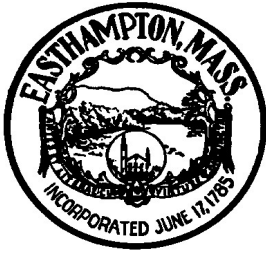


EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTER / PEPIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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3-15-21

Dear Families of Center Pepin Students:

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our 2021 school council. School councils enhance site-based decision making because they expand the participation of the school community. The involvement of different groups on the council (teachers, parents, and community members) provides the school with different and mutually complementary perspectives on improvement goals and plans. In addition, we love hearing feedback about the tremendous efforts being made to make this year as beneficial and inclusive as possible. We also want to acknowledge families, staff, and students who are new to our district as we strive to welcome you and surround you virtually with the same warm community that we foster in our physical schools and classrooms. We have learned a great deal this year about how to make your child's educational experience more effective. Our commitment is to continue learning, reflecting, and growing throughout the school year. In that spirit, school council is also an opportunity for sharing questions and suggestions with us. Our members include parents, Kara Murrett, Naomi Schmidt, Megan Kelley-Bagg, and Emily McDowell. Staff members include Kelly Przekopowski, Amy Gauger (also a Center Pepin parent), Heather Dean, Amy Skowron, the assistant principal, and the principal. We appreciate your continued collaboration. Our next meeting is Monday, April 5th at 4:30 over Zoom. Any caregiver is always welcome to attend.

On Friday, March 5, 2021, the State Board of Education granted the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education the authority to determine when hybrid models no longer count toward meeting the required learning hours. The Commissioner has notified Massachusetts public schools that a shift to full, in-person learning model will take place on April 5th for grades K-5. Our Easthampton School Committee has requested the superintendent to pursue a waiver to push back the start of full day in person learning until April 26, 2021. However, they are open to the idea of all students – in grades K-12 returning at that time. Dr. LeClair is filing the waiver and will keep you informed of the response. As we plan a shift to the new model, caregivers will need to decide whether their children will come to school for in-person learning (every day, all day), or stay home for remote learning. Classroom teachers will continue to use the hybrid learning model (some students in the class and some remote) for the remainder of the year, but we will no longer alternate weeks between Cohort A and Cohort B. As this represents a change in the conditions at school, we will need caregivers to let us know if students will be attending in-person or staying remote. If you have not already done so, please fill out a survey for each of your children. There is no need to fill it out again if you already did. A fully remote option will still be available for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. Below is the link to the survey if needed:

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<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Twr6NKWHyUqmFfaI5Hjmhkf9b-WnfyxOlPHJg-d9tC1UQVVIUDRNNkxIR0VQUTA5R1hWVFpITIVIMy4u>

Upon a full return, schools will begin operating under the following conditions:

- A full day, 5 days per week schedule (returning to pre-pandemic schooling)
- All lunches will be eaten outside for the remainder of the school year (exception: dangerous weather).
- Classroom spacing will be maximized with no less than 3 feet between students.
- Masks will continue to be required and consistently worn in school following published EPSD safety protocols.
- DESE recommended cleaning protocols will continue.
- New DESE Transportation Guidelines will be followed. These new guidelines lift capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements for students on school buses.

The Easthampton Public Schools will be participating in pooled testing. 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>

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 in so many ways at Center Pepin School. On Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. our elementary music teachers, Mr. Monte and Mrs. Cloutier will be presenting an evening of music to celebrate Music in Our Schools Month. While reading the story, *Ferdinand the Bull*, students will learn that it is good to be different or unique, because that's what makes each individual special. Students will learn about ways that *they* are unique. Next, they will meet 5 instruments of the orchestra up close and personal as well as the musicians who play them. These same instruments and musicians will be seen and heard during the reading of the story *Ferdinand the Bull*. After the story, students will have the opportunity to learn about the special rhythm "Habanera" that is heard and seen during the story. After learning the "Habanera" rhythm, students will be invited to create their own homemade maracas. We will practice playing our new rhythm with our maracas. At the end, one of our guest musicians will join our zoom call for a question & answer time. Packets will go home with all students that will include coloring pages, directions, and materials needed to make maracas and include some great questions to ask our guest musicians.

For Kindergarten, the month of March came in like a lion as students and staff were excited to learn about so many new things! They began the month with all things Seuss, learning all about Dr. Seuss and his work as an author/illustrator. They also celebrated *Read Across America* week by having thematic days. Students created word family hats, had pajama day to celebrate *The Sleep Book* and made fantastic pets. Students were encouraged to use their imaginations and came up with all kinds of creatures that ate all sorts of things and loved to participate in a variety of activities from climbing trees to rolling down hills! March 4th also marked our 100th Day of School! Students decorated t-shirts with 100 items of their choosing and modeled them on classroom Zoom fashion shows. Kindergarten looks forward to continuing hybrid learning and discovering more about the 'Force Olympics' for *Mystery*

Science and adding and subtracting numbers in math. Spring is in the air, so expect more outside activities to coming soon!

First grade teachers are excited to finally be in the classroom with students. Everyone is doing a great job adjusting to the new schedule and both remote students and in-person students are adapting very well. Grade 1 has started exploring nonfiction in both reading and writing lessons. They have looked at several nonfiction books on different subjects including bees, the five senses, and being a dentist to name a few. First graders are also practicing writing nonfiction pieces telling true information about themselves. In math, first grade is focusing on base ten. They are building different numbers with ten sticks and ones and learning how to easily see the value of a number by noticing what place value it is in. They are also practicing their teen numbers and starting to count all the way to 120.

Second graders have been learning about how to write nonfiction pieces. They have been reading various nonfiction texts and students will soon begin a research project about polar animals. In math, Grade 2 is continuing to practice telling time, counting money and adding 2-digit numbers with and without regrouping. In reading, second graders have been focusing on 'wondering' as a comprehension strategy. When students wonder about their reading, their curiosity makes them focus on what they are reading. In science, students will be learning about animal adaptations. Second graders are very also very excited to welcome in person learners. Thank you to all families for your patience during this time.

Grade 3 is very excited to finally be able to see friends in person at school. Third grade teachers hope their students are practicing their multiplication facts at home. Third grade is finishing a unit on addition with multi-digit numbers. This unit also includes subtraction with decomposing three-digit numbers. They will continue multiplication with tricky numbers (6, 7, and 8). In writing, third graders are working on nonfiction writing. They are writing information they know about animals. Students are asking "I wonder" questions about these animals. They will also be researching facts about their animals and reporting what they are learning in order to teach others. Fourth graders are adjusting to the return of some students to school while others continue to be fully remote. Grade 4 has been working on understanding elements of expository nonfiction reading and writing. Students are applying what they learn by researching one of the five United States regions. Fourth graders are also integrating a study on maps. In math, students continue to work on long division, factors, and multiples with plans to move into fractions next. In science, students will soon participate in a unit on Waves of Sound. As part of Black History Month and Women's History Month, students have been learning about trailblazing women with a special emphasis on women of color.

The Center Pepin Spirit Gear shop is open again! The store is open until March 19th.

https://www.mantisgraphics.com/store/c54/Center_Pepin.html

Grades close on Friday, March 19th and report cards will be mailed home on Monday the 29th. Thursday, March 25 is Music Night at 6:00 p.m. over Zoom. Packets are available in the dog house in front of Pepin School if you need one. Center Pepin's School Council will meet on Monday, April 5 at 4:30 over Zoom. All are welcome. There are 12:10 dismissals on Thursday and Friday April 15-16 for parent teacher conferences. April 19-23 is spring break. The Elementary PTO will be hosting a Roger Tinknell concert in April for all elementary students. The date will be announced soon.

It is the mission of the Easthampton Public Schools to create a community where all students feel welcome, accepted, and safe. In order to help fulfill this mission, the district has formed a Professional Learning Community (PLC) comprised of teachers, counselors, and administrators charged with developing age-appropriate resources and lessons for K-4 students

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to begin talking about topics highlighting the message of equity, access, and opportunity for all. This month's topics are women's rights and women's history. This topic is important for many reasons. The month of March is when we set forward our clocks and celebrate the return of spring. It is also Women's History Month! This is the month where we revel in learning about female history-makers, from the big names to the unsung heroes. It is also a time when we focus on learning more about the female perspective on big movements in human history. There are so many unacknowledged women who made history and for a long time, women were not allowed to create history. It is through learning about women and history that this information can be inspirational to future generations. It also destroys myths about what women cannot do. (Bustle, "5 Reasons Women's History Month is Important", 2016).

Being present, either in school or online, every day helps children get the most out of elementary school. It is crucial that students arrive to school on time so that important instructional time is not missed. Students need to be present to hear teachers explain concepts and participate in discussions and projects. Please schedule appointments before and after school hours whenever possible and if you cannot, try to arrange them for lunchtime. Also, it will be easier for your child to get up on time for school if she / he has had at least nine hours of sleep. Set a reasonable bedtime and make sure all electronics are put away.

We are very excited to welcome back students to the Center Pepin school buildings. There will be staff to greet students each morning. We ask parents and caregivers to remain in their cars unless there is a need to get a child out of a car seat. If that is the case, we request that you complete drop-off as quickly as possible. Every person in your car should have a mask on during drop-off. Pepin drop off will take place in front of Pepin School at 4 Park Street; Center drop off will take place at the playground gate between Center School and the Pride Station. Pepin pick ups will occur in front of Pepin School; Center pick ups will occur at the two gate openings at the Center School playground. Caregivers must park their cars and report to the location where their child dismisses. **Please have your color-coded card with you,** even if you are on foot. Please set an example for your children. In order for the pickup procedure to be safe and efficient, all caregivers must wear a mask at all times and observe physical distancing from other families. Please allow only one caregiver to meet the child (plus other children in their care of course). ***Once your child is dismissed, we asked that you exit the school grounds immediately.*** Playgrounds are not open and we require that you do not gather/socialize at the school at this time. For students eligible for bussing, bus routes are posted at epsd.us on the main page Scroll down to 'bus schedules for in-person learning'. Click 'elementary bus routes'. These bus routes are updated frequently. Please check the epsd.us website for the appropriate bus stop for your address if your family is eligible.

From our Easthampton Elementary PTO: Thank you to everyone who came out and participated in the winter scavenger hunt during February vacation week. We had around 150 children participate! It was an overwhelming success. The deadline to upload artwork to the Silver Graphics website has been extended until March 15th. You can use an art project your child did with Ms. A in art class, or another project done at home. Then you can order the artwork printed on a variety of things, including T shirts, potholders, mugs, keychains, pencil bags, and many other things. To order, go to <https://www.silvergraphics.com/shop/> and enter your school's code, which is either CenterART2021, PepinART2120, or MapleART2021. If you haven't already done so, please sign up for Amazon Smile and Box Tops for Education. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to the Easthampton Home and School Association when you shop at smile.amazon.com. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know with the added benefit of supporting charitable organizations. Go to Amazon smile to choose the Easthampton Home and School Association as your

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charity. Remember, only purchases made at smile.amazon.com, (not www.amazon.com or the mobile app,) generate AmazonSmile donations. Once you've selected Easthampton Home and School Association, money will automatically be deposited to the PTO. We use this money to plan and implement fun activities for your students. BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION: You can scan receipts from grocery shopping to help donate money to our school! Every little bit helps.

1) Download the Box Tops for Education app on your phone and select Pepin Center Complex or Maple Elementary School as the school you want your Box Tops to benefit.

2) After shopping at Target, Costco, Big Y, or Stop and Shop, open the app and scan your receipt. Any items that offer Box Tops will be recognized and the money goes straight to our school. (You must scan the receipt within 14 days of purchase, or it will not be accepted.)* Some of the brands that have box tops are: General Mills, Annie's, Nature Valley, Progresso, Old El Paso, Yoplait, Scott, Ziploc, Lysol, Larabar, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, and Nestle.

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. The Center School office will be closed each day from 12:00-12:30 and the Pepin School office will be closed from 12:30-1:00. If you need to contact these offices by phone during these times, please call the other office number listed at the top of this letter. We value you as a member of our Center Pepin School community. We look forward to your continued participation and welcome your calls, visits, and suggestions.

Sincerely,

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

Andrea McCallum
Assistant Principal