

Idaho high school transforms children's prank into way to honor seniors

By Idaho State Department of Education

On Friday, April 24, Centennial High School seniors were studying from home but awaiting a surprise.

"Ding Dong Ditch! Class of 2020 we are NOT done celebrating you," Centennial Patriots social media declared. "Check your front doors and porches throughout the day today, peek out your windows for teachers on the move."

Throughout Centennial's enrollment area in Idaho's West Ada School District, teachers approached students' homes, rang the doorbell or knocked, then ran away, leaving behind a Centennial Class of 2020 T-shirt and a heartfelt handwritten note.

But unlike the standard prank version of Ding-Dong Ditch, these doorbell ringers didn't hide: They stopped a safe distance away to greet the student and, in many cases, pose for pictures. In this case, the game was Ding-Dong Distance.



"We wanted to do something special for our seniors," said Centennial Vice Principal Niki Scheppers, who came up with the idea. "And we missed seeing them."

The school ordered T-shirts for each student, figured out the correct sizes for each, and looked for an interesting way to deliver them and renew connections.

"We had the shirts, and we had a drive-through parade for kids to pick up their caps and gowns, but we wanted another event for the shirts," Scheppers

said. And, she said, they wanted another opportunity to see the students who were finishing their final Centennial school year without being able to enter the school.

Centennial's principal and four vice principals each hand-wrote about 86 notes to the students. All five school counselors and 56 teachers happily joined in to make the deliveries. Each person was assigned a list of students and plotted a course for their deliveries.

"The teachers were delighted. Basically, it was our whole faculty," Scheppers said. "There was no hesitation from anybody. We were able to come together in a time of crisis and do something. The kids were really touched."

So were their parents, she said, noting that parents, too, will be receiving Centennial Class of 2020 T-shirts during graduation.

"At this point, the parents are 2020 strong as well," Scheppers said. "They've been helping their students learn from home; they've been dealing with so much."

As the handwritten notes said: "We love you. We miss you. Stay Patriot strong."

