

Dear Governor Inslee,

I am the proud parent of a senior at Ballard High School in Seattle. Last year's graduating class received an outpouring of sympathy as they missed their final senior milestones. This year's graduating class has it even worse: they haven't experienced a single day of their senior year in person, and it is unlikely they will ever step foot in their high schools again. **We can, however, help them celebrate graduation in person.**

All across the country and across Washington, schools have opened their doors in accordance with public health guidelines that dictate how to re-open safely. In Seattle, even though COVID cases are low, the district and the teachers union remain at an impasse. But in-person graduation doesn't require bargaining between Seattle Public Schools (SPS) and the union; it doesn't require ventilation standards. It requires careful planning and the desire to help seniors come together one final time to bid high school farewell, safely and together.

SPS' largest graduating class is 501 students; the smallest is 188. Typically, the larger public schools hold their graduation ceremonies at Memorial Stadium, which seats 12,000 in the stands. With limits on the number of guests per student, Memorial Stadium can safely accommodate even the largest senior class in the district, as follows:

- A cap of four guests per student would equate to a total of 2,500 people: 500 students seated eight feet apart on the field and 2,000 guests in the stands, which would equate to 17% capacity in the stands.
- A cap of two guests per student would yield a group of 1,500 people: 500 students seated eight feet apart on the field and 1,000 guests in the stands, which would equate to 8% capacity in the stands.
- No guests is also an option, allowing for even more distancing.

We are open to thinking creatively. For example, special consideration would need to be given to traffic flow; perhaps staggered entries could address this issue. If Memorial Stadium is deemed too small, Husky Stadium (70,000 capacity) or T-Mobile Park (47,000 capacity) could be considered (Bishop Blanchet, Seattle Prep, O'Dea and Holy Names are all planning to hold their graduation ceremonies at T-Mobile).

We all hope that COVID cases will continue to decline, allowing King County to advance beyond Phase 3 in the near future. When you are deciding on the size of Phase 4 group gatherings, please consider allowing outdoor gatherings of sufficient size to facilitate in-person graduation ceremonies. If King County is not in Phase 4, as Governor, please consider a variance for outdoor graduation.

Seniors have lost so much over the past year. Can you please give them this win?

Thank you.

Sincerely,
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