Dear Roller Class of 2020 and Families:

We hope this communication finds you and your families safe and well. This information will contain much-anticipated details that surround the celebration of the accomplishments of the Class of 2020. As an Administration & Graduation Planning Team, we have long deliberated how to best celebrate this huge milestone with you and your graduates. We recognize that walking across the stage in front of peers and family is a moment that each member of the Class of 2020 has earned through hard work and dedication and are saddened that this year, the celebration of their hard work cannot look the same as years past. Although this year will look different due to COVID-19, our Administration Team, along with Senior Class Advisors Mrs. Roedts, Mrs. Schuyler, and Graduation Coordinator Dr. Jackson, are committed to providing opportunities for each senior to feel recognized and celebrated. Through our planning, we balanced what we want for our students (the very best) against complying with the restrictions placed upon us for everyone’s wellbeing and safety by guidance from the State Government and the CDC. On Friday, May 8th, Governor Wolf announced that Dauphin County will remain in the “red zone” through June 4th. While we are aware that local government officials are in the process of challenging this, as a state institution, we are bound to follow directives of the Governor of Pennsylvania above all others. With this in mind, please see details below regarding specific previously scheduled events.

**CAP AND GOWN DISTRIBUTION**

Caps and gowns were delivered to Steel-High on May 6th. Arrangements are being made to distribute caps and gowns *tentatively* on June 2nd. Students, parents, & guardians should keep close watch on their email for instructions regarding how to pick up their caps and gowns. Announcements will also be posted in the Senior Google Classroom and on our [Graduation webpage](#). Distribution must adhere to social distancing practices as well as state guidelines.

We are asking seniors and families to submit photos in their caps and gowns to Instagram @blueandgraytoday via direct message and twitter @SHSDRollers with the #SHSDRollers2020. Some photos may be incorporated into our website.

**PROM**

The Senior Prom at the Red Lion Hotel, scheduled for May 15, 2020, has been canceled.
This event will not be able to be held as scheduled. Even if Dauphin County is moved into the “yellow” phase of the governor’s re-opening plan for Pennsylvania by May 30, large gatherings of more than 25 persons are not permitted and social distancing guidelines would prevent this event from being possible. The Administration and Senior Class Advisors have discussed the rescheduling of Prom to later in the summer; however, that would only be possible if Dauphin County were to be in the “green” phase of the governor’s re-opening plan for the state. We do not want to further disappoint students by announcing a rescheduled date as some other schools have done, only to have to cancel once again. Therefore, at this time, Prom will not be rescheduled. At such time that we anticipate a projected date for return to “green,” the Administration will then revisit the idea of holding a social event for the senior class that may be a formal, semi-formal or casual affair, dependent upon the majority of the wishes of the senior class at that time. It is very important to us that no student be excluded from participating in such an event due to an inability to afford formal or semi-formal attire or the traditional costs associated with Prom when many parents are out of work right now and may not be able to afford these expenses, so we may need the support and assistance of others in the community at that time. When the time arrives to revisit this topic, we will be in touch with the senior class to seek their input on the type of event they wish to have and make the decisions accordingly at that time.

SENIOR AWARDS BANQUET

This event will not be able to held as scheduled (previously May 21st); however, a list of all awards/scholarships and recipients will be posted in the graduation program and on our District website. Seniors will receive those awards along with their diplomas on June 6, 2020.

COMMENCEMENT CELEBRATION PLANS

“We know that school has been canceled for the rest of the school year, and we’re not going to allow large gatherings even in yellow zones, so I think that what’s a fair assumption, is that graduations will have to be remote.”

-Dr. Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania Health Department Secretary, 4/27/20

Based upon this statement, we developed a video and questions (survey) to gain input from the Class of 2020 regarding their commencement. Please remember that each of these events must take into consideration state guidelines and current social distancing practices. Of the 22 students who watched the video and responded to the questions, 16 students (72%) responded that they would like to participate in a semi-virtual ceremony (driving) rather than a fully virtual ceremony or waiting until August to see if we could potentially hold a traditional ceremony.

To the best of our ability, student responses to this video was the driving force in the finalization of commencement plans for the Steelton-Highspire Class of 2020.

Due to Governor Wolf’s announcement on May 8th that Dauphin County will remain in “red zone” through June 4th, which requires “Stay-at-Home” orders be followed for non-essential travel and his order that schools are physically closed for large gatherings through the end of the school year, our original plans for Commencement Celebrations must be moved to SATURDAY, JUNE 6TH, 2020

Saturday, June 6, 2020 Semi-Virtual Awarding of Diplomas & Commencement Celebration
This event will be **LIVESTREAMED on YouTube**

Traditional aspects of a SHSD commencement ceremony such as: student speeches, remarks from the Superintendent, the Principal’s address, and the presentation of the class to the School Board of Directors will be included.

Multiple scheduled windows of time will be used to limit the total number of students on campus at any one time. Students will receive their scheduled time via their Rollers email and a copy of the schedule will be posted on our [Graduation page of the District Website](#) as the date approaches.

Students will be limited to two (2) cars for the graduate and family members. In order to honor social distancing and state guidelines, families may not arrive early, may not utilize parking lots other than during their assigned window of time, and must exit the campus upon their graduate receiving their diplomas. Security will assist with the flow of traffic on campus as we award all diplomas on this day.

Cars should enter school property at the ELEMENTARY SCHOOL and will be directed into the parking lot outside of the Jr./Sr. High School Gymnasium. At this point, each Senior will be able to exit their car individually to receive their diploma (all other family members must remain in car). Cars will then follow directions through the parking lot of the High School where they will be given their Senior gifts (including sponsored yearbook and Adopt-a-Senior bags) and will have a photo opportunity at the Roller, exiting back onto Reynders Avenue past the baseball fields, where the new graduate will be given their personalized yard sign. A map of the route will also be posted in the Senior Google Classroom and on the [Graduation webpage](#).

Students, family, and friends will be able to watch each other receive diplomas via our [livestreamed on Youtube](#). This livestream will also be available via the District Website during the event.

**Families are welcome to decorate their car to celebrate their new graduate(s)!**

In addition to the graduation celebration being held at the Jr./Sr. High School, the Boroughs of Steelton and Highspire would like to invite all Class of 2020 Seniors and their families to participate in a PARADE at 4 PM, beginning at the Car Wash on Front Street in Steelton and ending in Highspire. Please look for more details regarding this part of the celebration to come soon!

**Rain date: Sunday, June 7, 2020.**

**Please also be reminded:**

- Light up the Night: War Veterans’ Memorial Field will be lit up in honor of our seniors each Friday night in the month of May from 8 PM – 10 PM.

Sincerely,

Travis M. Waters Ed.D.
Superintendent
Steelton-Highspire School District.