

Counseling Ongoing During Shutdown

Since every one of Newark Central School District's 2,100 students early this school year was assigned a 1:1 commuting device allowing access to class work, stored files and other educational materials, they have the advantage, since the recent closure of school, to work on them from home.

Coursework packets were prepared for every student and distributed to students and or parents March 17th at the beginning of the school closure and students are completing assignments and communicating with teachers online using either their iPads (Pre-K through second grades) or 2-in-1 laptop tablets being used by grades 3-12.

But what about school counselors?

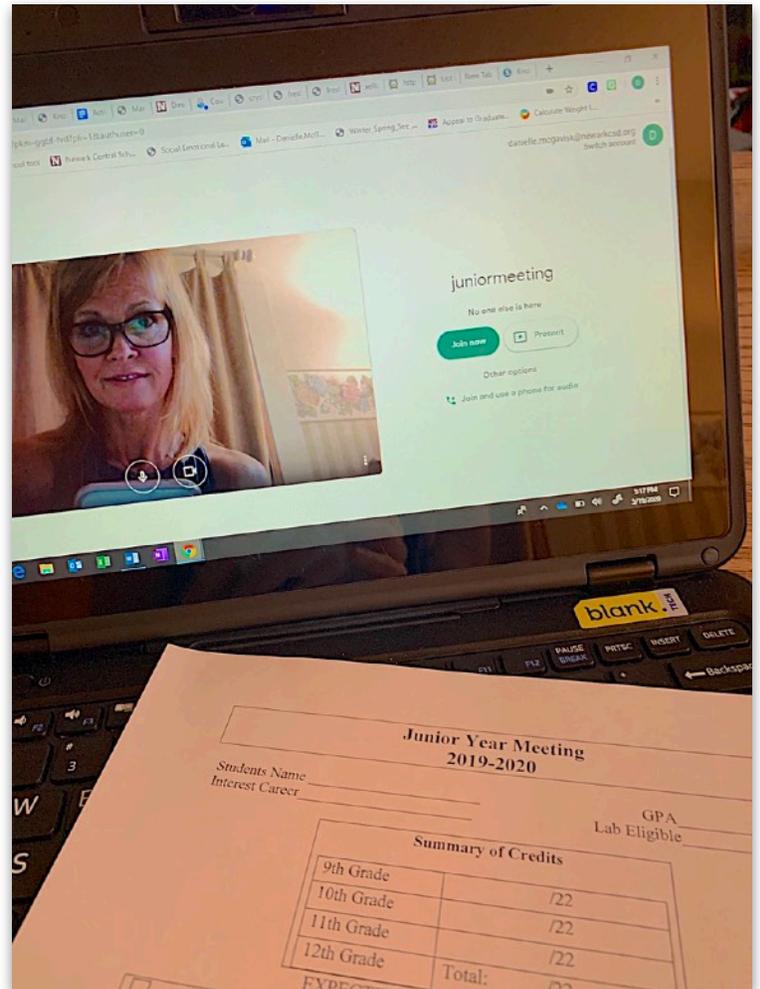
Like, for example those at Newark High School, who among other things are tasked with helping all of the NHS student population prepare themselves for their futures after graduation.

They're counseling and holding important college and coursework preparatory meetings online from their homes.

Like Danielle McGavisk, District Guidance Department Leader, who has been meeting with some of the juniors she's assigned to make sure they're on track with coursework to complete their majors and their transcripts.

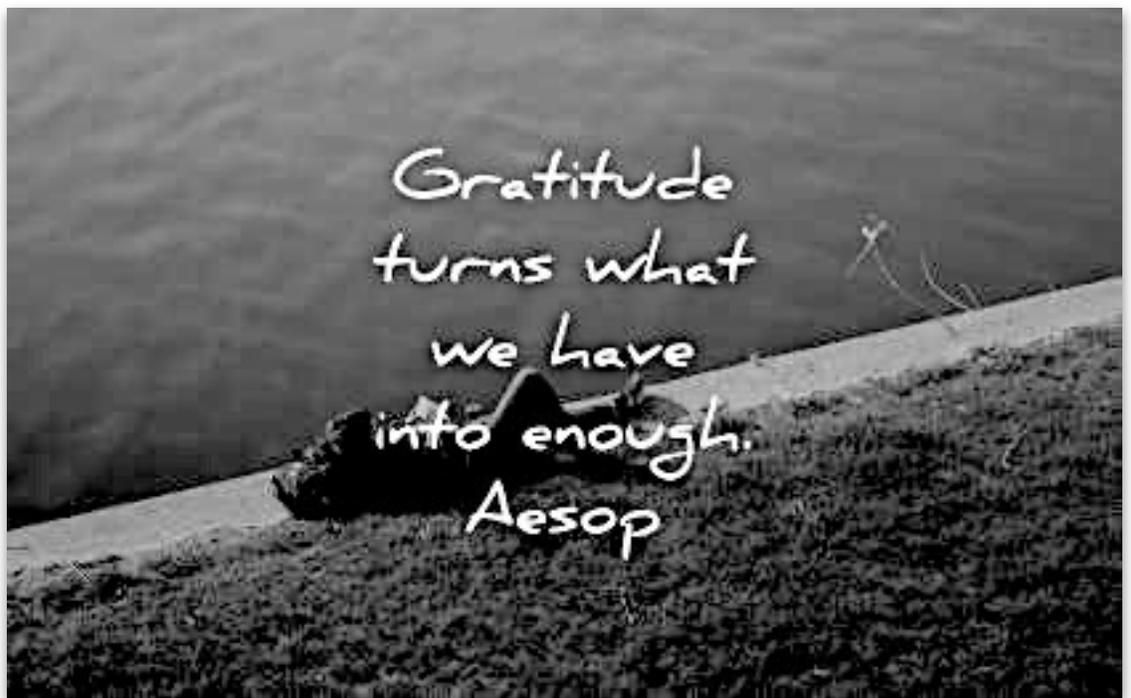
"Our junior meetings lay the groundwork for the senior year. They're really important and last the longest," McGavisk said. "We are making sure students are doing well academically and okay mentally during the shut-down."

She noted that an obviously more casual, but on-task junior meeting, using Google Meeting software last week, lasted a little longer than it would have if it had been held in school *"because the bell doesn't ring."*



Above, McGavisk using the Google Meeting software to conduct a virtual meeting with an NHS junior.

McGavisk said students also have access to various mental health-related resources in the NHS Counseling Course in *Schoology* to help keep students positive, motivated and upbeat when they're not in school and their normal routine.



And having taught, along with her husband, Mike _ who teaches physical education at NHS in addition to coaching _ their 3 children "to be thankful for what you have _ don't worry about what you don't have," Danielle McGavisk has also been encouraging students do likewise in some recent tweets.

And she practices what she is encouraging others to do. In the McGavisk household, there is a jar on the dining room table in which she and her husband and children, Caroline and Gabrielle, who are in 10th grade and son, Michael, a 7th grader, put little notes inside each day about what they are thankful for.

Thankfulness, she asserts, not only helps others, but the person who is thankful.

But above all, McGavisk said everyone needs to be kind to themselves and others during this abnormal school shutdown time.

She recently tweeted "*It's Okay*" which she thinks says it best.



It's Okay

- * To not know how to homeschool your own child
- * To not know how to work from home
- * To give kids more screen time than usual
- * To make a colorful daily schedule or just wing it
- * To not magically feel motivated to work out at home or take on a new hobby
- * To not feel okay

This is not normal for any of us.
Please be kind to yourself.