

## Superintendent's Report: August 2024

Highlight of the Month: It is once again an honor to be welcoming back the Eastford staff, students and families to the 2024-25 school year.

### News and Notes

#### Educational Leadership:

- Carole, Charlie and I have been working together to fill all the staffing and contracted services needs for our Eastford students.
  - Carole and Charlie are in the process of hiring new paraeducators. To date we are pleased to announce we have offered contracts of employment to: Seth Budd, Mary Dennison, Chelsea Friedmann and Lara Quinn (long-term para sub).
  - Due to changes in priorities and staffing, Eastconn is no longer offering contracted services for Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. Based on Charlie's review of comparative costs, we entered a contract with French River to offer these services.
  - Although we continue to post, we have been unsuccessful in hiring an "on staff" Speech and Language Pathologist. As a result, we are currently contracting with French River to provide these services.
  - Carole, Charlie and I have been meeting to revise our district, school and personal goals. With support from Eastconn, we are also concurrently working to streamline and make current the components of our strategic plan. Given this is the year we will be implementing the new Teacher Evaluation plan, this review and updating is of critical importance as teachers work to develop relevant goals in accordance with the changes in the revised Teacher Evaluation Plan.
  - Carole, Charlie and I are also working together to provide the professional development support and time needed by certified staff as we begin the implementation of the new Teacher Evaluation Plan. This support includes providing training for staff and paraeducators to meet the needs of an ever-changing population of students. We received grant funding to assist us in offering this support. To provide the increased need for professional development and take advantage of the additional funding, we will be asking the BOE to approve two additional early release days in the 2024-25 school year calendar. This will be discussed further under agenda item XII.F.

#### Facilities:

- We have been unsuccessful, to date, in offering a contract of employment to a full-time night custodian. We have been discussing with our daytime custodian Lory Kneeland the idea of contracting with a service provider for these services. In the interim, as we continue to search for a custodian, Lory Kneeland and Nathan Kneeland continue to work with Carole to provide the coverage that we need to provide a clean and safe learning environment for our staff and students. Thank you, Lory and Nathan.
- The State continues to add additional facility reports and environmental testing requirements and we are in the process of fulfilling these requirements. LaFramboise Water is completing the Lead and Copper testing and follow up report. They will also work with us this fall to complete any additional water testing requirements. We are working with Mystic Air to complete the Asbestos reports. EMCOR has been working with us to support some of the new indoor air quality reports. There are, however, additional one-year and five-year reports that need to be addressed which will include contracts for more advanced, specialized services. A meeting of the Facilities Committee will be needed to discuss additional information as it becomes available.

### Communication and Collaboration:

- By the time you receive this correspondence, the paving project for the school/town parking lot will be underway. Many thanks to Deb Richards for her persistence in obtaining the grant funding to make this project possible and for working with Willis Construction to have the project completed before the start of the school year.
- Due to the quality of our 2023-24 After School program, we received a \$91,667 grant to continue to offer free afternoon after care programming for students in K-8 for the 2024-25 school year. Thanks to the efforts of Candice Mead, we will be offering a more robust after school menu of programs for our students to enjoy.

### Finance:

- Following up on our request, the Board of Selectmen, at its August 12 meeting, voted unanimously to approve the allocation of \$90,401.38 for allowable educational expenditures. Past allocations have been critical in our ability to address unexpected special education expenditures.
- The ability provided to me by the BOE to make necessary end of year purchases and transfers to balance accounts allowed us to complete some needed building improvements, e.g., the third-grade floor, as well as to purchase some additional technology to meet the needs of our growing population. Thank you.
- In addition to the \$90,401.38 placed in the Unexpended Municipal Reserve account for allowable educational expenditures, we closed the 2023-24 budget as follows: Total expenditures \$4,404,703.21; Return to the Town \$25,000. *See item XIV.B*
- We are in the process of gathering information pertaining to the programs offered and tuition costs from Killingly, Putnam, E.O. Smith, and Woodstock Academy, for future review by the BOE and the community. I have also been meeting with Eastconn transportation to obtain comparative transportation costs. My goal is to have this information available for BOE review at our September meeting.
- In addition to obtaining comparative costs for alternate high school sites, we have been meeting with Eastconn to discuss the most cost-effective ways to address our recent population growth and changes in housing locations. This is also the last year of our busing contract so we will need to go out to bid for a new bus contract beginning in the 2025-26 school year. We began preliminary discussions regarding this with Eastconn.

### Comments on selected agenda items

#### XII. New Business

##### A. Completion of Roof/PV Project #039-0015 RR/EC

*Rob Ellsworth will be recommending to the BOE, based on the review of the project by the Town Roof Committee, that the BOE vote to accept Roof/PV Project #039-0015 RR/EC as complete. Depending on this vote, the submission for final payment and closure of the project can be submitted for approval to the State.*

##### B. Approval of Drill Log to DEMHS

*This is a routine submission to the State of the record of the safety drills we are obligated to hold each year.*

##### C. Approval of 2024-2025 Bus Routes

*Carole, Charlie, Mary Seguire and I have been working with Eastconn on bus routes for the 2024-25 school year. These routes are based on our current enrollment status and the current response we have from families regarding bus usage. Routes are subject to change as addresses are added or removed. After reviewing alternate scenarios, we will continue to operate the WA shuttle. However, we will be closely monitoring the route times and the bus usage to determine if this shuttle continues to be needed throughout the year.*

D. Policy 4126/4226, Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel)

*There have been changes regarding Title IX legislation which will be effective immediately in the 2024-25 school year. To remain current with these changes the Policy Committee will be recommending that the BOE vote to adopt S&G Model policy: PROHIBITION OF SEX DISCRIMINATION, INCLUDING SEX-BASED HARASSMENT to replace POLICY REGARDING PROHIBITION OF SEX DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE (PERSONNEL).*

E. Policy 5152, Regarding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students)

*The changes regarding Title IX which will be in effect in the 2024-25 school year pertain to both students and staff, therefore, the Policy Committee will be recommending that the BOE vote to adopt S&G model policy: PROHIBITION OF SEX DISCRIMINATION, INCLUDING SEX-BASED HARASSMENT to replace POLICY REGARDING TITLE IX of the EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972- PROHIBITION OF SEX DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT (STUDENTS).*

F. Request to change the 2024-25 School Calendar to add two additional early release days for professional development

*As mentioned in the News and Notes section above, the administration will be making a request to the BOE to approve two additional early release days. This time will help to provide for a meaningful implementation of the revised Teacher Evaluation plan and support the staff to be better prepared to respond to the changing needs of our students. The current school calendar is included in this packet.*

XIV. Financial Reports

*As always, please submit any questions or concerns regarding the financial reports and/or recommended transfers prior to the meeting so the administration can prepare the needed information. We will not be requesting any transfers at this time.*