

## Superintendent's Report: August 2021

Highlight of the Month: This year we provided a variety of summer school programming for our students at Eastford Elementary School. I would like to extend thanks to Mary Jo Chretien and staff for a very successful extended year program and to Candice Mead and staff for making it possible to offer our students a STEM/Mystic summer enrichment program. It was great fun and a highlight of the summer to join the students at the Aquarium for behind the scenes interactions with sharks, jellyfish and turtles, etc. It is the intention of the Eastford and Aquarium leadership to continue this partnership.

### News and Notes:

#### Educational Leadership

- Over the summer, the administration continued moving forward with our long-term strategic planning process. Carole will share the final draft copy of this plan with the staff during the professional development days for input and the drafting of specific goals for the 2021-22 school year. Following review by the staff, a copy of this plan will be forwarded to the BOE for review and input at the September meeting in conjunction with the updating of BOE goals. A copy will also be placed on our website for family review and input. I am considering the formation of a District Advisory Committee, similar to the composition of the District Reopening Committee. This committee will provide ongoing input and guidance as to the continued implementation of the long term strategic plan. After the administration has had time to review this concept, I will share more information regarding the organization of such a committee to the BOE in September.
- Over the summer, staff and administration continued work on the English Language Arts curriculum and the interconnected Physical Education, Social and Emotional and Health curriculums. Additional resources and an updated version of the Second Step program materials were purchased to facilitate delivery of these updated plans. These plans are being updated in light of current State standards and our Portrait (vision) of the Eastford Learner (POL). The Science curriculum was also recently updated to include references to Eastford's Portrait of a Learner. Carole will bring completed curriculum documents to the Curriculum Committee and then the BOE during the 2021-22 school year. Staff and administration also worked on the update and revision of the Response to Intervention plan and all the procedures and protocols for the Special Education, including gifted, plan. Carole, Mary Jo and involved staff will share these updated plans with staff on the August professional development days.
- As of this communication we are awaiting official confirmation of being a recipient of a competitive After School grant award. This grant will allow us to offer up to 10 hours of free, quality after school programming to 20-24 families. We are in the initial planning and advertising phase of this program. More information will follow once the grant is officially approved.
- We are also awaiting a response regarding our application for the School Security Grant. In her report, Carole provided progress on the facility projects that may be reimbursable to the Town if this grant is approved.
- Thanks to the work of Carole and her committee members, we are beginning the year with 4 new staff members: Jennifer Barlow (Math), Adam Phelps (ELA), Jessica Garvie (Grade K) and David Burgess (Instrumental). We are currently in the process of hiring a new Art teacher, given the recent resignation of our current one. We will most likely be starting the year with a substitute until a permanent replacement is found. We also just received notice from Stephanie Bulan that she will not be returning to her position as a paraprofessional this year. A copy of her letter is included in your packet.
- Any BOE member who has the time in their busy schedules is invited to join us on the August 26 professional development day to meet new staff and greet those that are returning. Please let Carole know if you are planning to stop by during that day.

### Facilities:

- EMCOR has continued work on the upgrade and related repairs of the heating system. A routine, expanded maintenance contract will also be completed before the start of school. Although there will always be the need for repairs, it is anticipated that this summer marks the end of major work on the heating system until the older boiler needs to be replaced.
- We are in the process of updating our electrical system due to the upgrades of the heating system and in response to electrical-related issues with our network. It is anticipated this work will be completed by the end of the summer.
- We have also made several repairs and upgrades to our plumbing system this summer. This includes the installation of new faucets and toilets, as well as replacing corroded and leaking pipes in the boiler room.
- Wayne Edwards performed a routine maintenance check on our roof this summer. Information gathered will be shared at the first meeting of the Town Roof Committee. This meeting is scheduled to take place at the Town Hall on August 23 at 6:00 PM.
- As an FYI, many towns are using the Town monies received as part of the COVID-19 related funding to air condition their schools. I have been informed that, in addition to being a major process for EES, it could also result in an increase in base charges for electricity due to a possible change in the utilization status of our school. A meeting of the Facilities Committee could be scheduled if there is any interest in discussing this further.

### Collaboration and Communication:

Our most exciting recent collaborative effort was the new partnership with Mystic Aquarium for the summer enrichment grant. It was truly an exciting STEM-focused program. The Congregational Church of Eastford partnered with us on the submission of the After School grant proposal. They will continue to partner with us on the provision of our after school programming and they will also offer additional workshop opportunities for families. Engagement of all Eastford families has always been acknowledged as critical to the success of all of our students. Due to increased funding and focus, we plan to extend our efforts to engage all families in the education of their children. We are also in the planning stages for partnerships with Buell Orchards and the Eastford Baptist Church.

### Finance:

Much work was done over the summer to close out our 2020-21 operating budget as well as spending down necessary grant funds. Although there have been changes in student enrollment, including special education and staffing, it is too soon to quantify their budgetary impact at this time.

### Comments on selected agenda items

#### XI. New Business

##### A. Update on School Reopening

The start of the 2021-22 school year marks the third year of learning that will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Working as a team, we successfully navigated the past two years. Although the protocols and strategies implemented in the past two years puts us in a good place for a safe, in-person opening of the 2021-22 school year, we continue to attend meetings and monitor the recommendations for continued mitigating strategies in light of current statistics. When we open our school in August, we will be adhering to the latest recommendations from the State Departments of Health and Education, which are continually being updated.

##### B. 2021-2022 Bus Routes

Our 2021-22 bus routes have been shared with you via email. As you know, these routes are subject to change based on student enrollment and decisions of families to use the buses.

As of this communication our bus route times are:

Length of run

Bus 1 am/pm: 1 hour, 29 minutes / 1 hour, 13 minutes

Bus 2 am/pm: 1 hour, 16 minutes/ 1 hour, 7 minutes

Ridership

Bus 1: 33 students

Bus 2: 40 students

Given the drop off and pick up times for students using our buses remain relatively the same, we will continue in 2021-22 with the same school schedule that was in place for staff and students in 2020-21. The draft, unofficial Memorandum of Agreement that will be discussed with teachers regarding this schedule is attached.

C. Reports on Student Activities, Milk, Readiness Fees and BASP

These reports are included in your packet.

D. Fee increases for BASP

We are proposing a fee increase for the 8:00-8:25 AM before school care cost. Currently we charge \$50 per year for this time slot. Divided by 182 days, that equals \$.27 per day. We propose charging \$1.00 per day for this time frame. Carole can provide additional information if needed.

E. Fee increases for Milk

Essentially, our total milk expense was \$6,124.16 and we brought in \$4,602.71 from the State. To cover the difference, if we do not have a balance in the account we need to use money from student activities. Currently we charge \$.13 per milk or \$22.10 per year. We are proposing raising it to \$.25 per milk or \$42.50 per year. The cost of milk for us to purchase from Wade's Dairy has gone up each year and the amount of state reimbursement remains the same.

G. through M. Policies

Given that the policies listed as items XI. G. through XI. M. were carefully reviewed by the Policy Committee, reflect minor mandated changes and that some of these same policies may require additional minor updates based on the most recent legislation, I recommend that the BOE vote to accept these policies with one reading.

N. through R. Policies

The policies listed as items XI. N. through XI. R. are scheduled for review and recommendation by the members our Policy Committee on August 16. Given these policies are interconnected, recommendations for merging and/or elimination of certain policies may be recommended. Also, based on recent purchasing experiences, I have made recommendations for the Policy Committee to consider relative to changing the limits regarding the formal and informal bid process. Given you may not receive these draft policies until very close to the meeting and given that they contain very important purchasing processes and protocols, the Board should be prepared to discuss but not approve these policies as part of the first reading process.

Financial Reports

As always, if you have any questions regarding any of the financial reports, please do not hesitate to forward them to me prior to the BOE meeting so we can be best prepared to respond.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in person on August 19 at 7:00PM