



Panther Pride NEWSLETTER



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Dear Educational Community,

We are happy to say "Welcome Back!" We could not have imagined when we closed back in March that we would not be able to return until the following September. In the intervening months, we have seen a valiant effort on the part of our teachers and staff to develop and implement the best possible return-to-school plan. We are so thrilled to see our students return.

Although we feel there were many accomplishments to celebrate during the time school was closed last spring, it is equally clear our students need to be back in school. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that "schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being."

Our plan is designed to try to limit exposures among all individuals to the greatest extent possible, while recognizing the practical realities of life in schools. The plan represents months of work and discussion, and uses the lessons learned through our ongoing experience with COVID-19 and our best understanding of the science.

[Middle Township Public School's Restart of School Plan](#) is based on the best guidelines related to teaching and learning, as well as the recommendations from experts in the medical and scientific fields, in light of the ongoing health crisis our country is experiencing. We worked collaboratively with many local and state agencies to develop a reopening of school plan that prioritizes the health and safety of students and staff first. Your input into that plan is greatly appreciated.

As always, thank you for choosing the Middle Township Public Schools for your children's education! We greatly value and appreciate your trust in us! Please visit our social media sites for more school information.

Thank You,

Dr. David Salvo
Superintendent of Schools



Panther Pride — No Matter What!

Middle Township Public School's Panther Pride shines on, despite the face masks we all wear to keep each other safe. Nothing dampens our spirit – from preschoolers to seniors, from staff and faculty to administration. Together, we are Panther Pride!

Upcoming Events

Please check individual school websites and social media for weekly events, as they may change or be adjusted to meet current safety measures.





Outstanding Reopening by Elementary #1



The students and staff of Elementary #1 rocked the school's reopening according to Principal Christian Paskalides. "The students seem happy to be back and really have been wonderful." He is pleased there have been no issues with everyone wearing their face masks.

The teachers and staff also are doing an excellent job under difficult conditions. "Virtual instruction is challenging at any age," said Mr. Paskalides, "but it is a real challenge with younger students. We have to rely on the assistance of parents and caregivers, who are doing the best they can."

All of the planning for the reopening was critical, said Mr. Paskalides. "We all worked hard to put the plan in place over the summer and it is rewarding to see how well it has gone."

He also acknowledged the work of the Resiliency Team in helping address staff and student stress and anxiety by providing breathing and stretching exercises the teachers can do with students in the morning and throughout the day, as well as offering outdoor learning and mask breaks. He said the Team also has set up opportunities for teachers on Wednesdays such as socially distanced outdoor communal lunches, morning yoga, and even some massage therapy.

Third-Grade Goes to the Court House — Virtually



Recently, third-grade students read a book that takes place in a courtroom entitled, "The Trial of Cardigan Jones." The story is about a moose, accused of stealing a pie, who claims his innocence. The book, perfect for teaching inferencing, according to teacher Mrs. Julie Moore, provided a backdrop for an interesting virtual field trip to the County Court House.

Assistant Prosecutor James Moore, Mrs. Moore's husband, gave students a live [tour of a courtroom](#) that they watched via Zoom. The students heard and saw their vocabulary words come to life and learned where

members of the court sit during a trial. Students also learned about the job of a prosecutor.

Mrs. Moore said the students were very interested and had good questions about what happens in the courtroom. She is grateful to Principal Nancy Loteck for allowing the unconventional field trip. Mrs. Moore said there are restrictions this year, but teachers are thinking outside the box and getting creative.

As for Cardigan Jones, he was found "not guilty," which students were able to infer from the evidence presented before the book ended.





MTMS — New Year, New Library



Principal Jeff Ortman realized the MTMS library was the “same since I graduated from this school in 1993,” and it badly needed updating. Working with the Board of Education, District Business Administrator Diane Fox, and School Library Media Specialist Heather Chew, Mr. Ortman implemented a renovation that was the next step in updating the building.

“I wanted to make it [library] a focal point of the building and a space that students really

wanted to go to,” explained Mr. Ortman. “This, coupled with our move to one-to-one devices, sets our students up with the tools and resources needed to continue their educational growth.”

Mrs. Chew is thrilled with the revitalized space. “Nearly everything is on wheels so we can reconfigure the space for special events.” She also is excited because the shelves are lower and the students will be able to see and reach the books. “It makes everyone feel welcomed,” said Mrs. Chew.

MTHS Highlights Week of Respect

Each year, schools across New Jersey participate in a Week of Respect to make students aware of the need to respect others. “This is one way we can highlight key information for our students to help prevent harassment, intimidation, and bullying in our school community,” explained Guidance Counselor Angelica Brown, who organized the event spanning October 5-9. Mrs. Brown hopes students will apply the information and knowledge to their everyday lives.



Mrs. Brown said she specifically selected each of the activities because of the current school climate and everything that is going on in the world beyond the school. “I felt they would have the most impact on our students,” she said.

Students watched each day’s video during their homerooms and discussed each activity. The activities also acknowledged cultural diversity and celebrated individual’s differences.

“Angelica Brown did an excellent job organizing our week of respect,” said MTHS Principal George West. “You can never spread enough kindness, inclusion, think before post, respect of humanity, and elimination of hatred in the world. A big thank you to all of our homeroom teachers and students for participating.”





You Can Play Ball—Or Soccer, Football, Tennis ...

For months, the athletic fields, courts, and tracks of Middle Township High School have been silent. But all of that changed on October 1, when MTHS began its fall sports season!

As is the case with nearly everything this year, Middle Township Athletics is operating in a very different world, with new rules and regulations governing student sporting events and activities. "We are flying a bit blind," said Dr. Sharon Rementer, Assistant Principal of Athletics. "It's been 210 days since we played an event."

Dr. Rementer said there are many details that needed to be considered in planning for fall sports this year. "There are many unknowns and uncertainties on a day-to-day basis." She has been juggling schedules to ensure there is bus transportation available, as well as access to the

trainer. "We only have one trainer, and she must be available," said Dr. Rementer. Additionally, she has added games and meets to the various schedules to account for any schools that close as a result of additional cases of the virus.

Dr. Rementer noted that the coaches have been "doing more than ever for the sake of the kids." Officials too, have had to go the "extra mile." She said they have temperature checks for each game/meet, and they must adhere to mask requirements and social distancing. "We have to follow not only the state guidelines, but those of the



Cape Atlantic League and Middle Township, as well. No one wants to make a mistake."

Only parents may come to the games at MTHS this year. For football, for example, the athletes, cheerleaders, and band members receive tickets for their parents/guardians. No other spectators may attend. There are no concession stands, everyone's temperature is checked by security, and everyone must wear a mask and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

All the extra effort to keep everyone safe is worth it.

"It was all worth it to hear that first whistle at the first soccer game," said Dr. Rementer. She said there are so many positive long-term effects to high school sports. "The kids love the competition, as well as the camaraderie, the friendships they make, and just the love of the game they play."

