

SUMMER UPDATE

Prepare each student, by name, for success at every level



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Dear Parents & Guardians,

The past two school years have been extraordinary in terms of challenges and needs. We have come together as a community to persevere and even advance our school district into the future. This letter will update you on some of the important events and activities of the year and give you a preview of some of our future planning.

Superintendent of Pottstown Schools



School Safety:

Whether it's from disease or violence, student safety has been a top priority. Even though school violence is extremely rare in the United States occurring in far less than 1% of all schools, we are still laser-focused on school safety. All of our schools have Raptor systems to check visitors, secure vestibules, camera systems, monitoring security companies, and all schools drill for multiple types of emergencies.



We pride ourselves on having good conversations with students so that they understand what to do in an emergency in school as well as in other walks of life. For nearly a decade, we have adhered to the law enforcement model of the run, hide, fight. But based on new research, we are re-emphasizing our "Run, Hide, Fight" option and next year, all classroom doors will remain locked at all times to increase security from any intruder that might try to hurt students.

We will also be conducting training on reunification in the event of an emergency. Be it a natural disaster, facilities problem, or some other cause, there are three parts of our reunification protocol:



REUNIFICATION METHOD



RELOCATE

REORGANIZE

REUNIFY

Relocate – in the event of an emergency, School leaders may move all students to either a different school or a pre-approved facility close by. For security reasons, we never disclose possible locations to relocate. They would be announced in the event of an emergency after the relocation has occurred.

Re-organize – After school has relocated to a different facility, they need time to organize, take attendance, and be ready for parent pick up. If the age group is appropriate, students will be given permission to periodically check in with parents via text message on cell phones. This also gives our first responders including police, fire, or ambulance time to respond appropriately and secure locations.

Reunify – Finally, parents will be informed of the alternate pick-up location and given instructions to verify identity and pick up students. The goal is always to have an orderly and safe dismissal process. Parent cooperation is absolutely critical. This ensures that students remain safe, appropriate communication and contact occur in a timely manner, and no students ever get lost!

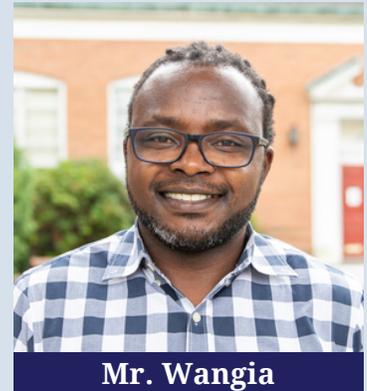
Middle School House Model:

Beginning next year, the Pottstown Middle School will be adopting a more elementary model with each grade being in a separate "house" with their own house principal and school counselor.

Activities, events, and field trips will be taken almost exclusively with their grade level cohorts and there will be a renewed emphasis on organization and communication. Parents, you are a vital partner in making the Middle School a positive and uplifting experience and we will be inviting you to many events so you can support your student's educational experience!



Meet your new Pottstown Middle School Head Principal!



Mr. Wangia

Demographics Update: Paper Only!

Announced this year, the school district will be moving to a much more powerful and convenient, easy-to-use student management system called PowerSchool, but not this year.

The 2022–2023 school year will be the transition year and the last year we use eSchool. As a result, this summer, all demographics, and emergency information will be collected by paper process only. Every family will need to submit and update emergency information in order for students to receive their schedules. For the 2022–2023 school year, the IEP system will go live using PowerSchool and we will phase out the prior system. For student schedules, grades, and teacher communication systems, full implementation of PowerSchool will only occur during the 2023–2024 school year. A small parent committee is already being formed to get the first parent training and be early adopters of the system. If you wish to volunteer, please call 610-323-8200 and leave your name and contact information with a clear note that you wish to volunteer for the PowerSchool parent training.

Internet Communication Outages:

In order to upgrade and upkeep our servers and computer systems, there will be multiple days throughout the summer the school computers may be going off-line. Do not be alarmed and feel free to call the main office of whichever school your student attends if you need help over the summer. Please be aware all district offices are closed on Fridays during the summer.

Lexia, DreamBox, Read 180, Math 180, Reflex Math:

Thanks to federal grant dollars, we have aggressively pursued supplemental programs to help students catch up from the pandemic disruption in the educational process. While the good news does not make up for that loss, we are on our way to recovery. Along with the regular curriculum and teaching program, students at every level have the opportunity to participate in research-based programs that help increase their reading level and math skills. Please ask your teacher about these resources for your child.

Athletic and Club Opportunities:

This summer we will highlight the multiple opportunities students have to join and be a part of athletic programs as well as clubs and activities throughout the school district. The pandemic has significantly affected student participation in many activities as we have reopened every aspect of school and community life, many of these programs do not have the same student participation levels.

Co-curricular activities are absolutely essential for students to fully experience what the education system has for them. We work with multiple partners throughout the community so even non-school sponsored events will be advertised this summer. Please encourage your child or children to come and try out and learn about these great opportunities!



Technology:

Students have the option to use their Chromebook during the summer but may also turn it in. Students are responsible for the care and security of the device so please make sure if you keep your chrome book over the summer to have it ready for the school year in August!

Student Teaching is Back!

This is an exciting announcement for any student at the high school who is interested in the field of education! If your child is headed toward a career as a teacher or educator, then we would welcome them to contact their school counselor ASAP and ask to be enrolled in the student teaching course. Students that qualify will be given the opportunity to observe and interact with students in our district, learning from caring teachers and paraprofessionals about what it takes to be a great educator!

Comprehensive Planning for the Future:

In the midst of the pandemic, the district committed to planning for the future over the next 3 to 5 years. We engaged stakeholders from across the community including students and parents, business leaders, and not-for-profit organizations, as well as our own staff, and asked a simple question, how do we serve our students better? The decisions and level of student focus is something for us to be proud of. Check out our website at www.pottstownschoools.org and click our district/comprehensive plan.

Local Support for Parents:

- YWCA Tri-County Area
- Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK)
- Family Services
- Creative Health Services
- P.A.L
- YMCA
- Family Advisory Committee (FAC)
- Strive Initiative
- Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation
- Salvation Army
- Victim Services Center of Montco

Funding Advocacy:

A historic budget was passed here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and gave schools a sizable increase that's not just a one-time grant.

Although it is a far cry from being fully funded according to the formula, it is still the largest increase in a single year for our school district in perhaps decades. It is my firm hope and desire that we are able to turn this into sustainable growth for our students, staff, and our community!

For those of you who have been dedicated and relentless in your advocacy efforts, showing up to rallies, writing letters, or making phone calls, the verdict is in. Advocacy still works!