rest of the community the best possible livestream experience.

And in a nutshell, here's how the event will unfold:

- Students and their immediate families (their 'household') will arrive by car at the facilities of The AV Department, a media production house in the Lloyd Center neighborhood. We have not finalized the time, but it will be earlier in the day than our historical evening start.
- Graduates' household(s) will, when notified, exit their car and line up outside the office door on designated markings 10 feet apart and in accordance with social distancing guidelines. We will develop accommodations for graduates with 2 households. Upon exiting the car, all must don masks, and the masks must be worn until families have returned to their cars.

- One graduate + family at a time will enter the AV Department office. In turn, that family will pass from the office to the recording studio and the ceremony stage.
- With their family in attendance and under the watchful eye of the camera, each graduate will step to the stage as Dan reads the curated reflections on that student written by the NWA faculty and staff.
- The graduating seniors will then pick up their NWA diploma, exchange virtual handshakes with Dan, me and NWA Board Chair Jason Matusow, and exit the facility through the industrial garage door.
- Upon exiting the studio, families will return to their cars while students, one at a time, proceed to an adjacent parking lot and walk to their assigned spot. Designated spaces will be at least 10 feet apart and will be assigned to allow graduates proceeding in order to arrive at their mark while preserving social distance. There will be exactly 22 spaces and no one else may enter this parking lot.
- On cue, students will flip their tassels and then together toss their caps in the air (caps will be marked to ensure that everyone retrieves only their own cap). We hope to photograph this by drone (as well as by earth-bound photographer).
- Students will then proceed to their family's car for an auto-parade exit from the site.
- If you are interested in the ODE guidelines, you can find them [here](#).
- Recorded video from the event will be made available to all families, as will printed graduation programs.

Please join us via livestream on June 7. Exact time and tune-in details will follow in the coming weeks...as will details for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade's promotion celebration. And details for the final week of school, which will begin as "Finals Week" and morph mid-Wednesday into "Arts Week."

If your head is not yet spinning, just you wait....

Take care and stay well,



Chris Schuck

Head of School