EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

East Hampton, Connecticut

Superintendent's Update
Week of October 9, 2017

The vision of the East Hampton Public Schools: Preparing and inspiring our students to be innovative, responsible, contributing members of an ever-changing global society.

The job titles may not exist yet, but in 2020 the cognitive processes that go into those jobs
are probably not that different than what we are looking at today.

~ Daniel Willingham
Cognitive scientist and professor of psychology, University of Virginia

This week in our Schools

- **Monday, October 9 – Columbus Day, No School.**

- **Monday-Friday, October 9-13 – National Fire Prevention Week.**

- **Monday-Friday, October 9-13 – National School Lunch Week.**

- **Wednesday, October 11 – PSAT Day for all East Hampton Sophomores and Juniors.**

- **Wednesday, October 11 – Middle School PTO in the Middle School Library, 6:00 PM.**

Wednesday, October 11 – "Chasing the Dragon – The Life of an Opiate Addict" presented at Epoch Arts, 7:00 PM. Epoch Arts at 27 Skinner Street will show this film followed by presentations and conversation. The evening is intended for parents and students (Grade 8 and older). This is a great opportunity for families to view this film together to learn firsthand the issues of opiate addiction. Opiate addiction is a national, state-wide, and **local problem.** Take the time to learn more about the problem and hear from a local family that was impacted directly by the crisis.

Coming up in our schools!

Project Graduation Fundraiser
"Messing with your Mind!"
An evening of family friendly fun for all ages!
East Hampton High School Auditorium
Friday, October 20 – 7:00 PM

Tickets available at the door!

**Adults $10
Students $5**

Meet the Candidates for Board of Education
Monday, October 23
East Hampton High School T-Bell
6:00 - 7:15 PM

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Questions by students from East Hampton Center School
Moderator: Mr. Jonathan Baine, Center School Teacher

Cheetah-Palooza!
At the Memorial School
Saturday, October 28
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
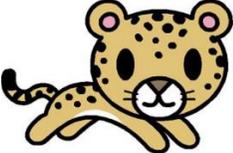
Please plan to make your
Budget Requests!
YOUR OPINION MATTERS
Board of Education Meeting
Monday, November 6
East Hampton High School T-Bell,
6:30 PM

October / November Calendar

Get your event on this calendar!
Send additional events and dates to
psmith@easthamptonct.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8	**9** Columbus Day **No School** National Fire Prevention Week National School Lunch Week	**10**	**11** PSAT Day @ High School Sophomores & Juniors Optional High School Faculty and Staff meeting: High School Principal Profile Middle School PTO Middle School Library 6:00 PM FILM: Chasing the Dragon The Life of an Opiate Addict 7:00-9:00 PM Epoch Arts Suitable fro Grade 8 - Adults	**12**	**13**	**14** Relay for Life EHHS participation (Over 80 students!)
15	**16** East Hampton Principals Appreciation Day (National Boss's Day) Stand Up for Others Week National School Bus Safety Week Board of Education Meeting - EHHS T-Bell, 6:30 PM	**17**	**18**	**19** Grade 4 to Mystic	**20** Grade 4 to Mystic Project Graduation Fundraiser "Messing with Your Mind" with Chris Mansfield Family-friendly Fundraiser East Hampton Hgih School 7:00 PM Adults $10 / Students $5	**21**
22	**23** MEET THE CANDIDATES Board of Education High School T-Bell 6:00-7:15 PM	**24**	**25** Delayed Start for High School TWO HOUR DELAY for NEASC Grade 6 & 7 Band/Choir to Coast Guard Academy TRI M Recital Evening	**26** Superintendent's Advisory Council 94 Main St. 9:00-10:15 AM Grade 5 to Pequot Museum	**27** Coffee & Chat With the Superintendent 94 Main St. 7:30-9:00 AM High School Semi-Formal	**28** Cheetah Palooza! Memorial School 11:00 AM-2:00 PM Drug Take Back Day Town Hall 10:00 AM-2:00 PM National Chocolate Day!
29	**30**	**31** National MIX IT UP at LUNCH DAY Grade 6 Halloween Dance	**November 1** All 2018-19 Budget Requests due to Building Principals Elementary PTO Memorial School 6:00 PM Project Graduation High School Library 6:00 PM	**2** Teacher of the Year Reception at LEARN/Old Lyme 4:00 PM. Area teachers honored.	**3** Coffee & Chat With the Superintendent 94 Main St. 7:30-9:00 AM FLU SHOTS For Teachers & Staff After School @ High school & Memorial	**4**
5 cHaNge youR cLoCk Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday!	**6** Board of Education Meeting - EHHS T-Bell, 6:30 PM Appointment of HS Principal Budget Requests welcome by Public	**7** Election Day & Professional Developemnt **No School** GO VOTE	**8**	**9**	**10** Veterans Day Observance **No School**	**11** Veterans Day Official Turkey Plunge for East Hampton Food Bank 9:00 AM-Sears Park

Notes

🟩 *Memorial tribute to John Fidler.*

The East Hampton Board of Education is proud to announce that the roadway leading to the school will be named **The John Fidler Way.**

A formal dedication of **The John Fidler Way** will take place in the near future.

At the East Hampton Board of Education meeting on Monday, October 2, the Board voted unanimously to name the roadway leading to the school, the John Fidler Way. Once approval is granted by the Town Council and signage is in place, the High School will have a formal dedication ceremony to honor John.

🟩 *East Hampton Board of Education Highlights (9/18/17)*

Visit East Hampton

You Tube

You can view this meeting and past meetings at:
http://www.easthamptonps.org/2017-2018-boe-meetings
Scroll down the page and click on "**VIDEO**" of the date you wish to view.

- o The Board recognized the 2017 Friends of Education: John Arcari – Memorial School; Lynn Minnick – Center School; Nancy Oakley – Center School and Middle School; Holly White – Middle School; Sean Cox – Middle School and District-wide; Mark Vickery – High School; Sylvia DeMore – High School; Paul Herlihy – High School; Tania Sones – District-wide; Donna Finkelstein – District-wide. Pictures of the recipients and their families during the recognition ceremony can be found here: http://www.easthamptonps.org/friends-of-education-award--2.
- o The Superintendent shared two draft school calendars for 2018-19 – one with a start date for students before Labor Day and one that begins after Labor Day. Parents, teachers, and staff members are invited to participate in a survey to express their support for one of the calendars. The Board will review the results of the survey at their October 16 meeting. *(See information on participating in the survey in this Update.)*
- o The Superintendent shared the budget timeline for 2018-19 with the Board. The budget process has begun in schools even without a state budget in place. In order for the Board of Education to present a budget to the Town by March 1 as required, the process must begin now.
- o The Superintendent shared a draft memo from the Town asking the Board of Education to consider possible reductions to the 2017-18 budget in case of drastic cuts from the state once a budget is in place.
- o The Board voted to name the roadway to the High School, the John Fidler Way. *(See information on tribute in this Update.)* The Superintendent and Chair will attend the next Town Council meeting on Tuesday, October 11 to seek approval.
- o The Superintendent reported that the High School Building Committee has agreed to place safety laminate over all exterior glass at the High School. The laminate is reimbursable in the same manner as all expenditures for the High School building project.

- o The Board review the following polies, which will be approved at the meeting of October 16.
  - 4131 Professional Learning
  - 6111 School Calendar
  - 7551 Naming of Facilities
  - 9240 Board of Education Development
  - 9325.43 Electronic Attendance at Meetings
  - 9400 Board of Education Self Evaluation

> All district policies are online:
> Click here

■ *The Budget process begins now for next year!*

Even though the state does not have a budget, the East Hampton Public Schools must begin the process of budget development in order to have a budget approved by the Board of Education and submitted to the town by March 1, 2018. **Teachers, staff members, parents, and students are urged to attend the Board of Education on Monday, November 6 to make budget requests to the Board.** Please be part of this meeting. Even though we don't know the details on state funding for this year or next year, we must still determine priorities as we continue to work to become the highest achieving district in the state of Connecticut.

■ *East Hampton School Employees surpassing last year!*

Thank you for your support of the United Way! We have already surpassed last year's donation amount as a school district. And, there is still time to contribute! There are two options for donation: (1) A payroll deduction donation over 16 pays beginning October 20. (Deadline for this option is Tuesday, October 10) and (2) A one-time donation. Staff members with questions are urged to e-mail Linda Collins lcollins@easthamptonct.org.

■ *East Hampton Drug Take-Back Day – Saturday, October 28 from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM.*

From the Middletown Press: East Hampton police, the Local Prevention Council and Drug Enforcement Administration will host a take back of expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs Oct. 28 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Individuals can bring their pills to the East Hampton Town Hall upper parking lot at 20 E. High St for disposal. The DEA will not accept liquids, needles or medical disposal sharps — only pills or patches. The service is free and anonymous, according to the department.

Last April, Americans turned in 450 tons, or 900,000 pounds, of prescription drugs at almost 5,500 sites operated by the DEA and more than 4,200 of its state and local law enforcement partners, according to the federal agency. Overall, in its 13 previous events, the DEA and its partners have taken in over 8.1 million pounds — more than 4,050 tons of pills, a press release said.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse, authorities say. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses.

Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends and home medicine cabinets, the DEA reports. In addition, Americans are now advised their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines — like flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash — pose potential safety and health hazards.

■ *School employees – avoid the flu. Get the flu shot on November 3.*

School employees – *mark the date:* ***Friday, November 3****.* The Connecticut Partnership is providing access to free flu shots at 2 district locations immediately after student dismissal on Friday, November 3. Shots will be free to all insured staff, including those not on the Partnership United Healthcare Oxford program (with insurance card). Family and children of staff may be included as well.

Location for High School and Middle School staff: East Hampton High School beginning 2:10 PM
Location for Center and Memorial staff: Memorial School beginning 3:20-3:30 PM.

■ *PASSWORD RESET coming for all school computers to maintain security.*

PASSWORDS
for East Hampton Network Computers
must be at least 7 characters long
and include 3 of the following:

1. CAPITAL letter
2. Lower Case letter
3. Number
4. Symbol

In order to maintain security on our district computers, teachers and staff members will begin getting notifications concerning the need to change your password to log on to a district computer. **We are doing a complete district PASSWORD RESET**.

Password resetting will become an annual event that coincides with the end of Daylight Saving Time in the Fall. You will have approximately 30 days to complete the task; however, I recommend updating your log on password as soon as prompted.

■ *Survey open – First Day of School: After or Before Labor Day in 2018?*

Legislation passed by the Connecticut General Assembly this year changes the **required** Regional School Calendar to an **optional** Regional School Calendar as of July 1, 2018. While we intend to line up vacation times and professional development with neighboring communities as much as possible, we are considering the option of beginning after Labor Day in 2018 as Labor Day is relatively early (September 3).

If you are interested in participating in a survey regarding the start date of School in 2018-19, please click on one of the links below:
For parents -   **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6DBFHVF.**
For teachers and staff -   **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6JPY3SK**

You will be asked to enter your name and answer one question regarding whether the first day of school for students should be before Labor Day or after Labor Day in 2018-19.

1. If school begins prior to Labor Day, the start for students will be on **Wednesday, August 29.**
2. If school begins after Labor Day, the start date for students will be on **Tuesday, September 4**.

If you are interested in offering an opinion, please complete the survey. The survey will be open until Friday, October 13. Information will be shared with the East Hampton Board of Education at their October 16 meeting at 6:30 PM in the High School T-Bell. Please note that the Board of Education determines the school calendar, but will consider survey data in determining the school calendar for next year.

Thoughts

In a time of uncertainty, we must teach our students to deal with uncertainty.

We live in a time characterized by "uncertainty," though many generations would probably point to their own time period and make a case for stronger uncertainty. But, if we can agree that we are experiencing some degree of uncertainty, what then are we doing to prepare our students for the "uncertain" world in which they will be expected to thrive during their lives and in their careers?

We know we want problem solvers, critical thinkers, and students who can collaborate and be creative. But, have we created the authentic conditions of uncertainty in our schools and classrooms in order to prepare students to utilize and master those skills in the real world – that is, the uncertain world of today?

Our goal must be to create the conditions in our classroom that our students will face in careers and lives outside work. We cannot develop creative thinkers and problem solvers in the neat, orderly environment of the structured classroom. Instead we must create a bit of chaos amid questions, allowing students to bring order to a situation. If a sign of our success is the future success of students, then a little bit of controlled chaos and uncertainty must be a priority for the conditions in which they learn.

The article below is written by a local authority Ronald A. Beghetto (www.ronaldbeghetto.com) who is a professor of educational psychology in the Neag School of Education and director of Innovation House at the University of Connecticut. You can follow him on Twitter, as well.

Inviting Uncertainty into the Classroom by Ronald A. Beghetto   EL EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Five strategies to help students respond well to uncertainty—and foster complex problem-solving skills.

What would happen if we invited uncertainty into our classrooms? If you're not sure how to answer this question, you're not alone. What makes this question difficult is that most of us don't like uncertainty. It's uncomfortable. We do our best to avoid uncertainty and if we experience it, we attempt to quickly resolve it.

In the context of classrooms, educators often replace uncertainty with overplanned learning experiences. We go to great lengths to clearly define the problems our students will solve, how they should solve them, and the desired outcomes. There are benefits in doing so beyond maintaining a sense of consistency, calm, and control; students can and do learn from routine problems and assignments (Lee & Anderson, 2013).

The key limitation to these types of learning experiences is that they don't give students opportunities to engage with uncertainty. Just as you can't learn to swim if you never get in the water, students won't learn how to respond productively to the unknown if we never give them opportunities to do so.

What if instead of trying to eliminate uncertainty, we welcomed it into our classrooms? Doing so requires a shift in how we think about uncertainty and its place in fostering problem solving. Five strategies can help us make that shift.

1. **View (Good) Uncertainty as an Opportunity**

If we view uncertainty as causing curricular chaos, then we're justified in attempting to eliminate it. Not all uncertainty, however, leads to chaos. One way to think about uncertainty in the context of classrooms is that there is *good uncertainty* and *bad uncertainty* (Beghetto, 2016a).

Bad uncertainty results from learning experiences that don't include necessary supports and structures. In such situations, students have no idea of what's expected of them. They also don't know whether, when, or how they will receive support when they need it. When structure and support are lacking, chaos is likely to ensue. If on top of this lack of supportive structure we ask students to tackle complex challenges or ill-defined problems, then we really are inviting chaos into our classroom, presenting them with a double whammy of uncertainty.

Good uncertainty, however, provides students opportunities to engage with the unknowns of a challenge in an otherwise supportive, well-structured environment. For example, when students are trying to come up with their own ways of solving a problem, teachers can let them know in advance about key constraints (such as time and materials), what's required for success, and how they can get additional assistance if they get stuck.

Although it may not be clear in advance how to best approach or solve a complex challenge, students still receive the guidance necessary to navigate the doubts and confusions connected to the problem they're attempting to solve.

This approach relates to why it's important to inject uncertainty into students' learning experiences. Put simply, uncertainty is what makes a problem a problem. If you already know how to move from A to Z, then you don't have a problem—yet our students *will* face problems in life. If we want to unleash student problem solving, we need to give them chances to respond well to uncertainty in the context of a supportive environment.

2. Try Lesson Unplanning

To invite uncertainty in their classrooms, teachers need to make room for it. They can do so by making slight adjustments to pre-existing lessons—what I call *lesson unplanning*. This refers to replacing some predetermined element (such as the problem or process) with a to-be-determined (by the students) component. Doing so transforms a routine exercise into a more complex one (Beghetto, forthcoming).

Lesson unplanning can be used with any preplanned learning exercise or activity. You might start small by unplanning just one feature of an already planned lesson. Let's say your typical approach is to teach students how to use a procedure to solve math story problems, and then assign them a set of similar problems to solve using the just-taught procedure. This is a routine exercise because the features of the task are predetermined; there's a clearly defined problem, solution, and procedure for arriving at the solution.

You could transform this exercise into a more open-ended one by removing the requirement to solve it using the predetermined method and instead require students to come up with as many different ways of solving the problem as they can.

Niu & Zhou (2010) observed a 3rd grade math teacher in China who took a similar approach. As a result, her students generated more than a dozen unique, mathematically accurate procedures for solving one math story problem.

In such cases, students still have an opportunity to reinforce their understanding of the concepts just taught. But instead of being limited to solving a dozen practice problems one way, students can learn how to solve one problem a dozen or more ways. The key advantage of doing so is that students learn that even problems with fixed solutions can be approached in many different ways. So if students get stuck trying to solve a problem one way, they may realize that there are likely other ways to solve it—and persist or seek assistance rather than give up at the first sign of difficulty.

Although teachers may already include a few problems and activities that incorporate uncertainty in these ways, it's worth exploring what would happen if they used lesson unplanning systematically throughout their entire curriculum. The more opportunities students have to practice working through problems when things are less spelled out, the more likely they'll be able to take on increasingly complex challenges (Beghetto, forthcoming).

3. Assign Complex Challenges

Challenges can range in scope from modest "in-classroom" tasks (such as rewriting the ending of a short story, while adhering to the style of the narrative) to more complex projects (such as developing a gardening project to provide homeless families with fresh produce). The more uncertainty involved in a challenge, the more complex the challenge becomes.

If we want to prepare students to respond productively to uncertainty, we need to have them tackle a full range of challenges, including those addressing ill-defined problems and big issues—such as developing an inexpensive, accurate way to detect the Ebola virus or designing a robot that can clean trash from New York's subways (Stone, 2016). Such work invites students to engage in tasks, situations, or experiences that are filled with uncertainty. There are no sure-fire formulas or predetermined steps to solve a problem like how to address under-the-radar bullying. And the nature of such problems can change during the process of solving them.

Students need to learn how to sit with the uncertainty of a thorny challenge, take time to explore the features of the task or situation, generate possible ways to address it, and evaluate the viability of those possibilities. Finally, students need to take action by choosing initial steps, taking those steps, monitoring progress, and making adjustments along the way. Teachers can help students become more familiar with these principles by having students apply them in different learning situations and highlighting how they differ across disciplines (monitoring progress looks different when working on a chemistry problem than when addressing a problem in theater design). When students become skilled in these basic principles of complex problem solving, they can apply them to almost any ill-defined problem.

Although complex challenges are filled with uncertainty, educators can set them up so they also have a structure. Teachers should break such challenges down into smaller parts and provide guidelines, criteria, and supports for addressing them (Beghetto, forthcoming). Consider the challenge of developing a gardening project to provide fresh produce to homeless families. The teacher might break this challenge down into smaller subgoals (for example, learn about the nutritional benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables, determine what can be grown in our region, identify a location for the garden, and so on). She can then help students develop specific agenda items (what must be done by when) to complete before moving on to the next sub-goal.

Working through complex challenges also requires students to put their knowledge to creative use, challenge their assumptions about the situation, seek out assistance from more knowledgeable people, persist through setbacks, and know when it's necessary to modify or even step away from a challenge (Beghetto, 2016a; 2016b; forthcoming).

4. Explore the Backstory of Famous Solutions

One way to help students learn to tackle complex challenges is to let them learn from models of successfully solved problems and accomplished problem solvers. Doing so requires students to go beyond the "what" of solved problems and learn about the *why, who, how, when*, and *where* of getting to that solution (Root-Bernstein & Root-Bernstein, 2017).

Much of what we teach in school involves solutions to complex challenges that have *already* been figured out (scientific laws, technological inventions, major social movements, and other solutions that have changed the course of history). Focusing only on tidy solutions, however, doesn't allow students to understand how or why those challenges were identified in the first place or reveal the behind-the-scenes messiness and productive struggle that went into resolving them.

One way to provide students with a behind-the-scenes look is to invite accomplished professionals from various disciplines into their classrooms (in person or through platforms like Skype) to describe the kinds of ill-defined challenges they face in their professional work and how they have addressed them (Beghetto, forthcoming). Alternatively, students might explore the story behind successfully solved challenges. Creativity researchers Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein (2017) assigned students in one course to choose an important discovery, figure out how the problem behind that discovery was initially identified, explore the approach used to address the challenge, find out how the problem solvers overcame obstacles along the way, and describe how the disciplinary community received the solution. Students then shared what they learned with the class. Such assignments can powerfully illustrate how accomplished problem solvers rely on both prior and new knowledge to structure the uncertainty they face.

5. Launch Never-Ending Projects

Projects provide great opportunities to address complex challenges. Unfortunately, most projects don't go far enough. Regardless of what form projects take, most are confined to the walls of the classroom and almost all have a predetermined end date. Once a project is over, it's over; the science fair trifold is recycled or stored in the basement, and the 3–D printed fidget spinners are shelved.

What if instead of limiting projects to the classroom and viewing them as coming to an end, we engaged students in projects that address authentic complex challenges and that make a lasting contribution beyond classroom walls, what I call *legacy challenges*? A legacy challenge represents an issue, problem, or situation that requires us to develop an ongoing solution and pass that solution on from one group of young people to the next (Beghetto, 2017; forthcoming). For instance, suppose a group of bilingual high school students recognizes that non-English speaking members of their community aren't receiving important health, education, and other public information in Spanish, their native language. These students work with their school language department and local businesses, nonprofits, and community centers to develop a service that translates public information into Spanish and delivers it to people in the community. The service would be sustained as each incoming class of bilingual students helps translate and disseminate key information.

As this example illustrates, legacy projects are a way for students to respond productively to complicated challenges facing them, their school, or their community. Designing such a project starts with working through four deceptively simple design questions (Beghetto, 2017; forthcoming):

1. *What is the problem?* Identifying a problem that's relevant to students is the first step. Potential challenges or problems can emerge from what students are learning in class or what they're experiencing in their lives, schools, homes, or neighborhoods.
2. *Why does it matter?* Once students have identified a challenge, they need to understand why it needs to be addressed. This includes learning more about the challenge, obtaining feedback and perspectives from various stakeholders, and becoming able to articulate to others the importance of addressing this problem.
3. *What are we going to do about it?* Students must start developing a plan for addressing the problem by drawing on their existing relevant knowledge, identifying areas where they need additional information, establishing external partnerships, and identifying initial steps to take.
4. *What lasting legacy will our work addressing this problem leave?* This question distinguishes legacy challenges from other kinds of problem-solving efforts. It requires students to take a long view of the challenge and identify how their work will be sustained, curated, and passed on from one generation of students and project partners to the next.

These questions are filled with unknowns. The idea of inviting this much uncertainty into the classroom may initially seem terrifying. Again, the key is to invite students to take on these questions within a structured, supportive learning environment. Break down each question into smaller subgoals, distribute the work across teams of students, and guide teams to accomplish it over time.

By working in this way, we support learners in moving from an ill-defined starting point toward a more clearly defined resolution of the challenge. Such efforts can go a long way in helping students learn how, why, and when to unleash their problem-solving skills on complex challenges—and even when it's better not to do so.

The Beautiful Risk

Let's return to our opening question: What would happen if we invited uncertainty into our classrooms? I hope you now have some idea of the potential benefits of doing so, and understand that reaping those benefits requires a change in how we think about uncertainty. It also requires a shift in how we do things, including being willing to unplan our lessons, incorporate complex challenges into our curriculums, explore previously solved problems with students, and give students opportunities to respond to community needs through legacy projects.

Many other good things may come from welcoming uncertainty into our classrooms. But we will never realize these benefits unless we're willing to take the beautiful risk of allowing students to unleash their problem solving on complex challenges—inside and outside the classroom.

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Create and enjoy a little bit of chaos!

Paul K. Smith

26 Miles of Hope