

EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTER / PEPIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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Dear Families of Center Pepin Students:

As we begin our last eight weeks of school, we celebrate and commend our teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week, which is May 3rd-7th. In these unprecedented times, we acknowledge the role teachers and support educators play in a child's life. Teachers can inspire a life-long love of learning and can be a positive influence in the life of a child. During Teacher Appreciation Week, we encourage you to show your teachers some love by reminding them that you enjoy being part of their classroom communities and appreciate their commitment to your families.

It has been wonderful seeing the students back in school full time. All students have worked hard to learn new routines both in their classrooms and in terms of health and safety. A health contract was sent home with each student on the first day of in-person learning. It is also attached to this email. It is imperative that ALL families complete this contract each morning before leaving for school. If you answer 'no' to all the questions, you may send your child to school; if you answer 'yes' to any of the questions, please keep your child home and contact the school nurse. Remember, even if a member of the household is experiencing symptoms on the health contract, all students from that household should remain at home. In person learners who are not present at Center Pepin School will be marked absent. In person students cannot attend remotely unless under the following exceptions: a student is following COVID-19 protocols due to an exposure or positive test result. If a student is following COVID-19 protocols, including answering 'yes' to a question on the health contract, is *required* to be at home, and is asymptomatic, that student may attend school remotely during that time.

A message from your Social/Emotional Learning Team: As we enter spring and move toward the end of this school year, it is natural to reflect on how far we have come over the last twelve months. It has been a period of seemingly unending transitions and adaptations to circumstances beyond our control. We have all made many challenging choices to protect the physical and emotional health of ourselves and our loved ones. We have become survivalists. With some hope and a little light, we can start to shift from surviving to thriving, taking with us what we have learned serves us well and leaving behind what does not - setting new goals and priorities. At Center Pepin, our SEL team has learned our students are both vulnerable and resilient in ways that we might never have understood in other circumstances. We recognize we are the navigators to a great deal of their emotional growth and have chosen to prioritize connection and relationship building as the key elements of this. It has been our absolute pleasure to share space with your children, both virtually and in-person over the last year. As we look toward the next eight weeks, we welcome you to continue to make us aware of the

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challenges they are facing, as well as stories of success to help us continue to support them through June and beyond. Please take a few minutes to visit our website:

<https://sites.google.com/epsd.us/epsdelementaryoutreach/home>

Students are getting accustomed to our new lunchtime routines. Meals always take place outside at Center Pepin School, except in dangerous weather. You have probably noticed that we have several tents erected on our campus under which students can eat in the event of rain. Students can remain distanced from one another during lunchtime and have multiple options for seating including individual desks and chairs, yoga mats, beach towels, and five gallon buckets (used as tables and stools). Please feel free to send your child in with a beach towel if your child would like that option. These should be taken home and washed regularly. Free bagged lunches are available to all students OR students may bring lunch from home. For all children not in school, free meal pickup will continue to occur at Easthampton High School between 11:00-1:00. Free breakfast is available to all students from 8:35-8:45 every day. Students will eat under the tents at Center and Pepin Schools. Students are not required to eat breakfast at school and may eat breakfast before they arrive.

Center Pepin welcomes Ms. Morgan Jones, our new Reading Specialist. Ms. Jones has been a special education teacher at Maple School since 2013, working on her reading specialist licensure and other specialized programming including Lindamood-Bell's *LIPs* and *Seeing Stars* as well as Orton-Gillingham. We look forward to Ms. Jones being part of our team! We also welcome para-educator, Brittany Starcun and building substitute, Karen Smith to our school.

The Easthampton Public Schools is participating in pooled testing through the remainder of the school year. If you have not signed up already, we strongly encourage all families to participate. Participation in pooled testing is a great tool in helping us mitigate the spread of COVID in our community! Read our FAQ document here if you would like to learn more about what pooled testing is:

<https://epsd.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pooled-Testing-FAQ.pdf>

Attached is a video about what pooled testing would look like for your child. Video link for elementary students:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJML8xBEKGk&feature=youtu.be>

Please visit <https://testcenter.concentricbyginkgo.com/minor-consent> and complete the consent process if you wish to allow your child to participate in testing. If you are providing consent for more than one child, please complete the process once for each child. For more information, please visit the [Concentric Support Center](#) for additional instructions to guide you through the consent process. The access code you will need is: **element-east**

Learning takes place with many people and in many ways at Center Pepin School. Our dedicated staff continues to create excellent educational opportunities for all students. Ms. Hicks and Ms. Barman are pleased to welcome their in-school speech students back to in-person speech sessions. They will continue to maintain safety precautions per district protocols. For those students who remain remote and receive speech services, you will continue to be able to Zoom in to your lessons as per the SLP's updated April therapy schedule. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's SLP at nhicks@epsd.us or lbarman@epsd.us.

A new sensory path on the Center playground is providing some fun during mask breaks and lunch time. Center Pepin's Occupational Therapist (OT), Lori Bernardi helped to design the concept. School Counselor, Riane Dermody, Special Education Teacher, Heather Dean,

School Psychologist, Christina Howard and Paraeducators, Cianaelyn Ricardi and Patty Turcotte created the path. It includes jumping and a 'follow line' requiring students to focus and regulate their bodies. It has been a hit, providing a safe activity for our students while maintaining appropriate distancing on the playground. We are also excited by the return of Hope Guardenier, our School Sprouts Leader. She will be holding gardening sessions with all classes beginning after April break through the beginning of June.

Center Pepin kindergarteners are excited to look for signs of spring! During their science block, classes are discussing the changing season, weather, growing plants, and animal behaviors and characteristics. Kindergarten is also welcoming spring through their writing prompts, crafts, and center activities. Along with these topics, students are also discussing Earth Day and the importance of recycling and keeping our Earth clean. During the literacy block, students are continuing reading and writing about both fiction and non-fiction stories. Kindergarteners are working on listening to and recalling information from a story and using that information for their writing and drawing. Classes are working on adding more details to illustrations, as well as writing a complete sentence beginning with a capital letter and ending with a punctuation mark. Students are also engaging in 'Free Write Fridays' and getting a chance to write and draw about things they like and do outside of school. In math, kindergarten is working on subtraction and addition using a variety of strategies. Students are using hands-on manipulatives, writing number sentences, drawing pictures to represent their numbers, and playing number and counting games both on and off the computer. K teachers are eager to incorporate more hands-on activities, crafts, and learning center activities now that we are back full time.

First grade has also been very busy this month. In *Making Meaning*, students are learning about animals. Before Grade 1 reads a text, they wonder about the animals. As a whole group students record questions. After reading and discussing the text in detail, students go back to see what questions they found answers to, and which ones they still wonder about. Along with the texts, first graders continue to learn new vocabulary words. Recently, Grade 1 has learned about ocean animals, big blue whales, and chameleons. In writing, students are exploring opinion writing. Classes are discussing how to make an opening sentence, supporting details, and a closing sentence. Grade 1 students have written about foods they like, foods they do not like, and fun activities that kids like to do. In math, Grade 1 is learning about adding and subtracting larger numbers. Classes are focusing on place value and how to pull numbers apart into tens and ones. In social studies, students learned about maps, built a zoo, and continue to read Scholastic News about recycling, wind, and the butterfly life cycle.

Grade 2 teachers are excited to be back in-person with students. They are also happy that they get to continue to see the students who are still working remotely on Zoom in their classrooms. The sunshine has helped to make the transition back to school a little easier since Grade 2 students spend a lot of time outside. Classes are working on animal research projects in writing workshop. The students are doing a wonderful job researching their animals. Teachers are looking forward to seeing the final product in the next couple weeks. In math, Grade 2 will be moving into measurement. However, students should continue to practice their math fact fluency at home. In science, Grade 2 students will be going into a plant unit after April vacation. It is a lot of fun to learn about and grow plants in the springtime. In social studies, students will continue to work on map skills and Scholastic News.

Grade 3 continues to work on their nonfiction animal reports during writing. Students have been researching and taking notes on an animal of their choice and will begin organizing their notes and creating a report on their animals. In math, please continue to practice multiplication and division facts 1-10. As Grade 3 classes finish Mission 3, they will move on to Mission 4,

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which will introduce area using arrays and rectangles. Keep reading books that interest you and use comprehension strategies discussed in class including visualizing, the fix-up strategy, questioning, inferring, and predicting! Grade 4 students continue their work on fractions. They are studying waves of sound in science. You may see fourth graders practicing informational writing as well.

A message from the Easthampton Elementary Parent Teacher Organization: PTO is always looking for more parents and guardians to join, so please consider being a part of the Easthampton Parent Teacher Organization. Our main objectives are to raise money that is used to support enrichment activities for the students, including art and music evenings, ice cream from Mt. Tom's for students, gift cards for teachers, and guest performances like one coming up later this month. In typical years we put on events like the gingerbread house making night, movie nights, and a spring pancake breakfast. We also sponsor a teacher appreciation event in May each year. Currently, we are looking for donations to help fund a spring seed growing project that all classes will be involved in. We wish to purchase pots, seeds, and gardening supplies that can be used in each classroom. If you are interested in helping, please send a check written to the Easthampton PTO to the Center, Pepin, or Maple office, or you can use our Venmo account, which is @Easthampton-PTO-1. Once again we are reminding families to sign up for Amazon Smile if you have not done so already. On Amazon, select Easthampton Home and School Association as your charity of choice and Amazon will donate a small amount to our PTO with every purchase you make! Additionally, please download the BoxTops for Education App where you can scan grocery receipts. Doing so will donate a small amount of money to our schools if you purchase certain items. You can choose Center Pepin or Maple as your recipient school. Thanks for helping support our schools!

Thank you for attending parent/teacher conferences this month. Monday-Friday, April 19-23 is our spring break. Classes resume on Monday, April 26, 2021. Thank you to our Elementary PTO for sponsoring Roger Tincknell, who will perform remotely for our students on Thursday, April 29th during the school day. We will be sending a schedule and Zoom link for our at-home learners. Wednesday, May 5 is a half day for students with a noon dismissal. Grade 3 and 4 students will take MCAS the week of May 10th. Students are off on Monday, May 31 for Memorial Day. As a reminder, from the hours of 8:30-3:30, the parking lots at Center Pepin are for staff only. Please reserve those parking lots for our school employees. Student drop offs are on Park Street and School Street. We value your contributions of ideas. We look forward to your child's participation and welcome your suggestions. If we can be of assistance to your family in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jill S. Pasquini-Torchia, Ed.D.
Principal

Andrea McCallum
Assistant Principal