

Marcellus Senior High School

1 Mustang Hill
Marcellus, NY 13108
315-673-6300

John R. Durkee
Principal

Michael Free
Director of Health and Athletics

May 28, 2020

Dear Family of Class of 2020 Graduate:

I know the second half of your senior year certainly has not been what you expected. We have been trying to find ways to make it as special as possible and to convey how much we miss you! I know you have waited patiently to hear all of the details of our Commencement Ceremony plan. We have been waiting for guidance from our state and county leaders, and with that information in hand, we have decided that it would be best to offer the plan outlined in this letter. There has been a great deal of speculation about the phases for reopening as well as what each phase allows, as it relates to schools and large gatherings. We have already seen things change on a weekly, if not daily, basis and, to us, rather than delaying any longer, the best thing that we could do at this point is to proceed with celebrating the Class of 2020. So, here is the plan!

Students who have met all state and local requirements for receipt of a diploma, we will have an individual/personalized. "mini commencement" with a limited amount of family members that still honors many of our Marcellus traditions. This event will take place in our traditional location of Groeling Auditorium and will allow the senior to be conferred with the title of **Graduate** of the Marcellus Central School District, receive his/her diploma in front of loved ones, and make the hard earned walk across the stage. The entire event will be streamed live so that family members around New York and the country can enjoy the spectacle. It will also be recorded and edited together with all graduates to produce a seamless ceremony that will air on the day of commencement.

In accordance with Onondaga County Health Department guidelines, our ceremony must be conducted in a manner that significantly limits the number of people allowed on campus at one time. In addition, we will need to follow strict social distancing protocols. Each member of the Class of 2020 will have the opportunity to walk the Groeling Auditorium stage and receive his/her diploma in the presence of close family members. The "stage walks" will be recorded on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 and Wednesday, June 24, 2020.

Your family is invited to campus for your ceremony on (date) at (time). In the event that this time frame will not work for your family, please contact Beth McDonough at the high school main office. Please be aware that we have a limited number of additional slots to offer. No more than four (4) family members may accompany each graduate. Families will arrive on our campus via

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Mustang Hill and will be directed to park in the student lot at the top of the hill. Please DO NOT arrive more than five (5) minutes in advance of your designated time. You will be alerted by a parking lot attendant when you should exit your cars and approach the auditorium pit door. Another attendant will signal you when it is time to enter. Once inside the auditorium, the four family members will be directed to stand in the pit area facing the stage. Graduates will proceed up the stairs and walk the stage as Mrs. Brantner announces their name and any additional awards they may have received. A videographer will record the moment and, at center stage, Mr. Durkee will be on hand as the graduate receives his/her diploma and a photographer captures the moment. It will be a no-contact exchange. The graduate and his/her family will then proceed up through the auditorium seating area and exit into the lobby. There will be a display set up for photographs there as well. The photographer will have approximately one minute to take photos of the graduate and family members. Please be thinking of any groupings of people you would like to have in a photograph as time will be tight. Families will then exit to the outside through the lobby doors, return to their car and exit the campus. We ask that no "out of area" family members attend the ceremony. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please call Mr. Durkee to talk it through. All family members must wear masks while on the campus.

We understand that each family has their own unique set of circumstances. If for some reason you do not wish to participate in this event, please know that we will partner with you to devise an alternative plan for celebrating your achievements.

After all graduates have had their "ceremony", we will create a video containing each stage walk, pre-recorded speeches, and the senior slideshow. That video will air on Sunday, 6/28/2020 at 2:00 PM. This will give families an opportunity to gather and view the ceremony together. We are working in concert with village officials to have some sort of "car parade" as a "kick-off" to this virtual commencement. We will share additional details once we confirm them.

Please know that this is not what we had in mind for closing out the first stage of your educational careers; but, nevertheless, it does give us a great deal of joy to know that we will still be able to have some sort of celebration with each of you. If you have any questions, please email me at jdurkee@marcellusschools.org or give me a call. We look forward to seeing all of you starting on the 23rd.

Sincerely,



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