ALTERNATIVE SUPPRESSION PLAN FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONIES
IN EL PASO COUNTY

This alternative suppression plan for high school graduation ceremonies (“Alternative Plan”) is based upon the following principles:

- A high school graduation ceremony is a one-time event rather than an ongoing operation.
- The majority of participants in this event, if held as proposed herein, are individuals at low risk of contracting or suffering serious effects from COVID-19.
- The current testing and healthcare system capacity are expected to be able to accommodate any increase in COVID-19 cases resulting from these events.

The ability of a school district or individual school to hold a high school graduation ceremony will be subject to the following requirements:

1. Each school district or school must submit a written plan to El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) at least three (3) weeks prior to the proposed ceremony that affirms compliance with the requirements set forth in this Alternative Plan and proposes any additional or alternative methods for protecting health of participants and preventing the spread of disease.

2. No school may hold a high school graduation ceremony that would otherwise violate CDPHE Public Health Order 20-28 without written approval of its or its district’s written plan from (EPCPH).

3. EPCPH will continue to monitor healthcare system capacity, testing capacity, and disease spread in El Paso County in the days and weeks leading up to graduation ceremony dates. EPCPH may require any school to implement its virtual-only alternative with at least one (1) week’s written notice should it determine that community conditions no longer support holding an in-person ceremony.

4. Written plans submitted by a school district or school must address the following guidelines:
   a. Ceremonies should be held in a staggered manner as late into the spring or summer as possible to allow for the evaluation of current loosening of social distancing policies.
   b. Written plans must include a fully virtual option in the event incoming data contraindicates hosting in-person ceremonies.
   c. Ceremonies must be held outside with weather contingency plans of transition to virtual-only or tents. Indoor ceremonies are prohibited.
   d. Ceremonies must be STUDENT ONLY with minimal staff required to manage students and flow of ceremonies.
   e. All students and staff must meet 6-foot social distancing at all times, including when entering and exiting the ceremony.
   f. If outside facilities cannot accommodate the 6-foot distancing, ceremonies must be held in the number of shifts necessary to allow for such distancing.
   g. No parents, guests, or observers are allowed on-site. Ceremonies may be broadcast electronically for all viewers.
h. No associated social gatherings of students or staff are permitted at ceremony facilities prior to or following the ceremony.

i. All students and staff must wear cloth face coverings over the nose and mouth at all times, with the exception of individual photographs by an official photographer while social distancing from others.

j. A no-touch or no-contact procedure for receipt of the diploma must be implemented, such as presentation on a table by staff to be picked up by the student.

k. A permission slip or behavior contract must be signed by students and parents concerning risk mitigation. It must include a health screening survey that is completed the day of the ceremony and prior to entry, to include questions about fever, cough, congestion, chills, or other symptoms exhibited by the student or others in the household in the previous 14 days, with any positive answers resulting in exclusion of the student from participation in the ceremony.

l. Proposals to address students with special needs or who may require assistance must be included.

m. An inclusionary plan must be developed for families or students not wishing or not able to participate in person.