

May 11, 2018

TO: Students and Families for the Class of 2018

FROM: William S. McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent, and Lisa Deorio, Principal

RE: Graduation Venue – Will Allow Private Funding for the Tent

Graduation 2018

Many students and families over the past two weeks have expressed questions about not having the tent as the venue for graduation for the Class of 2018. The Superintendent’s decision not to use a tent was because of a severe financial shortfall in this fiscal year, and the need to protect against such a shortfall next year. The tent became a necessary, but painful, reduction in budget cutting that has had to occur to protect and preserve the highest priority curricular and co-curricular programs and opportunities we provide Weston students.

While most students and families have understood the financial necessity of the cut, many have asked why private donations could not be used to pay for the tent. **After carefully considering the range of points raised in meetings, phone calls and multiple emails, the Superintendent has decided to allow the tent to be paid for by private donations.**

We have determined that, we can provide the Class of 2018 a commencement under the tent for the cost listed below. The firm which has provided the tent and all associated services in the past has made itself available. However, we have to make a full and final financial commitment to the firm no later than Friday, May 18, 2018. Thus, the challenge is that all funds must be raised and submitted to the Superintendent’s Office **no later than Friday, May 18** in the form of a single, certified bank check. **The required amount is \$21,500:**

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. Tent (Set-up, take-down, lighting, etc.) | \$15,500 |
| 2. Overtime Costs for security, custodians, site preparation and clean-up | \$ 3,200 |
| 3. Contingency (15%) | \$ 2,800 |
| TOTAL | \$21,500 |

Donations and gifts must be made to a *GoFundMe* account. Several parents have volunteered to manage the process for the high school. We will send the *GoFundMe* link to all senior families over the weekend. Please note that there will be **no special provisions, services or opportunities provided in exchange for gifts or donations.** A final reporting on the cost of graduation and the use of funds will be reported to the BOE, and thus the full WPS Community, at the July 2018 BOE Meeting.

Future Year Graduations

Private funding for a graduation tent will have to be the practice for the foreseeable future. The Weston Public Schools cannot afford to pay for a tent. Henceforth, a Graduation Committee (chaired by the WHS Principal, with staff, PTO and student representation) will be established in the fall of each school year to make all plans for commencement, including the recommendation on venue (i.e., tent, football stadium, gym, or other location). If the tent is the chosen venue, private funding will be required. The final decision would still be made by the Superintendent and WHS Principal, based on the Graduation Committee’s multiple months of work and recommendations.