



## **NMRSD Update Monday, May 11, 2020**

Good Morning,

I hope all of the mothers out there in the NM community had a chance to relax and enjoy the day yesterday, albeit likely that it was a little different than Mother's Day in the past.

Also, on behalf of the entire administrative team, I would like to wish both our school nurses and all of the other nurses out there a Happy National Nurses Week. Thank you for all that you do!!!

### ***Starting with some GOOD news...***

- Congratulations to **Ms. Ashley Barbera** the school nurse at Varnum Brook Elementary who gave birth to a baby boy on Tuesday, April 28th. Caleb Barbera weighed 6 pounds/13 ounces and was 20 inches long.
- Congratulations to **Ms. Stephanie Paris**, a teacher at Nissitissit Middle who gave birth to a baby boy on Thursday, April 30. Beau Robert Paris was born at 2:57pm and weighed 8 pounds/11 ounces and was 22 inches long.

### **Graduation**

We continue to work closely with the Nashoba Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding options for graduation. Based on our conversations, it is highly unlikely that a traditional graduation will be permissible at any point during the summer due to crowd limitations, so we continue to look at possible alternatives.

After meetings with the school committee and a group of student representatives last Friday afternoon, the administration plans on posing two options to the Nashoba Board of Health on Tuesday, May 12th:

#### ***Option 1***

A drive-through style graduation where students will be grouped (25-50) at a time to arrive at NMRHS in a vehicle. Students would be called out of the vehicle to

receive their diploma and then have a family photo taken before departing campus.

### **Option 2**

Students and a set number of guests (to be determined) will be grouped (25-30 students) at a time for a graduation in the stadium. Students would be seated with their families and be separated from other students and families by the social distancing guidelines set by the state.

It is possible that things could change, which is why we are waiting until Monday, May 18th when the governor will make a decision about what Massachusetts will look like moving forward. If restrictions are lifted, we will adjust to the new guidelines. That said, it is important to plan so our goal is to hold graduation on the following dates:

Friday, June 6th & Saturday, June 7th (if needed)

Rain dates: Friday, June 13th (if needed) & Saturday, June 14th (if needed)

For both options, parents would select a time block on a Google spreadsheet that will be sent to all families once a final decision is made during the week of May 18th.

Both options would have a virtual component as well that will include administration and student speeches that will be recorded and combined with either option for a video that will be given to all students.

We understand that some districts may opt to wait until mid-August, but after discussions, it was clear that too many students would not be able to participate nevermind the concern that August may not look much different when it comes to crowds gathering. Some of these concerns include:

- Many of our college-bound student athletes would already be at school
- Many of our students attending school in the south many have already left for school
- Students who have signed up for military service would already be at boot camp
- In addition to social distancing still likely being in place for August, if we wait until mid-August and need to cancel, putting together even a virtual graduation would be extremely difficult at that point.
- When a potential July date was floated, many families had vacations planned and reported that they would not be able to attend. This would likely be the case in August as well.

Ultimately, June dates are more accessible to students and families and ensure a higher percentage of participation. We all understand that this is not the graduation that students were looking towards or deserve for their years of hard work. Our senior class has lost being able to properly close out their time in NM. They have lost senior week, concerts, athletics, and drama productions, to name a few, all of which are part of a normal high school experience. Our students have been learning remotely for two months and have dealt with restrictions such as not being able to see their friends and other family members. That said, if there is one thing that is clear, our students are resilient and have truly risen to the occasion in dealing with this crisis and have, in many ways, taught us to be resilient as well.

As a small token of our appreciation, seniors will be able to order t-shirts that have been generously donated by CSA Graphics. Additionally, signs have been ordered for each graduate that will be displayed in public areas in each student's town. We are currently working with each town to identify those areas so that the entire community can celebrate these young people as they transition from NM to the next chapter in their lives.

#### **4th & 8th Grade Celebrations**

These are being dealt with at the school level and if you have not received communication as of yet, you will be hearing from schools shortly.

#### **Re-Opening in August**

By now, many of you have probably seen the CDC draft guidelines for the fall, which include:

- Desks being 6 feet apart
- Lunch being in classrooms
- No assemblies or field trips

Please know that the CDC is an advisory and they do not govern how Massachusetts will reopen. However, we have already begun work to prepare should Massachusetts adopt any or all of the CDC's recommendations, which could result in a "blended" environment where students would both go to school in-person in smaller numbers and learn remotely as well. This would require extensive preparation with regard to classroom set-up, scheduling for students (while keeping siblings and other restrictions in mind) and more extensive Chromebook distribution. It is my hope that we will receive guidance from the state at some point in June so that we can properly prepare.

#### **Phase III-Remote Learning Commissioner's Family Letter**

The Commissioner of Education provided districts with the third phase of remote learning guidance to families on April 24, 2020. The district sent out information last week around the changes you will begin seeing today.

You may access the state and district documents below:

[Commissioner's letter.](#)

[Phase III- NMRSD Family Guidance](#)

**Commissioner Guidance for High School**

The Commissioner also released information for high schools regarding the MCAS, graduation requirements for the class of 2020, and information about the competency determination for other high school classes. You may access the [Commissioner's memo here.](#)