



Celebrating the RI High School Graduating Class of 2020

Rhode Island Graduation Special

The State of Rhode Island and Rhode Island PBS are partnering to host a statewide graduation special to commemorate the RI high school graduating class of 2020 on June 15 at 7pm. The broadcast will have special guest speakers, musical performances, and contributions from RI high school seniors. Visit <https://www.ripbs.org/youryear2020/> for more information!

Valedictorian Speeches

High schools can have their valedictorians record their graduation speech. Once the high school leadership team reviews the speech and makes sure it is in a shareable format, please email the video to your RIDE distance learning point of contact. RIDE will post the speeches on their website and will also share with RI PBS so clips of the speeches can be included in the graduation special. In order for the speech to be considered for inclusion in the statewide graduation special, please submit before May 22.

Senior Picture Slideshows

High schools can have all of their seniors submit a picture in order to compile a senior class slideshow with each of the graduates. The slide show can also include pictures highlighting the class such as pictures of sporting events, homecoming, theatre productions and other events. Once the high school has a completed the senior slide show, RIDE can post the slideshows of each high school on their website to share with the state.

RI High School Graduation Ceremony Options

On April 29, the Governor announced that social events and in-person gatherings larger than 50 people will not be allowed through the end of the summer - this includes in-person high school graduations. Since no in-person ceremonies of any kind are allowed, virtual ceremonies are an option for districts hoping to celebrate their graduates.

In preparation of content for your virtual graduation, any district considering recording students walking across the stage, one at a time, must ensure that all involved adhere to all directives contained with the Governor's Executive Orders and all RIDOH rules, regulations and guidance around gatherings and community mitigation strategies. To be clear:

- There should be no more than five (5) people total gathered at any one time, including the student, staff member(s), photographer, etc. Compliance with this five-person rule will likely require you to do this one student at a time, and will require sufficient time scheduled between students.
- Masks must be worn by all at all times.
- All individuals must remain six (6) feet apart at all times. In order to maintain the six feet apart rule, no handshaking or passing of a diploma should occur.



- Any surface areas touched by the student (e.g., hand-rail) must be disinfected between graduates.
- Staff should be required to wash their hands frequently.
- All individuals (including staff and each student) must be screened before entering for any symptoms or risk factors. This screening can be done verbally. Sample screening questions can be found at:
https://health.ri.gov/forms/screening/COVID19_Employee_Screening_Tool.pdf
- Every student and staff member involved must be required to remain home if sick.

The following menu of **virtual ceremony viewing options** provides ideas for individual high schools in RI to celebrate their graduating seniors in a memorable but safe way:

Drive-In Graduation Ceremony

Individual high schools could host a “drive-in” style graduation ceremony similar to drive-in movie theatres. Families would drive to the designated location, stay in their cars, and watch the ceremony on a big screen. Schools could put together a slide show of pictures of each graduate to be shown on the big screen as the school leader reads off the names of each graduate. Valedictorians and other student speakers could either pre-record their speeches to be shown on the screen or could be allowed to give their speeches live over loudspeakers. Schools could either set up a loudspeaker system to facilitate the ceremony or broadcast over a radio frequency. Schools would need to reiterate that students and families must remain in their cars during the ceremony or they will be asked to leave. There should be absolutely no handshaking, handing out of diplomas or getting out to the car to take pictures. Cars that are within 6 feet of each other should have their windows closed at all times. These same guidelines also apply to “car parades.”

Potential Venue Options – Individual high schools would need to contact these venues in order to determine availability:

- *Rustic Drive-In in North Smithfield* – this drive-in movie theatre has the capacity to hold up to 550 cars and has a large screen system set up. The drive-in is open from April to September. Could be in option for the Northern part of the state.
- *Misquamicut Drive-in in Westerly* – another drive-in movie theatre location usually open from May to October. Could be an option for the Southern part of the state.
- *Rhode Island College/CCRI in Providence* – RIC and CCRI have several large, centrally located parking lots that could be utilized for a drive-in graduation ceremony
- *High School Parking Lots/Large Parking Lots* – high schools could also set up a drive-in movie theatre set up in their own parking lots or other large parking lots or fields in their communities. They would need to set up a large screen and figure out a way to ensure all cars could hear the ceremony (sound system or radio).

Zoom Graduation

High schools could also host a “Zoom” graduation ceremony or another online meeting platform that allows a large capacity of attendees. Zoom allows users to purchase a Large



Meeting License for up to 500 or 1000 attendees. School leaders could read off the names of each graduate and have valedictorians and other student speakers give their speeches live through the online meeting.

TV Broadcast

Utilizing Capital TV or another local TV channel, high schools could broadcast a graduation ceremony that families could watch from home. Schools could put together a slide show of pictures of each graduate to be shown as the school leader reads off the names. Valedictorians and other student speakers could pre-record their speeches to be shown during the broadcast.

- Capital TV: Individual high schools can sign up to reserve the Capital TV channel for a specific day and time. Contact Margie O'Brien at MOBrien@rilegislature.gov for more information.
- Channel 10: For a fee, individual high schools can broadcast their virtual graduation ceremony on Channel 10. Contact Kim Pendergast at KMPendergast@sbgvtv.com for more details.

Facebook or Instagram Live Graduation

Utilizing Facebook or Instagram Live, high schools could broadcast a live graduation ceremony that families could watch from home. Valedictorians and other student speakers could be joined into the live session and give their speeches live from home. School leaders could read off the names of each graduate.