

# METUCHEN HIGH SCHOOL SHORTS

August 20, 2021

Student & Family Updates

## WELCOME BACK!

Many years ago (longer ago than I'd like to admit) a dear friend and mentor imparted some life advice that I've been able to use in various situations. She told me, "Remember to participate, don't anticipate." This reminder continues to surface in different aspects of my life. I'll be honest, it's a struggle to live this advice, but it's something I continue to strive toward. Many of us tend to spend more time anticipating 'what's next' instead of enjoying the present time and the experiences in which we are currently involved. I equate it to the question that we've all asked someone else and don't necessarily enjoy responding to – "Are we there yet?" For me, I understand the anticipation of the child in the back of the car asking that question. I also understand the response that I've given – "Just enjoy the ride."

August is the perfect time to practice my mentor's advice. Many of us have this conflict – we're hoping to remain in summer mode and participate in things like vacations, fun summer events, and maybe a relaxing night or two in front of the fire pit. But, let's be honest – more often than not, the calendar turns from July to August and we start anticipating about all the things that need to be accomplished before the start of the school year. We (I include myself as a parent here) may anticipate the start of activities like Band Camp and Fall Sports. We also probably anticipate the unlocking of the Genesis portal to see this year's schedule and assigned teachers, touring the school to determine how to maneuver through this year's schedule, and mentally preparing ourselves for the upcoming school year. While many people may anticipate activities including when to go to Target, Staples, or the mall to accomplish the back to school shopping, my hope is that this newsletter can help alleviate some of the other concerns.

I hope that you can experience the perfect August balance between anticipating and participating. Please enjoy participating in the remainder of your summer. I'm excitedly anticipating our students' arrival in September!

Take good care and stay safe,  
Mr. Porowski

## SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES

STAY INFORMED! Follow Mr. Porowski on Twitter, Instagram, & TikTok...

**MHSPorowski**

## DO YOU HAVE A SUMMER ASSIGNMENT?

Do you have an assignment that needs to be accomplished? Please click on the link below to check and see what assignment(s) were given. You have a couple more weeks to get these accomplished. Don't wait until the last minute to finish your work!

[SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS 2021](#)

## 2021-2022 FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

This year, all students will be provided Free Lunch. The district is encouraging families to fill out the Free/Reduced Lunch Price School Meals Application. It may help your family with other benefits including activity fees and test fee waivers. Please be on the lookout for this paperwork!

## IMPORTANT DATES

DATE(S)	EVENT(S)
8/30, 8/31, 9/1	New Teacher Orientation
9/2 & 9/3	Staff In-service Days
9/6	Schools Closed Labor Day
9/7 & 9/8	Schools Closed Rosh Hashanah Observed
9/9	First Day of School
9/10	Picture Day Gr. 9, 10, 11 St. Council Interest Mtg. 7:15am
9/11	Patriot Day
9/13	Commodore Barry Day PTO Meeting 7:30pm
9/16	Schools Closed Yom Kippur Observed
9/17	Student Council Virtual Elections
9/23	Meet the Teacher Night 7pm
9/24	Tentative Pep Rally
9/27-10/2	MHS Athletics Week of Lights
10/2	Homecoming Football Game & Homecoming Court
10/11	MP1 Mid-Point Interims Released
10/13	PSATs Grades 10 & 11
10/23	ACT Testing
11/1	MHS Early Dismissal 12:30pm Parent-Teacher Conferences

## MESSAGES FROM MHS COUNSELING

**Student Schedules for the 2021-22 school year will be available on August 20th at 3PM.** In order to view your child's schedule, all documents and forms must first be completed. Genesis will also be open to select a Schedule Change Request meeting with your counselor. You will find appointment slots listed on:

**Genesis → Conferences tab → Request a Conference (you can advance the screen to see more dates) → Select your date and time (counselors will be available on Aug 30, 31, and Sept 1).**

Please review the following where what is considered an acceptable change request, change request deadlines, and information on the forms required to process an acceptable change request is outlined.

### SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY

In the spring, when choosing classes, students are counseled and expected to carefully consider the courses they choose. Withdrawing from a course is strongly discouraged, as it may adversely affect class sizes and course enrollment. A course drop/add request should only be pursued under extraordinary circumstances (see list of valid reasons below). A request may be rejected if the deadline for withdrawal has passed, a section of the class desired is at capacity, sections become grossly unbalanced, or the course is required for graduation.

### Valid Reasons for Requesting a Schedule Change:

- Senior not scheduled in a course needed for graduation
- Student has already earned credit for course he/she is scheduled
- Student has not taken a pre-requisite course
- Student previously failed course with the same teacher
- Student does not have a full schedule
- Data entry error (class listed twice, etc.)
- Class is listed that student did not request

You must meet one of these criteria to schedule an appointment with a school counselor.

### SCHEDULE CHANGE DEADLINES:

**Regular full year courses and semester one courses including AP Electives:** No schedule changes will be made after September 15, 2021.

**Semester two courses:** No schedule changes will be made after the fifth day of the third marking period.

**Course Level Change:** Students have until the twentieth day of the course to determine if the level is appropriate. After the 20th day, level changes will only be considered under extenuating circumstances and through appointment with the content area supervisor and Principal.

Requests to withdraw from a course beyond the aforementioned deadlines will require the completion of a form obtained in the Guidance Office and must be approved by a Department Supervisor and/or Administrator. A late withdrawal will result in a Withdrawal Pass or Fail (WP or WF) indicated on the report card and final transcript.

## STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

**Interested in running for Student Council office for the 2021-2022 school year?**

**Come to the interest meeting on Friday, September 10 @ 7:15am in the auditorium!**

*Attendance is required to run for office.*

**Email Mrs. Wagenblast with any questions. [ewagenblast@metuchenschools.org](mailto:ewagenblast@metuchenschools.org)**

**METUCHEN HIGH SCHOOL**

**SELF-GUIDED OPEN HOUSE**

**AUGUST 25th 9:00-11:00am**

**AUGUST 27th 12:00-2:00pm**



**STUDENT SCHEDULES WILL BE AVAILABLE ON 8/20!**

Either print out your schedule or log into Genesis on your cell phone.

Enter the school via the front door & sign in using the QR Code.

**WHILE INSIDE, MASK UP & MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE!**

Walk the building to find your classrooms, locker, etc.

One adult per student, please.

Please limit your visit to no more than 15 minutes.

**SIGN OUT** using the QR Code by the front door exit.

**Not feeling well? Stay home and get better!**

## STUDENT PARKING PRIVILEGES

Many of our High School Seniors and Juniors exercise the privilege of driving to Metuchen High School. Driving to school is a privilege which we offer to our licensed students, and we have a number of practices in place to ensure that traffic safety laws are met and students who drive do so safely and with respect toward vehicle registration, insurance, and licensing laws. In order to be granted permission to drive to school, any student who wishes to park on Metuchen High School property must complete the following steps:

1. Pass all New Jersey written and road test driving exams and obtain a legal driver's license
2. Log into Genesis parent portal after receiving drivers' license and access "FORMS"
3. Look for "Student Driver Agreement" form and open the document
4. Once in the Student Driver Agreement, first open the hyperlink entitled "Student Driver Regulations". Read this form in its entirety
5. Next, open the hyperlink entitled "Student Driver Agreement" and enter all information. You will be required to upload copies of your current car registration, current car insurance, and drivers' license.
6. Submit the form electronically using the "SUBMIT" button at the bottom of the form

Once the steps above have been completed, you are authorized to drive to school and park on MHS property. No parking placards will be distributed this year, but regular spot checks of the parking lot to ensure all cars are registered will occur.

Students may only park in the approved student parking lot and may not park in faculty/staff lots, fire lanes, driveways, traffic circles, or elsewhere on the property. If the student parking lot is full, Administration will open additional parking (stone lot near the science wing) to student drivers as well. If both the student lot and stone lot are full, students must park on Mason Dr. at the exit of the high school.

Please remember that driving to Metuchen High School is a privilege which we are happy to extend to our student drivers, but one that must not be abused. Failure to register your car to park on MHS property, speeding or reckless driving, hit and run accidents, or any other infractions may result in loss of parking privileges at the discretion of building Administration.

## BURNING QUESTIONS...

We've been told that there are some questions that students (and families) have as they prepare for the school year. Here are a few answers:

Q: What supplies are needed for each class?

A: Each teacher will provide you with information about the required supplies. Some may post this information on their website or Google Classroom prior to the start of the school year. Others may wait to discuss this with their students in person.

Q: Will the students be changing for physical education classes?

A: No. We will not be using the locker rooms during the school day. There will be certain parameters regarding dress and footwear which will be shared by the physical education department when they meet with the students.

Q: Will there be opportunities for students in all grades to engage in 'check-ins' with their counselors?

A: In short, yes. More information will follow from the counseling department.

Q: What if we can't attend either of the times offered for the Self-Guided Open House?

A: A last chance opportunity will be afforded. Please be on the lookout for a flyer with that information.

Q: Do parents have to attend the Self-Guided Open House with their child?

A: No. We just wanted to afford them the opportunity to be with their child. It's not necessary. However, please make sure that you're paying attention to the time you're there and that you're following the expectations for wearing masks and social distancing.

Q: Will students be given a planner for the school year to help organize themselves and their assignments?

A: YES! The MHS PTO has ordered them. The PTO is waiting for delivery date confirmation. The planners will be distributed once delivered!

Q: When does the schedule for clubs come out?

A: Traditionally, the advisors will post the information for the start of their club on school announcements and on flyers. More info to follow!

Q: Any advice for incoming ninth graders?

A: Yes! Don't stress yourself out. It will take some time to get used to the pace at the high school. Stay on top of your work and reach out to your teacher(s) when you have questions. We are ALL here to help you succeed. You got this!

## WELCOME OUR NEW STAFF!

Please join me as we welcome several new staff members into our school building for the 2021-2022 school year.

Nicole Benfatti – LDTC  
Kelsey Comerford – Media Specialist  
Aubree Deminski – Special Education/English  
Dana Donatelli – School Psychologist  
Christina Dybas – Special Ed./9-12 Self-Contained  
Samantha Green – Biology  
Ann Leghorn – Response to Intervention/English  
Anais Ortega – Spanish  
Hank Schwab – German Leave Replacement  
Mark Stack – English  
Dawn Valovcin – Special Education/18-21 Program  
Roland Wright – Special Education/Math  
Molly Yelencsis – Athletic Trainer

Please also make sure to welcome back those staff members who are returning this year:

Kerry Blaze – Social Studies  
Leigh Hanbridge – Counseling  
Karen Van de Castle – Business

On a special note, please join us in welcoming Ms. Kathy Glutz who is returning to Metuchen High School as our Interim Guidance Supervisor. Ms. Glutz will be with us at the beginning of the year and will assist with the transition when our new Guidance Supervisor, Ms. Ilana Kurtin, joins us.

It'll be a great year!

## PICTURE DAY!

PICTURE DAY FOR 9<sup>TH</sup>, 10<sup>TH</sup>, & 11<sup>TH</sup> Grade Students is scheduled for:

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2021**

Please click on the links below to access the paperwork for picture day. Please bring the paperwork with you on September 10<sup>TH</sup>!

Ordering Pictures? Click on this link:

<https://5il.co/xiqc>

Only Want a Student ID? Click on this link:

<https://5il.co/xiqd>

## ZERO PERIOD CLASSES & LABS

Students may notice that they have a science lab class one day a week during Zero Period. In addition, there are Zero Period Financial Literacy and Physical Education Classes. Please pay attention to this when you are examining your schedule. Thank you!

## COVID PROTOCOLS FOR 2021-22

The school district continues to provide direction and feedback regarding how to effectively open the school while maintaining safety protocols to support all staff and students. More information will follow, but here are a few items that are being addressed:

- **All staff and students are required to wear face masks, regardless of vaccination status, as per Executive Order 251.**
- **Screening Forms.** All staff and students will be required to complete screening forms each morning prior to entering into the school. Additional information regarding the expectations for accomplishing this will be communicated closer to the start of the school year.
- **Physical Education Lockers.** Student will not be using gym lockers during the school day for physical education. Guidelines for how to dress for physical education will be presented to the students.
- **Athlete Lockers.** We will provide Student Athletes with the opportunity to use the locker spaces to house their equipment during the school day and for quickly changing prior to practice. Time limits will be established and both masking and social distancing to occur. Every evening, the locker rooms will be sanitized.
- **Hall Lockers.** We are hoping to provide our students with access to lockers. Specific protocols and guidelines will be shared with you in the near future regarding the approach to managing this. Please keep in mind, however, that decisions about locker usage may need to be modified.
- **Lunch.** We plan on providing additional spaces for students to have lunch for additional social distancing while being unmasked. This may include outdoor spaces for students on fair weather days. Additional information will be forthcoming.
- **Shared Materials.** Routines will be established for using shared materials in a safe, responsible manner.
- **Club Meetings.** Based on the advisor's judgment, meetings can be virtual or in person.