

EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



EASTHAMPTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

50 Payson Avenue, 2nd Floor Easthampton, MA 01027

(413) 529-1500 TEL

(413) 529-1567 FAX

e-mail: superintendent@epsd.us

website: www.epsd.us

Allison LeClair, Ed.D., Superintendent

Logistical Update #5

August 14, 2020

Greetings Easthampton Families,

I hope your summer is sailing along smoothly. This week, we convened a COVID Advisory group, spearheaded by Sarah Mochak. The group membership includes Sarah and I, along with Laurie Garcia – SC member, Nellie Taylor – EEA (Easthampton Education Association) President, Bri Eichstaedt, our school physician and a local epidemiologist. We will be consistently reviewing metrics and will be called upon if cases arise when school is in session.

On another note, some of you have inquired about technology for your children. Yes, the district has ordered several hundred Chromebooks (thanks to CARES funding) and we will distribute to families the week of Sept. 8th. More information will be coming.

As a result of our school committee meeting this week, I will be filing a waiver to remove the SRO (School Resource Officer) position from our schools. We heard many voices on both sides of the issue. The district Equity Committee will continue to explore how we can address challenges related to having police in school settings.

There was a Preschool Forum held this week. In case you missed it, recordings may be found on our School Reopening page. Our Curriculum Director and I were invited to answer questions at a parent forum the other afternoon. Thank-you to the organizers and we look forward to future invites. This week, I also asked school principals to schedule building-based Family forums in the coming weeks. At the elementary level, we are working on securing tents for kindergarten screening. More information will be coming shortly on these items.

This coming week, we have:

- School Committee meets on Tuesday night at 6 p.m.

I am awaiting further guidance on Fall sports from the MIAA (MA. Interscholastic Athletic Association) and DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). Last week, DESE indicated that if we started in a remote model, we would not be having sports. They have since backed off that comment and are awaiting the MIAA. I will let everyone know when a decision has been made.

Finally, our Facilities and Operations working group has developed the following document to share. As always, the School Committee, our district leadership team and I welcome your feedback and questions – please reach out to us if you have questions.

My best to all of you,

Allison LeClair, Superintendent

Operations and Facilities Work Group

Approach to Complying with Guidelines Concerning Air Flow and Ventilation

Guidance suggests school should aim to improve both air flow and air filtration as a means to mitigate against the spread of COVID 19. Recognizing that our schools have shortcomings and challenges due to age, we want to do everything we reasonably can to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

In progress:

- Purchased materials to fabricate screens for classroom windows that do not have them
- Inspect windows to remedy those difficult to operate or inoperable
- Inspect, clean, service, change filters of air handling equipment
- Consider and seek input as to the advisability of changing to more robust air filters
- Consider and seek input as to the advisability of using window fans to improve circulation
- Review preventative maintenance routines for ventilation systems; consider more frequent preventative maintenance protocols
- Research, price, and seek input about portable air filtering or cleansing units
- Develop a list, by building of spaces of concern for adequate air flow and or ventilation
- Solicit a proposal from the energy management contractor to increase the frequency of air exchange at the high school
- When occupied, run the air handlers at each school from two hours before they are occupied until two hours after they cease being occupied

Next steps:

- Engage Colliers International to assess the air handling systems in all schools and make recommendations as to how air flow and air filtering might be improved.
- As we receive more information about the condition of our buildings' systems and any recommendations to consider for improving air flow and ventilation, we will share them.