



HOME OF THE SPARTANS

Strathmore High School

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Dear Grade 12 Parents/Guardians:

As your son/daughter continues through Grade 12 this year, you will undoubtedly hear a great deal about an event called Graduation. Graduation has become, in many ways, a rite of passage which all parents and students look forward to. Graduation at Strathmore High School is really a recognition ceremony of anticipated success in Grade 12 because students will not graduate until they receive their final diploma marks in late July. On May 26th, 2012, SHS will recognize those students who are eligible to graduate in a ceremony in the afternoon and in a celebration in the evening. Both events take place at SHS.

In an article about graduation ceremonies in the June edition of the Strathmore Times accused SHS of being unsupportive of a parent organized meal. These quotes highlighted the misunderstandings that exist about our ceremonies. Prior to 2008, we were growing increasingly concerned about the rising costs of our banquet and the number of students who were unable to attend or choosing not to attend because of costs. We were also aware that at our banquet, the majority of the students spent time in small groups, with their families and the families of their friends. We began to examine the idea of having an evening celebration in place of the banquet. In the fall of 2008, grad supervisors Mrs. Ledene and Mr. Pirie arranged for a ballot to be given to every Grade 12 and their family. The ballot asked Grade 12's and their families to choose between a school organized banquet in Calgary or no organized banquet. The second question they were asked was if they wanted the school to organize a celebration at the school.

A majority of families/students chose the option not to have an organized banquet and to support an evening social at the school. As a result of this vote, Strathmore High School hosts a celebration in the evening of the Grad day that includes ALL the activities that used to be part of the banquet with the exception of the meal. The decision has resulted in a reduction of costs for students and parents. The Grad Fee which was at \$45 in 2008 is now \$20, and the evening celebration costs only \$10 with children under 12 free while the banquet in Calgary was \$50 per person and rising each year. The number of guests that students can bring was limited before and now is unlimited. Our aim as a school was and is to make the school celebration as

affordable as possible and, therefore, accessible to all our students. The staff of SHS is very proud of the fact that all eligible Grade 12 students are able to attend the ceremony in the afternoon and the evening celebration at a very minimal cost.

Since 2008, some Grade 12 parents have chosen to organize a meal for students to attend. Strathmore High School has not been involved in this event. The staff of SHS does not attend, in an official capacity, any of the meals organized by parents or students because to do so would send the message that the school is endorsing a certain event. We encourage parents and students to attend a meal that suits their family, friends and finances. The staff of SHS is pleased that since 2008 an increasing number of students have chosen celebratory meals at restaurants in Calgary and Strathmore, at churches, in homes and community halls and then return to the school where they can all celebrate together. Parents who choose to organize a meal need to understand that the school cannot provide lists of students, addresses or phone numbers as this would be a violation of provincial FOIP legislation. Any form of support by the school would also mean we assume some liability for the event.

Safe Grad, like any parent organized meal, does not involve Strathmore High School. While we believe it is an invaluable event in allowing students and friends to celebrate in a safe environment, we cannot be involved in any way for legal reasons. Golden Hills School Division and the Alberta Teachers' Association have urged all teachers not to attend or be involved in Safe Grad because of liability issues.

The Grad supervisors this year are Mrs. Pedersen and Mr. Pirie. They will be communicating with parents through letters in October and April as well as providing updates through announcements to Grade 12's, the school newsletter and the school website. They can be contacted through email or a phone call to the school.

Strathmore High School recognizes that Graduation is a very important tradition in the lives of its students and parents. The staff of SHS is very proud of our school's desire to establish a tradition that is affordable to all. The staff looks forward to seeing you on May 26th.

Strathmore High School