



Good Afternoon Neshaminy Secondary Students and Parents,

I'm going to start a running list of emails with the most recent at the top. In addition, a complete list of all Neshaminy COVID-19 communications may be found at <https://www.neshaminy.org/>

Things to Know about Phase 3 of Neshaminy's Continuation of Learning Plan beginning Monday, April 13

1. Big Picture, Overview of the Phased Roll-out:

Phase 1: Week of March 16

--- Broad Exploratory Learning Opportunities at www.neshaminy.org/hslearning

Phase 2: Week of March 23 through April 12

--- Grade Level & Content/Course Specific Learning Opportunities
Hundreds of well-designed activities in Canvas

Phase 3: Week of April 13 and beyond

--- Individual Class Instructional Activities, teacher supervised, in Canvas

2. Phase 3, Individual Class/Course Asynchronous Instruction via Canvas Details.

From Past March 31 Email (Entire email attached as well)

Students will work in their individual Canvas Courses under the supervision of their classroom teachers on a mostly asynchronous basis. This permits students (and families) the flexibility to work on school stuff at any time during the day. There is no requirement for the entire class and teacher to be doing anything at the same time. However, some teachers will periodically offer synchronous Video Conferences. So think asynchronous learning with a periodic splash of synchronicity. Teachers will also be working in an asynchronous schedule to assist in meeting both the needs of their students and their individual families at home.

Students will have something to learn by reading, watching or doing activities in each class. Additionally, students will have something to turn-in/complete to Check for Understanding and Participation. We estimate students will be required to spend 30 minutes per class to complete all that is required each day. Classes/courses that do not meet daily, will have a weekly cycle instead of a daily cycle. Additionally, each teacher will offer voluntary opportunities for the students to "Go Deeper" in that particular course if students so choose.

FAQ on the above Topic:

- 30 minutes per class/course per day? That seems like a bit much.

It may be too much. We will monitor and adjust accordingly.

- Only 30 minutes per class/course per day?

Yes. However, each day in each class/course will be a “Going Deeper” section for students who wish to explore more on a specific topic with a particular teacher. The activities could be daily/individual in nature or cumulative for the week or month. The idea being, students with the desire and time pursue an area of interest with a particular teacher will have an array of opportunities throughout the week.

3. Phase 3, Marking Period 4 Grading during Asynchronous Online Instruction.

- 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 above 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, consistencies 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.

- So how will End-of-Course Grades be determined?

More in the next email

4. More things to explain in the coming days

- a) How am I supposed to get my kid to do this stuff?
- b) What about Final Exams?
- c) What if a student has a specialized learning need?
- d) Monitoring Student Progress
- e) How will Final End-of-Course Grades be determined given this (S)atisfactory Mark?
- f) And a whole bunch of things that haven't been thought about yet.

FAQ on the above Topic:

- o Why doesn't he just give us all information now?

Simple answer, we haven't figured some of it out yet. Nor do I believe most want a 40ish page email/novel. 😊 But the point is well-taken. At some point, we will compile a complete, concise (?) document with everything you need to know.

Please do not hesitate to call or email your questions to me.

I hope all are well.

My wife tells me it's Friday....So enjoy the Weekend!

Rob McGee, Ph.D.

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PS: The Next Family Fun Activity

Solo Cup Tower Building Challenge

If your family is still 'on speaking terms,' give the below a shot.

Read:

<https://blog.tcea.org/solo-cup-challenge/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/tceamg/physical-computing/am-agenda/solo-cup-challenge>

Watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teJbh-dxHTQ>

