

Dear JSHS Families,

I am writing with an update on a few things at the JSHS. One is about attendance and the other is about a new format for Wednesdays.

Attendance: Most of our students are doing an amazing job of learning in the current environment by showing up to class in their Google Meets, attending to their school work, and participating in their classes. Teachers continually work hard to make lessons interactive and meaningful.

Here's where we need some assistance from parents/guardians: when students are learning remotely from home, some students are not fully engaged during their Google Meets, mostly in terms of their time spent in class. Some students log on late on a consistent basis; some students leave Google Meets early without being directed to do so; others do not log in at all and don't let their teachers know why. In the very near future, we will be implementing a way to track the time students log into and out of Google Meets. We hope this resolves the issue, but that also requires students to actually listen to and participate in the lessons. Teachers have also found that they call on students who appear to be logged on with their videos off, but when called on, do not respond. Teachers sometimes ask students to turn on their videos so that they can see that the students are there and get no response. It is my hope that by bringing these concerns to your attention that you can speak to your children as means of checking on how things are going for them and, if necessary, reminding them that being present in their classes gives them the best opportunity to learn. I have encouraged teachers to call parents to let them know if their students are not engaging in lessons.

Wednesdays: I am including a document (below) to explain how we will reshape Wednesdays. It is still designed to decrease the amount of time students and teachers are spending interacting on screens. We are reworking the time schedule for the day that may be appealing to many students and give them some freedom for completing Wednesday learning activities. Students have the opportunity to interact with their teachers in a virtual manner and are strongly encouraged to do so as needed. As with any new process, we may need to make adjustments once we see how things are going. Teachers worked with their students yesterday and today to explain the new schedule for Wednesdays to them.

On a last note, I want to thank everyone for working with our attendance office using the new email address for absence notes, etc. We hope it is working out as well for you as it is for us. Look for an email in the next day or two from that email address (jshs.attendance@tullyschoools.org) so that you can easily put it into your contact list if it is not already there. Mrs. Hackett, our current attendance clerk, is retiring with her last day being this Friday, October 30th. Mrs. Foti will be our new attendance clerk; she has been training this week and last (your children know her from her previous role in our Food Service). I am confident that Mrs. Foti has a handle on her job responsibilities and will do an excellent job in her new role.

Thanks so much for the support you have given your children and the teaching staff this year!

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Murphy, JSHS Principal

PS - Reminder: Students do not have school next Tuesday, November 3rd due to a Superintendent Conference Day for staff; Wednesday, November 4th is an in person day for Cohort 2 (Tue/Fri) students.

Wednesdays at Tully JSHS

Tully JSHS reserves most Wednesdays as “remote only” days for staff and students to become acclimated to what school could be like in the event that we have to close the building for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also designed to be a day when staff and students have a break from using a screen for extended periods of time for teaching and learning. It is important to note that learning activities must take place in some form and that students may access their teachers for interactions, assistance and feedback.

Effective October 28, 2020: The Wednesday schedule will differ from other days of the week.

Students will be given assignments from their teachers that they are expected to work on each Wednesday. Students will often receive those assignments ahead of time, but may also receive them on Wednesday mornings, so that they can plan their schoolwork schedule accordingly. This work may take many different forms, but will all be designed for independent practice or work. We will have one hour blocks of time dedicated to two or three subjects for students to check in with teachers if they find it necessary (schedule is below). During the blocks, teachers will open their Google Meets for students to access them readily. In the event that a student has some sort of conflict, an additional meeting can be scheduled with the teacher at a mutually convenient time. If this is the case, students should email their teachers as early in the day as possible.

Work completed on Wednesdays will always need to be submitted in a manner determined by the teacher so that they may track student progress and for attendance purposes.

Wednesday schedule when teachers will open a Google Meet for one hour:

8:00 am English & Social Studies

9:00 am Band & Resource 7, Resource 8, or Resource 12

10:00 am Chorus & Technology & Agriculture

11:00 am Art & Spanish & French

12:00 pm LUNCH for everyone

1:00 pm Math & Science

2:00 pm Phys Ed & Health & Resource 9, Resource 10, or Resource 11

To assist students in planning their Wednesdays, it may make sense to complete assignments for individual classes by organizing work to be completed according to the time frame above. Of course, for some students, a different approach will work better, and that is okay as long as they can meet their teachers' expectations.