



Neshaminy School District

Administrative Offices • 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road • Langhorne, PA 19047

We Build Futures

Good Morning Neshaminy Secondary Students and Parents,

Some things to know as we move into the third week of our school closure.

Our commitment to our students:

- Neshaminy intends to make certain no group of students and/or individual students suffer a negative long-term educational impact from this interruption of school.
- You have our commitment, that those students on course to graduate in June 2020 at the time of the school closure, will receive their diplomas in June.
- Those students on course to be promoted to the next grade, will be promoted.
- Any learning gaps resulting from this school closure will be addressed in the subsequent grade/course in the coming year.

Family Fun Idea!

I thought I would start off with something simple, somewhat educational and entertaining for the entire family. The below is a timed quiz on the locations of the 50 States in our country. (Thank you to Neil French, Maple Point Middle, Assistant Principal) My wife and I took the quiz individually, then sent the link with our scores to friends and family who in turn took the quiz. The interaction provided an hour or so of entertaining virtual family interaction on scores and the 50 states. My wife scored 78%. I was positive I'd do better but also scored a 78% (How long has Idaho been all the way up there?!?) Anyway, if you're tired of Netflix, give it a shot.

Identify the 50 States in 7 Minutes!

https://www.sporcle.com/games/Matt/find_the_states

Phase 2: Learning Opportunities in Canvas

The Learning Opportunities in Canvas were designed by Neshaminy Teachers and span Grades 5 through 12 in specific content/course areas. Each activity is intended to be an independent 15-30 minute series of tasks to review, continue or extend the Neshaminy Curriculum in a particular content/course.

While the Learning Opportunities are voluntary and ungraded, each presents an excellent opportunity to engage with Neshaminy curriculum from the past, present and in the future. I'm 54 years old with three degrees and I have learned new things from simply reviewing the Learning Opportunities in Canvas. Can you

list the 5 pillars of Democracy? Explain the function of a Biosphere? Identify literary devices you come across in your daily life? Explain the counter-intuitive nature of exponential growth?

Moreover, these Learning Opportunities provide a glimpse of the independent asynchronous learning environment students will experience in the next Phase of Neshaminy's instruction plan during the COVID-19 school closure. By design, these Learning Opportunities are not only opportunities to engage with Neshaminy's curriculum, but also practice the structure and habits needed to learn in an online environment.

Why wait for online instruction until after Spring Break?

The Phased Roll-out was Neshaminy's intent prior to the closing of schools. The phased roll-out is as follows:

Phase 1: Week of March 16

Broad Exploratory Learning Opportunities

Phase 2: Week of March 23

Grade Level & Content/Course Specific Learning Opportunities

Phase 3: Week of April 13 and beyond

Individual Class/Course Asynchronous Online Instruction

However, many teachers are doing Video Conferencing and using Canvas to continue instruction, but it's voluntary during Phase 1 and Phase 2. Neshaminy teachers officially start back to "work" on Monday, March 30 to begin planning for April 13 and beyond. Moreover, we felt it necessary to permit Neshaminy Families and Staff time during the week of Passover and Easter to focus on their families instead of rolling-out an entirely new form of instruction at that time.

Neshaminy (along with most other public schools in the Commonwealth) was working in a 2-week period of "No Educational Services" as a result of the Governor's directives. What happens after the 2-week period was cleared up only on Monday; permitting a "Continuation of Education" as expected. We have been planning for Online learning since the beginning and will deliver a quality program; albeit not the first out of the gate. As we develop our programs, the Learning Opportunities in the New Canvas Course present a broad array of opportunities to review, continue and advance learning for Grades 5 – 12. As I stated above, I reviewed them, I learned a few things. ☺

A “Free and Appropriate Public Education” (FAPE) for all is the sticking point, particularly as established in Pennsylvania with compensatory education legislation. Other states have different State laws on the topic connecting the Federal Legislation to State Code. While I don’t necessarily agree that the established rules were intended for a situation like the present, they are the rules, at the moment, nevertheless. We received clearer direction from the PDE just this week.

If you are interested in more information, See #9 and #11 from PDE:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Pages/AnswersToFAQs.aspx>

US DoE Info:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocr-coronavirus-fact-sheet.pdf>

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/rr/policyguidance/Supple%20Fact%20Sheet%203.21.20%20FINAL.pdf>

At the closing of schools, Neshaminy had take-home Chromebooks in Grades 5 – 10 only and Canvas in Grades 5 – 12 only. Additionally, the Pandemic impacts each family differently. Most other Districts in Bucks County are in a similar position. We just purchased Canvas for Grades K-4 and hope to have it up and running for teachers by Monday. Additionally, we are distributing Chromebooks to families without such devices.

Ultimately, it’s me to “blame.” I advocated for a well-defined, equally-accessible solution in lieu of the more immediate, less clear solution of some other districts. Only time will tell how that decision plays out.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we chart a new course.

Marking Period 3 Grades:

The third marking period was scheduled to end March 31. Secondary Teachers have been asked to close Marking Period 3 as of March 12 making all necessary accommodations and adjustments to make certain each student is given a grade that is not negatively impacted by the sudden school closure on March 13.

Marking Period Grades will be available in Home Access by Friday, April 3. I ask students and parents to wait until after seeing their grades on Friday, April 3 before emailing teachers about questions/concerns. After April 3, if you have concerns/questions, please contact the teacher and school principal with your questions/concerns.

Phase 3: Week of April 13 and Beyond Preparation

Beginning Monday, April 13, Neshaminy will enter Phase 3 of our Educational Plan during the COVID-19 school Closure. Phase 3 involves instruction being provided in an asynchronous online environment via the students' existing courses in Canvas.

Teachers in each of your child's courses will provide roughly 30 minutes of Learning Activities, including a "Check for Understanding" component requiring the student to submit some form of work to demonstrate their completion and understanding of the day's material. Moreover, each teacher will present an optional "Going Deeper" opportunity for students who may have an interest or passion for a particular topic/content/course. This process will occur Monday through Thursday each week leaving Friday for individual exploration of interests in the "Going Deeper" options, catching up on missed work and communicating with teachers.

The learning environment described above is completely new to most students, parents and teachers alike. Success will require a shift in mindsets, practices, expectations and habits of all involved.

Things to be addressed in future emails:

- Parent Access to their child's Canvas Course
- Grading in Marking Period 4
- Final Course Grade Determination

Again, thank you for your patience and support as we collectively convert our quality 'Brick & Mortar' K-12 educational institution into a quality K-12 Online institution.

Please don't hesitate to call or email if you have questions.

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