

Marcellus Central Schools

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Dear Mustang Families:

My hope is that this letter finds you relaxing and enjoying some summer fun and sun with your children! We can't thank all of you enough for your support and dedication during our school closure.

I am sure that, like us, you are waiting for news of what things might look like this fall. After last week's announcement, it appears the Governor will be issuing his directive as to whether or not schools will reopen by August 7th. Prior to that, it is expected that school districts will receive by the end of this week guidelines from the State Education Department with direction on how to reopen schools. We have spent a great deal of time reading guidance and plans from other states and even other countries, and have met and discussed a variety of options. There are lots of obstacles to overcome depending on what the requirements are for schools to operate safely.

Once the district is in receipt of the guidance we will be required to follow, a draft plan will be created and then vetted and modified by a committee consisting of school staff and parents. If we are allowed to bring all students back in the fall, we will adhere to the guidance we are given including use of masks, cleaning and disinfecting procedures and other possible safety protocols. In the event guidance released by SED dictates that we must socially distance at school, that would require an extreme reduction in not only the number of students in each building at a time but also each classroom. While we are in the process of determining how that could be accomplished, it is proving very challenging. We are also aware that any sort of rotation of students attending school (two days on, two days off for example) creates a hardship for working families as they struggle to secure adequate daycare while also dealing with their child's schooling requirements. In addition, we recognize that there is a segment of our community that prefers their children not return to school until a vaccine is developed. While I am uncertain what mandates will be given regarding maintaining a virtual school for students not returning and also a "live" school experience for students returning, I am assuming we will need to do both. In light of all of these variables, we have created a survey requesting information from our families. This survey will better help us plan as it will provide information about your preferences. It can be found on the Marcellus Central School District website homepage. Please complete the survey no later than July 27th. We ask that you please complete the survey for **each one** of your children that attends school in the district. While this may seem redundant, it will help us to disaggregate data by school, and it will also allow you to

answer differently in the event that you plan to take different courses of action for each of your children based on factors of age, ability to handle virtual learning, underlying medical conditions etc. In the event that you are unable to access the electronic version of the survey, please contact Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Data and Assessment, Jean Sharlow, at 315-673-6037.

Although these are certainly challenging times for all of us, we are committed to finding the best possible solutions to serve the needs of our students. We are acutely aware that there is no replacement for the connections that are made between a teacher and student, or between classmates in a productive learning environment. Nevertheless, we are in a position where we must comply with the directives handed down from our Governor and the State Education Department. I am confident that if we work together and stay connected, we no doubt will do great work for the students of the Marcellus School District.

Should you have additional questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Brantner
Superintendent of Schools