

Drive-through graduation for Del Norte

June 11, 2020



UPDATE: Del Norte High School's drive-through graduation on Friday, June 12, will begin at 5 p.m. (not 6 p.m., as previously reported)

CLICK HERE for a diagram of how the drive-through graduation will be organized.

Del Norte Unified School District officials were forced to abandon the preferred standing graduation ceremony for Del Norte High School seniors after the county health officer did not approved their plans.

Del Norte High School will now go with the community's second choice of a drive- through ceremony at 5 p.m. Friday — unless the school gets a last-minute reprieve from Dr. Waren Rehwaldt, county health officer.

Principal Randy Fugate walked through Plan B option of the drive through graduation ceremony for the school board at their June 4 meeting.

For Plan B, Harding and Small streets will be closed off. Parents and graduates will be queued up in 160 cars and wind their way up to the stage. Meanwhile, radio station KPOD has offered to broadcast the ceremony live, Fugate said, so they can listen to the whole ceremony. In addition, it will be live streamed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/delnorthehighschool> and on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/k1D6apunFCk>.

Fugate said the graduate will then get out, walk across the stage for their diploma, while the family follows in position, staying in their cars.

Michael Hawkins told The Triplicate Wednesday it appears Dr. Rehwaldt chose to stay with an abundance of caution in which plan to approve.

“A lot of counties are handling graduations as a local decision, while others are staying with the state level,” Hawkins said.

Allowing communities to host mass gatherings is in the state’s Phase 4 in its Resilience Roadmap to reopening.

Hawkins said the school still has plans in place for Plan A should Rehwaldt change his mind at the last minute.

Rehwaldt did not return The Triplicate’s request for comment before the deadline for this edition.

Fugate said nobody voted for a third option, a virtual ceremony. Elizabeth Ward, School Board Student Representative, said her fellow seniors voted for the in-person graduation as their first preference.

“The drive through was the second choice,” Ward said. “The virtual option got destroyed. It got no votes.”

Hawkins said he’s holding out hope that Rehwaldt could still change his mind at the last moment. If Plan A is approved, it is a two-stage outdoor ceremony on DNHS Whalen Field, splitting the seniors into two groups, with one ceremony at 4:30 and a second at 7:30 p.m. Each graduate would be allowed to bring two to three family members who will be seated six feet apart in the bleachers, with seniors seated 12 feet apart on the football field.