



Good Afternoon Secondary Students and Parents,

Just some reminders as we begin to wind down the school year.

1. An Observation:

Despite an amazing effort by students, parents, teachers, staff and principals, I am not sure we could have sustained the present Online Instruction Model beyond the two months planned. Thank you and I hear you.

2. Memorial Day, Monday, May 25:

"No School" Day. Enjoy a long weekend! Please take some time away from your computer.

3. Mr. Geanette's STEM Challenge II, The Marble Rollercoaster

New today! More STEM Challenge details at: <https://www.neshaminy.org/Page/41967>

4. Middle School Virtual Field Day

Coming June 4 and 5! The Lighting of the Torch Relay: <https://youtu.be/CQMR7nxagEE>

5. Memorial Day Materials

In your child's Social Studies Class in Canvas, teachers have prepared a "What is Memorial Day" Section. It's good stuff (even for adults).

6. Marking Period 4 (S)atisfactory Level

We will set this level next week. We are still discussing (debating/arguing) it. A review of "Grading" is below. Again, our goal is to 'hold students harmless' in terms of grading and future impact of such grading. If for some reason things do not work out to your liking as a parent, we will work it out with you. (Yes, one student/parent at a time if necessary.)

"Why hasn't he set the level yet!?!?" I understand some of the frustration. Remember "Senioritis" when you were in school? As soon as we set that level, we will have an outbreak of Senioritis, Junioritis, SeventhGraderitis, ParentOnlineLearningitis, etc, etc. Hang in there for a few more days please.

7. Review/Reminder/Repeat Information:

On the subsequent pages is a review of the grade outline that was laid out in March/April along with the End-of-the-year Calendar.

"All Gave Some; Some Gave All"

Rob McGee, Ph.D.
Director of Secondary Education
Neshaminy School District

Review/Reminder/Repeat Information:

1. Marking Period 4 “Grading”

- a. Marking Period 4 will begin on Monday, April 13 in Phase 3 of Neshaminy’s Continuation of Learning Plan.
- b. Neshaminy will be grading Online work in Phase 3 in Marking Period 4 as either (S)atisfactory or (I)ncomplete.
- c. Monday through Thursday of each week in April (and May), students will be expected to complete roughly 30 minutes of work in each of their classes/courses in the Canvas Platform. Each day, they will be required to “turn something in” to demonstrate their completion of the daily activities, check their understanding and to mark their participation for the day.
- d. Teachers will be giving students feedback on things submitted daily, based on established standards and expectations of the Neshaminy Curriculum similar to normal in-school instruction. This feedback will not accumulate to a traditional letter grade for the Marking Period.
- e. At the end of the Marking Period, we will set a common benchmark for earning a (S)atisfactory for the Marking Period. So if a student has completed X % of the daily activities for a particular class/course, he/she earns a (S)atisfactory for MP4 in that course.

FAQ on Grading Topic:

- Why haven’t we set a specific participation threshold?

The expectation is 100% daily participation but the pandemic’s impact on us (students, parents, staff and the community) is still unclear. We will set the Satisfactory threshold once the impact is more apparent.

- What if after the X% Participation (S)atisfactory threshold is set, my child hasn’t met it and receives an (I)ncomplete for the Marking Period?

The (I)ncomplete will remain until we return to school in (Fill-in-your-guess-here). We will communicate with you and your child, giving him/her X more weeks with the necessary resources to complete the necessary work. After X weeks, the (I)ncomplete will be changed to either a (S)atisfactory or an (U)nsatisfactory.

- What if a student can't participate on a given day?

Similarly as with face-to-face schooling, daily attendance/participation is the expectation and norm. If students are absent/unavailable, they may complete the missed work by Monday of the following week. Again, back to the actual impact of the Pandemic on students/parents/staff/community, this is our starting point. Flexibility is the foundation of our entire plan. We received concerns from both extremes of the continuum. From students/parents asking for more instruction and sooner to students/parents concerned that they won't be able to handle much instruction given the circumstance in their homes. The Neshaminy Continuation of Learning Plan is built with consideration for all Neshaminy families regardless of where each falls on the continuum now and in the unforeseen circumstances of the future weeks/months.

- Why aren't we assigning letter grades?

It's complicated. Even given the traditional classroom setting, letter grading has some inherent flaws including a degree of subjectivity, inconsistencies across courses/subjects/grade levels/teachers and the lack of unidimensionality (been dying to use that word! – lumping too many different facets/skills/standards into a single mark). While minimalizing these flaws, the traditional classroom setting permits schools to 'level the playing field' in so many other areas that have a significant impact on a student's ability to learn and earn grades. Asynchronous Online Instruction in the middle of a World Pandemic (redundant?) is anything but a "Level Playing Field." Moreover, learning is a social activity. The nuances, the depth of assistance, re-teaching, reminders, peer interaction and clarifications are reduced making traditional letter grades very problematic during Phase 3 Online.

- Colleges/Universities use Letter Grades for Online Courses, are these grades based on an unlevel playing field?

Yes; demonstrated by the limited admissions of students and the success rate/drop-out rate that is unacceptable for K-12 public education in this country.

- How will this (S)atisfactory Grade impact a student's GPA?

At the high school level, Marking Period 3 Grades are not used in the cumulative GPA calculation. Only End-of-Course Grades are used to calculate cumulative GPA's. Only the Marking Period 4 Honor Roll designation will be impacted (lost) as a result of the (S)atisfactory mark.

2. Determining an End-of-year Grade in each class/course

- a) Some Important Background/Foundational Understandings about End-of-course Grades and Transcripts to set the stage:
- A student's official Transcript begins in Grade 9.
 - Middle Schoolers have a Transcript-like End-of-course Grade History in our computer system.
 - At the High School Level, End-of-course Grades are determined by a standardized cumulative point-system involving five equally weighted grades; grades from each marking period with the fifth equally weighted grade being the Course Final Exam.
 - At the Middle Level, End-of-course grades are determined by a point-system involving each of the four marking periods with the Final Exam as part of the fourth marking period grade.
 - Only End-of-course Grades appear on Transcripts.
 - So individual Marking Period Grades "disappear" into the background once an End-of-course Grade is determined.
- b) Final Exams will be eliminated this year.
- c) Calculating the End-of-course Grades

End-of-course Grades will continue to be A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- or F as in the past. The calculation will be determined by an adjusted standardized point-system similar to the well-established present point-system using the grades from the first 3 marking periods plus a (S)atisfactory in marking period 4. The (S)atisfactory being used to push the End-of-course Grade upward.

If the student receives an (I)ncomplete for Marking Period 4, an (I)ncomplete will also be assigned to the End-of-course Grade until the student has had an opportunity and access to complete the work.

The below chart illustrates the idea.

NHS	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	FE	End-of-course Grade
Student 1	A	A	A	S	X	A
Student 2	A	A	A	I	X	I
Student 3	A	B	A	S	X	A
Student 4	A	B	B	S	X	A-
Student 5	B	B	B	S	X	B
Student 6	F	F	D	S	X	D
Student 7	F	F	F	S	X	Call us to discuss
Student 8	F	F	I	I	X	I
Student 9	B	B	C	S	X	B
Student 10	B	B	D	S	X	B-
Etc.,Etc., Etc.						

Once the final grade is determined, the student/parent will be given the Choice of the Actual Grade or a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Mark. A Satisfactory along with all passing Grades are Credit Bearing (NHS).

Both Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Marks, if chosen, would be excluded from GPA.

3. Overview: End of Year Student Calendar:

Middle School

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6/1 Normal Online Instruction	6/2 Normal Online Instruction	6/3 Normal Online Instruction	6/4 Field Days	6/5 Field Days
6/8 Normal Online Instruction	6/9 Normal Online Instruction	6/10 No New Instruction Communication of Grades	6/11 No New Instruction Communication of Grades	6/12 MP 4 Grade Issue Resolutions with students/parents Office Hours

NHS Grade 9-11

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6/1 Normal Online Instruction	6/2 Normal Online Instruction	6/3 Normal Online Instruction	6/4 Normal Online Instruction	6/5 Office Hours
6/8 Normal Online Instruction	6/9 Normal Online Instruction	6/10 No New Instruction Communication of Grades	6/11 No New Instruction Communication of Grades	6/12 MP 4 Grade Issue Resolutions with students/parents Office Hours

NHS Grade 12

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6/1 Normal Online Instruction	6/2 Normal Online Instruction	6/3 Normal Online Instruction	6/4 Normal Online Instruction	6/5 Office Hours
6/8 No New Instruction Communication of Grades	6/9 No New Instruction Communication of Grades	6/10 MP 4 Grade Issue Resolutions with students/parents	6/11 Work with Students who failed course but could pass if...	6/12 Work with Students who failed course but could pass if...