

Eastford Elementary School  
Safety Committee Minutes  
Tuesday, September 29, 2020  
4:30 PM via Zoom

**I. Call to Order at 4:32 PM**

**Members Present:** Doug Beaudoin, Fire Chief; Deborah Richards, Eastford EMD; Donna Leake, Superintendent; Megan Calchera, Board of Education; Carole McCombe, Principal; Lori Crocker-Lincoln, Eastford Teacher

**Members Absent:** Jason Szemrelyo, Parent representative; Police representative

**II. Update on COVID-19 safety precautions and Reopening of School**

Carole McCombe shared the protocols and precautions in place for the safe reopening of the school during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- A Reopening Committee was formed in July to begin discussions on how to reopen the school. The committee consists of representatives from parent groups, Board of Education, school staff and the Town of Eastford. The Committee followed state and CDC guidance.
- A reopening plan was created that focused on a modified hybrid model with four days in person learning and one remote learning day for students each week.
- Visitors to the building are limited.
- Student work and other materials for remote students are left outside the main door for drop off/pick up.
- Floor markings have been placed in hallways and classrooms to designate one way and 6' distancing.
- Student desks are 6' apart in all classrooms and students/staff use desk shields.
- All people in the building wear masks.
- Sanitizing stations have been installed around the building and hand sanitizer is available in all the classrooms/workspaces.
- The Monday remote day allows for extra cleaning. An additional custodial staff member has been hired to assist with cleaning classrooms and common areas frequently throughout the school day.
- Hand washing routines and mask breaks have been established.
- There are no after school activities or sports at this time.
- The building is ventilated in the morning and afternoon, before and after people enter/leave the building.
- Windows are kept open during the school day and classroom doors closed to keep the oxygenated air in the classrooms.

- Students are eating lunch in the classrooms. Small groups of middle school students rotate eating in the lunchroom and in classrooms. Special area teachers are traveling to students instead of students moving throughout the building.
- The situation is reassessed monthly to determine if conditions warrant a full return to in-person learning.
- Staff are encouraged to keep 6' from students and other staff.

### **III. Review and discuss Addendum #8: Fire and School Safety During COVID**

CSDE guidance requires that monthly drills should continue, including a crisis response drill every third month. All students and staff should wear a mask during fire drills and practice safe distancing once assembled. New assembly locations have been established outside for all grades to allow for social distancing. We had our first Fire Drill on September 17 and everything went smoothly.

Lockdown drills will also continue. Staff will review, discuss, and model with students without the whole group hiding/sheltering at the same time. All students will wear masks as they do throughout the school day. During the drill, an announcement will be made as we typically do, and only one or two students will practice moving to hide or shelter to model for the class. Teachers will then allow other students to take turns doing so. They would be instructed that, in an actual situation, they should hide or shelter as quickly and quietly as possible.

### **IV. All staff training on elements of the School Safety Plan**

At the beginning of each school year I review with staff the sample teacher's emergency packet and flow chart for different scenarios – lockdown, shelter in place, secure school, and natural disasters such as tornado and hurricane safety. They keep this quick guide in their emergency folders in the bin near the classroom door along with a class list, pencil and other items on the checklist.

All classrooms and workspaces are equipped with an emergency bucket that contains water, cups, flashlight, batteries, a blanket, masks, toilet paper and other essential supplies. The bucket is checked 2 times per year by staff and the school nurse to ensure it contains all required items.

When COVID precautions are lifted, we will resume practice on other aspects of school evacuation – such as utilizing our offsite gathering location.

### **V. Discuss 2020-2021 Safety Plan submission**

Primary new item is the need for an annex for emergency communications for any student identified as deaf, hard of hearing or both blind or visually impaired

and deaf, including procedures for alerting such students of an emergency situation and ensuring that the specific needs of the students are met during the emergency situations. All other elements remain the same.

We do not currently have signage in Braille or other such system of supporting students with significant hearing or visual impairments. Support staff is assigned to assist with any students who have significant disabilities or conditions that require support to evacuate, shelter in place or follow directions in the event of an emergency.

We are due to have an updated security audit by a certified member of the State Police. Carole McCombe will work to get this scheduled and completed. Carole McCombe and office staff will work on updating the necessary elements of the plan for submission by November 1, 2020.

## **VI. Other items relating to School Safety**

Discussion was held about a recent alarm call at the school on Monday evening, September 21, 2020. The alarm came in indicating smoke in the Office Area. The actual event was in the Kindergarten room. Dr. Leake followed up with the alarm company to have all the alarm codes checked and aligned with current building usage.

The Fire Company requested and received an updated school layout map. A request was made to have reflective numbers on the outside of the building instead of the black numbers we currently have. Fire Chief Doug Beaudoin did not feel this was necessary. The Fire Company does not use the window numbers, but rather they rely on the layout and inside numbering. Carole McCombe will check with State Police during the Security Audit regarding this matter.

Staff shared concerns about safety with more time outdoors for mask breaks and fresh air. Classes are utilizing the grassy area near the building, the parking lot and the front steps of the middle school wing. There are limited boundary markings between the grass and Westford Road. Dr. Leake will follow up with Eastford Public Works to see about concrete pilings (bollards) or other type of barrier.

Fire Chief Doug Beaudoin requested time for EIFD members to check their keys to the building to ensure they can access all locations. Carole McCombe will facilitate this.

Carole McCombe and Doug Beaudoin will plan a modified Fire Safety event for students October 21. EIFD will provide feedback on a fire drill and students may view the trucks, equipment and gear and ask questions. Students will receive Fire Prevention materials.

**VII. Separation of School Climate and School Safety meetings**

Going forward, the Climate Committee and Safety Committee will be separate entities and will meet separately. The Safety Committee is aligned around improving school climate and addressing incidents of bullying and sexual harassment. School climate updates that impact school safety will be shared at the Safety Committee meetings.

**VIII. Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

The next meeting will be scheduled to review the results of the Security Audit, once completed.

Minutes submitted by Carole McCombe