



**TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS**  
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Dear Toms River Regional School community:

As students engage in remote learning through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, which is quickly approaching, it's important that I keep you updated regarding plans for graduations and year-end procedures for all students.

### **Graduation**

On May 4, Governor Murphy announced that NJ public schools would remain closed for in-person instruction for the duration of the 2019-2020 school year as part of continuing efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19. Many of our students and school families have wondered, justifiably, how we plan to acknowledge and celebrate our graduating seniors and eighth graders.

Based on the most recent state directives, our plan is to honor graduates virtually while remaining committed to scheduling in-person graduation ceremonies at a future time when such gatherings are both lawful and safe. Many have opined and provided thoughtful ideas as to how we and other districts might manage in-person graduations, but it is clear we are bound by Executive Order No. 107, which remains in effect indefinitely and prohibits gatherings of individuals for parties, celebrations, and other social events. This executive order, signed March 21, was reiterated by the NJDOE as a memorandum May 8 to remind school districts that in-person graduations are not permitted by law. State Director of Emergency Management Colonel Patrick J. Callahan also [recently clarified that graduation ceremonies may only be held virtually and that even "wave parades" are prohibited.](#)

Therefore, in celebration of the Classes of 2020, our three high schools will conduct virtual graduation ceremonies the evening of Friday, **June 12** and our intermediate schools will have their virtual celebration of 8th graders the afternoon of **June 12**. Principals will continue to update their communities on the schedule and other details leading up to graduation (ex. diplomas, yearbooks) as they are finalized.

### **End-of-year procedures**

As we look to coordinate closeout procedures for the end of the school year, families will receive detailed communications from their building principal regarding personal item pickup such as locker belongings, as well as the drop off of school property including textbooks, Chromebooks, instruments, uniforms, library books, electronic devices, etc.

Seniors will receive more detailed information from their building principals regarding caps, gowns, lockers, final grades, etc.



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I understand that these procedures are far from what we all had envisioned just several months ago. Believe me that I share in your disappointment, both as a father and as a leader of this district who counts graduation day as the highlight of every school year. We all cherish these once-in-a-lifetime occasions, recognize their significance, and wonder whether a virtual replacement, even if temporary, can come close to providing the memories and closure that our students crave and so deeply deserve.

These unprecedented times have imposed on us all a number of unforeseen circumstances and non-traditional measures, but the joy we derive from our students' and children's accomplishments is no less great. I believe, in fact, we have more to celebrate this year than any year prior. Our students approach the end of this year having exhibited profound resilience and remarkable capacity for remote learning, all while sacrificing the everyday delights of simply going to school. Our teachers continue to provide our students with virtual learning while working to maintain a personal and nurturing experience, not to mention caring for their own children. We commend them for this and thank all of our staff, parents, and students for working with each other in a unified and positive fashion as we navigate through these unique and challenging times.

Your health, safety, and well-being is our top priority, and we look forward to rejoining all of you in person with a newfound appreciation for some of the simple things in life. Until then, stay well, and may God bless all of you.

Sincerely,

David M. Healy  
Superintendent of Schools