

MES Family Update - July 1, 2020

Good afternoon Marlborough Families,

We miss our children and families! We hope everyone is enjoying this most unusual summer.

Virtual Story Time starts again tonight at 6:30 p.m.! We have missed seeing our kids, hearing their tales, reading funny stories and especially our 'good nights'. We encourage our children in ALL grade levels and their families to join us - we would LOVE to see everyone. The link to Storytime is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83652203295?pwd=VUNKR1oxbzBpYXVuTXY5bTRyNCtVZz09>

Below, please find a link to a **survey on reopening school in the fall**. Reopening schools has been one of the main focuses of our state and the nation as a whole. Safety of our children, staff and families continues to be our top priority. Based on requirements and guidance provided by the State of Connecticut on Monday, we have drafted the survey found at the link below. We would appreciate your survey response by **Tuesday, July 7th** in order to assist us with the next phase of planning for the fall.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R8GJD5C>

At the bottom of the survey you will find locations to share your name, student(s) name and grade and a big open box. We are hoping that all of our families will provide us feedback so we can make the most informed next steps. We are very excited to create a school to bring our children and staff back to. A school without children and staff is just a big empty building - not what we've become used to in our wonderful six years as Marlborough administrators.

On Monday, the Connecticut State Department of Education sent out the following reopening guidance. Our MES Task Force is reviewing the information and meeting on a regular basis. The link to the document is below:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf>

We would like to share information on Connecticut's Summer Reading and Math Programs.

Summer Reading: The link below brings you to a pdf document where you can track books read over the summer. Families can also create their own log unique to their family. We are looking forward to seeing the books our entire Marlborough Family can read over the summer.

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/CTRead/SR2020_journal.pdf

Summer Math: The link below brings you the State of Connecticut's Summer Math Challenge. We will collect data on the number of children who participate in this exciting program.

<https://hub.lexile.com/Summer-Math-Challenge>

In order to ensure that we are in touch over the summer, we will send out an email every Wednesday, sharing new information. We want to ensure that everyone in our Marlborough Family is informed on decisions as they are made. Thank you so much for completing our survey (link above). We may have a few surveys this summer, but promise to do our best to keep them short. Your input is valued and appreciated.

Hope to 'see' everyone at our weekly Virtual Story Time - tonight at 6:30 p.m.

Dan & Kim

*Please see below for a letter from Dr. David Sklarz, Marlborough Superintendent

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Dr. David P. Sklarz, Superintendent

July 1, 2020

Dear MES Families and Staff:

We have just finished a school year that challenged all of us to come together as one for the education of our children in the midst of a pandemic. Distance learning became the new norm and education as we have never known it. As we close this year we can look back and say, "We did it". We could not have done this alone but together what once appeared impossible became possible, we did it for our children. We must now look forward and it starts with time to rest and return to uninterrupted time with family once again.

Then we will need to look forward to the reality of the new challenges of reopening our schools safely and another new normal for schooling in a pandemic. We came together, families and staff in distance learning and we will do it again as we prepare for reopening our school in September. We in the administration have not rested and are moving forward in a planning process for a safe reopening and want every one of you to know that your voices and concerns will be important in this daunting process.

On Monday the State Department of Education released the state's plan for reopening all Connecticut schools providing in-school instruction in a safe learning environment for all children. The plan has several components that are mandated and they will guide us in the planning process. Many of the questions that have been raised by educators and families are answered in the State Department of Education plan and they are:

- All children at all grade levels will resume in-school instruction when schools reopen in August.
- All children will be required to wear protective face covering (masks) throughout the day with few exceptions allowed during the day such as recess.
- The CDC guideline of 6 feet of social distancing whenever possible will be the standard throughout the school.
- Students riding the bus will be required to wear a mask at all times while on the bus.
- Parents are encouraged to drive their children to and from school.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms practicing social distancing.
- Numbers of students in each classroom will be based on guidelines to accommodate social distancing standards. Classrooms with tables rather than desks will be replaced with desks to accommodate safe distancing.
- Elementary plans will differ from middle and high schools based on age level appropriateness.
- Special subjects such as art, music and physical education remain an important part of the curriculum and will require new approaches and teaching strategies.
- There will be distance learning options for parents who choose not to send their children to in school instruction .

There is much to be accomplished for the final plans for school reopening. To that end we have established a School Reopening Task Force that brings together the incredible talent of our community. The task force is made up of parents, school board members, the first selectman, union representatives, teachers, paraeducators, support staff, health experts and town safety personnel. Principal White and Assistant Principal Kelley will co-chair the work of the task force and will continue to update you over the summer and are always available to you and your concerns. You can find the names and representative groups on a special section of our website at www.marlborough.k12.ct.us.

The Task Force members bring extraordinary expertise, professionalism and inspire confidence to assure that our school will meet the highest standard before reopening. The work will be driven by CDC guidelines, medical science, research on best practices and most of all what is best for our Marlborough Elementary children as we plan for and implement the governor's school reopening guidelines and mandates in an approach that best meets the individual needs of OUR children and OUR values and beliefs.

We are living in uncertain times and open communication has never been more important. The family emails will continue periodically and the website will provide additional information. Please feel free to contact us throughout the process. To that end, we will be sending out a parent survey today to try to identify your needs, concerns and suggestions. Together we will plan a reopening that provides maximum safety and addresses the educational and social emotional needs of our children, families, teachers and staff. Together we can and will get through this stronger than ever.

May you and your family stay well and healthy.

Regards,

David P. Sklarz, Ed.D.