

15 March 2015

Dear Parents of the Class of 2015,

It is hard to believe that graduation is only a few months away. It is even harder to believe that these past four years have flown by so quickly. While I have only been the class sponsor for this past year, it has truly been my pleasure to work with your students and share with them the excitement of their senior year. I am sure that I represent the entire faculty and staff when I say that your children will be missed, but we all look forward to sharing these remaining events with you and your graduates. To help you plan for this very busy time of year I have listed the main events along with information associated with graduation below.

Cap and Gown Orders

The Senior Class fee collected in September included your student's payment for their cap and gown. In November, Herff Jones visited to collect measurements for graduation robes and to share their catalogue of graduation-related paraphernalia (announcements, souvenir tassels, clothing, etc.). All orders will be delivered in April.

Senior Class Meeting: Thursday, April 2, 11:40 a.m., Auditorium

A mandatory class meeting will be held to discuss all aspects of the "Graduation Season." For example, class officers will report on the MLWGS Foundation Challenge and will provide details about the "Senior Quotes" for the Senior Recognition program.

Senior Survey via Naviance – April 14th through May 8th

The senior survey will be available on Naviance starting April 14th and must be completed by May 8th as a part of the official check-out process. This survey will give the senior counselors information about each student's post-graduation plans. The final college decision each senior reports will be used in the graduation program, and the scholarships accepted will be reported in the Senior Awards Assembly program. To access the survey, go to Naviance and click the senior survey link to the left under "About Me". When complete, select "Save and I am finished" on the survey, and also mark it "Complete" on the Naviance Checklist. If a student changes his/her college decision or receives a scholarship after submitting the form, please notify his/her senior counselor in person or by e-mail. A brief demonstration and question/answer session about this survey will be provided during AP "Bubblefest" on Tuesday, April 21st and Wednesday, April 22nd. Please contact Ms. Deck or Dr. Loving if you have questions.

AP Exam "Bubblefest" – Tuesday, April 21, 11:40 a.m., Auditorium

Any senior who has registered to take an AP exam in May is required to attend Bubblefest hosted by the school counselors during lunch on April 21. If for any reason you need to be absent on Tuesday, you may attend the underclassmen session on Wednesday.

Caps, Gowns, & Announcements: Wednesday & Thursday, April 22nd & 23rd, at Lunch

Caps, gowns, announcements, and other items ordered from Herff-Jones will be distributed on April 22nd and 23rd in the student commons during lunch. If your student does not pick up his/her order at that time, he/she should contact Ms. Sheppard (class sponsor/graduation coordinator) in Room 330. If you have questions about or problems with the order you placed, please call Herff-Jones directly. The number is 804-598-0971. Additional announcements are available for purchase (\$1.35 each); contact Ms. Sheppard if you need extras or forgot to place an order. She may be reached by email (ksheppard@gsgis.k12.va.us) or by phone (354-6800 ext. 3304).

Senior Graduation Ticket Distribution: April 22nd & 23rd, at lunch

Please note that these are tickets for admission to the graduation exercises and are not the announcements you would have ordered from Herff-Jones. Anyone planning to come watch a graduate receive their diploma must have a ticket to gain entrance into the theater. Ms. Sheppard will be at a table in the student commons (next to the Herff-Jones tables) where seniors can pick up their tickets. Each student will receive 13 tickets, and more tickets may be available on a case-by-case basis. If tickets are lost, they are not replaceable. Please keep them in a safe place until June 15th.

Senior Group Photo: Wednesday, April 29th, 11:50 a.m.

A group photograph will be taken of all seniors in their caps and gowns standing proudly on the front steps of Maggie Walker. This panorama style photograph measures approximately 10"x30", and the cost is \$15.00. Approximately a week before the photograph is taken, order forms will be placed in the senior commons for any student interested in purchasing a copy of the photo. *Students need to remember to bring their caps and gowns that day.*

AP Exams: The Weeks of May 4th and May 12th

Morning exams convene at 8:30 a.m., and afternoon exams begin at 12:00. A good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast is the best strategy during these weeks; students have been well prepared for the exams! The AP exam schedule is at <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/exam/calendar/index.html>.

MLWGS Prom: Saturday, May 16th

The Junior/Senior Prom will be held on Saturday, May 16th, from 8:00 – 11:00 p.m. at the Bull and Bear Club, located on the top floor of the James Center. Seniors are not charged admission, but each senior must pick up his/her complimentary ticket during ticket sales. Junior and guest tickets are priced at \$30.00. If juniors or seniors plan on bringing a guest from outside the MLWGS community, they must submit a form, which can be found on ItsLearning or be picked up in Ms. Valenta Williams' office in room 100. It is recommended that dinner reservations be made early enough so that students are able to arrive in time to enjoy the prom (This is particularly important if students plan to dine where meals can typically take over an hour and a half). If you have questions, please contact the Class of 2016 Sponsor, Jennifer Todd, jtodd@gsgis.k12.va.us.

Community Service Hours: Due by Monday, May 18th, 3:30 p.m.

Completion of 140 community service hours is a requirement for graduation (see the MLWGS student handbook). Students may confirm their community service hours in PowerSchool. Please see Ms. Valenta Williams in room 100 if there are any discrepancies. All seniors must turn in any remaining hours they have earned no later than May 18.

Music Performance Auditions: May 19th & 20th, 3:20 – 4:30 p.m., Auditorium

Showcasing MLWGS Senior musical talent is an important tradition at Senior Recognition Night and graduation. For example, vocalists are needed to sing *The Star Spangled Banner*. Additional performers or performance groups (instrumental or vocal) are sought for both events. *Students should begin preparing now if they would like to audition.* Any MLWGS senior or group of seniors interested in auditioning must sign up for a time slot by May 15th on the list outside the Forum. Final decisions will be made by a committee of faculty members and the class officers. **Note: All students intending to perform must be present at auditions and are required to perform their intended piece for graduation or Senior Night.**

Senior Showcase: Wednesday, June 3rd

Senior Showcase is the highlight of the seniors' mentorship or seminar experiences. The students have worked diligently over several months, and this is an opportunity for the entire school community to see the creativity and energy of their efforts. Please be on the lookout for invitations to be mailed in mid-May. Please mark the date on your calendars now so you don't miss out on this special day for Maggie Walker seniors!

Senior Recognition Night: Thursday, June 4th, 7:00 p.m., Auditorium

This is the night we all come together to honor the many contributions and memories of our graduating seniors. The highlight of the evening for the students is always the Senior Slide Show, and it is a great opportunity for you to get a sense of what the last four years have looked like inside our halls. Students should arrive by 6:30 for the line-up wearing professional/business attire; caps and gowns are NOT worn for this event.

Senior Awards Assembly: Friday, June 5, 12:55 p.m., Auditorium

This assembly allows community organizations to distinguish senior recipients of scholarships/awards. Parents will be notified in advance if their child will be recognized.

Senior Exams: Monday-Wednesday, June 8th – 10th

Check with your student about which exams he or she will be required to take. All exams and any outstanding coursework need to be completed by June 10th in order for a student to walk at graduation. Note that the 10th is also an early dismissal day.

**Senior "Check Out" Forms & Senior Financial Obligations:
Due on or before Wednesday, June 10th**

The "check out" form will be given to students after APs are over. Each student is responsible for collecting the required signatures and returning the form to the School Counseling Office by Wednesday, June 10th.

Outstanding MLWGS obligations must be paid to Mrs. Crystal Charity in the main office prior to 3:00 p.m. on June 11th. NOTE: All teachers' signatures need to be obtained before going to Mrs. Charity because she takes all monies from each student for all obligations (lost or damaged book fines, etc.) and writes one receipt for him/her.

Seniors who have unpaid financial obligations and/or who have not returned the check-out form will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony. Any outstanding VCU library fines *must be paid directly to the VCU library*. If the latter applies to your student, a paid receipt from the VCU library should be turned in to Mrs. Zona Hicks in the School Counseling Office to clear the account.

Senior Picnic: Thursday, June 11th, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

The Senior Picnic is the first official alumni event for the Class of 2015, and it is sponsored by the Governor's School Foundation and Alumni Office. The event will be held at the Carillon Shelter at Byrd Park, and students are asked to sign-up to bring desserts, drinks, paper goods, and chips. The Foundation will be providing the main meal. Any parent who wishes to help serve at this event, please contact class sponsor, Kerry Sheppard, ksheppard@gsgis.k12.va.us, 354-6800 ext.3304.

Baccalaureate Service: Thursday, June 11th, 6:30 p.m.

The Baccalaureate Service will be held at Beth Ahabah (1109 West Franklin Street). Sponsored by the MLWGS PTSA, the inter-faith service begins promptly at 6:30 p.m. and will last one hour. Students are not required to attend, but this traditional and memorable event celebrates finishing one chapter in their lives and beginning the next. Information regarding line-up and parking will be included in the official invitation from the PTSA, which will arrive by mail. Seniors are reminded to bring both cap and gown for the ceremony.

The Faculty Lounge Lizards at Dogwood Dell: Thursday, June 11th, 8:00 p.m.

After the Baccalaureate Service, the entire MLWGS family is invited to hear the fantastic faculty band, The Faculty Lounge Lizards, perform at Dogwood Dell. It promises to be a great evening of music and a fun way to celebrate the friendships formed during the last four years! Bring folding chairs or a blanket to sit on. Additional information will be sent out in *Smoke and Scales* and/or posted on the MLWGS website.

Graduation Rehearsal: Monday, June 15th, 9:00 a.m., Altria Theater, 6 N. Laurel Street

Graduation rehearsal is held at the Altria Theater. Parking for graduation is available at the VCU parking deck for a minimal fee (entrances are on Cherry and Laurel Streets.) Please adhere to posted street parking signs as ticketing and towing are strictly enforced. *Seniors must arrive no later than 8:45 a.m. and report to the downstairs ballroom (enter through the Main Street entrance towards the rear of the building). Rehearsal will begin at 9:00 a.m. sharp. ANY STUDENT WHO MISSES REHEARSAL WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO WALK IN THE ACTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY*, so parents are asked to please work with your student to make sure he or she is on time. Practice is usually completed by 11:30 a.m. or so; but given that we will take as long as needed to perfect the process, please do not plan anything that requires your student to leave early or be gone by a certain time. This rehearsal is crucial to the success of the graduation ceremony.

Graduation: Monday, June 15th, 3:00 p.m., Altria Theater, 6 N. Laurel Street

Graduates must arrive at the downstairs ballroom by 2:00 p.m. For organizational reasons, this area is off limits to parents, relatives, and friends; we appreciate your understanding. Cap, gown, and tassel are the most important items for the day, but students are asked to dress appropriately: dark dress pants, collared shirt and tie for the young men, dresses for the young women.

Perhaps the most important clothing decision for the day, however, is shoes. Dress shoes and socks for the boys and low-heeled dress shoes for the girls are the best choices; please, no "flip-flops" or athletic shoes. Additionally, decorations on mortarboards are absolutely prohibited. Note: The "collar" that comes with the graduation gown will not be used.

Doors to the Carpenter Theater will open at 2:30 p.m. Guests should enter through the front doors and must have a ticket to attend graduation. Seating is not reserved. Handicap seating is available in multiple locations; please see one of the ushers at the door upon your arrival if you need this seating. Parking for graduation is available at the VCU parking deck for a minimal fee (entrances are on Cherry and Laurel Streets.) Please adhere to posted street parking signs as ticketing and towing are strictly enforced.

Photographs during the ceremony are only allowed from your seats. The Altria Theater will not permit us to spill into the aisles for this activity, and they enforce this quite seriously. However, Lifetouch will be taking pictures of each individual student as he/she receives his/her diploma. This year, a proof picture will be mailed directly to each family and be accessible online along with ordering information.

Last but certainly not least, a brief reception for students and their families will be held immediately after graduation in the downstairs ballroom of Altria Theater. Graduation activities should conclude by 6:00 p.m.

Final Transcripts

Senior counselors are responsible for the June mailing of final transcripts to each senior's designated college or university. In the event of a pending wait-list decision, the transcript will also be mailed to that college at the student's request. In order to obtain dual enrollment credit officially from VCU, the student must fill out the Transcript Request form and submit it to the VCU Records and Registration Office after July 1. These forms will be available in the School Counseling Office on the third floor.

Now we know that this all looks overwhelming, but we hope that you will still sit back and enjoy these remaining months. Have fun with your senior, take lots of pictures, and try to help them cherish this exciting time. The Class of 2015 is a special group of talented, bright, and caring young people. We look forward to having you, your families, and friends join us at these celebrations of your senior's achievements when we will honor their efforts and wish each and every one of them all the best in their future endeavors.

On behalf of all the Maggie L. Walker teachers and staff, we wish you all the best in the future. You will always be members of the Dragon family!

Sincerely,



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