

Dear Parents,

It is a bittersweet time of year as we watch our seniors begin to realize that their time in high school will soon be coming to an end. As you know very well, Graduation marks a special moment in a student's life where friends and family gather to congratulate them on their hard work and dedication. At Festus High School, we want this day to be special for everybody. In the past, 1500-2000 guests have attended graduation each year; however, we are limited by the number of guests we can accommodate in the stands. In recent years, many individuals were "reserving" seats with blankets up to 48 hours in advance of the ceremony. In many instances, the entire seating had been unofficially reserved by 10 am the day of the ceremony, resulting in unhappy guests. As a result, we have attempted to add additional seating and reserve a section of bleachers for graduate friends and family in an effort to make this a joyous, stress-free occasion.

Three years ago, the board of education approved NO RESERVED seating at Commencement. While we will continue to honor the traditions of Festus High School, we also want this evening to be enjoyable for all. The outcomes approved by the Festus RVI Board of Education are as follows:

- Gates will open promptly at 5:30 pm. Reserved seating, other than those designated by school officials, will not be permitted. Ushers will be available to take tickets and assist with seating.
- There will be additional seating added to the track. Each graduate will be allotted 2 gold tickets for this section. While we know that with split, extended, and blended families, you may need more than two tickets, we took the space that we had, calculated the number of graduates, and allotted what we could based on size and space. It is up to each individual graduate to determine who gets the two tickets.
- We are looking at the possibility of adding additional seating; therefore, ticket numbers may go up. At a minimum, each graduate will receive 4 black tickets that will be for reserved seating in the main section of the bleachers, again, based on the size and space available. It is up to the graduates and their families to decide who sits where. All tickets will be distributed during graduation practice **prior to** graduation. If you need additional tickets, please contact Mrs. Lassing in the high school office at 636-937-5410. We will try to accommodate as best we can.
- In the event of inclement weather, Graduation will be held at the Jefferson College Field House. These tickets will also be issued at graduation practice and based on the number of graduates and seating capacity at Jefferson College.
- Public seating will be on each side of the bleachers, on the grassy areas, and on the silver portable bleachers on the top level by the press box. This is open seating; **no ticket is required.**
- Handicap reserved seating is in the front row with parking on the lower level. A golf cart will be available to assist handicap guests to seats as needed. The stadium will 'officially' OPEN 90 minutes prior to the ceremony. Thus for the 7 p.m. ceremony, access will be at 5:30 p.m. Prior to 5:30 p.m., blankets or makeshift reserved seating **WILL BE REMOVED** by school officials and no individual will be allowed inside the grandstand or track area.

My intent is for the event to be truly a celebration. If you have any questions about the Graduation/Commencement Ceremony protocols, please contact me at 636-937-5410.

Respectfully,

Dr. Diana Allen

We will have several practices and recognition celebrations prior to graduation. Below are some guidelines that we will share with your graduate during our mandatory graduation practice. Please help us in ensuring that all graduates read and abide by the following guidelines as it will avoid any stress on the evening of graduation.

1. Commencement will be on Tuesday, May 23rd, 2017 at 7 pm on the high school football field (weather permitting). Gates will open at 5:30 pm. Graduates will arrive at 5:00. In case of inclement weather, Commencement will be held in the Jefferson College Field House at 7 pm, Tuesday, May 23rd, 2017 at 7 pm. An announcement will be made Tuesday morning at graduation practice if the location must be change.
2. There will be no reserved seating permitted. All tickets will be handed out at graduation practice. Our intent is to have as many tickets (2 in the track seating and 4 in the bleachers) as we did last year; however, we are looking at ways to add additional seating so it could be more. If you need additional tickets, please contact Mrs. Lassing at 636-937-5410. We will try to accommodate your request. In the event that the ceremony will take place on the football field, you will present your gold ticket to senior advisory teachers stationed at the gold seats on the track and the black seats in the reserved section of the bleachers.
3. In the event that the ceremony will take place at Jefferson College, each graduate will receive 11 white tickets for the ceremony.
4. The men are to wear ties with dress slacks, dress shirt, and dress shoes. Footwear should be formal. NO tennis shoes, flip flops, sandals or other inappropriate footwear. Students will be asked to change if not properly attired.
5. Graduates may keep the caps and gowns. They are made of a thinner material than the rental gowns. Please choose attire that goes well with the gown.
6. The ladies should wear dresses, skirts or dress slacks. Footwear should be formal. No tennis shoes, flip flops, or other inappropriate footwear. Due to the turf on the football field, it is necessary to wear dress flats, wedges, gladiator sandals or heels one inch by one inch that will not puncture the turf. The spiked heels will penetrate deeper than cleats do and will ruin the turf. Students will be asked to change if not properly attired.
7. Graduation caps should be worn flat on the top of the head, not tilted back or to the side. Student MAY NOT decorate their hats. While decorating caps may be something that some schools do, it takes away from the formality of the occasion. Tassels are to be worn on the right side until the end of the ceremony. The class president will instruct the graduates to turn their tassel to the left to signify that they have “graduated”.
8. Graduates should leave purses and other personal belongings with parents. Please be sure to demonstrate respect and responsibility by placing all cell phones on silent. Talking or texting on the cell during the ceremony is strictly prohibited.
9. Special instructions for marching to seats will be discussed during the Commencement practice. You must have earned all required credits in order to participate and you must participate in the graduation ceremony in order to receive a Festus diploma. **A mandatory graduation meeting will be held on May 22nd following senior breakfast in the cafeteria at 7:40. A mandatory**

**commencement practice also will be held on the turf on May 23rd at 7:40. Students who fail to attend either meeting will not be allowed to walk at graduation. No appointments should be scheduled before noon. Graduates must remain the entire practice.**

10. Graduates should plan on arriving for the graduation ceremony no later than 5:00 pm. Please allow plenty of time. Being rushed on the day of graduation only makes one more nervous.
11. All participants will be expected to form lines to march on the football field by 5:30 on the 23rd as per special instructions given during practice. Senior class teacher sponsors will be there to assist with the lineup.
12. Absolutely no Silly String is allowed at the ceremony. The dye in the silly string will stain the turf.
13. No noise makers. They prevent others from hearing their graduate's name.
14. On the evening of graduation, students will only be given their cover for their diploma. They will pick up their diploma from the main office in mid-June. All fines are to be cleared with Mrs. Lassing in the main office before a diploma will be issued. Stay tuned to School Reach and the school website.
15. Graduation is recorded. Please be sure that all students behave accordingly.
16. Handicap Parking at Tiger Stadium: Please pull in through the gates on the lower level of the football field off Sunshine Dr. where someone will direct parking. We will then direct you to the first row of bleachers for handicap seating. If you need transportation to the bleachers, please inform the gate keeper at the entrance. Additional handicap parking will also be available on the top lot along the fence.
17. Handicap Parking at Jefferson College: Park in a handicap parking spot. Special handicap seating will be located behind the graduates in chairs on the floor.

We want this evening to be special for you and your graduate. Please let me know if you have any questions prior to the ceremony. We will try to be as accommodating as possible. High School Graduation is a milestone in a student's life that only happens once. We want the evening to be perfect. Thank you so much for your support as a parent.

