



**Aitkin High School**  
**Independent School District #1**  
**Aitkin Public Schools**  
306 2<sup>nd</sup> St NW  
Aitkin, MN 56431  
(218) 927-2115

LISA DEMARS, High School Principal  
JIM HENRICKSON, Dean of Students

*“A community in continuous pursuit of educational excellence for all”*

May 8, 2026

## **IMPORTANT GRADUATION AND YEAR-END INFORMATION**

Dear Seniors and Parents:

This is an exciting and rewarding time of the year as we move toward the last days of school before graduation. It can also be a time of high emotions and fear of the unknown as graduates prepare for the next steps in potential careers and new homes in a college setting. The staff at Aitkin High School has truly enjoyed their time with the senior class. Many memories have been made over the years in classrooms, athletic events, club activities, and other school-sponsored activities. The administration team and staff at Aitkin High School want to do all we can to give the graduating class of 2026 a memorable graduation ceremony. The information in this letter will lay out the commencement ceremony and how it will look for the graduating class of 2026.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Seniors who do not meet the credit requirements to graduate by May 29th cannot participate in the graduation ceremony.

**IMPORTANT:** Graduates who do not plan on attending the ceremony **MUST CONTACT** Ms. DeMars by email at [ldemars@isd1.org](mailto:ldemars@isd1.org) or by calling 218-927-7113 (leave a message if necessary) by Friday, May 22nd at 3 PM

### **GRADUATION PRACTICE**

**Date/Time:** Friday, May 29th at 9:00 a.m.

**Place:** Veterans Football Field

**You must attend practice in order to participate in the commencement ceremony.** In the case of extenuating circumstances causing you to miss practice, you must make arrangements with Ms. DeMars by Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. **Working will NOT be accepted as an excuse for missing practice.** Make arrangements with your boss so you are able to attend practice.

**GRADUATION CEREMONY**  
**DATE/TIME: Friday, May 29th at 7:00 PM**  
**LOCATION: Veterans Football Field**

**In case of inclement weather, the practice and ceremony will be held in the new gym at the high school. That decision will be made on Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. Please check the school website, Graduation Page for updates.**  
(<https://home.isd1.org/graduation-information.html>)

*The ceremony will NOT be live-streamed, but will be recorded and linked on the school web page the week following graduation.*

**ARRIVAL TIME:** All graduating seniors must be at the football field by 6:45 p.m. to line up as the ceremony will begin at 7:00 p.m. sharp. Parents/guests may start finding their places at 6:15 p.m.

**SEATING for parents/guests at Veterans Field:** Seniors will be seated in chairs in front of the bleachers. Parents and guests should bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit in small groups on the field behind the graduates. There is no limit on the number of guests at the graduation ceremony. *If the ceremony is moved to the high school gym, seating is not limited but is first come, first-served. The gym will open at 6:00 p.m.*

**PARKING:** There is limited parking in the lot by the tennis courts and parking on the streets around the field. No parking on the east side of the football field or bus garage parking lot.

**RESTROOMS:** Restrooms will be available in the football fieldhouse.

**OVER**

**PARADE:** The parade around town, led by the Aitkin Police Department, will follow the ceremony and will last 25-30 minutes. Parents will have 10 minutes after the ceremony to take pictures, etc. before the start of the parade. Families of the graduates may follow behind the floats in their vehicles. **All participants** following the parade must stay in their vehicles. This includes graduates. **No one will be allowed to sit on top of a vehicle or in the back of a truck, and no people hanging out the windows.** Families wishing to participate in the parade should be parked in the parade line-up that will be marked for families of graduating seniors. A line-up and parade route are available on the school website, under the high school "Graduation" page.

**GRADUATE ATTIRE:** Caps and gowns are a symbol of a significant event in one's life, commencement. These traditional regalia link the student with a chain of graduates from the past, the present, and into the future. They should be worn with dignity, honor, and a spirit of comradeship. Correct wearing of caps and gowns is as follows:

- The prescribed attire for commencement is the purchased cap, gown, stole, and cord, without modification.
- Caps should be worn straight with the point of the shorter part of the cap in the center of the forehead.
- The tassel is draped over the right front quarter of the cap. After you receive your diploma the superintendent, principal, or school board member will move the tassel from the right to left.
- Students should be conscious of the fact that shoes are noticeable- please wear nice shoes.
- What the different color honor cords and tassels signify:
  - Gold cords - graduating with Highest Honors
  - Silver cords - graduating with Honors
  - Gold Tassel – a member of the National Honor Society
  - Green cords – CTE Distinctions

All of these honors will be announced at graduation.

## GRAD BLAST

Grad blast is a fun safe way for students to celebrate their graduation night. This year our committee has raised over \$36,000 thanks to the generous business/individual donations and fundraising. Check in the night of Grad Blast will start at 9pm. We will be serving food during the entire event starting at check in time and will have snacks and drinks for your seniors. We ask that all graduates be in the school by 9:55. If students would like to change or store items, we have a secured area for their items. Once the doors are locked at 10:00, students will **not** be able to enter. If students choose to leave early, they will be allowed to take their individual gifts and anything already won, but any grand prizes or raffle prizes won will be forfeited and donated back. If students choose to leave early, they will **NOT** be allowed back in. Students will be released around 2:30 am. There will be a variety of activities, prizes, and raffles throughout the night.

## NOTES REGARDING THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

**School Issued Computer Check-in:** Seniors should check in their computers beginning the week of May 18th, as soon as they are done using them for the year. They will be expected to bring all computers/bags/chargers to the media center on the second floor to be checked in by technology staff. The FINAL check-in will be on Friday, May 22nd. All senior computers must be returned by 3:00 p.m. that day. See below for exceptions.

- **Last day of instruction for seniors is Thursday, May 21st**, unless extra time is needed to complete coursework. Students must communicate with Ms. DeMars in advance if they need to keep their computer to finish classes after May 21st. Have Ms. DeMars sign the bottom of your "Senior Checkout" sheet.
- The **Senior Class Trip is on May 22nd** at Breezy Point. ALL seniors are eligible to attend. **A signed permission form must be on file at the school for each senior, whether or not they are planning to attend.** Seniors should come to school by 8:30 on Friday, May 22nd for a special send off and the senior parade at Rippleside before their trip to Breezy Point.

Sincerely,



Lisa DeMars, Principal