

# Marcellus Central Schools

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May 4, 2020

Dear Marcellus Families:

I hope this letter finds you all doing well! I have been waiting to have a little clearer picture of the fate of our school year prior to sending another message out. As of Friday, May 1st, Governor Cuomo announced that schools will be closed for the remainder of the school year. I am sure many of you are feeling the same sorrow we are feeling. We miss all of our students terribly. At this point, though, we must proceed with determining how to bring our school year to a close over the next two months in the best way possible for your children. We are committed to continuing to keep them engaged in learning the best way that we can. Our goal is to prioritize remaining skills and content related to our standards to provide students with the foundation necessary to move ahead in their academic career. The Governor's announcement also opened the door for us to continue planning how we will proceed with end-of-school year ceremonies and recognitions. We will continue to update you on the progress of those plans in the weeks to come. Here are a few updates for you.

**End-of-Year Ceremonies and Events:** We will have a list on the COVID 19 page of our website showing what events have been cancelled and which will be re-imagined. We will plan out specific details for each and all of that information will be shared with you and the school community. We already have some good ideas - including for graduation - and are working with school staff, the seniors and senior class officers to vet those ideas.

**When will the school year end?:** We have not received guidance on that yet but our plan right now is to stop when we reach 180 days of instruction, which is the minimum number of days required to receive our school aid. While this might be a bit confusing, that number differs for students in grades K-6 versus those in grades 7-12. Right now, if we remove Memorial Day as a day of instruction, the 180th day for K-6 students is Monday, June 15; the 180th day for 7-12 students is Friday June 12th. I will provide more specifics once we hear more from the Governor via an executive order or from the State Education Department. These details were not spelled out in Friday's press conference.

**Collection of Student Personal Belongings:** Due to the abrupt nature of our students' departure from school back in March, over the course of the next week, we will be gathering any items your child may have left in their classroom or locker(s) and bagging them, labeled with their

name. We will be delivering those items within the next few weeks and will share details of how it will work as we get closer to that time.

**How will the school budget vote and elections take place?:** As part of his executive order, the Governor set June 9th as the date upon which school districts will hold their annual votes. While we are still sifting through the details and working out time lines, it is clear we will be required to hold this election and vote by absentee ballot only. We will be mailing materials to eligible voters in the near future. In addition we will hold a virtual budget hearing in late May. We will post updates to the budget section of our webpage and continue to use our usual means of communication to share details of next year's budget information.

**What about yearbooks?** We will be working out a plan to distribute yearbooks when they arrive and this will be communicated to you.

**What will summer look like?:** Governor Cuomo also mentioned that he will announce his decision about summer school by 5/15/20. That will help us determine what we can and can't do over the summer.

**How do we reimagine the fall to open school while complying with social distancing?:** During Friday's press conference, the Governor made a brief reference to opening schools in the fall with specific plans for cleaning and social distancing. He is putting together a statewide task force to examine how to come off NY Pause. The State Education Department will also put together a task force to examine what it will look like for schools to reopen throughout the state. I am also planning to pull a group of staff and parent representatives together here (virtually of course) to examine our specific plans. One thing I know for sure....we are an incredible team and if anyone can do it, WE CAN!

I can't thank you enough for your support and partnership during such a challenging time. I know many of you share our sentiments that we wish things could just go back to the way they were. While at some point school will resume, I ask that you stick with us until then. I know that by working together we will create the best possible outcome for your children.

Sincerely,

*Michelle L. Brantner*

Michelle L. Brantner  
Superintendent of Schools