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Dr. Edwin M. Quezada
Superintendent of Schools

April 29, 2021

**RE: Class of 2021 Commencement and Graduation Activities
Class of 2025 Eighth Grade Moving Up Ceremonies**

Dear Students and Parent of the Classes of 2021 and 2025,

Graduation activities for the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2025 eighth grade Moving Up ceremonies have been under discussion for the past several weeks while we waited for New York State guidance. Our goal, as always, is to provide beautiful memorable events for our students and families. School districts continue to be governed by New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) guidance for in-person activities during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. As we prepare for June events to maximize student and family in-person participation, I want everyone to understand that all decisions related to these activities must comply with NYSDOH guidelines for social distancing and limits for the number of participants at gatherings.

Last year, joyous end of the year events occurred at our high schools and many elementary schools, all following the CDC guidelines available at that time. Commencement "Turn Your Tassel" offered our high school graduates an opportunity to wear their cap and gown, receive their diploma and take pictures with family and school administrators and teachers. Everyone social distancing. In addition, schools creatively offered virtual awards ceremonies. These events were well received and appreciated. Because of last year's great success the Classes of 2021 and 2025 can expect magnificent events.

Based on recent NYSDOH guidance, **Yonkers Public Schools will be able to host outdoor in-person Class of 2021 Commencement Exercises and eighth grade Moving Up ceremonies.** These activities will strictly comply with NYSDOH [Updated Interim Guidance for End of Academic Year Celebrations During the COVID-19 State of Emergency \(Updated April 12, 2021\)](#) and the [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency \(As of April 9, 2021\)](#).

As of June 1, based on the NYSDOH April 12, 2021 guidance for *End of Academic Year Celebrations*, there are strict guidelines for in-person outdoor and indoor events (pages 6 & 7) based on the number of people in attendance. Our high schools are graduating from 100 to 300 students. With two (2) family members attending graduation we must anticipate 300 to 900 people in attendance, which would require everyone in attendance must show proof of a recent negative COVID-19 screening test or immunization (vaccination). **Based on these very strict requirements, the District cannot organize formal in-person ceremonies in ALL 8 high schools and 20 prekindergarten through grade 8 schools. Therefore, to comply with the NYSDOH guidance, and to be equitable to all of our students and families across the District,**

ALL 28 schools will host outdoor walk through commencement ceremonies.

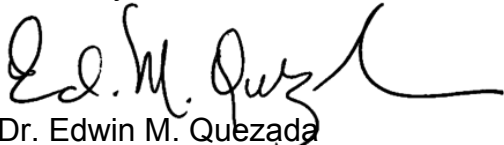
High School Commencement Exercises are an extremely important rite of passage for students and families. Please know that every decision made is with input from our high school students, administrators and teachers. These exercises will be held on the school's campus or at an adjacent park on the dates and times listed below. Each school's unique facility and property will determine the walk through format for their celebration. In the event of inclement weather, students will be able to participate in a short indoor ceremony that would include allowing one family at a time to come into the school to see the graduate receive the diploma.

Yonkers Middle High School	Wednesday, June 16, 2021	9:00 AM
Yonkers Montessori Academy	Wednesday, June 16, 2021	2:00 PM
Saunders Trade And Technical High School	Monday, June 21, 2021	9:00 AM
Palisade Preparatory School	Monday, June 21, 2021	2:00 PM
Riverside High School	Thursday, June 17, 2021	2:00PM
Gorton High School	Tuesday, June 22, 2021	2:00 PM
Lincoln High School	Tuesday, June 15, 2021	9:00 AM
Roosevelt High School - Early College Studies	Wednesday, June 23, 2021	2:00 PM

Eighth Grade Moving Up ceremonies will follow similar procedures to the high schools hosting only walk through ceremonies. Principals will notify their learning community regarding the date, time and the activity details.

Once again, our Central Office team, school administrators and staff continue to demonstrate creativity, resourcefulness and determination to do the best possible for all of our magnificent students. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Dr. Edwin M. Quezada
Superintendent of Schools



Rev. Steve Lopez
President, Board of Education

C: Vice President Dr. Rosalba Corrado Del Vecchio and Members of the Board of Education