

# EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## WHITE BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Meredith Balise, Principal  
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February 5, 2019

Dear Families of White Brook Middle School Students:

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education updated the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) to better measure the critical thinking skills students need for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The tests will include innovative questions specifically created to assess the Massachusetts learning standards. At White Brook Middle School, all students will take MCAS on computers. For planning purposes, please see the following dates your middle schooler will be taking MCAS:

**Grade 5:** April 9 *ELA Session 1*, April 10 *ELA Session 2*, April 29 *Math Session 1*, April 30 *Math Session 2*, May 15 *Science Session 1*, May 16 *Science Session 2*

**Grade 6:** April 11 *ELA Session 1*, April 12 *ELA Session 2*, May 1 *Math Session 1*, May 2 *Math Session 2*

**Grade 7:** April 23 *ELA Session 1*, April 24 *ELA Session 2*, May 7 *Math Session 1*, May 8 *Math Session 2*

**Grade 8:** April 25 *ELA Session 1*, April 26 *ELA Session 2*, May 9 *Math Session 1*, May 10 *Math Session 2*, May 13 *Science Session 1*, May 14 *Science Session 2*

Private, self-conscious, even moody; if that sounds like your middle schooler, you are not alone. At this age, bodies and emotions are changing rapidly. Physical growth and worries about friendships, schoolwork, and other things can cause moodiness. Let your child know you are there to talk. This may invite him or her to open up. It is natural for your middle schooler to want some time alone. He or she might walk away to take a phone call for example. Show him or her you respect the growing need for privacy by giving space, but be sure you require your child to power down devices and keep them in your possession in the evening. In addition, many middle schoolers feel self-conscious. Being part of a group that shares interests can help your child focus on strengths and gain more confidence. Encourage your child to participate in at least one activity beyond school.

White Brook's Peer Leaders will be sponsoring Spirit Week starting February 11<sup>th</sup>. Show your White Brook Pride! Monday will be Easthampton Eagle Pride Day, Tuesday is Sports Team Day, Wednesday is 80s Day, Thursday is Superhero Day, and Friday is Crazy Hair/Hat Day (\$1.00 donation). Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 is the EHS open house for interested 8<sup>th</sup> grade families. Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup> is our next Friday Fun Dance from 6:00-8:00 p.m. The cost is \$5.00 per student. Please bring a non-perishable food item or a gently used pair of shoes to donate at the dance. Pizza and other refreshments are sold during the dance. The last payment for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Washington D.C. trip is

due February 15<sup>th</sup> in the amount of \$120 or the remaining balance. Winter break begins February 18-22. Classes resume on Monday, February 25, 2019.

When children miss school, they come in the next day and have to catch up on the lessons or work from the previous day. This can often times put stress on your child. We send home letters to those families whose child has had three or more absences during the term. These letters serve as documents to show that you are aware of your child's absences so that we can work together to minimize further absences. When absences become excessive, we meet with the child's parents to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance. Open communication about an absence provides the opportunity to prepare work missed or send home other pertinent information your child missed on the day they were out. If your child sees a doctor, please ask for a note for the school office, which will be placed in the child's file. If your child is sick and will not be attending school for the day, kindly call the school office to make us aware. In addition, students must arrive by 8:15 a.m. every day. It is crucial that students arrive to school on time so that important instructional time is not missed.

Spring is right around the corner! However, road conditions are still dangerous this time of year. Please review with your children the importance of being safe when traveling to and from school. Cars have a difficult time seeing children around snowbanks and may not be able to stop quickly on slippery roads. Please remember that during the winter months we plan to have outdoor recess unless the weather poses a danger. We use our best judgment around the cold and wind chill index and check for the soaking factor of precipitation. All students must have winter coats, gloves, and a hat. For your information, if there is a two-hour delay due to weather, IEP Team meetings will not be held on that day. IEP meetings will not be held in the event of a snow day. The special education coordinator will contact parents the next day to schedule a new date for these meetings. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions or suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Meredith Balise  
Principal

Jill Pasquini-Torchia  
Assistant Principal

### **A Virtues Pick**

#### **COOPERATION**

Cooperation is working together and sharing the load. When we cooperate, we join with others to do things that cannot be done alone. We are willing to follow the rules that keep everyone safe and happy. Together we can accomplish great things (The Virtues Project, 2002).

You are practicing **COOPERATION** when you work well with others, offer your help and ideas, disagree peacefully and respectfully, follow the rules, ask for help when you need it, and help keep a safe and happy environment.