

August 13, 2020

Good Evening,

It has come to my attention that the information regarding the cancellation of courses has caused some angst. I'm sure it comes as unwelcome news, but hopefully, I can help explain a bit more as to why this happened.

Due to the pandemic, the AOE guidelines, and the two tracks MHS is offering this year, MHS is not able to sustain the same course offerings as we did in prior years. I understand that this isn't the best news you've heard this summer, but there isn't another option for us. Because we are offering two tracks, online and in person, MHS had to provide our online learning institution, VTVLC, with a specific number of full time staff to support the families/students who have chosen the virtual leaning option for the 2020-2021 school year. Currently, our social studies department has dropped to 50% of its teaching staff as two teachers will be departing MHS to VTVLC for the year. These positions are not replaced for the school year as these teachers continue to be employed by our district; however, they are working in another school to support an online learning option for our MHS students. To come to the decisions we did with which courses would still continue to be offered, we looked at the number of course requests, necessary courses/years for graduation from MHS, and alternative opportunities for students to be able to access courses online or through dual enrollment. In addition to this change, our English department is also sending a teacher to VTVLC to support online learning for this school year. This is a 25% reduction in that department. Because of this, classes needed to be shuffled to other teachers and, in turn, creative writing was cancelled. Similar to social studies elective courses, students can take creative writing through another resource.

I, and we, do understand that there are a number of challenges seniors are facing as they walk into this year and with quite a bit of uncertainty. However, the reality of our situation is that we just can't operate the same as we once did. To be honest, we're fortunate that we are not having to cut more courses based on our small population of staff and sending three of them to VTVLC. It is certainly not our intent to make this any more challenging for you or for us, yet this is a significantly challenging time. I apologize if this news brings you disappointment, but please know that our reality continues to be

working in crisis mode. Many of your teachers and MHS administration did their best to create a schedule where students could have the most course offerings as possible in school, while also supporting 20% of our population online.

There are a number of options that were laid out in our prior communication, and if it's important for you to take the course, then we'll find a way to make that happen--no doubt. Please reach out to those people who can assist and we will work in collaboration with you to get the course you need.

We appreciate your support and understanding and, certainly, patience.