

**YHS
GRADUATION⁺
PARTY VENUE
SELECTION**

SUMMARY

History

2020 Survey

Comparison of State Theatre to Boat

Final Thoughts



History of the Boat Party

- Party was established about 25 years ago.
- Goal was to provide a drug- and alcohol-free party the night of graduation to keep students safe. By ending the party at 3am, students would be less likely to post-party after the event.
- Over the years, prices for the party have crept up (**to \$60 per ticket**) and fewer students have been attending.
- **Records show that over the past 3 years, only about 40-50% of the graduating class attends the party.**



MANY FAMILIES HAD COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE BOAT

- + Ticket Prices were too expensive
- Ending the party at 3am is very inconvenient
- Many families have out of town guests for graduation and wanted to see more flexibility in the party
- Getting volunteers to help plan and volunteer the night of the party has consistently been extremely challenging

2019/2020 Working Group to Consider Boat Party Alternatives

- Contacted other local high schools to gain knowledge of how they celebrated graduation night
- Contacted potential alternative venues for pricing estimates, feasibility, etc.
- Surveyed all YHS students (including current Senior Class members) and their parents for their input on the boat and alternatives



WHAT OTHER LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS DO:

- + • W&L is the only other local high school to hold this event on the boat. The parents also provide a breakfast to the students when they return at 3am to keep them at the school a bit longer to give parents a later/ more reasonable pick-up time.
- - Most other schools (in Fairfax County and Montgomery County) hold all night events *at* their school – usually from 10pm to 6am. Activities are available all night; students are locked in and can only leave if a parent picks them up.
 - Some schools do not do anything on graduation night; instead, parents throw after-prom parties at their schools and those go until about 4am.

ALTERNATIVE VENUES RESEARCHED:

- Country Clubs
- State Theatre
- Restaurants/Bars (including some downtown with a view of the monuments)
- Knights of Columbus
- Yorktown High School
- Building Museum
- Barcroft Community Center
- Glen Echo Ballroom

*Some of the above venues were prohibitively expensive

SURVEY - BOAT VS LAND OVERALL:°

Students Likely to Attend:

- Boat venue – 79%
- **Other land-based venue – 87%**

Parents Likely to Encourage Attendance:

- Boat venue – 82%
- **Other land-based venue – 95%**

And:

Students Overall Preference:

- Boat venue – 40%
- **Other land-based venue – 45%**

Parents Overall Preference:

- Boat venue – 20%
- **Other land-based venue – 54%**

Survey Results: Appeal of Venue

State Theatre received more parent votes than boat.

While boat received more student votes than single land-based venues, as previous slide shows, “other land-based venue” received more student votes than boat.

Percentages combined to reflect “somewhat appealing to extremely appealing.”

Students:

- Boat – 81%
- State Theatre – 57%
- Knights of Columbus – 47%
- Yorktown HS – 21%
- Barcroft Comm Center – 32%
- Glen Echo – 68%
- Country Club – 82%
- Building Museum – 57%

Parents:

- Boat – 76%
- State Theatre – 86%
- Knights of Columbus – 58%
- Yorktown HS – 34%
- Barcroft Comm Center – 29%
- Glen Echo – 67%
- Country Club -- 86 %
- Building Museum – 79%

Finally – MORE Parents Willing to Volunteer (Always a Challenge) on Land

- **35% said they would consider volunteering** if party is on the boat, and chaperones would have to be on the boat all night.
- **67% said they would consider volunteering** if party is *not* on the boat, and parents have options to chaperone all night *or* in shifts.

Comparison of Boat Party to State Theatre

State Theatre

- Overall Budget will be approx. \$15,000
- Venue Rental with Food Cost Estimate: \$8,000
- No Transportation Cost
- Ticket prices will be in the \$10-20 range (dependent on fundraising)
- Outdoor contingency option if another Covid Wave hits

Boat

- Overall budget has historically been \$25,000
- Venue Rental with Food Cost Estimate: \$13,100
- Transportation Cost: \$2,000
- Tickets have historically been \$60 including fundraising.
- Boat has 3 decks; only one is open air so a good part of the party must be indoors, and in case of inclement weather, *all* would have to be indoors

FINAL THOUGHTS

- We want the party to be as inclusive as possible. **Many families feel that \$60 is a high price** for the tickets and we have a history of below 50% attendance at the event, suggesting an enthusiasm gap.
- Feedback from the students and school: Senior class officers were provided detailed information and comparisons of the two venues; the response was that the **class officers were happy about the venue change (specifically not being on a boat) and the lower price was a very big plus.**
- In addition, the entire senior class was told about the proposed venue change during a live feed at school last week; based upon this, **the seniors' estimated participation at the State Theatre is over 50% and there have been no complaints to the school from students about venue change.**
- One parent comment from the survey completed two years ago stated that the night of the party was stormy, so students had to spend the evening in the enclosed lower decks of the boat; the party ended up feeling very cramped and this parent's child ended up seasick.
- With COVID's unpredictability and the possibility of another wave any time, including in June, **the State Theatre is a safer option because they have a fully outdoor option.** Many students have travel plans for graduation trips in the days following graduation and it would be a disappointment to have to cancel those plans if a super-spreader event happened on the boat.
- We are a group of parent volunteers who are doing our best to provide a nice, safe, and enjoyable experience for Yorktown's graduating Seniors, to celebrate their great achievement in graduating, with a last gathering of all who want to attend. We look forward to giving them a happy send-off into their futures, and we welcome all who want to join us!

BOTTOM LINE

- + • We want the party to be as inclusive as possible. **Many families feel that \$60 is a high price** for the tickets and we have a history of below 50% attendance at the event, suggesting an enthusiasm gap.
- Feedback from the students and school: Senior class officers were provided detailed information and comparisons of the two venues; the response was that the **class officers were happy about the venue change (specifically not being on a boat) and the lower price was a very big plus.**
- ○ In addition, the entire senior class was told about the proposed venue change during a live feed at school last week; based upon this, **the seniors' estimated participation at the State Theatre is over 50% and there have been no complaints to the school from students about venue change.**
- One parent comment from the survey completed two years ago stated that the night of the party was stormy, so students had to spend the evening in the enclosed lower decks of the boat; the party ended up feeling very cramped and this parent's child ended up seasick.
- With COVID's unpredictability and the possibility of another wave any time, including in June, **the State Theatre is a safer option because they have a fully outdoor option.** Many students have travel plans for graduation trips in the days following graduation and it would be a disappointment to have to cancel those plans if a superspreader event happened on the boat.