



Parent Association Presidents' Forum

Tuesday, May 12, 2020
Zoom Online

The Parent Association Presidents' Forum took place on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, via Zoom from 9:30am-11:00am. Participants gathered briefly for introductory remarks and an event overview before meeting in 3 online breakout groups for K-8, K-12, and 6-12 schools. After breakout discussion, participants returned to report out to the full group. Below are the main takeaways from breakout group discussions.

Key Takeaways

- Schools are focusing on creating meaningful end-of-year activities for seniors and/or other students, such as:
 - preparing various options for graduation
 - acknowledging the transition to official "alumni" status
 - scheduling campus drive thru for seniors (see each other, receive gifts, etc.)
 - distributing yearbooks
 - sending surprise gifts
 - carrying on traditions in online format (college reveals, etc.)
 - posting yard signs for graduates outside their homes
 - sharing photos/write ups of seniors (in newsletters, online, Instagram, etc.)
 - for younger students (preK, 5th, 8th), hosting promotion ceremonies
- Schools want to engage, value, and honor all students, and not direct all attention to just one grade level. Examples:
 - sending a school blanket or a school pennant to each student
- Schools are trying to be creative with teacher appreciation:
 - kudos boards
 - grub hub gift certificates
 - letter-writing campaigns
- Schools are engaging more with parents/families online or otherwise, for example:
 - weekly distance learning surveys
 - weekly morning coffees/updates with HOS

- parent coffees by grade with parent grade representatives
 - community listserv
 - direct phone calls (parent-to-parent check-ins)
 - PA aligning with school and sending emails to parents (e.g., reporting when a PA donated money to the school emergency fund)
- Schools and Parent Association groups are being creative over Zoom or other online formats to engage students and parents:
 - trivia/Kahoot (initiated game using student baby pictures)
 - games such as Bingo or Pictionary
 - cooking “class”
 - happy hours with parents
- Parent Associations are in the planning stages for next school year, but it is obviously difficult because there are so many unknowns. Suggestions included:
 - planning a “Welcome Back” event and “Welcome to New Families” - which may be more important than ever, even if virtual
 - doing more virtually and simplifying
 - keeping the calendar as close to as-is as possible
 - not overloading the Spring calendar
 - keeping attuned to the fact that even though events may look different, traditions remain meaningful (and maybe even more so)
 - promoting flexibility, ingenuity, and creativity in engaging incoming families
- Parent Associations are thinking through working with volunteers next year and shared the following advice:
 - meet parents where they are
 - cast a broader net
 - have parents opt-in rather than seek them out
 - relax past expectations and a “this is how we always do it” mentality
 - make sure not to put even more pressure on parents
 - be creative with roles such as “room parent” when students are not together