



## Manalapan-Englishtown Middle School

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May 1, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of the Class of 2020:

This is not the letter I imagined I would be sending to all of you when I started back in January. Terms like chaotic and unprecedented seem to almost fall flat when describing the last few months. It has been said tough times do not build character, but that they reveal it. If that is the case this pandemic has shown the exceptional character and work ethic of our community, students, and staff. While this unprecedented time has been stressful on all of us it has also highlighted the strength of the MERS community. As we approach the end of the school year I wanted to update our 8th grade families on how certain end of the year events will be handled for this year:

- Graduation - Due to the uncertainty surrounding the reopening of schools and social distancing regulations at that time, this year's graduation ceremony will be virtual. Students will still have the ability to present speeches. These speeches along with the superintendent's message, my message, and other traditional parts of the ceremony will be included with student names and pictures in a graduation video\*. This is not a decision that was made lightly. As always, the health and safety of our families is our top priority.  
*\*If you do not wish to have your child's/children's picture and name included in the virtual graduation ceremony please email [scangialosi@mersnj.us](mailto:scangialosi@mersnj.us) prior to May 22, 2020.*
- Graduation Awards - Graduation awards will still be presented as in years past. The graduation awards will be announced as part of the virtual graduation.
- Yearbooks, t-shirts, graduation programs, diplomas and caps and gowns - All 8th graders will receive their cap and gown and Diploma. Students who purchased yearbooks and 8th grade t-shirts will receive them with their caps and gowns. Each student will receive a traditional graduation program.
- Graduation Fee - There will be no fee associated with this year's graduation ceremony.
- Past Due Accounts -Please note that lunch account balances, textbooks, fines, etc. must be settled by June 1, 2020 for students to be included in our virtual graduation.
- 8th Grade Dance - Due to concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will unfortunately not be having an 8th Grade Dance this year.

Feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions. Please continue to stay positive, healthy, and safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Fiorillo