

**Senior Parent Night Notes**  
**May 6, 2015**

1. Joel's key message: South is here for you and your student all the way through graduation, and he hopes that you will contact the school if you have any questions or concerns, so all students can be kept safe and happy.

2. Starting any day now: students can choose to participate in a game called "Assassins". This is basically water squirt gun tag and the school is NOT responsible for this. Student organizers take money and assign each student someone to spray with water. Once sprayed, that student is out of the game. The last student(s) not sprayed win the game and get the money everyone paid in. Very fun game, but please talk to your student about being SAFE. No hanging out of cars to spray someone, no water guns allowed at school at all, no spraying in public areas where bystanders could be hit inadvertently. Tip from the police: please encourage your student to use a water gun that is pink or blue or orange or some color where it is clearly fake, so the police (and your neighbors) will not think it's real.

3. Every Senior at NSHS is required to do a 6 - 10 page paper that describes their experience at South over their four years. Four years of English is a requirement for graduation, and if this paper is not completed, technically students have not completed their English requirement and cannot participate in graduation. Be sure your student doesn't forget to do this! Note: some teachers have already started on this project and others are waiting for students to finish their AP's before talking to their students about this. New this year: Some students are required to write a 'synthesis paper.'

4. Senior Skip Day is currently anticipated to be Monday, May 18th. This is NOT in any way sanctioned by the school. Any student who does not have a legal or medical note verifying their absence will be marked unexcused. For 99% of students this is no big deal. However, for students who receive 9 absences in this term, they will "N" out, which will affect graduation. You can always go to Parent Connect and check if your student has any unexcused absences. Since the last day of classes for Seniors is Friday, May 29th, Marc Banks said they have 15 "wake ups" left. (Note: May 18th is also the date for WISE project presentations. Parents are welcome to come if the student wants them to.)

5. May 21st is Graduation Speaker Try-outs. South does not do the traditional valedictorian speech for graduation, but rather opens it up to any student who is interested. Encourage your student to sign up outside the English Office and then show up in the Lecture Hall for J Block on Thursday, May 21st to read their speech before a panel of teachers who will select the final speakers. The faculty go out of their way to include a range a students so all experiences are validated--so really, ALL are encouraged to try-out.

6. Families of students with the top 10% of GPA's have been sent an email by Jan O'Neil to attend a Cum Laude breakfast on Thursday, May 21st from 7:45 - 8:45 a.m., where they will receive their yellow tassel to wear at graduation. Just like Senior Awards Night on May 27th, 7 p.m. in the Auditorium, this is an invitation only event.

7. On May 26th the administration is trying something new. Seniors are expected to come to school, but they have no classes. They will attend presentations on the arts peers' Global projects. Seniors can pick from multiple workshops/performances/presentations during 3 blocks. They are calling this day "Senior May Fair". In the evening of May 26th, the Art Show will be on public display from 5 - 6:30 p.m., main office entrance.

8. Last day of classes: May 29th. (Not mentioned at last night's meeting, but something we know happens is the student go out to the football field for the last block of that day and count down the last minutes of their high school career with Joel--very sweet!)

9. June 1st: Check Out Day which is REQUIRED. Students should come to Gym B at 11 a.m. with their yearbooks (if they bought one). At this time, students will settle all Senior obligations, i.e. pay any money owed the school for lost books, etc. Settling obligations is a requirement for participating in graduation, receiving your cap and gown and graduation tickets. (See point #13 below for more info on tickets.) At 1:15, all students will go to the Field House for graduation rehearsal, also REQUIRED. After that, the PTSO will provide students a free picnic lunch.

10. June 2 is Prom. Buses are optional, they must be ridden both ways, and students must reserve a spot with Marc Banks by next week. Prom runs 7 - 11 p.m.

11. At midnight, SouthFest begins and runs until 4 a.m. Last year, 400 out of 450 Seniors came. All Seniors and their guests are welcome to this amazing South tradition, even if they don't go to Prom. Goal is to provide fun and safe environment. Students should come or change into casual clothes. Free supervised storage of all dresses and tuxes provided while student is at SouthFest. Free taxis home start around 3 a.m. and students are grouped together by destination, so they might have to wait until it's their turn. Once a student leaves SouthFest, they are not allowed back in. SouthFest does not track students once they leave--please have a conversation with your student about what they are doing after SouthFest. Some students leave their cars at South and drive themselves home. Donations still needed for this amazing party--please give if you haven't already. Let me know and I'll send you the link for PayPal.

12. June 4 is the Graduation ceremony from 5 - 7 p.m. Graduates must arrive in cap and gown and be in Wheeler Commons by 4 p.m. Ceremony begins at 5 p.m. SHARP. Please note that traffic

around South gets very heavy from 3:30 p.m. on and the police will make it one-way. Even then, the traffic crawls. Experienced parents recommend that you bring your student and the whole family at 4 p.m. and stay--don't try to go back home again and back--much too stressful! Each student's family receives only ONE parking pass. If you have twins graduating, you get two parking passes.

13. Each student receives 6 free tickets for graduation to be used for family and friends (don't count your student). Tickets are distributed at Senior Check Out Day on Monday, June 1st which is REQUIRED. Please tell your student in advance how many tickets you will need before this day. If you know you will need more than 6 tickets, call or email your house secretary ASAP to get on a waiting list for the extra tickets. If you know you do not need all 6, please tell your student how many tickets to turn back in on June 1st. This has always worked out for all South families--don't worry!

14. Handicap seating and parking is available for the Graduation ceremony, but only if requested in advance. Usually, families sit in the bleachers arranged by their students' house (Goodwin, Goldrick, Cutler or Wheeler), while students have floor seating of the Field House. If requested in advance, parents or relatives with limited mobility can also have floor seating. Please email Vice Principal Candice Beerman ASAP at [candice\\_beermann@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:candice_beermann@newton.k12.ma.us) if you need handicap seating or a handicap parking pass. Note: if you request a handicap parking pass, this is your family's ONE pass, you will not get another (unless you have twins graduating).

Graduation is always live-streamed from the school's website. So if you have any relatives who absolutely can't make it but want to watch, please tell them to go to the Newton South website (<http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/nshs>) at 4:50 p.m. on June 4th and click on the link from the homepage. This is a great alternative for frail grandparents, very young children who can't sit for 2 hours, or anyone who hates crowds.

15. Be sure to arrange a meeting place with your student for AFTER the graduation ceremony. There are expected to be 467 graduates this year and it can be very hard to find your kid afterwards! Do allow time for picture-taking and chit chat right after the ceremony ends at 7 p.m. (My veteran friend recommended to me that dinner reservations NOT be made until 8 p.m. as you don't want to rush this special time.)

16. Due to snow days, Spring Sports Awards had to be moved to June 9, 7 p.m. at the Field House. Note this date is after graduation! Graduated Seniors are allowed and encouraged to come to Spring Sports Awards.

17. Senior students need to complete the graduation survey in Naviance to let the school know what they have planned for next year, whether they are taking a gap year, going to work, joining the military, or going to college.

18. The Scavenger Hunt is a game that students have moved until after graduation, since previous participation prevented them from graduating. Many of the activities listed on the Scavenger Hunt are criminal in nature (vandalism being most common). The Police stated that if they catch a student participating in this, they will prosecute. Please encourage your student NOT to participate.

19. Shelly Borg spoke last about the emotional bittersweet transition that is the summer before students go to college or their next step. Please do as you have always done, let them know you are there for them and be their sounding board. Don't be surprised if they are extremely moody and even downright cranky some days. It's very normal for the students to be giddy with excitement one moment and then paralyzed with trepidation the next--and the same goes for the parents! Do what you can to give your student space to start this new chapter with independence and confidence. The Guidance Counselors are here for you if you have any concerns.

More information is available here: <http://newtonsouthptso.org/frequently-asked-questions/graduation-faq/>

Good luck and congratulations again!