

EASTAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT



Neighborhood News

Fall 2019 Edition

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BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Notes From Our Superintendent

Welcome to the beginning of a new school year and season as we get fully immersed in educating our growing student population. As the leaves change colors and the temperature begins to fall, I am reminded of how fortunate I am to work in such a caring community. There are some new staff members at our school that I would like to introduce to our families.

I am truly excited to welcome Assistant Principal, Michael Herman, to Eastampton Township School District. Mr. Herman is a graduate of Millersville University and most recently served as a Dean of Discipline (formerly a social studies/special education teacher) in the Franklin Township School District. I would also like to welcome Jennifer Bergen back to Eastampton. Mrs. Bergen joins our 3rd grade team. Other new staff members are Alexa Bonomo (Kindergarten), George Dejesus (Custodian), Jessica Goodman (LDT-C), Gloria Gould (Custodian), Madison Hughes (SpEd), Samantha Pagnani (1st Grade), Catherine Steele (SpEd), and Kayleigh Whitmore (Music). Please join me in welcoming them to our wonderful community and school district.

This year our focus will be to enhance our academic programming to keep up with our ever-changing student population. As many of you know, our military population continues to grow which presents some wonderful opportunities for our school to engage with women and men who serve in the military. The importance of this understanding cannot be underscored enough. Our goal is for all of our students to uniquely understand and appreciate how fortunate we are to have so many service-women/men in our community. To that end, I am heartened that the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee will use our building to host the first **Boots vs. Badges** basketball game at our school on Veterans Day, Monday, November 11th. Collectively, we are looking to make this an annual event where military and civilians share, learn, and



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

compete together. The next day, November 12th, our eighth grade students will have an opportunity to interview and hear from veterans from wars as far back as World War II. This annual event allows our students to see how fortunate we are to have such a large military presence in our town. We celebrate those who serve and ask that as you read this article, you reflect on those who have given their lives to protect our freedom, and celebrate those veterans and active military.

This past August, the Board of Education and I collaborated to create goals that will govern our district's efforts for the next three years. Some of the goals are a continuation of past goals while others are new. We are working collectively to continue to **Build Relationships** with all of our stakeholders. This goal is critical, as our needs and costs continue to grow and funding is being reduced. Partnerships allow our district to continue the rich offerings at very little impact to the taxpayers in Eastampton. **Standardized Testing Readiness** is a three-year goal that forces our district to look at the varying factors that lead to student success. An early finding of this goal is that we have an average of thirty percent of our population that turns over each year. This is in part due to the amount of military families that reside in our town. We are investigating ways to quickly assess new students and chart a plan of success to help each achieve at a high level. The third goal is to investigate starting a **Preschool Program** in our building. Our team, led by Kelly Eagles, developed a comprehensive plan and applied for funding through the New Jersey Department of Education. Unfortunately, as reported by the NJDOE, there were many more applications than money. We will apply again next year with the hope that the budget will be expanded and that we can start a program in the year 2020-2021. The fourth goal is to continue to **Enhance Communication**, through newsletters, website, and social media. Our team is working hard to enhance our presence on all platforms to share the wonderful things that we do daily. The final goal is to plan strategically to **Maintain our Facilities**. This process started three years ago and will continue. To date, we have replaced our lighting with energy efficient LED bulbs, painted half the interior, replaced carpeting in hallways that get major traffic, painted the trailers that face Learning Lane, and much more. There are some major projects ahead that address more than aesthetics, such as HVAC, parking lot paving, and applying for energy grants to help offset the cost of each above.

As you can see, we are looking back to celebrate the efforts of our military, we are looking presently at enhancing our rich offerings to our students, and we are looking into the future on how we can make our school building sustainable for the next generation. Thank you Eastampton Community for your support and partnering with our district to make our school the benchmark in K-8 education!

A Teacher's Take

In the last twenty-five years, education has seen countless changes. Classrooms have gone from whole group instruction, to small group instruction, to teacher-directed instruction, back to small group instruction, and to what some today call student-directed learning. We have seen seating of students go from rows of single student's desks, to groups of four or five, to rows of two or three, to the latest buzz word in education, "flexible seating". In this latest and improved seating arrangement, desks are removed and living rooms are created within the walls of a classroom to accommodate the needs of children who cannot sit in the traditional learning environment.

Today, technology is all the rage with students using iPads, Chromebooks, and Kindles, just to name a few. Students are expected to research, type, and play learning games on devices that isolate them from interacting with not only their peers, but their teachers as well. We are creating a society of learners who don't know how to work together to solve problems and share what they know.

Teachers are constantly encouraged to be "innovative", with new teachers thinking this means they need to think outside the box. This new buzzword creates great anxiety for them as they try to think of new ways to educate the children and make learning even more entertaining than it was before! Older teachers are told over and over that they need to be innovative and accept the changes that are happening in the world of education. Researchers, and often people who have never even set foot in a classroom, think they have all the answers on how to educate our children by creating these "innovative" practices that inevitably go by the wayside and circle around to the pedagogy from days gone by.

In the world of education, two elements of teaching never change and are of the utmost importance - showing students that you care and developing lifelong learners. The first thing every teacher needs to do is show students that they care and create a relationship with them. It doesn't matter what your classroom looks like or what your style is - rows, groups, or flexible seating. If you don't build caring relationships with students, learning is not going to take place. Teachers need to create a love of learning. Encouraging students to want to learn will create lifelong learners. The enthusiasm a teacher displays for the content of each lesson will inspire students to want to learn more about those topics.

Education doesn't need more technology to create students who will become socially inept, but teachers who will care for the students they teach. Building relationships and creating lifelong learners are the two constants in education that will never change. Why do teachers with years of experience need to forget what they know? Why not use what works from those years of experience? Teachers should not forget what they know, but instead use this knowledge to create a future of lifelong learners who in the end will grow up to be successful citizens. Students will come and go every year. What they will remember is how much their teachers cared for them and helped them develop a love of learning!



8TH GRADE CLASS OFFICERS



The 7 Habits of Happy Kids

In order to foster Character Education and Social Emotional Learning, Mrs. D'Addona and Ms. Ragone have selected Sean Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids*. This book will be used in lessons and activities to help students develop the pillars of character. The seven stories within the book each highlight a habit that teaches children positive principles. Throughout the year, we will spend time focusing on each habit. Mrs. D'Addona and Ms. Ragone will visit grades K-5 at the beginning of each month to introduce the habit of the month. Teachers will emphasize the seven habits in the classroom each day. Students will read books and participate in lessons on the seven habits. We want to create a partnership with you by getting you involved in this process and speaking the language of the habits at home with your child. Please visit Ms. Ragone's teacher page for more resources on how you can have these conversations at home!

November: Habit 1 - *Be Proactive*

December: Habit 2 - *Begin With the End in Mind*

January: Habit 3 - *Put First Things First*

February: Habit 4 - *Think Win-Win*

March: Habit 5 - *Seek First to Understand, Then To Be Understood*

April: Habit 6 - *Synergize*

May: Habit 7 - *Sharpen the Saw*

The 7 Habits of Happy Kids



Habit 1- Be Proactive: You're In Charge

I am a responsible person.
I take initiative.
I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods.
I do not blame others for my wrong actions.
I do the right thing without being asked, even when no one is looking.

Habit 2- Begin with the End in Mind: Have A Plan

I plan ahead and set goals.
I do things that have meaning and make a difference.
I am an important part of my classroom and school.



Habit 3- Put First Things First: Work First, Then Play

I spend my time on things that are most important.
I say no to things I know I should not do.
I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan.
I am self-disciplined and organized.



Habit 4- Think Win-Win: Everyone Can Win

I want everyone to be a success.
I don't have to put others down to get what I want.
When a conflict happens, I look for a third solution.
I believe that we all can win!



Habit 5- Seek First to Understand Then to be Understood:

Listen Before You Talk

I listen to other people's ideas and feelings.
I try to see things from their viewpoints.
I listen to others without interrupting.
I share my opinions and ideas.



Habit 6- Synergize: Together Is Better

I know that everyone is good at something.
Everyone needs to get better at something.
We can all learn something from each other.
Working in groups helps to create better ideas than what one person can do alone.



Habit 7- Sharpen the Saw: Balance Feels Best

I take care of my body by eating right, exercising and getting sleep.
I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school.
I take time to help others.



Putting the "Parent" Back in the PTA! STEPHANIE MCHUGH, ECS PTA PRESIDENT

One of the goals this year for the PTA is to increase parent engagement. As an organization, we are focused on the kids, of course, but in our increasingly complex world we parents need more skills and knowledge than any generation before us. But don't worry, parent engagement can be fun!

For instance, Math Night was a great success—over 200 people showed up! For MATH! Everyone had a great time. (Thank you, Ms. Jennings, for organizing and staff members for your support.) We are working to try for a Science Night in the same vein, so keep your eyes open for that. A school-wide cyber-bullying assembly is already scheduled and a parental component is in the works. We want our parents to have what they need to protect and guide their kids through the often confusing and ever-changing social media world.

The PTA is planning other parent workshops, but we want to hear from you. What topics are of interest? What parts of navigating your child's school or social life do you feel you need help understanding better? Let us know!

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