February 7, 2020

Dear Roxbury Families,

A high school graduation ceremony marks a momentous occasion in the lives of our students and their families. We believe we have "prepared our students of today for tomorrow" and share in the excitement and desire to celebrate their achievement. Recognizing that families need to plan and understand that there has been a significant amount of discussion regarding our commencement ceremony for the class of 2020, I want to take some time to share the details and plans for graduation this year.

We are pleased to announce that our commencement ceremony will take place at 2:00 pm on Friday, June 19th at Mennen Arena this year. We recognize that this is an adjustment of the graduation date, but believe it is necessary to provide the best graduation experience for our students. Mennen Arena was selected for several reasons. First, Mennen Arena is a venue that will be available regardless of the weather. Secondly, it is climate controlled so both our graduates and guests will be in a comfortable atmosphere. In addition, handicapped seating is more accessible as there is seating on the floor of the arena. Most importantly, due to the ability of Mennen Arena to accommodate a larger capacity, we are able to offer our families seven (7) tickets each. We are excited to bring this opportunity to our students and families.

Please understand that significant time, research, and consideration went into making this decision. After analyzing the pros and cons of various options and much deliberation, Mennen Arena was selected as the best choice. While we hope that this letter will serve to clarify our rationale, you may still have a few questions.

Mr. Mason and I will be giving a presentation at Monday's (2/10) Board of Education Meeting. During this presentation, we will explain the importance of beginning construction on the track and turf. There is the thought that the turf is being done strictly for football. This could not be further from the truth. If we do not begin construction as early as possible, over 1000 combined students and community members will be negatively impacted by not having a track and turf by September 2020. Approximately 400 Roxbury High School students involved in Marching Band, Cheerleading, Football, Cross Country, Boys and Girls Soccer, and Field Hockey will be impacted. The turf is our main instructional space for Physical Education in the Fall. Not having the turf and track available in September will affect about two-thirds or 800 high school students. Eisenhower Middle School also uses the turf and track in the fall. Approximately 500 middle school students would be impacted. To continue, our recreation department utilizes the track and turf. Approximately 300 community members who participate in recreation, travel, and adult soccer, would be negatively affected. The youth of Roxbury who participate in recreation flag football, Junior Gaels Football, and Junior Gaels Cheerleading would all lose a significant amount of time for practice and competition.
Other fibers of the tradition of Roxbury that would be negatively impacted by delaying the construction and upgrades of the track and turf include the following:

- Junior Gaels Football and Cheerleading Pep Rally
- The RHS Marching Band Classic
- Morris County Boys and Girls Soccer Finals
- Homecoming
- Alumni Night
- Military Night
- Breast Cancer Awareness Night
- Loss of revenue for Booster Clubs
- Senior Night for:
  - Field Hockey
  - Football
  - Girls Soccer
  - Boy Soccer
  - Roxbury Sound/Marching Band

Ultimately, our track and field both require updating. Both have met or surpassed their life expectancy.

Our goal is to make sure our students are consistently provided with unique opportunities, supported emotionally and academically, and prepared for the challenges they face in their futures. In doing so we work very hard to ensure that all students have a great experience at Roxbury High School. Part of that experience is the students’ commencement ceremony. We will make our commencement ceremony for the class of 2020 memorable. At the same time, we will be able to ensure our districts’ posterity with an upgraded, first-class facility, that supports all students, and community stakeholders. I look forward to our continued partnership to establish that our Roxbury High School reflects the pride and tradition of our district and community.

Feel free to join us at the Board of Education meeting Monday, February 10, at 7:30 pm, in the Lincoln-Roosevelt Auditorium. Our presentation will provide you with pertinent information and alleviate any concerns.

Always remember, every day is a great day to be a Gael!

Respectfully,

Dominick J. Miller
Principal