## Initial communication to high school seniors and families from Districts

To: Seniors and Families

Re: Determining Status of Graduation due to COVID-19 School Closure

Dear Seniors and Families,

As we navigate through this unprecedented time, our first concern is for your well-being. We understand you may be anxious about the near future, anticipating the potential loss of cherished traditions and experiences that serve as important markers of your senior year. We are experiencing this too, and we care about responding to your needs and questions in the best way we know how. We are with you.

With the schools closed for an extended period (per Governor Brown’s Executive Order [EO 20-08](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IR5fFOUxLJRDASrvkV-HyZWoi5IHlmXE/view) issued on March 17, 2020), we are working to ensure that every member of the Class of 2020 can access supports for their well-being, ongoing learning, high school completion and transition to career and college. You have been working toward this high school milestone for over twelve years, and you deserve the opportunity to finish strong. We remain focused on you and your future goals.

Oregon Department of Education’s (ODE) Graduation Pathways Guidance is not requiring Essential Skills and Personalized Learning Requirements for 2020, so seniors will not need to meet them to graduate. Additionally, graduation status will be based on the senior’s course progress prior to the extended school closure (March 13). The purpose of this is to recognize progress and award credits towards the 24-credit Oregon Diploma requirement even though school is closed. Our goal is to not penalize any senior for this crisis.

[Insert School Name] is in the process of reviewing each senior’s course progress to determine credits earned for the spring term, and then we will update your students status towards graduation.

On or before April 30, 2020, you will receive follow-up communication from [insert contact]. This communication will include:

* Your senior’s graduation status that reflects credits earned for the period of school closure.
* Information and next steps to stay engaged with learning and to access other supports for your well-being and transition to career and college.
* Contact information along with answers to frequently asked questions.

We are so proud of your consistent display of leadership, character, and integrity during such a difficult time. Undoubtedly, this has created incredible disruption for everyone, and we acknowledge the impact for our senior class of 2020 most especially. We continue to look for creative ways to celebrate and mark your senior year with new traditions and re-imagined ceremonies. Student voice and input will be essential as we design what these might be, conscious of the important role for families and communities sharing in this moment.

Thanks to each of you for supporting one another, for embracing uncertainty with grace and patience, and for finding strength in one another. We must remind ourselves that we’re part of a greater community, and that our purpose is to emerge from this with the tools to build a better world.

Sincerely,

*[Superintendent Name]*

## Follow-up communication to seniors and families who are on track to graduate

April 30, 2020 *[or earlier, if feasible]*

Dear *[Student Name]*,

We are pleased to confirm that you have met the credit requirements, are on track for a 2020 Oregon [*REGULAR or MODIFIED or EXTENDED*] Diploma and set to graduate in June 2020. Well done -- you’re almost there!

We are committed to supporting your future goals during this extended school closure. As named in Governor Brown’s Executive Order ([EO 20-08](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IR5fFOUxLJRDASrvkV-HyZWoi5IHlmXE/view)), issued on March 17, 2020, our commitment to you is to support your learning and set you up for future success.

In order to prepare you for graduation and a successful transition to life after high school, we have information and resources for your continued learning, well-being, and career and college planning. This letter includes resources that may be helpful as you finish your senior year and look towards post-secondary opportunities. You can find more information about next steps by going to *[insert access instructions for the students to proactively learn about the supports]* and/or contacting *[insert contact]*.

We are proud of your accomplishments and look forward to celebrating your graduation. If you have any questions, please reach out to *[counselor or mentor teacher]* at *[phone and/or email].*  *[Schools may wish to leave specific information here about contact procedures considering equity to access, the student’s social/emotional considerations, and the student’s preferred language.]*

We stand by you each step of the way forward. Even though school doors are closed, our hearts are open to you during this time. Count on us to encourage you, help you learn and be there with you through graduation. Stay engaged and support one another; we are in this together as the Class of 2020.

Sincerely,

[Principal Name]

## Follow-up communication to seniors and families who need credit to graduate

Dear [*Student Name*],

We believe in you and are committed to supporting your pathway to graduation. We know that with the right plan, you will successfully graduate high school. As shared with you in the *[phone call on (name date) or email on (name date) or letter on (name date)]*, your graduation success plan will include personalized attention to your learning, any additional care needed for your mental and emotional health and supports to bridge toward career and college.

We will work with you to earn the following credits necessary to graduate and receive your diploma:

*[Insert student credits still needed.]*

Please see the list below that outlines the specific supports that [*school name*] will provide in order for you to earn the necessary credits to graduate:

*[District to list supports here]:  Plans may look different depending on if the student’s goal is to graduate by the end of the school year or return next year for further education.*

*Include:*

1. *Who will be collaborating in this plan (involve students, families, teachers, case managers, counselors, social workers, and/or administrators, as appropriate)*
2. *What flexibility has been provided (refer to existing state flexibility provided by* [*Credit Options*](https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/viewSingleRule.action?ruleVrsnRsn=145206) *and any new distance learning opportunities.)*
3. *Accommodations provided for students who require specially designed instruction and access*
4. *What supports are provided for College and Career Pathways*
5. *Other appropriate information as referenced in the* [*Oregon Education Plan and Profile*](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/GraduationImprovement/Documents/Education%20Plan%20Profile.pdf)

We know that with school closed, it will require commitment from all of us to guarantee your success. If you have any questions, please reach out to [counselor or mentor teacher] at *[phone and/or email].*  *[Schools may wish to leave specific information here about contact procedures considering equity to access, the student’s social/emotional considerations, and the student’s preferred language.]*

We stand by you each step of the way forward. Even though school doors are closed, our hearts are open to you during this time. Count on us to encourage you, help you learn and be there cheering you on to the finish line.

Sincerely,

[Principal Name]

## Initial communication to school board members

*The purpose of this letter is to update school board members about guidance from the Department of Education on graduation for the Class of 2020 and how [DISTRICT NAME] will be supporting our high school seniors to ensure they have a clear pathway to achieving a diploma.*

To: Members of the Board of Education

Re: Guidance for 2020 Graduation due to COVID-19 School Closure

Join me in standing by our senior Class of 2020 as they continue to rise strong and demonstrate leadership, integrity, and bravery through this unprecedented time. They deserve our greatest support.

When our district is in a crisis, our community looks to their elected leaders to provide a unified message that is supportive of our students and families and helps reassure them that we are doing everything we can to provide support. It is more critical than ever that we provide our community with factual information that is clear, calm, and reassuring. It is important for us to maintain consistent and unified messaging from the district so that our seniors feel our commitment during a critical time in their lives. We need your help to focus our energy on ensuring that every senior is able to graduate on time and begin building a successful future.

As we work to meet Governor Brown’s March 17th Executive Order ([EO 20-08](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IR5fFOUxLJRDASrvkV-HyZWoi5IHlmXE/view)), we want to prioritize student safety and well-being. It is our collective responsibility to consider the needs and strengths of our seniors and to create the conditions for them to graduate--even with our schools closed to students in physical form. Our goal is to hold students harmless, recognize their accomplishments over the course of more than 12 years and protect their future plans. With your support, we believe we can achieve this goal and support each and every member of the Class of 2020 to successfully graduate.

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has developed new guidance for 2020 Graduation.

**What’s Essential: Graduation Pathways 2020 Guidance**

* Maintain current Oregon Diploma, Oregon Modified Diploma, and Oregon Extended Diploma subject area and credit requirements.
* Award subject-area credit based on a senior’s progress or demonstrated proficiency prior to the school closure.
* Award a diploma if a senior was on track to graduate prior to the closure.
* Include any distance learning educational opportunities offered after school closure to award credit.
* Assign seniors Pass/Incomplete for all courses impacted by school closure.
* Suspend all Essential Skills and Personalized Learning requirements for seniors (Career Related Learning Experiences (CRLEs), Extended Application, and Education Plan and Profile). *Note: This will require future State Board of Education action and OAR revision.*

Seniors who need additional credits to achieve the 2020 Oregon Diploma will receive a personalized graduation plan to support and help them earn the additional credits needed to graduate.

*[Districts to personalize what this looks like here]*

On or before April 30, 2020, each senior will receive follow-up communication from [insert contact name(s) and/or role(s)] with their graduation status and next steps for staying engaged with learning and transition to career and college. We will also include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to help address the many questions our seniors and families have. We will promptly provide you with any additional information and updates as we receive them from ODE. *[Districts can add local information here about how students and parents will receive these updates (e.g. online, phone, flash alert, etc.)]*

We are so proud of our seniors and the integrity and strength they are modeling during such a disappointing and challenging time. We recognize the incredible disruption they are experiencing at the prospect of not having the cherished traditions that our community has come to know and anticipate each year. Our commitment is to continue to look for creative ways to celebrate and mark their accomplishments.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information about our efforts to support the Class of 2020.

Sincerely,

*[Superintendent Name]*