

# EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## CENTER / PEPIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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May 1, 2020

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 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>. 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. Remind them that you enjoy being part of their remote classroom communities and appreciate their commitment to your families.

As the weather heats up, so does the excitement at Center Pepin! We would like to help brighten students' days with SPIRIT MONTH! If your family chooses to participate, show your teachers how your family is celebrating spirit month. Take some photos! If you would like photos of your child celebrating Center Pepin Spirit Month posted on our Center Pepin Facebook page, please send them to [slabumbard@epsd.us](mailto:slabumbard@epsd.us) and they may be posted.

Week 1, May 4-8: **Check Out My Crazy Hair or Hat Week**

Week 2, May 11-15: **Meet My Pet or Stuffy Week**

Week 3, May 18-22: **Strike a Pose in Nature Week**

Week 4, May 25-29: **Center Pepin or Easthampton Eagles Pride Week**

Learning takes place in many ways at Center Pepin School. Our dedicated staff continues to create excellent opportunities for remote learning for all students. The kindergarten team would like to thank families for communicating with them through videos, photos, check-in emails, etc. Kindergarteners are engaging in video lessons that are structured around the curriculum areas reinforcing learned skills as well as teaching new ones. Students have been able to attend a virtual field trip weekly ranging from stories in space, to visiting zoos, and exploring dairy farms! The kindergarten team has provided students with opportunities to learn inside as well as outside with scavenger hunts and outdoor activities that support learning in fun and engaging ways. They are fortunate also for the many kindergarten families who have shared their own creative ideas for learning activities with the teachers as a way of checking in.

Our first graders are working on poetry and using strong movement words in writing. They will be moving into opinion writing over the next few weeks. The teachers have loved meeting and seeing everyone's faces during virtual learning groups and class meetings. In Math, first graders are working on fact fluency and solving single-digit problems quickly. In the coming weeks, first grade will be focusing on counting, adding, and subtracting groups of ten. They will be learning more about place value and the tens and ones place. Our second graders are

*A great place to learn and grow.*

currently doing an animal research project and will be sharing their research with teachers soon. Grade 2 students continue to read stories and use ‘I wonder...’ statements to dig even deeper into what they are reading. They have been adding suffixes to spelling words to create new words and expand their vocabulary. In math, second graders have been working on money, place value, and playing some math games with family. Teachers report seeing some wonderful pictures of science experiments that students have done at home. Second graders have looked at pictures to practice being historians and are finding clues about history. They have had an opportunity to do interactive lessons on Seesaw in social studies as well as variety of other academic areas. The Grade 2 teachers are very proud of all the amazing work students and families are doing at home and ask families to please keep sharing. They look forward to seeing you on Zoom!

Grade 3 teachers truly enjoy seeing their students’ faces during Zoom sessions whether it is to hear an ongoing read aloud or just to check in on how everyone is doing! Many third graders participated in creating their own 2020 COVID-19 time capsule to document what they have been experiencing. This will be something to save and look back on the role they played in this historic time. Third grade teachers look forward to re-launching the Acadia STARS program in each of the virtual classrooms. They will be dividing up each lesson into chunks to work on over the course of several days. The teachers hope students are as excited as they are to get started on these lessons again! Grade 4 students have been very busy as well. Teachers have been meeting with students for both non-academic and academic sessions on Teams/Zoom. Sometimes they meet to simply check in or share and sometimes they work on academic content. Students have been reviewing previously taught concepts in mathematics and literacy and are now beginning to work on some new content like geometry. Fun and engaging writing prompts are keeping students focused on core writing skills, while also trying to spark creativity and imagination. Speaking of fun, fourth graders are enjoying read alouds, trivia, and MadLibs. Up next? Grade 4 looks forward to trying out some home history lessons from a recent professional development they attended. Teachers expressed that while we are apart, there is nothing quite like getting to see, hear, and hang out with their students on Teams/Zoom!

While we are away from school, our psychologist, Ms. Howard has provided her website, <https://sites.google.com/view/ms-howard>, to be used as a central location for the Center Pepin community to stay connected with her. She will use this space to post updates, resources, and strategies to help support the social and emotional well-being of Center Pepin students, families, and staff. The site is organized by page with updates from Ms. Howard, elementary-aged appropriate COVID-19 resources, at-home social skills resources, caregiver resources, and her contact information. Please feel free to access her at any time. In addition, our district’s occupational therapists have put together activities, video lessons, links to websites and information to support and promote development and engagement of children. Here is their website: <https://sites.google.com/epsd.us/easthampton-ot/home> Please utilize Center Pepin’s occupational therapy providers, Barb Boulay at [bboulay@epsd.us](mailto:bboulay@epsd.us) and Lori Bernardi at [lbernardi@epsd.us](mailto:lbernardi@epsd.us).

As a school community, we will continue our remote learning plan through June 18, 2020. Teachers will continue to communicate with families on a regular basis through email, text, voice calls, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Seesaw, Remind, or other means. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s guidance recommends that schools support students in engaging in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a school day. Guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provided direction to keep equity at the forefront of our efforts to improve remote learning and to maintain focus on our most vulnerable students. We will continue to work toward an

effective and equitable learning experience for all. DESE has recommended further focus on connectedness and on the content standards most critical for success in the next grade. With DESE's initial guidance, schools focused on reinforcing content previously taught. In light of schools remaining closed through the end of the year, DESE updated this guidance based on further direction from the U.S. Department of Education. Teachers are not being asked to cover all standards this year; however, they will be going further than reviewing material previously covered. When planning future remote learning lessons, teachers will focus on those standards that are the most critical pre-requisites for student success in the next grade. Since many of these learning standards have already been covered prior to the closure, some instructional time will still be spent on reinforcement. Teachers will continue to assess student participation. All students are expected to engage and participate with some or most of the learning opportunities teachers are providing to the best of their abilities. Teachers will continue providing feedback to students in order to incentivize continuous learning in these uncertain times.

You will not see a significant change in the way that instruction is delivered. Much of the work will remain student self-directed and can be done at a child's (family's) own pace and time. Teachers will continue to provide daily assignments, weekly assignments or a menu of learning opportunities for students in different subject areas appropriate for the intended learning needs of the students in the class. This varies by grade level and includes physical education and the arts. Some examples of remote learning opportunities at Center Pepin include pre-made video or audio recordings or asynchronous teaching, small or large group conferencing through Zoom or Microsoft Teams or synchronous teaching, other interactive learning tools, math games, email practice links, work packets, longer-term projects, reading, art projects, physical activity, online learning platforms, and other resources. Teachers will also continue having 'office hours' for two hours every school day. They will use this time to check in with students and families, provide feedback on assignments, help students who need it, and are available to you for immediate response. Special education teachers, ELL teachers, and related service providers are providing supports and resources to students and are working with families of students with specialized learning needs regarding necessary modifications to remote instruction.

The Easthampton Public Schools Elementary PTO would love to thank everyone for their support of their fundraisers and remind families that Silver Graphics is currently closed and will ship items to the school when we reopen. Our last School Improvement Council meeting for the 2019-2020 school year is scheduled for Monday, June 1 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. Members will receive an invite through email. Some families have contacted us about getting items left at school. Dr. LeClair is working on a plan to accommodate this in the coming weeks. Since western Massachusetts is still considered at a surge with regards to COVID-19, we need to be patient in order to be extra cautious. We realize that some families may need their child's medication. The Center Pepin nurses are planning a medication pick up day on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 from 8:30-10:30 at the entrances to each school. You will not be able to enter the building. If you wish to pick up your child's medication, the nurses will be at each school entrance during this time. Please send one family member (if possible), ring the bell, wear your masks and gloves, and practice safer social distancing if you come. The nurses will bring the medication out to you. If you do not need the medication now, or are unable to make it, we can make arrangements for you to get the medication later in the year. If you need to reach our nurses, they can be reached through their emails at Melanie Lapointe [mlapointe@epsd.us](mailto:mlapointe@epsd.us) or Sheila Streeter [sstreeter@epsd.us](mailto:sstreeter@epsd.us). Also, if a student left another very important item at school that is needed and you let us know the location, we can try to retrieve it for you now (no promises). However, please know that our superintendent is working on a larger plan for other things left behind in school.

The Center Pepin staff is working collaboratively to plan for end of school year activities including student displays of work, ceremonies, and transition events. We are working closely with White Brook Middle School as well. Although things will be different this year, we will strive to make the closure to the school year special for our students. We are also creating a yearbook for our exiting fourth graders. We will be requesting items from your fourth grader to include in the yearbook. Please be on the lookout for this! In past years, we have conducted Kindergarten registration in person in March, but because of the closure, we were unable to do that this year. Please do not worry; you have not missed any deadlines. A letter is going out this week to those with kindergarten-aged children with registration materials based on the census. Families can fill it out and mail it to the address provided or drop it off at the drop box at city hall. There will be directions for how to do both. There is also the option of getting the registration forms online for download (coming soon). There is a form filer online that families can also use to register that way. These options will be available on [www.epsd.us](http://www.epsd.us).

These are trying times for many reasons. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family to help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can make our community stronger. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Children often respond to what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared (CDC.gov, 2020). Try to stay informed. Get information only from reliable sources. Experts in global public health, infectious disease, and emergency preparedness from Johns Hopkins University Medical Center offer a web resource to help inform the public. Always remain cautious of myths and rumors that circulate on social media.

The CDC suggests that not all children respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for could include excessive crying or irritation in younger children; returning to behaviors they have outgrown; excessive worry or sadness; unhealthy eating or sleeping habits; poor performance or avoidance of school; difficulty with attention; avoidance of previously enjoyed activities; unexplained head or body aches. How can you as a caregiver support your child? Talk with your child about COVID-19. Answer questions and share facts in a way that your child can understand. Reassure your child that he or she is safe. Let them know it is ok to feel upset. Share how you deal with your own stress so they can learn how to cope from you. Create a schedule or routine for learning activities, relaxing, or fun activities. Be a role model for your child. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members (CDC.gov, 2020). Please know that we are here to support your family in the ways that we can. We are realistic, understanding, and realize that different families need different things. We only wish to be accessible to all. We also strive for continuous improvement. Please take care of yourselves and one another. Thank you for your continued support with the important work of educating your children. We appreciate you and welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

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Principal

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