

Superintendent's Report: September 2020

Highlight of the Month:

The doors of Eastford Elementary School opened for our students on August 31. Thanks to the efforts of the entire staff of EES, our students were engaged in a very exciting and successful first week of learning. At this time our current enrollment count at Eastford Elementary School is 138 students with 15 students choosing the option to “temporarily learn at home”. The parents/guardians of eight students decided to home school their children, these students are no longer included in our count for this year.

News and Notes:

Facilities:

The electrician completed additional work that should allow EMCOR to complete their work on the hot water heating system. We will be doing a test of the system this month, so we are prepared to turn on the heating system when the days become cooler in October. A meeting of the Town Building Committee for this project will be scheduled this month.

We interviewed for a part time custodial substitute position. This position will help assist with the additional cleaning protocols that were developed in response to COVID-19.

Our cleaning and ventilation protocols, which were developed with guidance from the State Department of Health, our regional health office and EMCOR, are included in the parent information section of the webpage. For your convenience, a copy of these protocols is included with this packet.

Collaboration and Communication:

Our efforts regarding communication and collaboration are targeted on keeping families updated as to new information, including policies and protocols, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. All updated protocols are included in the parent section of our website. The administration also maintains an open system of communication with staff. In addition, the administration and the school nurse continue to remain current with updated COVID-19 related information through professional meetings and attendance at webinars. The EES Reopening Committee will continue to meet. Their next meeting is at 6:00PM on September 10, prior to the BOE meeting. The Town and School administration are keeping in close contact regarding safety and security protocols as well as any potential sources of additional funding for Eastford.

Finance:

We have made some unanticipated expenditures in the areas of technology and instruction to meet the needs of our students that are learning on site as well as those learning at home. These expenditures are currently within the allocated amounts of our 2020-21 budget. We are still awaiting updated information as to the availability of funds and allowed expenditures regarding the additional OPM funds we are targeted to receive. Once we receive this information, we will be able to make more informed reallocations within our budget. We are targeted to receive a total of \$70,722. The bulk of the dollars, \$67,800, is allocated to health and safety, cleaning and PPE needs. An amount of \$2,526, which was allocated to support transportation needs, was recently increased to \$3,027. We received only \$356 dollars to support our needs for additional support personnel even though in our financial survey we indicated this

as our area of greatest need. There have been many concerns expressed by school superintendents and business managers concerning the allocation of these funds. We have been promised to receive more information shortly.

Additional news and notes

- We continue to respond to staff requests for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 FMLA requests.
- We have not yet finalized an MOU with the ETA regarding impact due to COVID-19. We are also working on an MOU regarding the adjustment of starting and ending times of the teacher workday.
- The Executive Board is continuing to negotiate the successor contract between the certified union and the BOE. A mediation date of September 28 has tentatively been set in the event a negotiated settlement is not achieved prior to that date.
- Eastford School District was named along with school districts across the country in a class action special education lawsuit arising out of New York. CIRMA is providing the services of the law firm that is representing us on this issue.
- We have been receiving a variety of false alarm notices from our security service. We are in communication with them to resolve this issue.

Comments on the agenda items:

I am providing general notes on the agenda items since they mostly involve routine items, status updates and policy reviews. The policy regarding bullying was moved to the October agenda to allow the school staff sufficient time to update the Safe School Climate Plan. The Readiness Grant, \$100,800, which supports our preschool program and the Primary Mental Health Grant, \$12,607, which provides additional support to students in the area of social and emotional growth, are traditional grants that we apply for and have received in past years. We also have the opportunity to apply for \$10,000 in Title IV funds this year due to receiving Title I funds last year. Although I am asking that you support the possibility of us applying for these Title IV funds, I am not certain we will do so since we have been informed that we will lose, dollar for dollar, the amount of funds we receive from our REAP grant next year. I have been in communication with the person from the state to verify this information. REAP grant dollars are typically more flexible in spending than those provided under Title IV.