



Warren County Board of Education

Grant Swallows, Ed. S. – Director of Schools

2548 Morrison Street, McMinnville, Tennessee 37110
Telephone: (931) 668-4022; Fax: (931) 815-2685

September 14, 2020

Dear Legislators,

I send you greetings from the Warren County School System. During this challenging time, I think you would be proud of the work that is being done. Our teachers and staff are working extremely hard to serve our students well. Additionally, I am very proud of our students and how they have responded to the challenges related to school in 2020-2021.

I am writing to advocate on behalf of our system regarding standardized testing. First, allow me to say that we believe in assessing our students and the work of our schools. In the first few weeks of school, we have done great work around screening students to find out where they are following a long absence from school. We will continue that work throughout the year. Assessment and its results help to guide instruction. With that said, this school year has brought unprecedented challenges. Schools, teachers, and staff are fighting battles they have never encountered before. They are working extremely hard to “do things a different way.” Attached you will find a resolution passed by our Board of Education advocating for a moratorium on standardized testing for this school year. I believe that it is the right thing to do. A moratorium for this school year, particularly in accountability, will not hinder the education of students. It will serve as a relief from a stress our teachers and students do not need currently. I hope that you will give it strong consideration.

I want to thank you for your service. Please know that I am available to speak with you concerning this matter or anything at all. Know that we are thankful for the opportunity to serve our community and most of all the students of Warren County. I appreciate you advocating on behalf of those students and staff.

Sincerely,

Grant Swallows, Ed.S.
Director of Schools

Enclosure

**RESOLUTION 2020-3 OF WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
IN SUPPORT OF A MORATORIUM ON STATE STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR THE
2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

WHEREAS, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a global pandemic that can be spread through close contact among individuals; and

WHEREAS, beginning on March 12, 2020, Governor Bill Lee declared Tennessee to be in a state of emergency until June 30, 2020, pursuant to Executive Orders 14 and 36, due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, beginning on March 16, 2020, Tennessee schools were closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, in response to requests made by Governor Bill Lee that they close to combat the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, the Tennessee General Assembly approved the cancellation of state standardized testing for the 2019-2020 school year, due to the statewide closure of schools and subsequent lack of standardized instruction being delivered to students; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2020, the Tennessee State Board of Education approved Emergency Rule 0520-01-17-01, which requires Tennessee school districts to provide students in grades one (1) through twelve (12) access to six and one half (6 1/2) hours of instructional time each school day during the 2020-2021 school year, even if there are school closures or disruptions related to outbreaks of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, by Executive Order 50 signed by Governor Bill Lee on June 29, 2020, the state of Tennessee is to remain in a state of emergency until at least August 29, 2020 and * COVID-19 continues to spread at a rapid rate in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee schools, in order to comply with State Board requirements, will likely have to engage in remote learning, in whole or in part, during the 2020-2021 academic school year due to the continued spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board Emergency Rule 0520-01-17-.01, Tennessee school districts are required to each create and implement their own plans to facilitate

continuous learning in light of the continued spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee school districts will be implementing different plans for learning from county to county across the state for the 2020-2021, based upon the needs of their students and COVID-19 outbreaks in each county; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee students will likely face significant academic and behavioral regression upon returning to school, having lost approximately two (2) months of standard instruction and attendance due to the extended closure; and

WHEREAS, when schools resume in August 2020, students will have spent approximately five (5) consecutive months out of school; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee school districts will be focused not only on student growth and safety, but also on recoupment of academic and social and emotional skills lost during the extended closure.

NOW, THEREFORE be it resolved unanimously by all of the Board Members on the 20 day of August, 2020 that the Warren County School District:

Supports and respectfully requests a moratorium on state standardized testing and accountability associated with such testing for the 2020-2021 school year. to include end-of-year examinations and formative assessments throughout the year. The Warren County School District requests that, if state standardized testing does continue in some format for the 2020-2021 school year, the results of that testing be used as metrics of student progress rather than to determine district rankings and scoring statewide due to the disparity in learning methods that will be used across the state in light of COVID-19 and focus on recoupment of students' academic and social/emotional skills lost during the extended school closure.

Adopted and approved this 20th day of August, 2020

By: Tanya Bess
Tanya Bess, Board Chair

Attest: Grant Swallow
Grant Swallows, Director of Schools