



Serving With Pride The
Township of Manalapan
and the
Borough of Englishtown

John J. Marciante, Jr., Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Peter M. Friedman Building
54 Main Street
Englishtown, NJ 07726-1329
(732) 786-2500
(732) 786-2542 FAX

jmarciante@mersnj.us

May 28, 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

As we approach the end of the year I have received emails and have been told of numerous comments on social media about graduation and moving up ceremonies. Without specific guidance from the state the district proceeded with creating virtual experiences so that students and parents would have closure during this challenging time we are all living through. Yesterday after taking several different positions on the matter, specific guidelines were released by the Governor through the Department of Education. A Board of Education Committee had already been established anticipating these new guidelines and is working on a graduation ceremony for MEMS which will follow this new criteria. As per the guidelines the ceremony will occur after July 6th and as soon as the details are worked out it will be shared with the community.

The Governor specifically stated the following; “Additionally, DOE guidelines will stipulate that commencements must be held only for graduation from middle school or high school, and not for other ceremonies that mark promotion from one grade to the next”. That statement clearly indicates the districts moving up ceremonies are not considered exceptions to his current executive orders which define essential activities. Based on this directive from the Governor, all moving up ceremonies in the district will unfortunately have to remain virtual.

I recognize that many of you will be very disappointed by this decision. I am well aware that your children have experienced the loss of many special activities associated with the traditional end of the school year, especially children in the fifth grade. Unfortunately, as the analogy has been made, battling this pandemic is like a war. And the one defining characteristic of war is loss. For 100,000 Americans and their families it has been loss of life or a loved one. For our medical workers on the front line, many have had to experience the loss of colleagues and separation from their families to protect them from COVID-19. For some of you or your neighbors it has been a loss of job and dealing with the financial uncertainty that brings. I know as parents your desire is to protect your children from loss and in this case if by giving them a moving up ceremony it will somehow accomplish this. I personally don't think that it will, but I am truly sorry that I can't give it to you.

Sincerely,

John J. Marciante, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools