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Ellington Board of Education Approves High School Graduation at Mansfield Drive-In Ceremony to be held on Friday, June 5th at 4:30 pm

ELLINGTON, CT – On Wednesday, May 20, 2020, at a meeting of the Ellington Board of Education, Board members unanimously approved an Ellington High School Graduation ceremony for June 5th at the Mansfield Drive-In. The event will begin promptly at 4:30 P.M. with a rain date of Saturday, June 6th.

“Our graduating high school seniors will have a well-earned and safe graduation that honors their scholastic and extracurricular achievements,” said Michael J. Purcaro, Chairman of the Ellington Board of Education. “The week-long graduation activities that culminate with a commencement ceremony have been carefully planned in accordance with all current public health and safety guidance while upholding our sacred academic traditions.”

High School Principal John Guidry, Administrative Assistant Karen Rusich and Senior students Jaimee DelPiano, Katelyn Johndrow, Clarrisa Welti, Will Forst and Aidan Caron - worked tirelessly soliciting feedback from parents and students and presented at three public Board meetings to ensure the Ellington community had a voice. With an overwhelming number of students wanting to avoid a virtual graduation, it became a high priority to examine various graduation models that had in-person elements.

"When the student survey results came back and their number one priority was to have a graduation that was in-person and not virtual, we worked with state and local officials to come up and design the best possible graduation to honor this special class of 2020", said Jennifer Mullin, Chairperson of the Communications Committee for the Board of Education.

The June 5th ceremony will allow one car per graduate, include in-person adult and student speeches, pre-recorded musical performances and close with a diploma procession. The event will be live-streamed, have two photographers, a videographer and aerial video and photos will be taken from a drone aircraft. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott Nicol emphasized the importance of a creative event in which classmates, loved ones and friends could be together while ensuring local and state health measures are strictly followed.

"I have worked closely with the Ellington Board of Education and its administration to provide professional guidance that minimizes the health concerns related to COVID-19", said Patrice Sulik, Director of the North Central District Health Department. "The Ellington Public Schools has made safety and health a priority throughout the planning process."

The Ellington Public Schools has declared the week of June 1st through the 5th as *EHS 2020 Graduation Week*. Seniors will partake in a variety of celebratory events from a drive-up breakfast, car parade through town, and video montages and speeches throughout the week leading up to the June 5th ceremony.

According to Jen Dzen, Vice-Chair of the Board of Education, "It doesn't just take a village to raise a child. During COVID-19 it takes a village to graduate them as well! We can not thank our 'Ellington Village' enough for all their support and guidance through this process."

Additional information may be found at the Ellington Public Schools' [EHS Graduation 2020](#) web page.

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