

BOARD MEMO

Date: May 6, 2021

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X

Board Agenda: Yes X

No _____

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Peter Balas, Principal, T.C. Williams High School

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Class of 2021 In-Person Commencement

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY

Chronic Absenteeism among Hispanic Students

Outreach to Hispanic Families to Improve Attendance and Graduation

Outreach to Underserved Communities to Increase Engagement

SUMMARY

After the COVID-19 pandemic caused a fully virtual graduation ceremony in June 2020, the Titan Graduation Ceremony Committee for the Class of 2021 began planning for all possible ceremony types ranging from virtual to fully in-person traditional, and all ideas in between. This committee consists of high school staff, students, central office staff, and an ACPS School Board member. The student committee members have presented their proposals for an in-person graduation ceremony that follows all safety protocols and guidelines mandated by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. The plan was presented to ACPS Superintendent, Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., and his Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on Thursday, April 8, 2021. As a result, we were given permission to move on to the next phase of securing a location. Due to renovation, the Parker-Gray Memorial Stadium is not available for this year's graduation ceremony. Since the presentation on April 8, 2021, a location in the City of Alexandria has been secured for an outdoor in-person graduation ceremony.

BOARD MEMO

BACKGROUND

A graduation committee was formed in December 2020 to start brainstorming all options for the Class of 2021 Commencement. The committee reflected on what they liked about traditional pre-pandemic ceremonies as well as last year's fully virtual ceremony to plan the best experience possible for the graduating seniors. Our student leaders in Student Government and Leadership have been involved in planning with us, resulting in some amazing in-person graduation ceremony ideas. The committee developed a proposal for in-person graduation commencement that would provide a memorable graduation for the Class of 2021 Titans and their families. More details will be shared with students and families over the next few weeks.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this memo and attachment as it relates to High School Graduation.

IMPACT

The commencement of the Class of 2021 will be in-person, following all safety guidelines, to give our students and families a personalized experience as they end their time in high school.

ATTACHMENT

1. 210506_Presentation_High_School_Graduation_Update

CONTACT

Peter Balas, peter.balas@acps.k12.va.us