



# EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

East Hampton, Connecticut

## Superintendent's Update

Week of October 16, 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.

Guard well within yourself that treasure, **kindness**.

Know how to give without hesitation, how to lose with regret, how to acquire without meanness.

~George Sand

### This week in our Schools

- **Monday, October 16 – East Hampton Principals Appreciation Day.** Since this is **National Boss's Day**, we will take the time to thank our building principals: Nancy Briere (Interim EHHS Principal), Michael Dalton (EHHS Assistant Principal), Kaitlin Sullivan (Interim Dean of Students), Jason Lehmann (EHMS Principal), Eric Kissinger (EHMS Assistant Principal), Chris Sullivan (Center School Principal), Andrew Gonzalez (Memorial School Principal), and Brandy Gadoury (Memorial School Assistant Principal). And, thank you to our district-wide "bosses" including Rodney Mosier, Karen Asetta, Don Harwood, and Rich Fielding.
- **Monday-Friday, October 16-20 – Stand Up for Others Week.** This week also links in with "Say Something Week" as part of the Sandy Hook Promise. Both awareness events focus on making sure that students are connected in positive ways to each other, to adults, to mentors, and to caregivers. **You can always start a connection just by saying "Hello!"**
- **Monday-Friday, October 16-20 – National School Bus Safety Week.** School Bus Safety is very important to us and to celebrate this week, the East Hampton Board of Education will recognize bus driver, Amber Defond of Bus 10, who recently prevented a potential serious injury to a child when a car ignored the flashing red lights of the bus. We salute Amber and the fine work of our school bus drivers! Amber will be honored at the October 16 Board of Education meeting.
- **Monday, October 16 – East Hampton Board of Education Meeting in the High School T-Bell, 6:30 PM.** Consider livestreaming our meeting from the comfort of your home computer if you cannot attend. 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 if you have missed past meetings..



- **Friday, October 16 – Project Graduation Fundraiser: "Messing With Your Mind" at East Hampton High School, 7:00 PM.** This is an evening of family friendly fun for all ages!

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

**Chris Mansfield**  
is  
**"Messing With YOUR Mind"**  
don't worry, it's for a **GOOD CAUSE**  
(they ain't that what they change say?)

This show is an hysterical exploration of the **power** (or lack thereof) of our minds. We will measure the **power** of love with a lock and chain. Explore if we really are as **psychic**. We will test to see if **hypnosis** is fake. We'll ask the most important question of us: "Why does **Chris** predict the numbers on playing cards instead of predicting the winning numbers for the Mega Millions Lottery? - oh yeah...we'll have baked goods too.

all that in one **Family Friendly** show for **ALL** ages!

proudly presented by  
**EHHS Project Graduation**

**Friday**  
**October 20<sup>th</sup> 2017**  
**7:00 p.m.**

East Hampton High School Auditorium  
15 North Maple St | East Hampton, CT

**Tickets available at the Door**  
adults \$10 students \$5

(Proceeds benefit East Hampton High School Project Graduation)

**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**



# October / November Calendar

Get your event on this calendar!

Send additional events and dates to  
[psmith@easthamptonct.org](mailto:psmith@easthamptonct.org).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	East Hampton Principals Appreciation Day (National Boss's Day) <b>Stand Up for Others Week</b> <b>National School Bus Safety Week</b> Board of Education Meeting - EHHS T-Bell, 6:30 PM	 		Grade 4 to Mystic	Grade 4 to Mystic <b>Project Graduation Butter Braid Sale Begins</b> Project Graduation Fundraiser "Messing with Your Mind" with Chris Mansfield Family-friendly Fundraiser East Hampton High School 7:00 PM Adults \$10 / Students \$5	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	<b>MEET THE CANDIDATES</b> Board of Education High School T-Bell 6:00-7:15 PM		Delayed Start for High School TWO HOUR DELAY for NEASC Grade 6 & 7 Band/Choir to Coast Guard Academy TRI M Recital Evening	 Superintendent's Advisory Council 94 Main St. 9:00-10:15 AM Grade 5 to Pequot Museum  Para of the Year Recognition	 Coffee & Chat With the Superintendent 94 Main St. 7:30-9:00 AM High School Semi-Formal	<b>Cheetah Palooza!</b> 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	November 1	2	3	4
		<b>National MIX IT UP at LUNCH DAY</b>  Grade 6 Halloween Dance	All 2018-19 Budget Requests due to Building Principals Elementary PTO Memorial School 6:00 PM Project Graduation High School Library 6:00 PM	 Teacher of the Year Reception at LEARN/Old Lyme 4:00 PM Kristen Keska and area teachers honored.	 Coffee & Chat With the Superintendent 94 Main St. 7:30-9:00 AM <b>FLU SHOTS For Teachers &amp; Staff</b> After School @ High school & Memorial	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
 Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday!	Board of Education Meeting - EHHS T-Bell, 6:30 PM Appointment of HS Principal <b>Budget Requests welcome by Public</b>	<b>Election Day &amp; Professional Development No School</b> 	Middle School PTO Middle School Library 6:00 PM		<b>Veterans Day Observance No School</b> 	 Veterans Day Official  <b>Turkey Plunge</b> for East Hampton Food Bank 9:00 AM-Sears Park
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		<b>Project Graduation Butter Braid Delivery</b>	<b>Half Day for Middle School Parent Conferences</b>  <b>Teacher of the Year Recognition at the Bushnell 5:00 PM.</b> Kristen Keska and state teachers honored.	<b>Half Day for Middle School Parent Conferences</b>		 East Hampton High School presents <b>All Around the World Fest</b> 1:00-5:00 PM Students \$5.00 No fee for parents who accompany children

## Notes



### ***Around the World Fest – November 18***

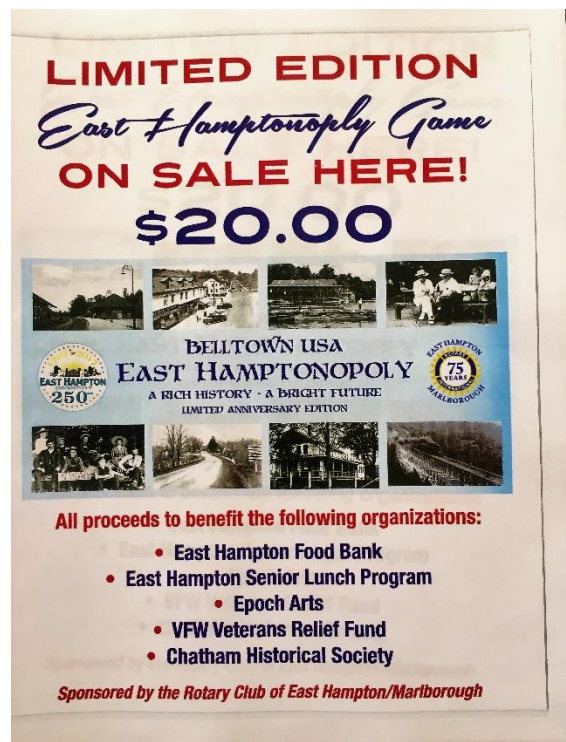
The Spanish and French Clubs at East Hampton High School are organizing the second annual **All Around the World Fest** for children in Grades Pre K through 5. The event will take place on **Saturday, November 18, 1:00-5:00 PM** with activities and workshops from 1:00-4:00 PM and music and dance performances from 4:00-5:00 PM. The clubs are planning to include workshops geared towards teaching and sharing culture with children ages Pre K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade and they would like to add your skills, too. The activities can include international music, dance, crafts, storytelling, games, language lessons, or any other cultural activity that might be fun and educational for our students. Workshops already lined up are a Samba music workshop presented by Eric Galm, professor of ethnomusicology at Trinity College.

- Anyone who would like to consider organizing an activity can submit a proposal at: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1VhYatpffCi0Bif\\_7PK6aKftrP1UOMHht8ytmCUw8v9g/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1VhYatpffCi0Bif_7PK6aKftrP1UOMHht8ytmCUw8v9g/edit)
- Visit the event website at: <https://easthamptonct.wixsite.com/allaroundtheworld>.
- Send questions to [culturefest@easthamptonct.org](mailto:culturefest@easthamptonct.org).



### ***Be on the lookout for East Hamptonopoly!***

It's time to get your copy of **East Hamptonopoly!** Celebrate the town's 250th with the perfect gift for the holidays. The game is on display at the Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, and the Schools' Central Office (94 Main). You can purchase the game for \$20 at Paul and Sandy's or Mimi's Design Lakeside Sign. All proceeds benefit the East Hampton Food Bank, Senior Lunch Program, Epoch Arts, VFW Veterans Relief Fund, and the Chatham Historical Society.





■ **Mark Monday, November 6 on your calendars.**



Please plan to make your  
**Budget Requests!**

Board of Education Meeting  
**Monday, November 6**  
East Hampton High School T-Bell,  
6:30 PM

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. Even though we don't know the details on state funding for this year or next year, we must still determine our own East Hampton education priorities as we continue to work to become the highest achieving district in the state of Connecticut – with whatever funding is available to us.



## Thoughts

If we want to make sure we foster **Kindness & Caring** in our schools, we should begin with **Empathy**.

In a recent post on the *Edutopia website*, a quote from the article [Developing Empathy in the Classroom](#) by Bob Sornson is included. It reads, "Empathy is the heart of a great classroom culture." In addition, Sornson promotes that "students learn to understand each other, which helps them to build friendships based on positive relationships of trust."

As well, business articles including [A study conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership](#) (PDF) and Jon Kolko's article in the *Harvard Business Review* focus on the importance of empathy as a requisite for good leadership.

As a school community, if we are going to prepare our students to be successful in college and careers, then making sure they are empathetic may be an important skill for their future competitiveness and effectiveness.

I expect everyone in the school community to work with our students to make sure we are equipping our students to be stewards of kindness and caring – and in doing so we may be creating the future leaders of businesses and communities.

### **Steps and Strategies for Developing Empathy** by Thomas R. Hoerr in *ASCD Express*

There are six basic steps to developing empathy: listening, understanding, internalizing, projecting, planning, and intervening. The first two steps—listening and understanding—constitute *awareness*: Students must first pay attention to others and then take the time to learn what is being said and how (and for more mature students, perceiving what *isn't* being said). Understanding doesn't necessarily mean agreeing; it simply means having a cognitive grasp of another person's views.

Perhaps the most difficult step in helping students develop empathy is teaching them to internalize what they have learned. To place themselves in other people's shoes and actually *experience* their feelings—now that's empathy! Projecting is the next step, when students are able to imagine how they would react in the same situation. They can also work to imagine how the perceptions that they hold are perceived by others, and appreciate how easy or difficult that might be for the other person. Together, these opening steps lead students to appreciate how easy or difficult it might be to be someone else in a different context.

Once students have developed empathy, the next step is to create a context for collaborative effort. In step five, students are able to plan a response to a given situation informed by their empathy—perhaps starting with conversations toward common understanding and respect, or attempts to alter the situation, or both—and in step six, they execute their plan. Planning should always be inclusive and collaborative: successful change doesn't come from what we do to or for others, but rather from what we do together.

### **Strategies for Developing Empathy**

To create contexts where students can practice these six basic steps, consider using some of these strategies and activities in your classroom.

For all teachers:

- **Help students appreciate their own backgrounds and biases.** Ask students to answer the question "Why am I the way I am?" by interviewing relatives, researching family histories, and creating self-presentations that feature music and photos and cover a range of information (e.g., geographic locations, ethnicity, family size, religion). The presentations can serve as a rich resource for teachers and students, as another way to understand some "others." (The data could be tallied and analyzed as a logical-mathematical activity, too.)
- **Consciously teach about stereotypes and discrimination, the history and evolution of attitudes, and the reasons why people's degrees of empathy toward different people vary.** From the Crusades and Westward Expansion to the subjugation of blacks, Jews, and women, there is no lack of fodder. Ask "What caused some groups or individuals to be so insensitive to the needs of others?" Remind students that the goal is not to empathize in all cases with everyone, but rather to act kindly whether or not you do.
- **Have students examine historical examples of innocent people who were wrongly accused of crimes.** Study the trial of Galileo, the Salem Witch Trials, or the Dreyfus Affair. The goal is to help students see the perspectives not only of the wrongly accused but also of the other characters involved. It may be easy to feel empathy for the protagonist, so it is important for students to see the interplay of perspectives so that they can speculate on which other character(s) might warrant their sympathy or empathy. (Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, about the Salem Witch Trials, is a very powerful—and fairly short—resource.) Then ask your students to reflect on a time when they were wrongly accused of some misdeed. Have them generate adjectives and drawings or perhaps a song or dance to capture how they felt and how others in the situation felt, too.
- **Create a system by which students can submit anonymous compliments for specific classmates.** Then, quietly or publicly, pass along the praise. The goal here is to help students understand what others might appreciate, particularly how others might appreciate something that is not particularly meaningful to them.

For middle and high school teachers:

- **Teach students about the differences in perspective between journalism and literature and between current and historical accounts.** Use assigned fiction and nonfiction readings to help students see various perspectives and distinguish between empathy and sympathy. Books such as Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859/1999), Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) provide enough characters and complexity to generate good thought and discussion.
- **Read portions of Paul Theroux's book *Deep South* (2015) with students to examine a slice of life with which they may not be familiar.** The book follows Theroux as he visits with good people who are grappling with the effects of globalization and—even today—the long-term vestiges of slavery.

For elementary school teachers:

- **Teach students the difference between sympathy and empathy.** It may help to present empathy as the highest level on a three-step developmental sequence, with sympathy as step two and step one being care (i.e., the positive feelings we might have toward a pet).
- **Use empathy as a tool to help students understand character creation and development in fiction.** When we find our attention seized by a story—such as by Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) or Raquel J. Palacio's *Wonder* (2012)—it's because we reach beyond sympathy to empathize with the characters. Students should consider how the author causes us to feel empathy for some characters and not others.
- **Ask students to speculate as to what other children might like to receive for their birthdays—discounting what they might want for themselves.** Consider using this exercise to conclude a discussion of the different interests among students' family members. The goal here is for the children to learn to step out of their perspectives and work to see how others feel.
- **If a student's pet dies, use the occasion to talk about feelings.** Many students will naturally feel empathy in this situation with the student whose pet died.

For principals:

- **Make it a priority to hire teachers who are empathetic toward all kinds of students—not just those who excel in school and are well-behaved.** Teacher candidates should be able to explain how they might identify and care for students in a variety of situations. When interviewing, I often ask teachers to describe a time when they had to respond to a student who was having difficulties or to tell me how they might intervene in a hypothetical situation. My goal is less to learn more about the specific strategies they might use and more

to determine how much of an effort they would make to know and understand their students. Similarly, Mark Catalana, director of human resources for the Mehlville (Missouri) School District, asks teacher applicants to describe an occasion when they learned about a student going through a difficult time, and then asks them whether that knowledge changed the way they treated the student. Sometimes Mark also asks applicants to tell them about any personal struggles they had as children. How did they handle them? Did it affect their schooling? Did anyone in the school help them get through their difficulties?

- **Screen Brené Brown's two-minute documentary, *Brené Brown on Empathy* (2013).** I would first screen the video for faculty and then ask teachers to meet in groups and discuss how it resonated with them personally and how they might discuss it with students.
- **Form a voluntary faculty book group to read books related to empathy.** Ensuring total transparency of the selection process, choose books such as *Daring Greatly* (2012) and *Rising Strong* (2015), both by Brené Brown; *Ghettoside* (2015), by Jill Leovy; and *High Price* (2014), by Carl Hart. All of these are compelling works that enable us to see difficult situations from the perspectives of others.

Excerpted from *The Formative Five: Fostering Grit, Empathy, and Other Success Skills Every Student Needs*, by Thomas R. Hoerr,

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#### 4 Proven Strategies for Teaching Empathy By Dr. Donna Wilson and Dr. Marcus Conyers in Edutopia

Help your students understand the perspectives of other people with these tried-and-tested methods.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Empathy has the capacity to transform individual lives for the better while helping to bring about positive social change in schools and communities worldwide. In psychology, there are currently two common approaches to empathy: shared emotional response and perspective taking.

Shared emotional response, or affective empathy, occurs when an individual shares another person's emotions. An example from our own lives came when a group of friends joined Marcus as he crossed the finish line of a half-marathon—they threw their arms up just as he did, mimicking his stance. Individuals in an audience involuntarily mirroring a speaker's smile is another example of this type of empathy.

Perspective taking, also known as cognitive empathy, occurs when a person is able to imagine herself in the situation of another. A good example is a line spoken by Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck) in the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "If you just learn a single trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."

Here are some strategies our graduates around the world use with their students to help develop both affective and cognitive empathy.

##### Modeling

Teachers can be role models who, by example, show students the power of empathy in relationships. It is the teacher who leads individuals to care for the feelings of the others in class. As teachers model how to be positive when learning, students mirror optimistic and confident learning behaviors.

##### Teaching Point of View

We use the numbers 6 and 9 to teach students about different points of view. First, have students look at the number 6 and then the number 9. Explain to students that the idea for this exercise came from an old Middle Eastern legend in which two princes were at war for many years. One prince looked at the image on the table and said it was a 6, while the other prince said it was a 9. For years the battle raged, and then one day when the princes were seated at the table a young boy turned the tablecloth around, and for the first time, they could see the other's point of view. The war came to an end, and the princes became firm friends.

Illustrate with an example from your own life in which something similar has happened in terms of you arguing with somebody simply because they had a different point of view.

Ask students to break into small groups and discuss how important it is to understand that many people disagree with us simply because they have a different point of view. Debrief the student comments.

## Using Literature to Teach Different Perspectives

In the classroom, literature can be used to help students see a situation from different perspectives. For example, everyone knows the story “The Three Little Pigs.” We sympathize with the pigs because we see the wolf as a ravenous villain, but is it possible to see the story from the wolf’s point of view? That’s exactly what Jon Scieszka undertakes in his book *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. In this humorous retelling, the wolf didn’t huff and puff to blow the pigs’ houses down; instead he suffered from a terrible allergy and, when stopping by to borrow a cup of sugar, accidentally blew the houses down with a big and powerful sneeze.

## Listening Actively to Others

One of the most common obstacles to empathic relationships is that effective listening is difficult, and often individuals don’t listen to one another in conversation. We designed the HEAR strategy to help students recognize and block out that noise as they devote their attention to listening to one another. The HEAR strategy consists of these steps:

**Halt:** Stop whatever else you are doing, end your internal dialogue on other thoughts, and free your mind to give the speaker your attention.

**Engage:** Focus on the speaker. We suggest a physical component, such as turning your head slightly so that your right ear is toward the speaker as a reminder to be engaged solely in listening.

**Anticipate:** By looking forward to what the speaker has to say, you are acknowledging that you will likely learn something new and interesting, which will enhance your motivation to listen.

**Replay:** Think about what the speaker is saying. Analyze and paraphrase it in your mind or in discussion with the speaker and other classmates. Replaying and dialoguing the information you have heard will aid in understanding what the speaker is attempting to convey.

## Being Metacognitive About One’s State of Empathy

Be aware of your feelings and thoughts about your ability to understand and share in the feelings of others. With metacognitive awareness, we can all become more effective at taking another’s perspective throughout our lives.

When we encourage students to become more empathic, we help them create more opportunities for success in school and other aspects of their lives. This valuable skill deserves more of our attention.

Promote empathy. Promote kindness. Promote caring.



Paul K. Smith



26 Miles of Hope