



POLK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Jacqueline M. Byrd
Superintendent

May 16, 2019

Dear families,

Many of you have expressed concern and frustration regarding changes to the school district's graduation ceremonies.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience or disappointment. We recognize high school graduation is an important milestone in a student's academic career.

The City of Lakeland's RP Funding Center has undergone extensive renovations that have reduced seating capacity in the Jenkins Arena by nearly 1,100 seats. Additionally, fire code allows for a maximum of 4,000 seats at each graduation ceremony.

The limited number of tickets available for each student is a direct result of reduced seating capacity at the RP Funding Center and the need to abide by fire code to ensure attendees' safety.

Due to the limited seating capacity at the graduation venue, Polk County Public Schools and the City of Lakeland agreed to issue tickets for graduation ceremonies.

The number of tickets each graduate received depends on the total number of graduates at his/her school. The number of available seats (4,000) was divided by the number of graduates at each school to determine how many tickets each graduate would receive.

Graduates at schools with larger graduating classes received fewer tickets; graduates at schools with smaller graduating classes received more tickets. The RP Funding Center is being used at maximum capacity to allow as many attendees as possible to attend.

STUDENTS FIRST



1915 S. Floral Ave.
Bartow, FL 33830



P.O. Box 391
Bartow, FL 33831



863-534-0500



polkschoolsfl.com

Not all graduates need the maximum number of tickets they have received. Schools have worked to redistribute any extra tickets to accommodate graduates with larger families. **Please understand we have no control over how many tickets families will ultimately use on the day of their graduate's ceremony.**

Because graduation is such an important and special occasion, the school district is live streaming all ceremonies taking place at the RP Funding Center to allow those unable to attend in person to share in this special moment. For a graduation schedule and to access live stream links, visit <https://polkschoolsfl.com/graduation/>.

Again, both the City of Lakeland and Polk County Public Schools know high school graduation is a momentous occasion for the graduates and their families. We thank you for understanding our capacity limitations and commitment to attendee safety.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline M. Byrd
Superintendent



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