



**EDWARD MILNE**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

May 28, 2021

Hello Grads and Families,

With the exciting provincial announcement of [BC's Restart Plan](#) this past Tuesday, the district has received numerous inquiries from parents about plans and opportunities for commencement ceremonies.

We recognize that this year is not how our grads envisioned their final year, and that this is a significant milestone for our students, their families and our staff. We're committed to making these year end ceremonies meaningful for students and families, while at the same time being consistent with the PHO Gathering and Events Order and the K-12 Health & Safety Guidelines, and balancing the comfort level, safety, and needs of our students and their families.

The restart plans laid out are for public events and households only and do not apply to education settings. The guidelines for schools remain the same as we currently have under stage 2 of the K-12 Education Restart Plan. The Ministry of Education has been clear that graduation ceremonies will continue under the guidelines recently published, COVID-19 Planning Resource – Graduation.

We promise to do our very best to make your graduate shine on their commencement day. We hope you take the opportunities under the new guidelines to celebrate your child at home as well.

### **EMCS Commencement 2021**

The newly re-scheduled dates for EMCS Graduation Commencement ceremonies will be **Tuesday, June 29th and Wednesday, June 30th**. Part of the rationale for rescheduling the ceremonies to the dates later in June is that it allows us to plan the ceremonies with no disruption to class time, and allows for greater student focus as they are finishing up their last course in high school.

Students will be assigned ceremony times based on alphabetical order of last names. This organization is similar to last year, which we found worked incredibly well. We will be scheduling 4 ceremony times (2 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon) on Tuesday, and 1 ceremony time on Wednesday. The list of names and specific ceremony times will be emailed out soon. Grad regalia will be handed out next week.

Unfortunately, as would have been the case for weekend/evening ceremonies, we are unable to have families of grads on site at the time of the ceremonies. Live-streaming links (which will be downloadable) will be sent out at a future date.



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### Health & Safety Information Pertaining to Commencement Ceremonies:

- Grads will be assigned a ceremony based on alpha
  - These will be in groupings of 35 students, as per the K-12 Health & Safety Guidelines as it pertains to Gathering and Events
  - Please arrive 15 minutes prior to their ceremony, to get organized into the line
- Grads will already have their regalia, and are expected to come already dressed
  - They will be given their V-stoles as they are waiting in line to enter the school
- Grads will be lined up along the outside of the gym, tailing back towards the staff/student parking lot
  - They will sanitize prior to entering, enter in through the front doors, and proceed directly to the theatre (and to their assigned, physically-distanced seat)
- All grads MUST have their masks on at all times, and may remove them ONLY when they pause on stage to get their LifeTouch photo taken.
- Once everyone has crossed the stage and received their grad folder, they will exit through the stage right rear exit to the back staff/student parking lot
- The students will drop their V-stoles into a receptacle as they exit
  - Unfortunately, as we will need to reset and prepare for the next ceremony, grads will need to leave the site ASAP
  - We ask that no pictures are taken on the school grounds. Because the grad regalia does not need to be returned, please feel free to go off-site for any family photos, etc.

Once again, we understand that this commencement ceremony is not the one that many people had in mind over the years, but we are very grateful of the understanding and support shown by our families and graduates over the course of this school year. It's been a very difficult one, and now we are seeing the light at the end of a very long tunnel, with the added excitement following Dr. Henry's announcement on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

In a conversation between one of our graduating students and another teacher, the teacher said, "Well, you have the unique position of graduating during a global pandemic." The student's response was, "Yes, this is something that I am definitely telling my kids about!" That mindset shows the resilience of our students.

Thank you for your understanding and your commitment to celebrating the Grad class of 2021!

Todd Powell  
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