**DESOTO COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**



**Nelson Stephenson Cynthia Barrera**

Principal Dean of Students

 **Tod Baldwin Katherine Knoche**

Assistant Principal Dean of Students

**Cynthia Langston**   **Angela Brough**

Assistant Principal Head Counselor

May 07, 2014

Dear DeSoto High Parents, Guardians, and Seniors:

Four years at DeSoto County High School have gone quickly. Our senior class is getting ready to graduate and go forward into colleges, specialized training, the military and the workforce. The graduation ceremony is a solemn event that marks this most important rite of passage of our students’ young lives. It is my pleasure to invite you to the graduation exercises for the Class of 2014. We are proud of their achievements and will honor them as a class and as individuals on Friday, June 6, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. at the Turner Center.

**Senior Transition Meeting:**

In order to be given a cap and gown and be placed in the graduation lineup, all prospective graduates

are required to meet with their guidance counselors for a final review to discuss their future plans and to ensure that they have met all requirements to participate in the graduation ceremony. Passes will be sent to senior homerooms.

At this transition meeting, all seniors must be prepared to review the following items with their counselors:

 All obligations for lost books, calculators, etc., shown as “paid” by May 20th, 2014;

 The DCHS Graduation Contract signed by students and parents (attached);

 Appropriate dress for the ceremony;

 A completed Senior Survey indicating the student’s post-high school plans.

Any senior who misses his or her appointment must set up a make-up appointment in Guidance for this mandatory counselor meeting. Also, please be aware of the following:

 Seniors who wish to attend graduation must attend the Senior awards May 20th, Graduation practice on Thursday June 5th and Friday June 6th.

 Dress code for all ceremonies will apply. (Please see graduation details below)

 Proper guest etiquette will be enforced for Senior Awards, Baccalaureate, and Graduation. (Please see graduation details below)

 Any questions related to upcoming ceremonies should be directed to DeSoto High School Principal Secretary Ms. Kim Coan at (863)494-3434.

We are hoping that these transition meetings will assist our students in moving forward smoothly into their futures and to ensure a dignified and proper ceremony that our students deserve.

## For the most up-to-date graduation information please visit the DeSoto County High School homepage at http://dhs.desotoschools.com/

**To Parents and Relatives:**

On this special day, it is important that parents, grandparents, relatives, and friends share in the

experience and recognize the graduate’s accomplishment. All families deserve to hear the names of their graduates announced. For that reason, it is necessary that parents and students hold their applause until all students have had the opportunity to be recognized. Do not bring air horns or other noisemakers to the ceremony. The ceremony is filmed, and excessive noise ruins the sound quality of the video. Additionally, those who use noise makers make it difficult or impossible for other families to hear their child’s name announced. Please be courteous so that all graduates are properly acknowledged.

***\*Please note that this year during the Graduation ceremony we will not be providing child care***.

**To Graduating Seniors:**

This ceremony is a student activity, so it is not required that graduating seniors attend. We hope that

you choose to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime ceremony. However, if you intend to do anything that takes attention away from the ceremony or the person who is receiving his or her diploma, please do not attend. Every graduating student deserves the same recognition. All families deserve the pleasure of hearing their graduates’ name(s) read in the presence of all attending. Your consideration for all those attending graduation is appreciated.

To maintain a professional and dignified atmosphere, graduating seniors should not be disruptive during the graduation ceremony. Distracting items such as beach balls and balloons take the focus away from the students who are receiving their diplomas. The ceremony, even though it is already a long event, will be stopped whenever beach balls or other items are thrown around. **As this is a student activity, the code of conduct remains in full force. Students whose behavior impinges on the enjoyment of others will be removed from the ceremony and will not receive their diplomas until a conference with the student, parent and principal takes place.** Obviously, we hope that these measures will not be necessary and that our graduates will conduct themselves in a manner that will make their families proud.

**Graduation Details:**

 Those students who are not planning to participate in the graduation ceremony should notify

Angela Brough, Director of Guidance at (863-494-3434), no later than May 15th, 2014.

 Students who do not attend graduation may pick up diplomas after Graduation in the Guidance Office during regular business hours. A photo ID will be required to pick up diploma.

 No senior is required to take part in the graduation ceremony. However, to be included in the graduation ceremony, seniors must attend Graduation rehearsal, and the Senior awards ceremony. Attendance will be taken at these events.

 All outstanding obligations must be paid prior to Graduation practice. Check with Cynthia Mizell in the Bookkeeping Office, James Mock or Byron Jones (if you are in chorus/band), and Lucille LaCava in the Media Center to see if you have any outstanding obligations.

 Caps and gowns will be provided only after all obligations have been fulfilled.

 The only opportunity to receive caps and gowns is on Friday, May 16th. The gowns will look infinitely better if they are ironed at home before the ceremony. Please be sure to check the garment guidelines prior to ironing to ensure it is done correctly. DeSoto County High School does not have replacement gowns for those that are ruined if ironed incorrectly.

 As this is a formal occasion, under their graduation gowns, ladies should wear a dress or skirt/blouse combination and flat shoes (easier to walk up the stairs). No flowers, corsages, or jewelry can be displayed on the academic gown.

 Ladies should bring a supply of hairpins, tape or safety pins, as they will be needed to secure caps and/or collars.

 Gentlemen should wear dark dress pants (black or navy) and black shoes (no tennis shoes). A white button down dress shirt with a collar and a dark tie (black or navy). No neck jewelry or facial piercings. Do not wear shorts or jeans.

 During the Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem, and Alma Mater, men will remove their caps (also known as mortarboards) and put them back on at the conclusion of the music.

 Ladies wear their caps throughout the ceremony.

 As seniors enter into the Turner Center, the tassel should be on the student’s right side.

 The tassel should be shifted to the left after the diploma has been conferred. There will be assistance given for this switch while on the stage.

 Graduating students may not carry anything with them during the ceremony.

 Any student participating in pranks, alcohol or drug use, or inappropriate behavior, will be immediately escorted from the ceremony and will not be permitted to return. This rule shall apply to the processional and the ceremony.

On May 16, 2014, at 8:00 a.m., a senior class meeting will be held in the gymnasium. Caps and gowns will be distributed only to those seniors who have completed all requirements including no pending obligations, attending the Guidance transition meeting, and completing the Senior Exit Survey.

The graduation ceremony will be conducted at the Turner Center.

On June 6th during graduation practice tickets for admission to the graduation ceremony will be distributed. Attached to this document is a 2014 Graduation Ticket Request Form. This form is required to be returned no later than 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 16, 2014 to Ms. Kim Coan (Principal Secretary). If additional tickets are needed, a request is to be made in writing to Ms. Kim Coan by 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 16, 2014. Due to limited space, all students receive only ten tickets for the ceremony. Please consult the DeSoto County High School website for further information.

I look forward to seeing you on this special day! Respectfully,

Nelson Stephenson

Principal

Attachments:

 Special needs parking/seating

 Class awards

 Ceremony information

 Senior Graduation Contract

 Graduation Ticket Request Form

**SPECIAL NEEDS**:

If someone in your party has mobility issues or needs special attention for seating, parking, etc., please call in advance to notify Mrs. Cynthia Barrera. She may be reached by email cynthia.barrera@desoto.k12.fl.us or phone at (863) 494-3434.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

It is a policy of the Board of Education to recognize the valedictorian and salutatorian of the graduating class. In addition, students are recognized at the Senior Awards Program, at Graduation, and in selected local publications. Class rank, academic honors, and athletic awards may be referenced.

This information will be released without specific permission. If you wish to prohibit the release of any of this information, you may do so by contacting the Guidance Office in writing. Please specifically state what information you would like withheld.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY Graduation Night**

 Seniors report at 5:30 p.m. to the cafeteria. Students will be transported to the Turner Center via bus.

 Students are reminded to be prompt. The ceremony will commence at 7:00 p.m.

 When seniors arrive that evening, all parents, relatives, and friends are asked to find their seats and not visit the line-up area.

**Graduation Tickets**

**ADMISSION TO GRADUATION IS BY TICKET ONLY! Sorry, but there can be no exceptions.**

 Seniors must meet with guidance and return a completed and parent signed 2014 graduation contract in order to request tickets.

 Graduation Ticket Request Form is due to Ms. Kim Coan no later than 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 16th.

 Additional ticket requests for more than the original 10 is due no later than 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 16th to Ms. Kim Coan.

**Itinerary for Thursday, June 5th, 2014 – Graduation Practice (Mandatory) 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

 By 9:00 a.m., soon-to-be graduates will arrive at DeSoto County High School for the Senior Graduation practice.

 Students will board buses to the Turner Center for graduation practice.

 Graduation practice

 Photo of members of the Class of 2014 in caps and gowns will be taken.

**Itinerary for Friday, June 6th, 2014 – Graduation Day (Mandatory) 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

 By 8:00 a.m., soon-to-be graduates will arrive promptly at DeSoto County High School for the Senior Graduation practice.

 Senior breakfast will be provided courtesy of the Senior Class.

 Students will board buses to the Turner Center for graduation practice.

 All tickets for Graduation ceremony will be handed out at the end of the Graduation practice.

If you have any questions about the graduation ceremony itself, please contact our Senior Advisor Shawn Murphy.

Contact information – (863) 494-3434 Ext. 219 shawn.murphy@desoto.k12.fl.us

Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to a wonderful graduation.

**Project Graduation**

Students attending Project Graduation will meet in the Gymnasium after graduation. Snacks will be

served, and students will participate in a night of sober fun with their friends.

**Graduation Photos**

A professional photograph will be provided to each graduate. Pictures may be taken after the ceremony.

DeSoto County High School

Graduation Contract 2014

**I understand that my participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege, not a right. It is a**

**student activity, so attendance is optional. If I choose to attend the graduation ceremony, by checking off these items and signing the form, I am indicating that I agree to the following:**

OBLIGATIONS: I understand that all obligations to the school for debts, lost books, etc. must be cleared by May 20th in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. See Cynthia Mizell to clear any outstanding obligations. Checks should be made payable to **DHS**.

GRADUATION PRACTICE: I understand that I must attend graduation practice on Thursday, June 5th and Friday, June 6th 2014 beginning at 8:00 a.m. I am aware that any student not in attendance at practice cannot take part in the ceremony.

GRADUATION ATTIRE: Underneath the graduation gown, I will wear appropriate clothing.

**-Graduating Men:** Dress shoes, dress pants, dress shirt, and tie

**-Graduating Women:** Dresses or blouses and skirts with dress shoes (no purses on field) Jeans, tennis shoes, shorts, or T-shirts are not acceptable regardless of color, style, newness or cost.

(Any senior who has a question about appropriate dress should contact his/her Guidance Counselor.) Dress will be checked prior to lineup.

SENIOR TRANSITION MEETING: I understand that I must meet with my counselor and complete the

Senior Survey.

SUSPENSION: I am aware that any behavior between now and the end of the school year that results in suspension from school may jeopardize my participation in senior activities and graduation.

REMOVAL FROM THE GRADUATION CEREMONY: Families attending graduation deserve to enjoy the graduation ceremony without disruption. I am aware that it is disrespectful to other students and their families to use noise makers, toss balloons around, or do anything that disrupts graduation. I understand that if I participate in any disruptive activities, such as tossing balloons around, that I will be removed from the graduation ceremony and not allowed to return. Students who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol fall under reasonable suspicion statutes. Police officers will handle the situation if need be.

Students who participate in pranks, fights, or other unacceptable behavior in the last month of school risk being barred from the graduation ceremony.

***Student:*** *I have read and agree to abide by the above guidelines for Graduation 2014.*

**Student Name: (print legibly)**

**Student Signature Date**

***Parent/Guardian:*** *The above named student has my permission to attend graduation. I have read the information above and understand the requirements for attending graduation, including but not limited to dress code and any attempts to disrupt the graduation ceremony. I understand that participation in graduation is a privilege, not a right, and that students will be removed from the graduation ceremony if their behavior is inappropriate.*

**Parent/Guardian Name: (print legibly)**

**Parent/Guardian Signature:**

**Date**

**Guidance Counselor Signature: Date**

*Turn the completed form in to Ms. Kim Coan by 3:30 p.m. Friday, May 16th .*

2014 Graduation Ticket Request Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Number of tickets requesting:\_\_\_\_\_\_

List name and relation of person using the initial ten (10) tickets:

 Handicapped

Name Relation Seating Required?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*If you need more than ten tickets, please list the names of those you are requesting tickets for on the back of this form. Please return to Ms. Coan by 3:30 p.m. Friday, May 16th.

\*\*Maximum number of tickets given will be 10\*\*