



MESA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
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Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, academically rich environment utilizing best practices to develop all students to be productive citizens and preparing lifelong learners for post-secondary readiness and success in a global society.

May 16, 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Class of 2021,

Greetings from Mesa Ridge High School! **I wanted to let you all know that we have decided to hold graduation OUTSIDE so families can attend with the support from local and national weather services.** There is a slight chance there can be some light precipitation early in the morning, with a very low chance for thunderstorms until noon. Please dress for the weather as the temperatures will be in the 50's. As promised, we are still providing a link so parents, family members, and friends can access the Live Stream for the ceremony. Please follow the instructions referenced below to access the link for the Live Stream.

- Click on the following link: <http://events.locallive.tv/school/widefield-district-3>
(The link will also be available on the Mesa Ridge website: mrhs.wsd3.org – Click on the Live Stream button)
- Click the drop-down menu with “Upcoming Sports Events” and click on “**Upcoming School Events.**”
- Click on “**Watch**” next to the Mesa Ridge High School Graduation. You will be able to watch the ceremony LIVE when it starts at **9:00 am.**

GRADUATION CEREMONY:

- The graduation ceremony is scheduled for **Monday, May 17, 2021, at 9:00 am** at Mesa Ridge High School on the lower JV Baseball/football practice field. **The ceremony will last approximately one and a half hours.**
- Graduates should **arrive by 7:30 am** in the south student parking lot **dressed in their cap and gown** and **have their Diploma Cover with them.** We will do a brief walkthrough of the ceremony.
- Wear comfortable shoes because you will be walking on the grass fields.
- Parents should arrive **no earlier** than **8:00 am** when the gates open for guests. **Please have your tickets!**
- Seniors will stage for the precession of graduates at **8:45 am**, and the ceremony will begin promptly at **9:00 am.**
- Please dress appropriately for the weather forecast for the day (**positive thoughts for good weather**). We plan to do all we can to have the graduation ceremony at Mesa Ridge High School that day. Please bring sunscreen and water. Please do not bring large umbrellas as they will block the vision of those sitting around you.
- We will have **1000 seats available** for guests. Please understand that we will need your support. Adding four additional guests per graduate, bringing lawn chairs to sit on, or blankets for the hillside is appreciated.
- Restrooms and port-o-potties will be available for graduates and guests.

- Exiting the stadium after the ceremony – **PLEASE** do not linger after the ceremony. We would love for everyone to stay around and celebrate; however, we have to disperse our many guests and graduates.

CEREMONY EXPECTATIONS:

- All participants, parents, and guests at the ceremony will **only** be required to wear masks upon entering and exiting the ceremony. Once you are seated, you can take your mask off if you choose.
- The social distancing of six feet apart is **not** required, so it will allow us to have a more intimate ceremony.
- No person-to-person exchanges during the ceremony (**YOU MUST HAVE YOUR DIPLOMA COVER**)
- Graduates will be taking a picture with a School Board member while holding their Diploma Cover before exiting the stage.
- **Please, no** noisemakers, air horns, or cowbells allowed that would distract or interfere with the ceremony flow.
- **Guests, please do not enter the ceremony area where the graduates are seated or around the stage area.**

PRE-CEREMONY PROCEDURES:

- **Parking**
 - All graduates and guests will enter through the main entrance in front of the school. The Mesa Ridge Parkway entrance will be blocked off to allow us to control parking.
 - Seniors will arrive at **7:30 am** and check-in and find their seat, and will practice a “Walk-through” of how the ceremony will flow
 - **Seniors will park along the Mesa Ridge Parkway side of the south student parking lot.**
 - Parents/Guests must arrive **no earlier** than **8:00 am** and will be guided where to park in the south student parking lot.
 - Handicapped parking will be available in the south parking lot near the fields.
 - Guests will check-in at the top of the student parking lot near the football storage shed. Parents/guests will need to have a ticket to enter the ceremony. Please **REMINDER, ONLY SIX GUESTS PER GRADUATE will be allowed.**
 - Campus Security will be monitoring the parking lot to avoid large social gatherings.
- **Graduate Ceremony Seating**
 - Graduates will sit in their assigned ceremony seating and await instructions and expectations from staff

CEREMONY PROCEDURES:

- Staging of the graduates for the start of the ceremony is at **8:45 am**. The ceremony will begin at **9:00 am**.
- During the formal announcement of graduate’s names, Junior Ushers will guide graduates to stand and exit their row to the outside.
- Graduates will take two pictures with GradImages.
- The graduate will walk to a podium, set their name card on a music stand for Admin to read their name, then they will enter the stage, walk to the middle for a picture with the School Board member then exit the front of the stage (alternating left and right side one graduate on the stage at a time)
- Graduates will **NOT** be handed anything; they will **bring their Diploma Cover with them to the stage** and take their picture. (**NO EXCHANGES from person-person**)
- All guests must remain seated during the ceremony and **not enter the graduate area** to take pictures
- The recession of graduates (End of the ceremony)
 - Graduates will exit row by row starting from the back and will leave to the parking lot.
 - Parents will wait to be dismissed by event staff after graduates have left the event area. We ask that you leave campus to gather with family and friends to support us in complying with the Health Department and Governor’s graduation variance. **PLEASE support our efforts!!!**

- Event staff and Campus Security will monitor graduates and guests to prevent social gatherings and encourage graduates to leave campus promptly. **There will be no gathering on campus, so we remain in compliance with the Health Department and Governor's graduation variance.**
- **GradImages** is a professional photography company that will be taking photos of your graduates. They will contact graduates and their families via email to purchase senior graduation photos after the ceremony. Types of images that will be available are as follows:
 1. Headshot
 2. Torso up/headshot
 3. Stage shot with School Board

PARENT/GUEST SEATING:

- Due to the accommodation of six guests per graduate, we will need your help! PLEASE DRESS CASUALLY! We will have **1000 chairs for seating** and will need to utilize the athletic hillside for "picnic" style seating; bring a blanket for seating. **PLEASE bring lawn chairs for additional seating in the guest seating area on the north and south ends of the field.** We will have a section on the south end of the ceremony for handicap seating only.
- **Final announcements and clarifications for expectations and procedures will be addressed before going LIVE with the ceremony.**

The staff at Mesa Ridge has worked hard to honor the 2021 graduates within the El Paso County Health Department, CDC, and state guidelines. We truly appreciate all of your support and understanding throughout this unprecedented crisis!

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the Class of 2021 and their parents as we have crossed these uncharted waters throughout the school year. Mesa Ridge High School students, parents, and staff are indeed the best.

GRIZZLY NATION ROCKS!!!

Respectfully,

Scott A. Sage
Principal