



Media Release

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MANATEE DISTRICT RESCHEDULES CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATION DATES TO MOVE TO OUTDOOR VENUE AT BRADENTON'S LECOM PARK

(Bradenton, FL – July 1, 2020) High School graduation ceremonies for the School District of Manatee County's Class of 2020 – which were postponed due to COVID-19 – have been rescheduled for LECOM Park in Bradenton the week of Monday, July 27, through Saturday, August 1, 2020. LECOM Park, located at 1611 9th St. W., in Bradenton, is the spring training home to the Pittsburgh Pirates and their minor league affiliate, the Bradenton Marauders.

The postponed graduation ceremonies were initially scheduled for the Bradenton Area Convention Center during that same week. However, with an increase in COVID-19 cases being reported in Manatee County and across Florida, the ability to accommodate crowds upwards of 2000 people in an indoor setting while maintaining appropriate social distancing appears unfeasible.

In addition to providing an outdoor arena that can accommodate a large crowd, LECOM Park's assigned seating and ticketing system can assist in spacing guests for social distancing purposes. In addition, moving the ceremonies to the morning will allow for cooler temperatures and lessen the chances of interruptions from afternoon and evening thunderstorms that routinely occur that time of year. If there is a rainout, the early starting time will provide the possibility of rescheduling the ceremony for later the same day.

To accommodate the morning schedules at LECOM Park, the rescheduled graduation dates originally set for Braden River High and Southeast High at the Bradenton Area Convention Center had to be changed. Braden River's graduation date was moved from Friday to Tuesday; Southeast's graduation date was moved from Saturday to Monday.

The revised graduation ceremonies are scheduled as follows:

- Monday, July 27: Southeast High School, LECOM Park, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday July 28: Braden River High School, LECOM Park, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday July 28: Manatee High School, Hawkins Stadium, 8 p.m.
- Wednesday July 29: Lakewood Ranch High School, LECOM Park, 9 a.m.
- Thursday July 30: Palmetto High School, LECOM Park, 9 a.m.
- Saturday August 1: Bayshore High School, LECOM Park, 9 a.m.

“Like everything associated with the COVID-19 crisis, we have had to be flexible and proactive to make sound and safe decisions that are in the best interests of everyone involved,” said Superintendent Cynthia Saunders. “There is no perfect time or venue for these ceremonies, but our ultimate goal is to give our graduates and their families the recognition they have earned for receiving their diplomas.”