



## ***Johnstown-Monroe High School***

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May 5, 2020

Greetings Class of 2020 and Families,

I hope that this announcement finds you and your families healthy and well. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an incredible impact on our world, and we all know it has had a huge impact on our senior's last few months of high school. Each of you will have your own unique story to tell in the months and years ahead, but I hope that when you reflect back on this experience you feel like we at JHS have done everything we can to make you feel special and appreciated. We know that nothing we do can make up for the experiences and memories you've missed out on, but we are not going to allow that to get in the way of us honoring you the best we can.

Graduation is a milestone in nearly everyone's life, and it is an experience and honor that you have earned. Planning for graduation has been challenging. As the pandemic has evolved, the guidance from state and local agencies has changed. From the outset, our mission has been clear: how do we make our 2020 graduation as meaningful and memorable as possible, while following all health and safety regulations to ensure everyone's safety.

The [graduation ceremony guidance](#) from the Ohio Department of Education is now clear. Schools have the option to conduct virtual graduation ceremonies or have "structured and controlled in-person graduation ceremonies" that comply with the mass gathering limit of 10 people. The two examples of structured and controlled in-person graduation ceremonies include drive-thru graduations and single-family in-person ceremonies where families come to the school one at a time. Please note, that an in-person ceremony with students spaced out on the football field is not allowable because it violates the mass gathering limit of 10 people.

Our 2020 Graduation Planning Committee has been meeting daily to explore all possible options to make this graduation ceremony special and meaningful, and I am extremely pleased with the work of this committee. With the help of a facilitator, this committee was able to weigh the pros and cons of many different options, identify the most important components of a ceremony, and plan a graduation ceremony that we believe will result in a safe and memorable graduation for the JHS class of 2020

We have put together a short video explaining what our 2020 graduation ceremony will look like. Our plan includes a time for every senior to walk across the stage that will be set up outside under the JHS vestibule to receive their diploma in front of their family at a predetermined time on May 30<sup>th</sup>. We have contracted with a videographer who will capture those special moments

for every student, and will then incorporate those special moments into a virtual graduation ceremony that will be shared on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. Our virtual ceremony will include many of the traditional graduation ceremony components such as the valedictorian and salutatorian speeches, and music selections from The Big Red Band and the JHS Choir. The virtual graduation will be streamed live on the evening of June 6<sup>th</sup> and available for a free download. Additionally, each senior will receive a DVD copy of the virtual ceremony in the mail in the weeks after graduation. Finally, we will plan for the virtual ceremony to end a few minutes before 8:20pm on June 6<sup>th</sup>, so every graduate across our community can toss their caps one more time at 8:20pm and the community can express their congratulations by honking their horns and making noise.

Much more detailed information, including student arrival times on May 30<sup>th</sup> will be mailed home to every senior around May 15<sup>th</sup>. Between now and then we will be working closely with the Licking County Health Department to ensure that we are doing everything we can to make our graduation activities safe for all participants. If you would prefer not to come to the school on May 30<sup>th</sup> for any reason, I would be happy to work with you one-on-one to work out another arrangement. If that is the case, please reach out to me as soon as possible at [dbusenburg@jmk12.org](mailto:dbusenburg@jmk12.org).

I want all of our seniors to know that we miss you and you are in our thoughts. I cannot wait to see you all on the 30<sup>th</sup> in your caps and gowns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Busenburg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Derick Busenburg