

## **EASTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **2019-20 Annual Report**

#### Introduction

In my September 2019 report to the Board of Education, I shared my excitement in participating for the first time in the opening of the new school year in Eastford. It was a wonderful experience. The teachers were on site many days ahead of time making their rooms very inviting for all our students. I often asked myself the question young students have – do they live here? Our custodial team maneuvered their way around the heating projects, cleaning and preparing the school for opening day. Sometimes it was hard to find Ms. Seguire and Ms. Gaylor, buried among copies of opening day booklets, reports and supply orders. Of course, Mrs. McCombe spent her days calmly supporting everyone’s efforts, often leaving her own tasks to the evening hours. Who realized that by March 2020, this bustling scene would be replaced by empty offices, hallways and classrooms when all schools across Connecticut were ordered to be closed by the Governor and the Commissioner in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Schools remained closed from mid-March through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Since the unanticipated outbreak of the coronavirus, all efforts at communication and collaboration have been focused on the safety and well-being the students, staff and families of the Eastford community. The administrative team and Mrs. Roto, the school nurse, participated in many remote meetings and maintained ongoing communication with professional colleagues, the Board attorney and Town and State officials to remain current with all recent developments and information forthcoming about the status of the pandemic and its impact on the education of our students. The Commissioner of Education placed all of the schools in Connecticut into what was termed a “remote learning environment”. The days absent from traditional instruction were counted as school days and our school year ended on June 12.

The following pages contain many of the typical elements of an annual report. In addition, they contain a section focused on the provision of remote learning in response to the closing of schools to on-site instruction. The Board, administration and staff were focused on attaining our goals and providing, as always, the best education possible for our students. The stated goals, however, needed to be placed on hold as staff and administration retooled to provide all of our students with quality educational experiences responsive to the challenges presented to us by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

#### Mission Statement and Annual Goals

We pledge to provide every one of Eastford's children entrusted to our care with the very best education to meet individual needs, to maintain a nurturing and caring environment, and to ensure for each child the necessary preparation for a productive and fulfilling life in our changing world.

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2019-20 Board of Education Goals

Educational Leadership

- A. Monitor the data provided by school staff to assess the academic, social and emotional growth of students at Eastford Elementary School.
- B. Obtain and monitor data related to the performance of Eastford students in their secondary school education.
- C. Advocate for a budget that is responsive to the programmatic needs of all students and the professional growth needs of the school and district staff.

Organizational management

- A. Advocate for a budget that provides for the needed facility maintenance and updates in accordance with a multi-year plan.
- B. Explore ways to achieve greater efficiency as a school district by cooperating with other districts for shared services and staff as well as cooperative programs and purchases.
- C. Develop and implement strategies for the continuation of board vision and priorities.

Collaboration and Communication with Community

- A. Develop strategies for improving community participation in school sustainability efforts.

2019-20 Superintendent Goals

Educational Leadership

- A. Provide the school staff with the leadership and guidance needed to develop a long-term plan for the review and development of curriculum programs and instructional practices.
- B. Provide support to the school staff as they focus on the development of a community that manages conflicts and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships.

Organizational management

- A. Prioritize and advise the Board of Education of the needed maintenance, security and technology projects.
- B. Serve as the District/School liaison to the Town Building Committee responsible for the steam to hot water conversion project.
- C. Advise the Board of Education as to opportunities for shared services and programs.

Collaboration and Communication with Community

- A. Engage in meaningful conversations and collaborations with families and community stakeholders that provide for quality learning opportunities for Eastford students and families.

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2019-20 Principal Goals

Focus Area 1:

Climate, culture, and social and emotional factors for students and staff

Focus Area 2:

Targeted and focused improvement of curriculum and instruction

Principal Goals around two focus areas

Goal 1: Support staff in developing philosophical knowledge and understanding of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards along with practices that will support student SEL growth and development. Support staff ability to integrate these practices into their daily routines and instructional practices.

Goal 2: Support teachers in updating instructional materials, formalizing curricular scope, and sequence and implementing effective instructional practices.

2019-20 Whole School Goal

Teachers will focus on instructional approaches that integrate the “Workshop Model” structure for learning (mini-lesson, student collaboration, differentiated conferences) to promote collaboration as well as student independence, problem solving and perseverance.

2019-20 Parent Feedback Goal

Teachers will incorporate explicit instruction on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies into daily academic instructional practices to support student Social and Emotional growth and development and foster a positive and safe academic and social environment.

## **Accomplishments**

This report highlights some of the many accomplishments that were attained in the Eastford School District during the 2019-20 school year. Additional, more detailed information can be accessed online by reading committee reports and the principal/superintendent reports on the Board of Education's dropdown menu on the school's website (<http://www.eastfordct.org>)

### **Facilities**

#### **Steam to Hot Water Heating Project:**

During the 2019-20 school year, EMCOR completed Phase 2 of the heating repair project. The Town Building Committee, consisting of members Robert Ellsworth (BOE), Rob Torcellini (BOS), Mark Sheldon, Paul Torcellini, Thomas DeJohn and Garry Carabeau, also completed and posted an RFP for the Steam to Hot Water design proposal to upgrade the remainder of the heating system, including the purchase of a new boiler. The Building Committee reviewed proposals received in response to our RFP for the engineering design of the steam to hot water conversion project. Based on pricing and prior experience in schools, the committee recommended to the BOS the approval of the proposal presented by the firm, CMTA. The BOS accepted the Committee's recommendation. The RFP for the steam to hot water conversion project developed by CMTA and approved by the Building Committee and the BOS was posted. The Town did not receive any bids in response to the RFP for the steam to hot water conversion project. After reviewing the current situation of the heating system and the amount of dollars needed, the Building Committee decided that all the rooms that are still connected to the steam heat system needed to be connected to the existing hot water boiler this past summer. They did not feel it was worth the risk, given the issues that were occurring last winter, to wait any longer. The replacement of the boiler would need to wait until the following summer and the approval of additional capital funds. EMCOR provided a proposal to the Building Committee which was approved by the BOS. Given it was a Town project, all details were handled through the First Selectman's office. The school administration remained involved in all considerations involving the impact of the project on the operation of the school. The money allocated in the Town Capital Plan covered the EMCOR portion of the project. The BOE paid for the electrical work associated with this project out of its operating budget.

#### **Gym:**

In December, water covered portions of the gym floor near the doors and bleacher areas. Additional raised, bubbled areas appeared along the seams of the floor. Although this did occur during the time period that we were experiencing much rain, there was no evidence that the water was coming in from under the exterior doors. Mr. Akana, the EastConn facilities director, and an engineer from EastConn looked at the floor to help determine a possible cause as well as to provide contact information for a company that can repair or replace the floor if needed. This situation has not occurred since then. The underlying cause of the water was not determined.

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Library:

During December, there was a pipe break that released some steam and water into the library. EMCOR replaced the damaged coupling. To access the damaged areas, some library shelving needed to be moved from their bolted locations in front of the radiators. When removed from the walls, the need for replacing the shelving in the library became apparent. In response to that issue and the removal of additional shelving to provide for installation of the remainder of the heating system, a plan for purchasing new library shelving was approved by the BOE.

Transportation:

Rukstela Transportation turned over ownership of their school buses to Dattco, who then became our transportation provider. This was the last year of the contract with Rukstela so it was decided to go out with a combined bid proposal with the Town of Brooklyn. Dattco, First Student, M&J and EastConn each submitted bids in response to the posted RFP. EastConn was awarded the contract for both regular and special education transportation for five years.

Policy

During the 2019-20 school year, the Board continued to update policies in response to changes in State and Federal legislation, as recommended by the attorneys. Updated policies are delineated in monthly minutes of the Board of Education and access to all policies is on our website. Revised policies included:

- Policy 3150, Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers
- Policy 9141 Bylaws, Appointments of Representatives to the Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees
- Policy 1100, Non-Discrimination (Community Members)
- Policy 5146, Child Abuse and Assault (Students)

Finance

The Board of Education's operating budget for the 2019-20 school year was \$3,932,846. We also received State and Federal Grants that support the educational programming we provide for our students. This year we received the following grants:

1. School Readiness
2. Quality Enhancement
3. Primary Mental Health Grant
4. Rural Education Assistance Program
5. IDEA (two separate IDEA grants)
6. Title I and Title II

The Town directly received the State Education Cost Sharing grant funding as well as the Special Education Excess Cost funds.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the 2019-20 budget process. Savings were realized in areas such as field trips, fuel and a re-negotiated bus contract. Agreements, approved by the BOE, compensated all union and non-union employees for the 2019-20 school year.

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The savings that were realized alleviated the unanticipated increase in special education and high school tuitions and were used to purchase additional technology. The need for this technology was emphasized by the remote instruction. Money was also used to support the needed repairs in the building, including the replacement of one classroom floor and the stair treads on one stairwell. A sum of money (\$20,500) was also voted by the BOE and accepted by the BOS to be placed in the unexpended municipal account.

### **Personnel**

The Eastford Board of Education hired the following staff members:

1. Stephanie Murana, School Counselor
2. Tanya Webster, Social Studies Long Term Substitute
3. Joseph Tomanelli, General Music
4. David Vaughan, Instrumental Music
5. Chelsea Samperi, Physical Education and Health Long Term Substitute

### **Student Enrollment**

1. The October 1, 2019 student count at Eastford Elementary School was 148.
2. The October 1, 2019 count of Eastford students at Woodstock Academy was 41. 23 Eastford high school students were enrolled at other schools, including Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School, Killingly Regional Agricultural Center and Quinebaug Middle College.
3. Tuition, but not transportation, was paid for two Eastford students to attend E.O. Smith High School beginning in 2019-20.

### **Technology**

In 2019-20 we had a total of 135 computers in circulation: 85 Chromebooks, 20 Mac Airs and 30 Macbook Pros. These are housed on 6 carts around the building. There is an additional cart that has 10-15 computers on it that was restocked with more efficient machines repurposed from around the building which provided additional access to Google Classroom when working in the library or resource rooms. The Eastford School District has TelePresence videoconferencing equipment, which allows teachers and students to participate in workshops and courses as well as take advantage of virtual field trips via internet and video technology.

Although the Eastford School District has always recognized the importance of technology enriched instruction, during the COVID-19 pandemic the technology resources at Eastford Elementary School were used extensively for providing quality remote instruction for students from March-June. Students were provided with technology devices to access remote lessons. Teachers provided synchronous lessons, story time and book share opportunities through the use of Zoom. Lessons were posted for student access on Google Classroom and Seesaw. Online resources such as Lexia and IXL provided practice opportunities in math, science and language arts for students.

Classroom instruction was supported by the digital components of the district textbook series in math, science and social studies. In recognition of the importance of providing technology devices for every student, the BOE approved the purchase of up to \$68,000 worth of technology which allowed us to keep current with upgrades in technology as well as move to a one-to-one computer-to-student situation.

### **Curriculum Update**

- A dedicated team of 5 teachers met numerous times over the summer to evaluate and select an updated English-Language Arts (ELA) program that will meet Common Core Standards, foster and instill a passion for reading among students, and improve students' academic growth and performance.
- Mrs. Mead continued working with Mrs. Bibeault to better align our instructional practices with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and include hands-on opportunities for scientific exploration that will balance the digital component of the Discovery Education program. They wrote pacing guides for each grade level and compiled kits that can be used for each unit at all grade levels.
- To continue to address student social and emotional needs and to dovetail with the Second Step Program, we had students in grades 5 and 6 participate in the DARE program. This was a 10-week program presented to students by a CT State police officer certified to teach DARE. The program focused on good decision-making, making choices, assessing and evaluating outcomes. It also provided an opportunity for students to develop a positive relationship with the police officer and build familiarity in the community with the police.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development opportunities for the staff are provided on designated Professional Development days as well as through released time during the year. Professional development activities are carefully selected and/or planned to align with district and school goals.

- There were three professional development days in 2019-20. All staff attended the August and March days and only certified staff attended the November day.
  - The August Professional Development Day agenda was focused on staff introductions, staff preparation meetings, required training, safety updates, assessment results and the development of a school goal for continual academic and school climate improvement.
  - During the November Professional Development, the staff focused on the improvement of school climate through the implementation of restorative practices. Prior to the November professional development day, the presenter, a school climate specialist from EastConn, provided the staff with information regarding restorative practices and spent the day visiting classes and making observations and interactions. Follow up sessions were provided in January which

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- allowed staff to participate in sessions on integrating Social Emotional Learning and Restorative practices with academics.
- On the March Professional Development, all EES teaching staff met with teachers from Hampton and Scotland for professional development guided by EastConn staff. This supported the integration of SEL with academics and developed background knowledge on effective restorative practices.
- In addition to scheduled professional development days, staff members completed other professional development activities relating to school goals, student learning objectives and personal professional growth initiatives. These are highlighted in the principal's monthly reports available on the school's website. Below is a sampling of these high quality, targeted professional growth experiences:
    - Mrs. McCombe and Ms. Dill attended a two-day training on Restorative Practices. This training was endorsed and sponsored by the State of Connecticut (CSDE) as a way to continue supporting students with social-emotional needs and to continue efforts in developing a positive school climate and culture. By promoting this philosophy and mind-set it will help us to ensure that all students feel safe and connected while in school and on school transportation. Our goal is to ultimately provide training for all staff.
    - Mrs. Lessard attended Readers Workshop Units of Study training at EastConn to share information with our ELA committee and to learn more about the Workshop philosophy. She also participated in a Best New Young Adult Books of 2019 conference sponsored by TTL Seminars.
    - Mrs. Bibeault attend training on 'Purposeful Play' presented by Kristen Mraz in Berlin, CT.
    - The Middle school team of teachers met to discuss planning for the grade 5-8 middle school model and student needs.
    - Mrs. McCombe attended the TEAM District Facilitator training sponsored by EastConn and the Performance Matters workshop sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE.)
    - Mrs. Crocker-Lincoln, Ms. Dill and Mrs. Lessard attended training at EastConn on implementation of Reading Units of Study.
    - Mrs. McCombe and Ms. Murana attended training on social-emotional learning and school climate at EastConn.
    - Mrs. Mauer, SLP, attended training on the program, "Life Course" at EastConn.
    - Ms. Murana, our school counselor, attended training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Restorative Practices sponsored by CREC.
    - ELA teachers continued to receive support from EastConn on implementing Reader's Workshop.
    - Mrs. McCombe, Mrs. Chretien and Dr. Leake regularly attended their respective professional organizational meetings.



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- Mrs. Crocker-Lincoln attended the ELA Council Meeting at EastConn.
  - A team of teachers, Dr. Leake and Mrs. McCombe started the process of working with EastConn to develop the “Portrait of an Eastford Learner.” This will support and guide our curriculum and SEL decisions as we move into next school year.
  - Professional Development since COVID-19 moved to remote instruction.
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a change in focus of professional development. Staff devoted a great deal of time learning new technology platforms to support students while they are not physically in the school building. Virtual staff meetings were held weekly and EastConn had numerous Professional Development offerings to support districts in transitioning to, and sustaining, remote learning. The Strategic planning initiative focused on the Portrait of the Eastford Learner, and other planned programs to support the reading workshop initiative and the move to the use of restorative practices model was postponed until the 2020-21 school year.

### **Community Collaboration**

Collaboration with the community was a focused Board and Superintendent initiative this year, which was brought to a sudden halt with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to March:

- Volunteers from the local churches continued to support our afterschool enrichment activities and the afterschool homework club by providing volunteers to work with students. Some activities included Stenciling, Board Games, Zentangle pumpkin carving and a Model Rocket Workshop.
- A more formal mentoring program where volunteers worked 1:1 with select students to provide support with academics and spend quality time together in areas of mutual interest, such as hobbies or crafts, was continued.
- Grades PK, K and 3 visited the Eastford Public Library on a monthly basis.
- Grades 7 and 8 visited Union School to listen to a Holocaust speaker.

### **Field Trips**

Our teachers take the time to explore our local resources and to plan exciting opportunities that expand and enhance the learning that takes place within our classrooms.

- Mystic Seaport is always a popular destination. Grade 3 visited Mystic Seaport for a Hometown History Program. This year, Grade 7 students, along with students from Union School, participated for the first time in an overnight program on the training ship *the Joseph Conrad*. Dr. Leake, Mrs. Mead and Mr. Guilbault served as chaperones. Students Kaitlyn Becker, Alyssa Gilbert and Alexis Laskoski made a short presentation about this trip to the Board of Education.
- Grades 1 and 2 visited Creamery Brook Bison Farm in Brooklyn.

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- Grade 3 visited Sturbridge Village.
- Teachers take advantage of cultural opportunities offered at local venues, such as:
  - Grades 7 and 8 attended “A Christmas Carol” and a Talk Back session at The Hartford Stage performance.
  - Grades 2 and 3 attended a Symphony performance at the Loos Cultural Center at The Woodstock Academy.

### **Virtual Learning**

We are fortunate to have the technology to allow students to participate in a wide variety of virtual learning experiences such as:

- Grades K and 4 - bullying including: Halloween Poems for Many Voices: Bullying Expert/Speaker Brad Tassell, and No More Bullies: Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center
- Grade 4 - Asian Elephants: Learn Around the World
- Grade 3 - Holidays Around The World: Durham Museum
- Grade 4 - Wagons West: Roper Mountain, and Lure of the West: Smithsonian American Art Museum
- Grades 2 and 3 – Celebration of Seuss: Muskingum Valley Educational Center
- Grade 4 – Seuss 2.0: Muskingum Valley Educational Center
- Grade K – Arctic Animals: Toledo Zoo

### **Co-curriculum opportunities**

Teachers take advantage of many opportunities to provide students with learning activities that extend the curriculum, such as:

- EES students celebrated Global School Play Day and the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school.
- Teachers planned activities to celebrate Read Across America Day.
- Art teacher, Mrs. O’Hara, worked with 13 students who were interested in participating in the annual Invention Convention. Due to COVID-19, this opportunity was put on hold.
- Grades 7 and 8 attended Project Providence at Providence College on February 14 to learn about team building, sportsmanship, advantages of a healthy lifestyle and to watch a Providence College women’s basketball game.

### **School Sports**

In the 2019-20 school year, we had 8 boys and 11 girls participating in soccer. The girls followed the competitive league schedule and the boys scrimmaged with other towns with the understanding that we only had 8 players. We had 13 girls and 16 boys playing basketball, including one student from Union School. Congratulations to our boys’ basketball team! They won the playoff game against Ashford to earn the designation of QVJC small school league champion. With the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, school sports were put on hold.

### **Student Leadership**

Our Student Council, under the leadership of Mrs. Mead and Mrs. Reynolds, planned and executed social events, including dances, for the student population that often included the students from Union. In addition, they planned events that allowed for our students to “give back” to the community, e.g., selling carnations to benefit school and community projects and wearing pajamas to school to support kids battling cancer. The Music Department sponsored a Talent Show in conjunction with the Student Council. Proceeds benefited Australian Wildlife victims and those suffering from earthquakes in Puerto Rico.

### **Extended School Day**

- During the 2019-20 school year, the Board of Education facilitated the Before and After School Program for the ninth year. Melinda King was the primary childcare worker and Laurie Smith assisted.
- Mrs. Crocker-Lincoln, Mrs. Mead and Ms. Dill facilitated a well-established Homework Club four to five days per week from September through mid-March.

### **Extended School Year**

- Eastford provided extended year services (ESY) to students in accordance with their IEPs (individual educational program). Three students attended Camp Quinebaug and four were served at their outplacement sites. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the combined program with Pomfret Community School was not implemented as both districts limited in-person services. Therefore, students who required ESY at EES were provided with virtual (ZOOM) sessions, parent coaching, consultation, packets of materials and other communication as needed by EES special education teachers and applicable related services providers.
- Mrs. Mead taught a summer STEM program for students entering grades 4-8 during the week of July 22-26. This was held in conjunction with a Summer Sports camp sponsored by the local churches. The Sports Camp had approximately 80 participants and college volunteers came from around the country to supervise the children. The STEM portion had 5 participants. Students built and programmed (coded) mini robots – Ozobots. Students used problem solving, technology, hands-on manufacturing and coding build and manipulate their robots.
- Sarah Boyd, school librarian, provided two summer reading and craft opportunities for students entering grades preschool-3. A handful of families attended each one.

## **Readiness**

We are proud to announce that our Readiness program received our NAEYC Accreditation Renewal. We continue to work to maintain updated NAEYC standards and criteria. Our next accreditation will be due in April 2025. The Readiness Program was full with 17 students. With the new Assessment Program (DOTS), student reports went home twice a year with conferences being held between these reporting periods, once in November and once in March. The Readiness Council continues to work on revising and aligning policies to include all components for School Readiness and NAEYC. Based on areas of weakness from our recent NAEYC Accreditation, the specific goal focus areas for this year are: meeting all criteria for NAEYC Health Components; assisting families in connecting with one another; and aligning preschool curriculum and instructional practices with kindergarten expectations.

## **Remote Learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

In March, we moved to a remote learning model so students could continue to receive instruction and practice of skills while they were not physically in the school building. Remote learning is not like a regular school day! Remote learning is not optional for students. It is essential in order to prepare students for the learning and skills that will be needed to keep up with classes. Our goal with remote learning was to maintain learning and instruction through a blended approach that included opportunities for remote digital learning, hands-on family-centered learning, integrated, project-based learning and continuity of existing systems and supports for students, to the extent possible. Staff responded quickly to the closing of schools by developing learning packets that were distributed to all families. Staff spent many hours becoming adept at using remote resources to communicate with and provide instruction to students. Staff utilized district resources, together with resources that were provided by the State Department of Education and EastConn, to provide education remotely to all of our students. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 plan were provided detailed information about services. Many of the typical State requirements and timelines, including the teacher evaluation process, were waived. Parent-teacher conferences, scheduled for April 2 and April 3, were not held. Parents and teachers discussed progress updates and concerns via email and/or phone calls. All staff should be commended for their dedication to learning new ways to connect and engage with students remotely. Teachers and paraprofessionals worked together to offer story-times, lessons, activities and learning opportunities for all students. A few extra-special opportunities included:

- Zoom instrumental music lessons provided by Mr. Vaughan.
- Virtual Planetarium event hosted by Mrs. Mead and Mystic Seaport for middle school families.
- Driveway visits by Mrs. Reynolds.
- A Pollinator Project for grade 4 students hosted by Ms. Dill and the Eastford Conservation Commission.
- A collaborative approach to studying history for middle school students by incorporating the music of different time periods, like the Civil War, into

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academic learning – presented to students by Mr. Kernan, Mr. Tomanelli and Mr. Vaughan.

- Care boxes prepared by Ms. Murana and Mrs. Ames and delivered to students in the PALS program that contained a small stuffed animal, notebook, crayons, a handwritten letter and a rock project for students.
- Eastford Scavenger Hunt for grade 1 students organized by Mrs. Pittman and Mrs. Rhynhart.
- Eastern Blue Bird birdhouse building kit for grade 3 students prepared in conjunction with the Eastford Congregational Church and Mrs. Mead. After building the kit with families, students were asked to keep a photo journal of “who” was living in their birdhouse.
- A Virtual Field Day on June 10. No scheduled lessons or virtual meetings were held so students could use the day to prepare for and participate in some fun, at home field day events. Parents and older students received information via email with directions on how to prepare and participate in these activities. A slide show of student participation was posted on the school website.

### **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Through fundraising activities our family organizations support important programming opportunities for our students:

- The Annual Goods and Services Auction Committee, sponsored by the Middle School Auction Committee, raised approximately \$14,500. This was shared between grades 5-8. We are very grateful for the generosity of families and local business owners who donated goods or services. Our students benefit tremendously from their time and generosity. The Middle School Fundraising group continues to meet regularly to plan for the next year’s auction.
- The PTO sponsored the Scholastic Book Fair and whole school activities such as; Judy Jones, entertainer, who demonstrated hula-hooping, magic and general entertainment.
- The PTO continued to collect Box Tops for Education to earn funds for items to support students and school programs.
- The Sports Boosters sold EES Logo wear.

### **Community Collaboration**

- Mrs. McCombe, Dr. Leake, Pastor Moran of the Congregational Church of Eastford and Pastor Howard of the Eastford Baptist Church met regularly to discuss and coordinate collaboration opportunities.
- Volunteers from the Congregational Church of Eastford and the Eastford Baptist Church continued to offer after school enrichment activities for students on a monthly basis. Recent activities included Holiday Mat Weaving, Cupcake Decorating and Board Games.
- Members of the Eastford Conservation Commission worked with grade 3 students to construct a Rain Garden on the lawn outside the science classroom window. Grade 3 students will continue to maintain this in the future.

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- The Eastford Fire Company provided their annual Fire Prevention Awareness program. Students in PK-grade 3 explored the fire trucks and learned about fire safety.
- Eastford Elementary School was pleased to support a new program, “Raising Highly Capable Kids.” This program was held at the Congregational Church of Eastford and was open to all Eastford families as well as families from neighboring towns who were interested in building the confidence, tools and skills needed to raise healthy, caring and responsible children in our rapidly changing society. The program was free and dinner and child-care were provided. Eight EES families were among those participating in this program.
- Dr. Leake participated in several community events including the midday holiday luncheon at the Congregational Church of Eastford, Cupcake Wars, the Eastford Seniors pizza and music celebration and a special presentation of the Woodstock Academy Choir held at the Congregational Church of Eastford.
- Local volunteers donated numerous boxes of school supplies. We used these to “build” backpacks for students full of all their necessary supplies.
- Dr. Leake initiated the Superintendents Problem Solvers program for Grades K-3. This program was designed to promote family involvement with math by engaging parents and guardians as partners in problem-solving experiences. Families and school staff working together to encourage and celebrate learning builds community and contributes to a positive school climate.
- Although cut short by COVID-19, we initiated a new partnership with Eastern Connecticut State University to promote collaborative efforts in the area of STEM/STEAM. Mrs. Mead had arranged for our grades 5, 6 and 7 students to visit the planetarium at ECSU to support their study of Astronomy. Ms. Rodriguez, the science educator at Eastern, worked with her education students to plan additional activities for the students to engage in while on the campus. Hopefully this partnership can be continued after the COVID-19 Pandemic ends.
- The district applied for and received a small amount of funding from the EastConn Minority Teacher Recruitment grant program that allowed us to buy books for all students during our remote learning period.
- Pastor Moran, Mr. Tomanelli (Music), Mrs. O’Hara (Art) met to discuss ways that the school and community could develop stronger partnerships in the arts. As expected, when such creative minds come together in one place, many interesting possibilities were discussed. As a start, students were offered opportunities to participate in the Creative Arts night that took place at the Congregational Church of Eastford.
- Grade 3 and 4 Reading Challenge: Ms. Dill and Mrs. Crocker-Lincoln participated in a Reading Challenge Program designed by Dr. Leake as a collaborative effort with the local community to support students’ love of reading. Students were provided with a monthly reading goal. Those that reached their goal were invited to participate in the celebration. Celebrations were supported by such local businesses as Coriander’s and Buell’s Orchards.

### **High School Partnerships**

- Our students attend the Open House programs at the area high schools. Our students also have the opportunity to shadow students at The Woodstock Academy, Killingly, Ellis Tech and ACT.
- The Open House program at EES provided families the opportunity to visit classrooms and participate in an ice cream social sponsored by the PTO. Families were also provided with the opportunity to gather information on high school choices. Representatives from The Woodstock Academy, Killingly Ag-Ed, Quinebaug Middle College (QMC), Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT), Ellis Tech and E.O. Smith High School provided information to students and families. Other tables were set up to provide information about our parent groups, Boy Scouts and Town organizations.

### **Homework Club**

- Volunteers continued to assist at the after-school homework club.
- FRESH mentors from The Woodstock Academy provided additional support to our students during the after-school homework club. Volunteers came two to three times a week.

### **Collaboration with the Town of Eastford and other local towns**

In addition to working collaboratively with the Eastford Community to provide amazing opportunities for our students, we continue to maintain and explore opportunities for collaboration for services.

- With our town: The Eastford Board of Education and the Town of Eastford have collaborative agreements that include:
  - Employee Health benefits, which is a collaborative with the State Partnership Plan.
  - Liability, Auto, Professional and Worker's Compensation Insurance through CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency), another state cooperative.
  - Fueling of school buses at the Town Transfer Station.
  - Upkeep of the athletic fields.
  - The partnership with the Town Emergency Management Team was increased as a result of COVID-19. Ms. Richards, the Emergency Management Director, served on the Eastford Elementary School Reopening Committee. She also kept in regular contact with the administration, informing them of important updates from the meetings she attended.
- With other towns and agencies:
  - A long-term collaboration with the Union School District for sports, dances, and the Washington, D.C. trip (not done due to COVID-19).

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- A collaborative arrangement continues with the Pomfret School District to share a Pupil Services Director, though this is the last year due to Mrs. Chretien's retirement from Pomfret.
- Dr. Leake attended a series of administrative/Town representative meetings at EastConn, arranged by Representative Doug Dubitsky.
- The Eastford School District continues to participate in a number of collaborative agreements with EastConn, the Regional Education Service Center:
  - Birth to Three Student Services
  - Adult Education Services
  - Cooperative Purchasing Agreements for supplies and fuel
  - Magnet School Agreement
  - Readiness Compliance Oversight

### **Achievements, Awards and Recognitions**

Success can be measured in many ways. During their time at EES, students demonstrate academic, social and emotional growth. The students at Eastford Elementary are progressing in all areas. As noted in other sections of this report, our students participate in sports and in leadership events. They continue to show growth in the academic areas. One indicator of this can be found in their performance on the State Smarter Balanced Assessment. This year, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the State assessments were not administered.

#### **Honors Algebra**

Four students in grade 8 took an Honors Algebra 1 class offered collaboratively with The Woodstock Academy. This is an Advanced Credit (AC) course. Students who receive a final grade of at least a B (85) and pass the final exam with at least a 75% receive high school credit. Students not enrolled in the Honors Algebra course are taking the traditional grade 8 math course.

#### **The Arts**

This year our students were provided enhanced opportunities to explore and share their talents, such as:

- In November, students in grades 1-4 presented "Songs for Thanksgiving"
- In December, students in grades 5-8 presented a mini musical, "The Grumps of Ring a Ding Town"
- Grade 3 and 7 Students were invited by the Mansfield Arts Council to display their artwork at the East Brook Mall

Although spring events were planned, they needed to be canceled.

#### **Congratulations**

During the 2019-20 school year, congratulations were extended to:

- Robert Ellsworth for his first-place finish and Jacob Murphy for his second-place finish in the Eastford School Geography Bee.



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- Abigail Haynes, Grade 3 student, and Ammani Kuljancic, grade 5 student, (First Trimester); Mitchell Norman, Grade 3 student, and Addison Beausoleil, grade 7 student (Second Trimester) as recipients of the Trimester Citizenship Awards. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, there were no recipients for the third trimester.
- Izetta Asikainen, former EES student, who received the Woodstock Academy CAPSS Recognition Award.
- Zoe Marshall ('20) and Clayton Singleton ('21) received a Head of School Award for outstanding commitment to The Woodstock Academy and Community.
- Clayton Singleton ('21) was appointed to serve as a Student Representative on the 2020-2021 Connecticut State Advisory Council on Education (SSACE.)

Grade 8 Graduation

Mrs. McCombe spent much time planning for the Grade 8 graduation which was an outdoor “drive-in” style ceremony with the traditional speech by the Class President. Awards and diplomas were placed out for contact-free pick up by students and each student had the opportunity to walk across the “stage” and be recognized by families and peers. Although the event was only open to immediate family members and essential staff, the ceremony was video recorded and posted on the school website along with a link to view the traditional student slide show. The equipment and support were provided by members of the Eastford Baptist Church and the flower arrangements, provided by Mr. and Ms. Herm Barlow, contributed to the success of the program

During the Grade 8 graduation ceremony, the following awards were presented:

Award	Recipient(s)
Marilyn Krom, PTO	Kyliegh Chiles
Eastford Teachers Memorial	Kerry Blais
Olivette Kozey	Enzo Miglietta
Allen James Day Memorial	Kerry Blais and Enzo Miglietta
Roger Mason Day Memorial	Hunter Larson
William Shand Memorial	Cadence Pittman
Eastford Fire Company Citizenship	Hunter Larson
Otto F. King	Kerry Blais
American Legion	Alexander Harakaly
Joseph St. King	Enzo Miglietta
The ETA Local Hero	Hunter Larson
Arboriculture Award	Alexander Harakaly
Math/Science/Tech	Hunter Larson and Enzo Miglietta
Humanities	Enzo Miglietta
Presidential Academic Fitness	Hunter Larson and Enzo Miglietta
William S. Warren	Hunter Larson

**Eastford Elementary School 2020 Graduates**

Kerry Blais  
Conner Buell  
Nathan Budd  
Kyliegh Chiles  
Alexander Harakaly  
Hunter Haynes  
Matthew Johnson  
Hunter Larson  
Taylor Laskoski  
Enzo Miglietta  
Cadence Pittman  
Owen Reynolds Dyer

**Eastford 2020 High School Graduates**

**Woodstock Academy**

Izetta Asikainen  
Zachary Bertram  
Mia Kozey Edwards  
Kayla Gaudreau  
Jennifer Groleau  
Paula Hernandez-Aulet  
Nathaniel Johnson  
Zoe Marshall  
Judy Thavone  
Austin Varrieur

**Ellis Tech**

Matt Gaudreau

**Eastford Farm Home Academy**

Micah Torcellini

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College Scholarships

During the 2019-20 school year, the Board’s Scholarship Steering Committee continued their collaboration with the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and the Hartford Foundation to award College Scholarships to Eastford high school seniors and current college students. The following Scholarships were awarded:

Scholarship	Recipient(s)
The Dennis S. Barlow Scholarship Award	Cameron Grube Emily Hughes
The Edith Wheaton Smith Memorial Scholarship	Liam Dyer Kayla Gaudreau Cameron Grube Madelyn Grube Collin Singleton
The Eleanor K. Lewis Scholarship	Collin Singleton
The Emil Vaida Scholarship	Micah Torcellini
The Esther and Lucie Harmon and Leta Sabin Trepal Scholarship	Cody Goodwin Madelyn Grube Tyler Singleton
The Harold Carpenter Fund Scholarship	Micah Torcellini
Mary King Sharpe Memorial Business Scholarship	Collin Singleton
Ethel Gardner Music Scholarship	Dylan Grube Micah Torcellini

**Board of Education**

Stephen Bowen, Chairperson  
Terry Cote, Vice-Chairperson  
Lauren Skiff, Secretary  
Megan Calchera  
Robert Ellsworth  
Adam Minor  
Jessica Perry

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Faculty and Staff

Mrs. Sandra Ames	PALS Associate
Mrs. Laurie Bardsley	Grade 2
Mrs. Diane Barlow	Interventionist
Mrs. Michelle Bibeault	Kindergarten
Mrs. Samantha Boccacio	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Sarah Boyd	Library Media Specialist
Mr. Tyler Bridgewater	Physical Education/Health
Mrs. Stephanie Bulan	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Mary Jo Chretien	Pupil Services Director
Mrs. Lori Crocker-Lincoln	Grade 3
Mrs. Catherine DePercio	Spanish
Ms. Megan Dill	Grade 4
Ms. Kymberli Gaylor	District Financial Assistant
Mrs. Deborah Giovanni	Paraprofessional
Mr. Steven Guilbault	Special Education
Mrs. Lisa Hackner	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Kristin Haynes	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Tammy Hull	Paraprofessional
Mr. Charles Kernan	Social Studies, Grades 5-8
Ms. Alaina Kilburn	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Melinda King	Before and After School Program
Mrs. Christine Kopplin	Preschool
Dr. Donna Leake	Superintendent
Mrs. Melissa Lessard	Language Arts, Grades 5-8
Mr. Dale Lundy	Custodian
Mr. Daniel Lussier	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Donna Lynch	Enrichment
Mrs. Sarah Manbeck	Paraprofessional
Ms. Rachelle Mauer	Speech and Language Pathologist
Mrs. Carole McCombe	Principal
Mrs. Candice Mead	Science
Mrs. Patricia Moran	Special Education
Ms. Stephanie Murana	School Counselor and PALS Associate
Mrs. Elizabeth O'Hara	Art
Mr. Christopher Pittman	Custodian
Mrs. Margaret Pittman	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Lori Reynolds	Math, Grades 5-8
Mrs. Elizabeth Rhynhart	Grade 1
Mrs. Catherine Roto	School Nurse
Ms. Chelsea Samperi	Long term substitute: Phys Ed/ Health
Mrs. Mary Seguine	School Secretary
Mrs. Laurie Smith	Before and After School Program
Mr. Joseph Tomanelli	General Music
Mr. David Vaughan	Instrumental Music
Ms. Tanya Webster	Long term substitute: Social Studies