

Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200

201 North Scoville Avenue • Oak Park, IL 60302-2296

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Regina Topf, Director of Student Activities
Karin Sullivan, Director of Communication and Community Relations
Nate Rouse, Principal

DATE: August 27, 2015

RE: Graduation, 2016

Background & Information

Commencement at Oak Park and River Forest High School has been traditionally held on a Sunday afternoon. When weather permits, the stadium stands are filled with family and friends of graduates. It was rare to meet the capacity of the stadium until 2013 and 2014 when staff had to close the gates, turning people away in order to keep the crowd safe. In 2015, a ticketing system was used to ensure that each graduate could have a family member or friend present at the commencement ceremony. Each family could reserve tickets online allowing each student to have a maximum of 6 stadium tickets, 3 Field House tickets (rain location), and 2 tickets to the Auditorium for a live stream of the program. Each family also had the option of up to 2 Special Needs tickets that would take the place of their stadium or field house regular tickets. Commencement day was smooth with a comfortable crowd, despite a chill in the air, yet there were some issues while processing the tickets.

Families of multiples were issued tickets per child instead of per family, allowing these families to have more than the allotted 6 tickets. Most all families ordered the maximum possible number of tickets, leaving few extra to use as a lottery or for families with special circumstances like unhealthy relationships between parents, etc. This allowed for inequity in ticket distribution

Recommendations:

It is recommended for Commencement to not be held on Memorial Day Weekend as the calendar previously stated. This is out of respect for our families who may make alternative plans over the holiday weekend. It is recommended that Commencement be held on Thursday, May 26th at 7:00pm. Currently, there is a School Board Meeting and a Theater Banquet scheduled during this time, which can be changed.

It is recommended that since the crowds were under control families were allowed to plan accordingly that we keep the ticketing system. However, some adjustments are suggested. The following ticket allotment was calculated based on the class of 2016 having potentially 800 graduates and to abide by capacity laws in the stadium (4,400).

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It is recommended that each graduate will have the opportunity to request up to 5 General Stadium Tickets. The graduates will also receive 3 Field House Tickets and 2 Auditorium Tickets. Families will continue to have the option for requesting up to 2 Special Needs Tickets, which will count toward their General Ticket order. All ticket requests will be expected to be completed by Thursday, May 20th (exactly one week before Commencement).

It is expected that after all ticket requests are entered there will be at least 400 tickets leftover. These 400 tickets can then be used to help the families who need more tickets, i.e.: the families where the parents have an unhealthy relationship. In order to issue the extra tickets in a fair manner, it is proposed to have a first-come-first-serve service to pick up the extra tickets. With the graduation mailings, each family will receive a specific “will-call pass” with the student’s information. On Saturday, May 22nd, graduates can bring their “will-call pass” to OPRF and receive up to 2 extra General Stadium Tickets. This will allow only one set of extra tickets per graduate.

Next Steps:

Due to the impact on the community and student body, the district is asking for the Board of Education to provide feedback and endorsement to this proposal before the district takes more initiative.