

NESHAMINY

District feeling loss

— Rachel Canelli, 215-949-4191

With three children in the school district, the entire Neshaminy community is feeling the loss of Middletown police Officer Chris Jones, Acting Superintendent Lou Muenker said.

"This has affected us districtwide because of the contact he had with the Neshaminy family," Muenker said Friday.

Flags throughout the district flew at half-staff Friday in honor of the fallen officer.

Jones, 37, died Thursday morning from injuries he received during a routine traffic stop on the Route 1 Superhighway. He's survived by his wife, Suzanne, sons Christopher, 16, and Brendan, 12, and daughter, Julianne, 13. The kids are students at Neshaminy High, Maple Point Middle and Herbert Hoover Elementary.

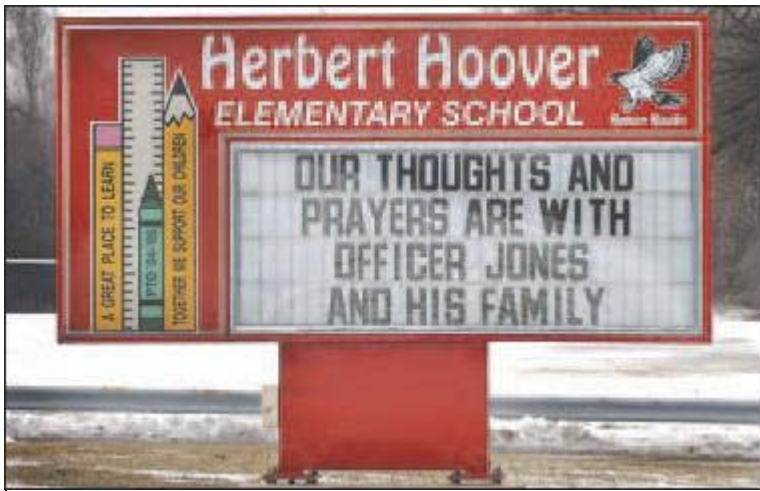
"It's just been a real tough conversation," said Muenker. "Even our assistant principals, who are usually strong individuals, were really broken up (Thursday)."

Letters will go home to parents regarding the loss and advising them that counseling is available to students, administrators said. Officials also are preparing for alternate bus routes or school schedules depending on the funeral arrangements, Muenker said.

During a course selection information session Thursday night, Muenker asked Poquessing Middle School parents to join in a moment of silence in Jones' memory.

Parents already are talking about dedicating a ceramic tile to Jones outside the auditorium in the high school, where Jones' involvement went beyond routine law enforcement activities and included handling violations and discipline issues, said Muenker.

"There was an open invitation that, if (school staff) needed anything, they shouldn't be shy about calling because he was glad to help," Muenker said. "He wanted a good environment for his children and for the Neshaminy community."



Herbert Hoover Elementary School in Langhorne shows its support Friday for Officer Chris Jones and his family.

KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER