



# WORCESTER CENTRAL SCHOOL

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August 13, 2020

Dear Worcester Central School Families,

As you may know, Governor Cuomo recently announced that schools throughout NY are allowed to reopen with the decision on how to reopen left to the local school districts. He further mandated schools to have a COVID-19 testing protocol for students and staff, as well as a contact tracing plan in place by this Friday.

The decision to reopen for in person learning is based on a wide variety of factors, with each having an impact on our entire school community. At the center of every conversation and consideration was, and always will be, the safety and well being of our students and staff. WCS created a reopening plan which took an extensive amount of time designing with our task force, colleagues, and state and county officials. We have analyzed school community and staff input through survey results and the questions submitted regarding our reopening plans to determine the best course of action. In recent conversations with colleagues, the Board of Education and the Otsego County Department of Health, and after hours of careful consideration; we have made the very difficult decision to begin school by **remote instruction through October 12, 2020.**

We understand this is disappointing news and we apologize for any inconvenience it causes. The present Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and New York State Department of Health guidance, extremely strict 14 day quarantine restrictions for symptomatic students and staff, increased confirmed COVID-19 cases in Otsego County, and the status of local and state resources in our area (specifically the availability of COVID-19 testing, time for test results and contact tracing capabilities) make a remote learning start the safest option for our students and staff. We will continue to monitor these factors, any updated information and guidance, and the local and regional COVID-19 climate to prepare for the anticipated return of your children in October. Depending on the previous factors the return could include a phase in approach of either of the hybrid scenarios from our reopening plan, followed by a full in person student return.

This decision has weighed heavily on our team and in no way was taken lightly. I understand that none of the learning options are the true return to school, and our goal remains to have all our students back in school as soon as possible. As a District leader the safety of our students and our staff will always be my first priority and it is the ultimate deciding factor in our reopening.

On August 31<sup>st</sup> students in grades 2-12 will be able to pick up Chromebooks and on September 3<sup>rd</sup> students in grades Pre-K-1 will pick up materials. Additional details will be shared in separate communications. I know there will be many questions and I encourage you to view our Reopening Resource Page on our website. There you can view our Reopening Plan, ask a question, and read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). In addition, you may attend our online reopening forums that will be held tonight at 6:30 p.m., Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup> at noon and Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. A link will be provided on our website [www.worcestercs.org](http://www.worcestercs.org). I can also be reached for questions at [tgonzales@worcestercs.org](mailto:tgonzales@worcestercs.org).

On behalf of all of us at Worcester Central School, I thank you for your continued support, understanding, and patience. Together we will get through this and be an even stronger Worcester School Community! I wish you and your families continued health and safety.

Respectfully,

Tim Gonzales  
Superintendent