



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

April 21, 2020

TO: Complex Area Superintendents  
High School Principals

FROM: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto  
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "CK", next to the name of the Superintendent.

**SUBJECT: Class of 2020 Commencement Celebration Guidelines**

The traditional commencement ceremonies for the class of 2020 are being replaced by alternative celebrations that adhere to social distancing guidelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This memorandum provides high schools with guidelines to use in their planning process for these celebrations.

High schools will continue to use their commencement criteria communicated with the senior class at the beginning of the school year to the greatest extent possible while complying with the social distancing requirements. The celebrations will take place as scheduled in May 2020.

Schools should adjust their commencement plans for technology-based events. These events must be student-centered and comply with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state Department of Health (DOH), and respective county guidelines, including any new advisories in effect on the day of the event. Additionally, for all events, schools are responsible to ensure:

- Participants follow protective and safety guidelines to ensure social distancing of six (6) feet between individuals, and adhere to the recommendations for social gatherings;
- The availability of hand sanitizers and masks;
- Student's ability to wear a cap and gown, and be individually recognized; and
- Security measures are in place to control any improper behaviors.

While commencement ceremonies must be done virtually, diplomas can be picked up by a drive-through method at the school or mailed to the student's home address. Any third-party venues are prohibited. Exceptions to the aforementioned guidelines will be approved by the school's principal and Complex Area Superintendent.

Please consider ways to celebrate our 2020 Hawaii public school alumni when we are able to return to normalcy. Mahalo for your leadership and aloha in this period of uncertainty.

CMK:pu