

North Mason School District **BUILD THE PRIDE!**

From PACE Academy

DISTRICT LIGHT

It's A Brand New World at PACE Academy

New and returning students at PACE Academy, North Mason School District's alternative high school, are benefitting from a number of positive changes this year – and this is just the **BEGINNING** of even more great things to come.

For starters, students are attending school all day Monday through Thursday, instead of attending one of three separate part-time sessions previously offered. The new schedule has alleviated transportation challenges that families struggled with in past years because students can now travel to and from PACE on the regular school bus schedule that serves North Mason High School just up the road.

PACE and HomeLink have a new staff member this year as well. We welcome Mrs. Rebecca Dougherty who is now serving exclusively as our school counselor. Mrs. Dougherty brings another level of opportunities for students in our program. Besides arranging for vocational speakers, college field trips, a school yearbook, scholarship assistance and much more, Mrs. Dougherty offers our students much-needed support in planning their routes to graduation and beyond.



School counselor Rebecca Dougherty (center with stripes) conducts a group meeting with PACE students on the North Mason campus.



Students and staff at PACE Academy will be moving to a brand new school building in the fall of 2015.

Students are also rising to meet the challenge of increased rigor and engagement brought about by a brand new curriculum entitled **Edgenuity** (Edgenuity.com). Courses

are designed to teach students strategies for success which transfer well to mastering the state standardized tests required for graduation. Another new class offered for the first time this year is supervised Physical Education. Students are reaping the benefits of a crisp 2.5 mile walk on the Theler Wetlands offered in the last period of the day.

Finally, our PACE and HomeLink students have the promise of a brand new school building to call their own, set to open in fall 2015. The new building will feature four classrooms, including a state-of-the-art computer lab, a family/consumer science classroom, conference room, cafeteria and commons area. The building will be located northeast of the Boys & Girls Club on E North Mason School Rd.

For more information about PACE Academy or the HomeLink program, please call our registrar at 360.277.2329 or Principal Anne Crosby at 360.277.2393.



PACE students take advantage of fall weather with a twice weekly walk/jog on the Theler Wetlands.



From the School Board

How Volunteering at School Benefits Middle School Kids

by Art Wightman, Director, District 1
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Greetings Fellow Citizens,

School is now well underway for the season, and our children are busy with all the tasks that this time of year brings – school work, after-school activities, home chores, etc. You readers, as parents, guardians and interested citizens alike, all play important roles in the development of our children from infants and toddlers all the way to their becoming responsible and productive citizens in our communities. We know that many of you will volunteer to assist us at the schools, especially at the elementary level, and this is a very good thing for us and especially for our children. What we also know is that once our children reach the middle school level, they are still in need of parental and community support as much so as when they were in elementary school, but that we see less of parents and community volunteers in the middle school than were involved earlier.

One of the interesting and exciting things that we know about middle school age children is that they do respond quite well to parental involvement, but that they have a different need to be met that complicates this involvement. To wit, middle school children are at the age when they need to begin separating themselves from their parents as a developmental stage they need to go through, and they substitute their peers for reassurance and guidance rather than their parents. Knowing this, and knowing that the need for parental involvement in middle school children's lives is still crucial, a way to get greater effectiveness is to use this peer substitution for identification to advantage.

A typical middle school student will often be heard to say to his/her peers something like "my parents are SO mean" or many variations of something that seems negative about his/her parents. The child is seeking affiliation and confirmation from the peer group, in order to establish that they are distinct from their parents. That child often does NOT want their parent to be around in activities they are involved in because this worries the child that their parent will prove to be as bad as they say to their peers. The good part of this is that the child's peers seldom will agree that the parent is "awful" once they get to know the parent themselves. So, to be effective in volunteering and being part of your child's life in middle school is to focus **away** from your own child and do things with and for other middle school kids. These other kids will discover that the parent is actually pretty decent, and the good word will eventually filter to your child. Your child, who may not be able to admit it openly, is actually pleased to discover that his/her friends think well of his/her parents, as that is a direct reflection on themselves to the good. This simple strategy of being involved indirectly with your child in middle school is very powerful, and assists the youngsters to develop healthier and more lasting positive self-images; this leads to better parent-child relationships, and even better learning outcomes for your child in school.

Volunteering and participating in children's activities at all ages is important – it doesn't stop after elementary school. When kids see adults participating in activities and events that they themselves are involved in, they learn better what it is to become a responsible adult. They are more secure as individuals knowing the adults in their community support them, and they become more productive adults themselves with the role models that you have given them!

Please consider volunteering at our schools – it does take a community to raise a child well. Contact the school district or the school principals for ways you can volunteer, whether you have a child in school or not!

THANK YOU!

Becoming LifeLong Learners  nmsd.wednet.edu