Thornton Fractional South High School

Home of the Red Wolves

November 2026

To the Parents of Graduating Seniors:

Thornton Fractional South High School and the Class of 2027 are thrilled to officially announce their graduation ceremony plans. The 2027 Commencement Program, a significant milestone in your child's academic journey, will take place on **Tuesday, May 18th,** and begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. in the school's red gymnasium.

Due to the gymnasium's seating capacity and occupancy restrictions, students will be issued three (3) tickets for guests attending the ceremony.

Graduates must promptly report to the Gray Gym at 4:30 p.m. for check-in purposes, final instructions, and to form the procession line. Guests of the graduates should plan to be seated no later than 5:50 p.m. as the doors to the red gym will close at 5:55 p.m. To ensure the comfort and safety of all attendees, all guests will be required to have a ticket to enter the gym and will be required to be seated in the stands - no standing is permitted.

The graduation ceremony is dignified and can be one of the fondest memories of one's high school experience. Your assistance in maintaining the formality of the ceremony will be greatly appreciated as we share with you the joy that this momentous occasion brings. We pledge to work with you to help make the graduation of the Class of 2027 a memorable one.

Graduation Matters.

Warmest regards,

James Thurman
Principal

Brian Bergthold
Assistant Principal, PPS

Attachment

Thornton Fractional South High School

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Class of 2027 Graduation Ceremony

Tuesday, May 18th at 6:00 p.m.

A Graduation that honors history & tradition at Thornton Fractional South.

Since 1959, our graduation ceremony is full of significance, symbolism, and tradition. Graduates are honored and follow traditions: wearing the cap and gown (a symbol of academic achievement); the procession of the graduates, school administration, and faculty; the formal presentation of the graduates to the Board of Education and the assembled guests; speeches of commendation; and the conferring of diplomas under the authority of the State of Illinois. Parents and guardians function greatly in the significance and symbolism of the ceremony as our graduates begin the next chapter of their lives.

Thornton Fractional South High School hosts a dignified ceremony for all attendees and graduates. The following standards will be **strictly** enforced:

Appropriate Dress & Graduation Ceremony Participation

- Graduates are encouraged to wear business casual attire,
- The ceremony will take place in the Red Gymnasium,
- Students will have to walk up and down the stairs to the stage. It is strongly recommended that graduates wear shoes that will allow them to **walk comfortably**,
- Purses and valuables should be left with parents or at home. There is no secure place to keep these items during the ceremony,
- Graduates **are not** allowed to wear sunglasses during the ceremony or when crossing the stage,
- Shorts, flip flops, and inappropriate apparel will not be allowed,
- For uniformity during the ceremony, graduates **are only allowed** to wear the medal that comes in the cap/gown package and any T.F. South school issued cords or stoles,
- All graduates must keep their gowns zipped throughout the entire ceremony. Any student who is determined to be inappropriately dressed, per administrative discretion, will not be allowed to participate in the dignified ceremony.

Cap & Gown Distribution

- Cap and gown distribution will be held on Tuesday, May 11th at the Senior Picnic between the hours of 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.;
- The next distribution of caps and gowns will be following the graduation rehearsal on Monday, May 17th;
- Cap & gowns can be ordered by contacting Chicago Balfour at 708-418-8400 or by visiting their website at www.chicagobalfour.com.

Graduate Not Participating

If a graduate does not want to participate in the graduation ceremony, please email Mrs. K. Taylor at ktaylor@tfd215.org by the close of business on Friday, April 30, 2027.

Graduation Rehearsal

- **Graduation rehearsal is scheduled for Monday, May 17th at 8:45 a.m.,**
- **Graduation rehearsal is mandatory,** so please schedule any outside appointments (doctor's, hair, nails, etc.,) after 11:30 a.m. on this day. Early dismissal or release from rehearsal will not be permitted,
- All graduates will meet for the commencement rehearsal in the Red Gymnasium,
- Each student will be directed to their assigned seat for the graduation ceremony,
- Graduates will practice the line-up, the processional, the program, and the recessional,
- The rehearsal should conclude no later than 11:00 a.m.,
- Appropriate behavior and discipline are expected of all graduates at the rehearsal and during the graduation ceremony,
- Students will be permitted access to the Red Gym and the concession restrooms only,
- Access to all other areas of the building is prohibited,
- Following graduation rehearsal, students are expected to exit the building promptly,
- A removal from the commencement rehearsal will result in the student forfeiting their participation in graduation on Tuesday, May 18th at 6:00 p.m.,
- In addition, a removal from the rehearsal or the ceremony for any reason will result in the diploma being withheld. If this occurs, the student and their parents/guardians must make an appointment and conference with the building principal to receive their diploma, and the diploma and transcript will be released per the building principal.

No rehearsal – No participation in the graduation ceremony —No exceptions

Guidelines & Expectations for Attendees

- Doors will open at 4:30 p.m. **ALL attendees are required to pass through the weapons detection system upon entry to the building.**
- This is a ticketed event, and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis,
- **Each graduate will receive (3) tickets. Due to seating capacity limitations and fire codes, no additional tickets are available. Additionally, T.F. South does not sell graduation tickets.**
- There will be no late room or overflow room available for guests who arrive late or those without tickets,
- **Due to occupancy restrictions, all attendees must have a ticket. This includes infants and small children,**
- Everyone will need to be seated by 5:50 p.m.,
- No one will be allowed entry without a ticket,
- No standing is permitted,
- Doors will close at 5:55 p.m., and
- Attendees must remain seated until the recessional has concluded, and graduates have exited the Red Gymnasium.

Disabled Attendees & Accessibility

The lower rows of the bleachers are reserved for persons with disabilities, special needs, or wheelchair accessibility needs. Please understand the following:

- Special/reserved seating is **very limited** and must be reserved but is not guaranteed,
- **To reserve a seat please contact Mrs. K. Taylor at ktaylor@tfd215.org no later than Wednesday, May 5th,**
- It is strongly recommended that a person requiring special reserved seating due to disabilities, special needs or wheelchair accessibility arrive when the doors open at 4:30 p.m.,
- If you do not make prior arrangements, special reserved seating cannot be accommodated once the lower rows of the bleachers are full,
- ****Please note that we cannot seat entire families together in the special reserved seating area.****
- Pictures of each graduate will be taken on stage as each graduate receives their diploma. The photography company will mail the picture proof and order form to your home within a few weeks after graduation,
- Guests are not allowed near the stage during graduation,
- Loud, boisterous, and unruly behavior will not be tolerated,
- **Flowers, balloons, and signs are not permitted in the graduation ceremony, and**
- **An attendee who tries to enter with the non-permitted items (ex. flowers, balloons, and signs) will be asked to leave them outside.**

GRADUATION TICKET DISTRIBUTION

Graduation tickets will be distributed during graduation rehearsal. Graduating seniors must attend the entire graduation rehearsal to obtain their tickets. **GRADUATION NIGHT:** All graduates are to report to the Gray Gym by 4:30 pm (enter through door N-11). Each student will be checked for appropriate dress. Students will not be allowed to bring personal items into the ceremony. Graduating seniors should not bring their purses, keys, make-up, hairbrushes, sunglasses, etc. as there will not be a secure place to leave these items. A few additional reminders:

- No chewing gum,
- Sunglasses **are not** allowed during the ceremony, including crossing the stage.
- Gowns must remain zipped throughout the entire ceremony. That includes walking across the stage,
- Place your cap horizontally on your head with the tassel on the left front side of the cap. Honors cords should be placed around the neck, and
- Graduates must stay in alphabetical order and remain quiet in the processional line.

Seniors should check with their fellow graduates if they need more than three tickets (some students may not use all tickets).

DISTRIBUTION OF DIPLOMAS

Class of 2027 diplomas will be distributed on the following date and time in the Grand Lobby:

Monday, May 24th from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

All senior fines and fees must be paid in full by Friday, April 30th. Textbooks, library books, and Chromebooks must be returned by May 11th.

FINAL TRANSCRIPTS

Final transcripts: All transcripts, including final transcripts being sent to the college that the student plans to attend, must be requested via Edocs in Naviance. Processing of final transcripts will begin on June 15, 2027. Please note that after July 31st, graduates are responsible for creating a Parchment account (www.parchment.com) where additional transcripts can be ordered online. After July 31st, there will be a fee for all transcripts.

Military Recognition: If your post-high school plans include military service, be sure to inform your school counselor as we pay special recognition for those who will be serving our country's armed forces.

Medical Records: All Illinois state universities and many colleges throughout the United States, as well as most employers, require students to submit health records which include immunizations since birth. Also, all seniors who are planning to attend an Illinois college next fall will be required to have had two meningitis immunizations. Please check with your physician to be sure your student meets this requirement. **Copies of your medical records can be obtained from the nurse's office until June 2, 2027, without a fee.**

Permanent Records: This is your personal written notification that we keep permanent records (only transcripts and health records are considered permanent) for 60 years. All other records are kept for a maximum of five (5) years.

DEADLINES:

Transcripts: All official transcripts from correspondence classes (i.e., American School) and transfer schools must be received by the Guidance Office no later than 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 29, 2027.

Graduation requirements: All academic requirements (including Credit Recovery, VSA completion and FAFSA) must be met and recorded no later than noon on May 4th.

If this deadline is not met, the student's name will not be listed in the graduation program and may forfeit their ability to participate in the graduation ceremony.