



Neshaminy School District

Poquessing Middle School • 300 Heights Lane • Feasterville, PA 19053

We Build Futures

August 25, 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians:

Greetings from Poquessing Middle School, and welcome to all! We are Poquessing Proud and prepared to launch the 2020-21 school year. Although this year will undoubtedly present a multitude of new challenges, we, the Poquessing family, are prepared to take any and all necessary steps to ensure the safe continuation of our educational institution. We finished the school year last June under nothing but abnormal circumstances. -- Forced into a virtual world over the weekend, we navigated some pretty rough seas. We came out on the other end a bit battered and bruised, but nonetheless, together, we made it happen. It is safe to say that we learned a great deal from our virtual experiences last spring, both positive and negative. We have adjusted our mindset, studied the current research, listened to those smarter than ourselves, and trained tirelessly over the summer months to shift our traditional brick and mortar experience into various models to continue to do what we at Neshaminy do best, Build Futures.

At this time many of us are living in various states of uncertainty. The current viral pandemic has touched each and every one of us to some degree. I myself have family members who have lost their sense of economic stability. I myself tried to balance remote learning while teaching/raising my children. I myself grapple with concerns over childcare and what is "right"..... I understand what many of you are going through! I live in Langhorne, have a daughter in pre-school, and a son entering second grade. I empathize with each and every one of you. I want nothing but a "normal" experience for my children at this time, to watch them play sports, have sleep-overs, go to ball games, and/or just do what we have always done. --- This just isn't the current reality, but together, we can lean on one another, connect each other with the supports / services needed, and work to do what I believe is the most important job in the entire world --- Educating our children.

The model may look different, but we, administration, faculty, and staff will continue our mission to work cohesively to raise achievement while building relationships both in the physical classrooms, and in the newly emerging virtual world. I am proud that Neshaminy has taken the lead and established a rotational schedule to allow our students an opportunity to connect with their new teachers in a physical setting. I am proud of our custodial staff for arranging the safest building possible, and I am proud of the patience exhibited by all as we analyze statistical trends, seek current information, and collectively adjust as needed. – This can be frustrating.....but know that we are trying to do right by our children, in every aspect imaginable.

The Neshaminy community builds futures by empowering each child to become a productive citizen and a lifelong learner. ----- This is our mission.....

The District Mission carries with it four beliefs that drive the actions of the Poquessing faculty.

- ***Children are the future.***
- ***All people have worth.***
- ***All people can learn.***
- ***A quality education is a right.***

Poquessing Middle School students will share in experiences and challenges, which the faculty believes will empower each child to become productive and help them grow academically, physically, and emotionally. Our expectation is that our students will “Be Kind” to one another. It costs nothing to be kind. As we move into a virtual setting for much of September, new norms regarding virtual classrooms must be established. Everyone deserves a chance to gain knowledge. No one deserves to be excluded, made fun of, or made to feel inferior, in person, or virtually. Let’s all be “Good Humans”, and teach our children to be “Good Humans”.

It is not news that the middle years can be difficult transitional years, but they are rewarding as well! Parents who have “survived” the middle years know that keeping students engaged is one key to success. Frequent home and school communication is also key. **We ask that you:**

1. Make student attendance a PRIORITY..... Even in the virtual setting.
2. Check Home Access Center regularly to ensure that scores are accurately recorded.
3. Communicate with your child’s teacher and/or counselor.
4. Foster independence by encouraging older students to communicate directly with their teachers.
5. Provide a routine/quiet place for classwork/homework.
6. Monitor students’ use of technology and Social Media.

Throughout the summer months the primary voice of communication shifted from the building level to a single source to avoid miscommunication. Dr. McGee, Superintendent of Schools, became that voice for the Neshaminy Community. As we shift away from the summer and head towards the fall, the voice is back at the building level. Yes, Dr. McGee will continue to provide various updates as information becomes relevant. Yes, the building administration will provide various updates as information becomes relevant. The focus of this communication is to provide details regarding the opening of the year, with a primary focus on the month of **September**. There are many details listed below.....not to cause confusion, but to address areas that need to be addressed. If anything appears overwhelming, if anything requires clarification and/or additional information, don’t sit there and stew about it, don’t jump on social media and complain about it, shoot me an email, or pick up the phone and give me a call; I will happily get in touch with you and have a discussion in a timely manner.....working together is going to be the key to navigating this new reality in which we exist. ---- Let’s get started!

Timothy S. Hunt

Timothy S. Hunt

Assistant Principal

THunt@neshaminy.org

Main Office: 215-809-6210 • Guidance Office: 215-809-6215 • Attendance Office: 215-809-6211

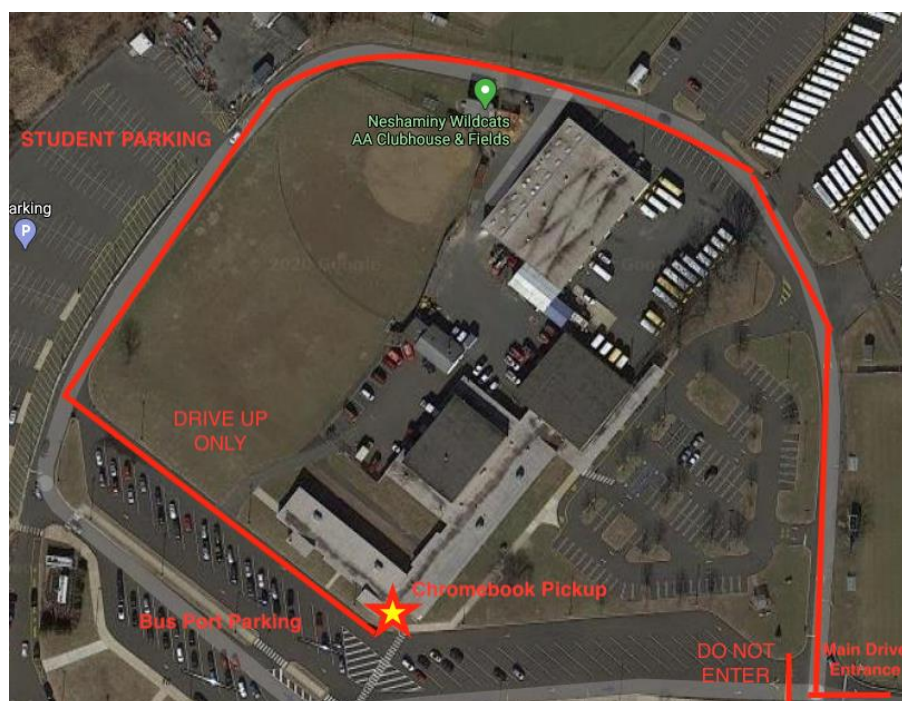
Technology Distribution:

Multiple inquiries have been made in regards to technology distribution/deployment. Various complications have led us to formulate an original plan, before adjusting the original.... over....and over...and over. I understand the frustration. I apologize for the delay. This is one area that we humbly admit we could have handled better, but on the back end....there were many things that didn't connect, and we needed to wait to ensure a smooth roll-out. --- Again, thank you for your patience!

Starting Monday, August 24, 2020, parents/guardians may pick up student devices. ALL pick up will take place at Neshaminy High School. Appointments are NOT necessary. Staff will be available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8 am to 4 pm, or Tuesday and Thursday from 4 pm to 8 pm.

Parents/guardians will NOT need to leave their car to obtain a device. A representative from the Technology Department will meet each family at their vehicle. Students with loaner devices from the spring can return their loaner device at this time (don't forget the loaner charger!). Have the following information available to make the process smooth: Student first and last name, name of school attending, and current grade level. ---- Appropriate signage at Neshaminy High School will point you in the correct direction..... I picked up a device last month in the same fashion. I pulled in, followed the signs, met a representative, collected the device, and was on my way out in a matter of minutes.

ALL incoming 5th grade students, along with ALL newly registered students in grades 6, 7, and 8, will need to complete the digital [technology](#) parent form prior to pick up (click on "technology" to access the link to the complete comprehensive deployment plan). All forms are electronic, no print copies are required. Parents /guardians should make every attempt to take advantage of this process. With this said, students unable to pick up their device should not worry, we will get you your device, somehow, someday....I've gotten really good at hoping in the car and acting as a delivery service! – Again, no worries! – A separate memo will come from IT regarding log-on procedures and preloaded programs.



Student Schedule Release:

Student schedules are finalized and will be released via the Home Access Center on Wednesday, August 26, at 4:00 pm. Student login information, for returning students, is unchanged. Student login information for new students will be conveyed at the time of device pickup; those unable to login should contact the main office for assistance. --- We will gladly assist with this process.

We understand that schedules may be difficult to read when you first see them online. This is something that we would normally be able to go over with students on the first day. Therefore, a video will be coming out next week to better explain how to follow your child's schedule. – Stay tuned.

Schedule concerns should be forwarded to the appropriate guidance counselor for review. – See below for Counseling Center details:

| Counselor | Grades | | Contact Information |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Mr. Passman | 5 th (last name A-G) | 7 TH | GPassman@neshaminy.org |
| Mrs. Lenahan | 5 TH (last name H-O) | 6 TH | CLenahan@neshaminy.org |
| Mrs. Abrohms | 5 TH (last name P-Z) | 8 TH | TAbrohms@neshamin.org |

| Guidance Secretary | Contact Information | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Mrs. Lombardo | 215-809-6215 | LLombardo@neshaminy.org |

Parent School Tours:

The Poquessing campus looks very different than it has in previous years. Various measures have been taken to proactively address potential concerns. This includes, but is not limited to, a reduction of furniture in each classroom, new design configurations for each classroom, a new design configuration for our cafeteria, hall signage to indicate directional movement, lavatory signage to promote best handwashing practices, and sanitizing stations....lots of sanitizing stations! --- On Thursday, September 3, and again on Friday, September 4, I will open the doors to Poquessing on a limited basis for those who seek more than the word of us, the district administration. This is NOT an orientation. There will NOT be guided tours at this time. Teachers will be in the building, but will NOT be available for conferences. This is a chance for you to view the building to ascertain whether or not you feel comfortable with your child attending days where in-person instruction is offered. ----- Specific tour information (times/availability) will come in a separate communication.

CANVAS Learning Management System:

Neshaminy is still committed to managing our instructional opportunities and assessments via the Canvas learning management system. Those in-district last year should be familiar with the system as it was used collectively to facilitate our online learning in the spring. --- Our teachers have spent hundreds of hours honing their skills within the management platform, are undergoing rigorous training next week, and will have their courses up and running by the first day of school.

Incoming 5th grades students will have a bit of a curve to adjust to. The secondary model, although similar to last year's elementary model, will have slight variances that need to be identified. This is where I strongly encourage the attendance of the assigned orientation days (details below) and/or asking your teachers for clarification as soon as a concern arises.....this will ensure we are all on the same page. Don't think of this as more....4th grade to 5th grade is a natural progression. Expectations, rigor, and course loads increase....this is no different when you look back at how you learned as a second grader compared to a third, or fourth grader.... You will pick up what you need to pick up quickly, and we will assist along the way to fill in the gaps.

Students new to the district will need a bit more. Again, I strongly encourage the attendance of the scheduled orientation days slated throughout the month of September (details below). In addition to the orientation days, I am assembling a one-stop-shop of "How to" Canvas materials/tutorials for our new families. This will itself be housed in a Canvas Communicative Course...I will push this out in a separate communication. The enduring understanding associated with all of this is that we have a system that allows you and/or your child to track progress, view homework/classwork, engage with the instructors, and simply be as involved with the class as you see fit.

Student Arrival and Dismissal:

This summer the Poquessing campus was resurfaced, allowing an opportunity for us to look at the flow of traffic and make some needed changes. The drop off procedure established for those familiar with the building will remain intact, with slight variations. The dismissal procedure itself has been completely redefined. A separate communication will be released next week with aerial imagery to fully explain the procedure. ---- This is going to be a process, with a learning curve for all, but something deemed necessary to keep our students as safe as possible as they cross neighboring streets on foot/bike, rush into and out of cars, and board district busses. Look forward to this separate communication.

For in-person instructional days, our doors will open at 7:25 am. Students will have the ability to enter the building through the following checkpoints: main entrance, cafeteria hall entrance, and gymnasium entrance. If necessary, the music hallway will be added to alleviate congestion and promote social distancing. Students will report directly to their homeroom immediately upon entering the building. Students who require breakfast will have a grab and go station housed in the cafeteria for convenience; students will eat in their designated homeroom area. ---- Sanitation supplies will be made readily available to handle any sort of clean up needed to accompany in-class eating; both pre and post.

Lockers:

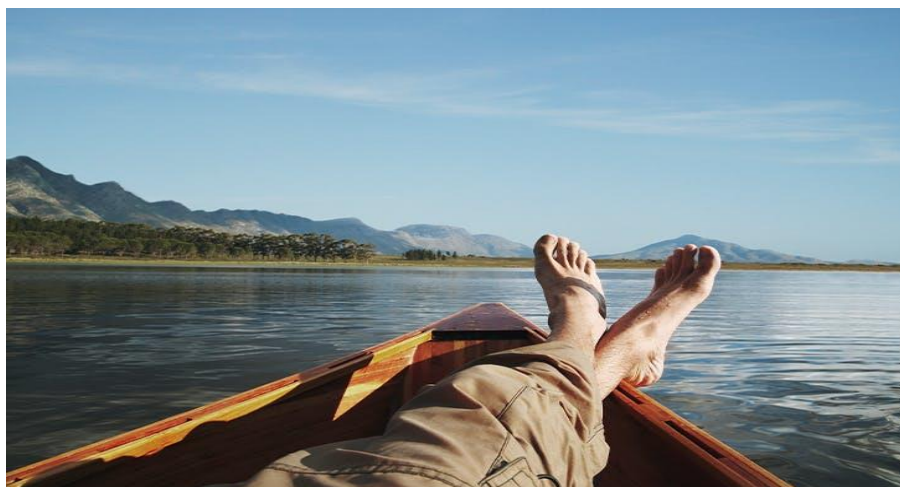
Lockers will not be assigned at the start of the year as they normally would. Each student has been assigned a locker, and locker information will be made available should the Department of Health, and the Neshaminy School Board of Directors, deem it appropriate, and safe. Students are encouraged to house their belongings, while in the building, in a personal backpack. Backpacks should only contain the needed materials for in-person instruction for a given day. --- As always, water bottles (water....not juice / soda / etc...) are permitted, and encouraged. Additional water bottle filling stations (filtered) were installed this summer.

First Day of School:

The first day of school will NOT look like anything any of us have ever experienced. I have been involved in the planning/preparation for this event, but honestly still have a difficult time envisioning how this will look on the parent end. I, like the rest of you, will find out on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, as ALL students, K-12, in the Neshaminy School District begin with a synchronous day of online meet and greets. ----- We have this! Do not worry! The schedules created on our end are going to synch up with your child's/students Canvas account. Each account has a dedicated calendar, and Zoom links are going to automatically populate each calendar. The term synchronous, for those who just want it plain and simple, refers to your child/student clicking on a link at a particular time, to access the meet and greet. --- We will balance synchronized days like the 8th with asynchronous days (work is posted online, students work at their own pace) throughout the month of September (see calendar below).

There are going to be issues! With a building as large as Poquessing there is bound to be something that goes wrong. Again, the enduring understanding..... If something goes wrong....don't panic, don't stew, don't complain (at first), pick up the phone, contact the main office, and I will do what I can to make it better.....that is a promise! If you need to scream or yell, I get it, no one ever expected this would be what we are forced to do. I will listen, I will provide advice, and if I can't directly answer your question, I guarantee I have the phone number on speed dial of the person who can. The Neshaminy community, that's all of us, together, will make this work!

Brain Break..... Pause..... Deep Breath..... Envision being here.....



September Calendar:

Neshaminy School District

Re-Opening of Schools, Recommendation 3.0

Stage I: Online Learning through October 2 with Synchronous Fridays

Phase-in, Staggered Grades In-School Days to teach & learn new safety procedures in school

Blue: Last Names A-K, **Red:** Last Names L-Z

With necessary adjustments for individual family needs

| SEPTEMBER 2020 (Online Learning with Staggered Student Orientations) | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
| 31 Staff Only | 1 Staff Only | 2 Staff Only | 3 Staff Only (Parent School Tours) | 4 Staff Only (Parent School Tours) |
| 7 Labor Day *No School | 8 Students K-12 First Day of School (Online Synchronously with Welcome Meetings) | 9 All Grades Asynchronous Online | 10 All Grades Asynchronous Online | 11 All Grades Online Synchronous Instruction (Test Run) |
| 14 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grades K, 5, 9 Blue All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 15 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grades K, 5, 9 Red All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 16 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grades 1, 6, 10 Blue All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 17 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grade 1, 6, 10 Red All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 18 All Grades Online Synchronous Instruction |
| 21 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grades 2, 7, 11 Blue All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 22 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grades 2, 7, 11 Red All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 23 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grades 3, 8, 12 Blue All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 24 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grade 3, 8, 12 Red All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 25 All Grades Online Synchronous Instruction |
| 28 Yom Kippur *No School | 29 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grade 4 Blue All Other Grades Asynchronous Online <u>Board Meeting</u> 7:00 PM | 30 <u>In School Orientation</u> Grade 4 Red All Other Grades Asynchronous Online | 1 All Grades Asynchronous Online | 2 All Grades Online Synchronous Instruction |

Orientation Days:

The term “orientation” is realistically misleading. This set of rotational days is NOT a traditional orientation as it has been defined in the Neshaminy School District, or other districts, in years past. The day is meant to serve as an opportunity for us to safely reconnect students with their new learning environment, and their new instructors; students, teachers, parents, all need some sort of connection to start the year. --- This is a viable option in light of the current situation.

The students, by grade level, have been split into two separate group designations; respectively, blue (last names beginning with A-K), and red (last names beginning with L-Z). Roughly one-half of each grade, or roughly one-eight of the total building population, will wake up as if things were transported back in time pre-March, 2020, and attend school as in years past (with some major modifications). The students will either walk, ride the school bus, or arrive via some other mode of transportation. The students will follow their “normal” days schedule, navigate from class to class, meet with their instructors, eat lunch/snack, and basically acclimate to the new normal for a full day. At the conclusion of the day, the students will be dismissed to walk, ride home again.

This day is 100% optional! Let me be crystal clear. If any student/parent/family has a reservation about attending, we will work with that family to acquire the information disseminated during the visitation. If you are unsure of what the building will look like, revisit the previous section regarding tour dates, sign-up for a time slot, and take a look around.....we have invested financially, and with sweat equity, to make our opening as safe as possible. Will there be things to adjust? I guarantee we will be looking at everything procedural that occurs during the “orientations” to adjust as needed so that we can do everything possible to get our kids back in the building, while maintaining safety for all.

Parents are NOT invited to attend on “orientation” day. Parents may sign-up and tour the facility prior to the first “orientation” (see above for clarification). --- All other students will continue their learning as dictated in the September calendar during “orientation” days.

Back-To-School-Night:






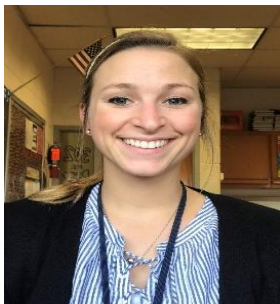


I have had several inquiries as to what Back-To-School-Night will look like. The reality is that we will not have a traditional Back-To-School-Night, but rather something held in an alternative setting. Stay tuned for more information.....a separate communication with specific information will follow as we coordinate between the elementary and secondary level.

Masks:

The way I see it, there are three main factions associated with mask wearing; the ones opposed, the ones on the fence, and the ones that strictly adhere. The Governing body of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mandated that all residents wear a mask and/or face covering when unable to properly socially distance from other persons. I am not going to tread on anyone, I believe in your Constitutional Rights, but above all, the scientists say this is what we need to do to get our kids back in school, and that wearing of a facial covering mitigates virus transmission. Simply put.... this is what we are going to do. Masks and/or face coverings will be required by ALL persons entering the Poquessing campus until otherwise noted. This is no different than a student arriving to school with the proper shirt, shoes, and/or pants/shorts. Students who are not wearing a face covering will NOT be permitted in the building and/or on a school bus. Masks will be available for those who need one. A face-shield will be provided to ALL as an additional option. Students who blatantly disregard the face covering mandate will automatically chose an online learning option until they understand that this is not about one individual, but rather about the collective nature of ALL in the Poquessing family. – Questions can be directed to my office.....contact info is listed above.

Staff Changes:

Let me be the first to introduce you to the newest members of Team Poquessing!

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
|  Elizabeth Bartolacci Art |  Leo D'Agostino Mathematics |  Kiersten Fassnacht Learning Support |  Casey Graefe Health Office |
|  Jim Smicherko Learning Support |  Cori Sweeney Science |  Maggie Stella Learning Support |  |

Supports / Services:

As I previously mentioned, In addition to working for Neshaminy, I am a member of the community as well. I have seen a lot of good people struggle throughout the years. In recent times, I have seen a lot more.

Please be aware that you are never alone in times of adversity when you exist in a true community. Our counseling center is available for our students, our food pantry continues to provide supplemental assistance, free and/or reduced [lunch](#) options are available, as well as assistance with [internet](#) connectivity. --- Click on the “lunch” link to view the plethora of options available through our food service provider.

Prepayment options described on the foodservice website (click on the link “lunch” above) will alleviate the need to physically handle currency during the pandemic. Various prepay options are listed, and it is strongly recommended that those applicable take advantage of the prepay options to limit the spread of virus particles, of various types, that may be spread through traditional currency circulation. – It’s time to go paperless.....no better time than now! We didn’t need a pandemic to tell us that money is just gross anyway!!!

District Communication:

To receive reliable district communications, such as calendar events, weather notifications, and schedule changes, please rely ONLY on the following official communications for official information: [Neshaminy School District Website](#), the [Poquessing Middle School Website](#), or the [Neshaminy School District Facebook Page](#).

In addition, please remember to update changes in our system by contacting the administrative secretaries if emails change, phone numbers change, and/or you relocate to a new residence within the district. Effective communication is a powerful tool that only works if we all have the correct, most up-to-date, contact information. Update requests can be processed at 215-809-6210.

Ask Trish:

Dr. McGee has established a direct hotline to address ALL concerns related to our reopening plan. The “Ask Trish” hotline can be accessed by calling 215-809-7777 or by emailing direct questions to Qestions@neshaminy.org.

PTO:

POQUESSING PTO MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



PoquessingPTONews@gmail.com



Poquessing Middle School PTO

The success of the PTO depends on the commitment from every parent/guardian to be involved in our school!

The objectives of the Poquessing PTO are to: (1) promote the welfare of children in the home, school and community, (2) foster cooperation between parents and teachers in education and extracurricular activities (3) enhance efforts of educators and the community to improve education and (4) to supplement the school with items which are not provided through the school district's budget, those are deemed beneficial by the Principal and Officers. Funds to support all PTO sponsored programs, such as new student t-shirts, Student of the Month ceremonies, college scholarships for former Poquessing students, etc. are generated through membership and coordinated fundraisers.

- **To become a member of the Poquessing PTO, please complete the attached form and return it with your \$10 per family membership fee; payments will be collected in the main.**
- Payment can be made by cash or a check made payable to the "Poquessing PTO". **Checks are encouraged.** Dues can be mailed, brought to school in an envelope marked "Poquessing PTO" or you can pay online at www.pay4schoolstuff.com. Instructions on how to sign up for Pay4SchoolStuff are on the Poquessing website, under Parents, click PTO, click Pay4SchoolStuff, click Quick Start Directions for Parents.

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This is a lot. I touched upon the highlights that are needed right now, but there is so much more that will need to be addressed in the coming weeks. Our [Website](#) will continually be updated as information becomes relevant. ----- Please check for updates and look for future communications from the administrative team..... This is the first one, the following will be significantly shorter, and more content focused.

I applaud those who made it to the end, I encourage others who skimmed through the text to revisit sections as needed, and to reach out if things appear vague and/or convoluted. The take away is that your administrators, teachers, and support staff are going to roll up our sleeves and do what is right, what is best, for our students and families in this most difficult of times.

Contact me as needed with questions and/or concerns.

Regards,

Mr. Hunt

The [AHERA](#) requirements include a notification to the parents of registered students, faculty and staff of the existence of the Management Plan and subsequent additions to the management plan. It is mandatory that the notice below be distributed to all parents.

"Neshaminy School District has engaged Eagle Industrial Hygiene Assoc., Inc., to fulfill the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR Part 763, Subpart E. This law requires that each Local Education Authority (LEA) engage EPA accredited individuals to initially inspect and subsequently reinspect every three years all student and staff accessed areas for the presence of both friable and non-friable asbestos containing materials (ACM) and to develop an Asbestos Management Plan from the information developed from the building inspections. All areas of our facilities were inspected for asbestos-containing materials.

The Management Plan provides a description of the amount, type, location and condition of all ACM found in these areas. The Plan also contains a detailed schedule of responses and activities for handling the ACM. The Management Plan is available for review by interested parents, faculty and staff in all school offices during business hours.

Sincerely,



*Donald B. Irwin, Jr.
Business Administrator"*