

From: [Anissa Dennis](#)
To: [Kirsten Coombs](#)
Cc: [BoE Email](#); [Michael Martirano](#)
Subject: Re: [External] Something to think about
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020 1:32:52 PM

Hello Mrs. Coombs,

In the early stages of planning, the high school principals suggested involving cars in a parade or students arriving in their cars in a processional. However, principals were concerned about our students without a family car and how they would participate and be involved.

Thank you,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607

On May 7, 2020, at 1:10 PM, Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org> wrote:

Yes, I realize it's in Virginia. Is it defined somewhere that Hogan's order prevents a car parade?

Regards,

Kirsten Coombs
Member
Howard County Board of Education

667-786-3867

From: Anissa Dennis <Anissa_Dennis@hcpss.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 7, 2020 11:12 AM
To: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Cc: BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: [External] Something to think about

Hello Mrs. Coombs,

I believe that Frederick school district is in Virginia with three high schools. As we were reminded yesterday, we must remain in compliance with our governor's executive orders in planning our graduations and we are doing just that.

We have shared with our community that safety is the number one driver in making the best decisions for all of our students, staff, and community. Also, please be aware that a number of parents shared that if any sort of live or i-person component was to be added to our schedule for students, their students would not be participating. We heard this from some parents of students doing speeches.

Thank you,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607

On May 7, 2020, at 10:54 AM, Kirsten Coombs
<Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org> wrote:

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From: Monica Bailey <monicab2316@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 7, 2020 10:24:15 AM
To: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Subject: [External] Something to think about

! CAUTION: This email originated from outside of HCPSS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

https://www.winchesterstar.com/coronavirus/parades-individual-ceremonies-added-to-graduation-plans-for-frederick-county-seniors/article_6060ec11-a959-5494-9b72-4f9d5dda2906.html

From: [Anissa Dennis](#)
To: [Kirsten Coombs](#)
Cc: [Karalee Turner-Little](#); [BoE Email](#); [Michael Martirano](#)
Subject: Re: 5th grade ceremonies & PTA purchases
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020 1:36:16 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-xiovcus.png](#)

Dear Mrs. Coombs,

The yard signs for seniors were approved because all high schools worked together to make sure no one was left out as all seniors received a yard sign. SMIL was made aware of 5th grade yard signs yesterday at 6 am on social media. Other principals sent it to us very disappointed and concerned that this was not shared or discussed as a team. As I shared with you earlier today, I will be addressing this at the principals' meeting tomorrow not only to discuss the PTA component (that they may spend their money as they choose) but to also address this as other principals are upset. Our principals are vocal about this type of recognition and they want consistency among schools.

Thank you,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607

On May 7, 2020, at 12:13 AM, Anissa Dennis <Anissa_Dennis@hcpss.org> wrote:

Dear Mrs. Coombs,

The yard signs for seniors was approved because all high schools worked together to make sure no one was left out as all seniors received a yard sign. SMIL was made aware of 5th grade yard signs yesterday at 6 am on social media. Other principals sent it to us very disappointed and concerned that this was not shared or discussed as a team. As I shared with you earlier today, I will be addressing this at the principals' meeting tomorrow not only to discuss the PTA component (that they may spend their money as they choose) but to also address this as other principals are upset. Our principals are vocal about this type of

recognition and they want consistency among schools.

Thank you,

From: [Anissa Dennis](#)
To: [Kirsten Coombs](#)
Cc: [Karalee Turner-Little](#); [BoE Email](#); [Michael Martirano](#)
Subject: Re: 5th grade ceremonies & PTA purchases
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020 12:13:40 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-xiovcus.png](#)

Dear Mrs. Coombs,

The yard signs for seniors was approved because all high schools worked together to make sure no one was left out as all seniors received a yard sign.

SMIL was made aware of 5th grade yard signs yesterday at 6 am on social media. Other principals sent it to us very disappointed and concerned that this was not shared or discussed as a team. As I shared with you earlier today, I will be addressing this at the principals' meeting tomorrow not only to discuss the PTA component (that they may spend their money as they choose) but to also address this as other principals are upset. Our principals are vocal about this type of recognition and they want consistency among schools.

Thank you,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607



From: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 11:24 PM
To: Anissa Dennis <Anissa_Dennis@hcpss.org>
Cc: Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>; BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: 5th grade ceremonies & PTA purchases

I can understand the thought that seniors should be prioritized given the lack of ceremonies. But to actively discourage PTAs from doing signs for the fifth & eighth graders seems like an overreach of the school system vis a vis the PTAs. It also seems like a difficult position in which to place principals.

I know that we can not be privy to every decision. But with regard to systemwide things like this, the Board should be notified so we can be prepared to respond to the community. It's hard to hear about these things after the fact and not know anything about the details.

Thank you,
Kirsten

Regards,

Kirsten Coombs
Member
Howard County Board of Education

667-786-3867

From: Anissa Dennis <Anissa_Dennis@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 3:19 PM
To: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Cc: Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: 5th grade ceremonies & PTA purchases

Mrs. Coombs,

We understand we cannot tell PTAs how to spend their funds. We meet with all elementary principals and assistant principals tomorrow and I will make sure to address that important point.

Thank you,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607

On May 6, 2020, at 3:12 PM, Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org> wrote:

Nessa,

It sounds like the word has been that PTAs CANNOT purchase them. One of the sign making companies said he had been told not to make them by HCPSS. This is very concerning.

Thank you & hope you are doing well.

Regards,

**Kirsten Coombs
Member
Howard County Board of Education**

667-786-3867

From: Anissa Dennis <Anissa_Dennis@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 2:59 PM
To: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Cc: Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: 5th grade ceremonies & PTA purchases

Good afternoon, Mrs. Coombs,

I hope this email finds you well. It is always our hope that PTAs work closely with their principal when purchasing items or planning any event and that both parties are in agreement. In the case of the yard signs for fifth graders, if PTAs ask for the principal's input, principals will not be in support of this item. If the PTA goes ahead and purchases this item, regardless of what the principal says, then you are correct, the PTA can purchase.

Regarding the high school signs, all high school principals, including Cedar Lane and Homewood, moved forward in purchasing because all of them worked together to ensure that all seniors would have a sign. We have been stressing with our principals that we are a school system and not a system of schools, and to be as consistent as possible when it pertains to student recognition. We have followed the same premise, as we have been very careful to be as consistent as possible with all senior activities. In addition, we are extremely sensitive to our seniors this year and do not think it is necessary for a fifth grader to have the same recognition as our seniors since this is the first year we are using yard signs for seniors.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Take care,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607
<Outlook-t4u5ibcd.png>

From: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 12:13 AM
To: Anissa Dennis <Anissa_Dennis@hcpss.org>
Cc: Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>
Subject: 5th grade ceremonies & PTA purchases

Hi Nessa,

A community member alerted me to the fact that PTAs are being told not to buy signs for 5th grade promotion celebrations. Apparently, this is because some PTAs have funds to do so and others do not. They're being told this was a directive from Central Office. Could you provide more information on this? How can HCPSS tell PTAs how to spend money on things like celebration signs? They are not instructional so the supplant/supplement issue is not applicable in this case.

Thank you,

Kirsten

Regards,

**Kirsten Coombs
Member
Howard County Board of Education**

667-786-3867

From: [Anissa Dennis](#)
To: [BoE Email](#)
Cc: [Jahantab Siddiqui](#); [David K. Lerner](#); [Kathleen V. Hanks](#); [Michael Martirano](#); [Karalee Turner-Little](#)
Subject: Fw: Class of 2020 Announcement
Date: Monday, April 27, 2020 5:26:25 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-4qiw1rry.png](#)

Good afternoon Mrs. Coombs,

I hope this email finds you well and healthy. The communication shared today does not address diploma distribution. We plan to provide specifics around the distribution of diplomas at a later time when we have all of the details around the logistics of our virtual graduations finalized.

Unofficial transcripts can be accessed now. Final transcripts will be available after the school school, as normal.

I hope this information helps.

Be well,

Nessa

Anissa Dennis
Chief School Management & Instructional Leadership Officer
Howard County Public School System
Phone: 410-313-6607



From: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 3:50 PM
To: BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Jahantab Siddiqui <Jahantab_Siddiqui@hcpss.org>
Cc: David K. Lerner <David_Lerner@hcpss.org>; Carrie A. Slaysman <Carrie_Slaysman@hcpss.org>; Kathleen V. Hanks <Kathleen_Hanks@hcpss.org>; Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: Class of 2020 Announcement

Will this also address the diploma distribution and transcript availability?

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From: Jahantab Siddiqui <Jahantab_Siddiqui@hcpss.org>

Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 3:37:49 PM

To: BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>

Cc: David K. Lerner <David_Lerner@hcpss.org>; Carrie A. Slaysman <Carrie_Slaysman@hcpss.org>; Kathleen V. Hanks <Kathleen_Hanks@hcpss.org>; Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>

Subject: Class of 2020 Announcement

Board members, the following announcement will be shared with our community this afternoon.

Jahantab

Subject: HCPSS Class of 2020 Celebration Plans

HCPSS is pleased to announce plans for graduation ceremonies and other events to celebrate the Class of 2020. Today, Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership leaders joined the principals of all high schools, Cedar Lane School and Homewood Center for a virtual discussion of plans for recognizing seniors. The discussion included input provided by Student Member of the Board, Allison Alston, and members of the HCPSS Senior Student Committee, as well as additional ideas generated by students and staff at each school.

Plans are underway for virtual graduation ceremonies to allow all seniors to participate in this wonderful tradition. Online ceremonies will be held between Monday, June 1 and Tuesday, June 9, with specific dates and other details to be provided as soon as plans are finalized.

Each high school, as well as Cedar Lane School and the Homewood Center, will hold a virtual senior awards ceremony to highlight the many accomplishments of its Class of 2020 and announce the recipients of school and community awards and scholarships. Additionally, every school will host an in-person celebration, to be scheduled at a later date, to give seniors the opportunity to come together with their classmates.

Yard signs honoring seniors have been ordered by all of the schools and will soon be displayed across the county. We thank the school PTSAs, Boosters, Senior Class, and other organizations for their support with this initiative. Other school celebrations being considered include senior superlatives, slideshows, and other ways to honor seniors and give graduates an opportunity to share their plans for the future.

HCPSS thanks students, staff, and families that are working together to create positive memories for our seniors as they finish their high school careers. Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

Jahantab Siddiqui
Chief Administrative Officer
Howard County Public School System
Office: 410-313-6680
Cell: [REDACTED]