

NESHAMINY

District may change graduation project

By RACHEL CANELLI COURIER TIMES

Neshaminy's graduation project could be getting a makeover.

A committee has been reviewing the district's process for students to complete a project required by the state Department of Education to graduate, according to Superintendent Paul Kadri.

The new project would focus on exploring a career of a student's choice within a six-month period, Geeta Heble, director of secondary education, told the Neshaminy school board Tuesday night.

Students previously were expected to start the project that could be done on various topics during 10th grade and finish it by the end of their senior year, officials said.

But in a survey, staff told the committee that three years was too long, Heble said.

"Parents, students and teachers felt it was a burden," she said.

The new process would call for seniors to begin November of their last year at the Middletown high school and complete it by April before they graduate, administrators said.

Teenagers could also perform community service in the career field, but they all have to write a paper on their experience and give a presentation, officials said.

This year alone, 350 seniors have yet to finish their graduation project. Those students have been informed of the possible changes, Kadri said.

If a student has completed their project, they don't have to do another one. If approved, students who have started, but not finished, would have a choice between the new and the old process. But pupils who haven't begun working on it would have to follow what could be the new process.

"Students need active intervention and we think this [new process] will help them understand themselves and recap a lot of instructional time," Kadri said.

Kadri and Heble agreed that they did not want to discuss further details until the faculty had a chance to review the new plan.

Board member Susan Cummings expressed concern about students having a mentor throughout the project and making sure all pupils complete it by graduation.

Heble said the committee is working on making sure students have an adult, like an administrator or teacher, helping them meet deadlines. She said she would provide more information to the board during the next meeting Oct. 9.

But board President Richard Eccles said the "changes look like [the] right direction for our students."