



# EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

East Hampton, Connecticut

## Superintendent's Update

Week of January 22, 2018



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.

學習是隨處可見的寶藏。

Xuéxí shì suíchù kějiàn de bǎozàng.

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

~Chinese Proverb

### This week in our Schools

- **Wednesday, January 24 – Optional Faculty and Staff meetings in the East Hampton High School T-Bell, 2:45 PM and 3:45 PM.** Teachers and staff members are welcome to attend a 2018-19 Budget discussion with the Superintendent of Schools. Given the nature of municipal funding at the state level, this is an important budget season in which to be active and knowledgeable. In order to protect school programs in times of insecure funding, it is important to be aware of the complications of the budget and the local and state level.

- **Wednesday, January 24 – East Hampton Sports Boosters Meeting in the High School Cafeteria, 7:00 PM.**

- **Friday, January 26 – Christa McAuliffe Recognition Day.** Thirty-two years ago, the Challenger shuttle explosion took the life of educator Christa McAuliffe, a high school social studies teacher from Concord, New Hampshire who had inspired children, schools, and the nation as the person chosen to be the first United States civilian in space.



**Friday, January 26 – Coffee with the Superintendent of Schools at 94 Main Street, 7:30 – 9:00 AM.** Stop by 94 Main Street for a cup of coffee to begin your morning. Even if you can't stay, you can grab a coffee to go. Of course, you're welcome to stay and enjoy a cup of coffee with the Superintendent of Schools.



**Friday, January 26 – Bellringer Day in honor of John Fidler at East Hampton High School, 9:30 AM.** The entire school community is invited to honor former High School Principal, John Fidler. This day will be the official dedication of **The John Fidler Way** at East Hampton High School. Street signs will be officially unveiled at the entrance and exit of the school and a plaque inside the school honoring John Fidler will be dedicated, as well. The event is open to the public. Please feel free to be part of this event!

- **Friday, January 26 – Grade 5 Center School visit to Middle School.**



East Hampton  
Board of Education

Promoting excellence for every child!












### Important News: Board of Education vacancy

Due to the resignation of one of its members, the East Hampton Board of Education is seeking citizens interested in serving on the Board of Education to complete a term which ends in November 2019.

Letters of interest and a resume should be submitted to Paul K. Smith Superintendent of Schools at [psmith@easthamptonct.org](mailto:psmith@easthamptonct.org) or by U.S. Mail at East Hampton Public Schools, 94 Main Street, East Hampton, CT 06424 by Friday, January 26, 2018 at 12:00 PM. Candidates for the vacancy will be interviewed by the Board on Monday, January 29, 2018. If you have any questions please contact Paul K. Smith, Superintendent of Schools, 94 Main Street, East Hampton, CT 06424 or call 806-365-4000.



## January/February 2018 Calendar

21	22	23	24	25	26	27
			<p><i>Optional Faculty Metings:</i>  <b>Budget Information 2018-19</b>  High School T-Bell  2:45 PM &amp; 3:45 PM</p> <p><b>East Hampton Sports Boosters Meeting</b>  High School Cafeteria  7:00 PM</p>		<p>Christa McAuliffe Recognition Day</p>  <p>Coffee &amp; Chat With the Superintendent  94 Main St.  7:30-9:00 AM</p> <p><b>BELLRINGER DAY</b>  Dedication of the John Fidler Way at EHHS, 9:30 AM</p> <p>Grade 5 visit to the <u>Middle School</u></p>	
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
<p>Christa McAuliffe Recognition Day (Actual)</p>	<p>Board of Education Meeting - EHHS  T-Bell, 6:30 PM  <b>BUDGET DISCUSSION</b></p>		<p>Grade 8 High School Parent Planning Night  High School  6:30 PM</p>		 <p><b>GROUNDHOG DAY</b></p> <p>Middle School Dance  Grades 7 &amp; 8  7:00 PM</p>	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Start with Hello Week</p>	 <p>Board of Education Meeting - EHHS  T-Bell, 6:30 PM  <b>BUDGET DISCUSSION</b></p>		<p><b>School Counselors Appreciation Day</b></p> <p>Middle School to Wolf Pack game</p> <p>Elementary PTO  Center School  6:00 PM</p> <p>Middle School PTO  Middle School Library  6:00 PM</p> <p>Project Graduation  High School Library  6:30 PM</p>  <p>Center School</p>		 <p><b>PTO Brain Show Memorial School Cafeteria</b></p>	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<p>Random Acts of Kindness Week</p>			<p>VALENTINE'S DAY</p> 	 <p>Superintendent's Advisory Council  94 Main St.  9:00-10:15 AM  <b>BOOK DISCUSSION!</b></p>	 <p>Coffee &amp; Chat With the Superintendent  94 Main St.  7:30-9:00 AM  <b>BOOK DISCUSSION!</b></p>	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	 <p><b>President's Day</b>  No School</p>	<p>Winter Recess Day  No School</p>	<p><b>Late Arrival for Students</b></p> <p>Professional Development Morning</p>	<p><b>National Day of DIGITAL LEARNING</b>  #DLDAY  <a href="http://www.digitalllearningday.org/">www.digitalllearningday.org/</a></p>	<p><b>School Volunteers Appreciation Day</b></p>  <p>Coffee &amp; Chat With the Superintendent  94 Main St.  7:30-9:00 AM</p>	

## Notes

**Please take the time to educate yourself on the budget.**

Take a moment to watch last week's budget presentation!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlacOzrcOEE>.



The **next budget workshop meeting** is **Monday, January 29** during the East Hampton Board of Education Meeting in the High School at 6:30 PM. **This is a chance to hear directly from the school Principals and Director of Curriculum.** Last week the Superintendent presented his recommended budget. During this meeting, the Principals will discuss items that are included in the budget and how that will impact programming for next year. In addition, the Principals will address items that were not included in the budget and how the elimination of those items from the budget impact next year. The Board will ask questions and **audience members will be given an opportunity to ask questions and make recommendations concerning the budget.**

**Here are some ways to be involved in the 2018-19 Budget Process:**

**Attend the Board meetings** at 6:30 PM at the High School:

- Monday, January 29
- Monday, February 5
- Monday, February 26

**Attend the Superintendent's Advisory Council** at 9:00 AM at 94 Main Street

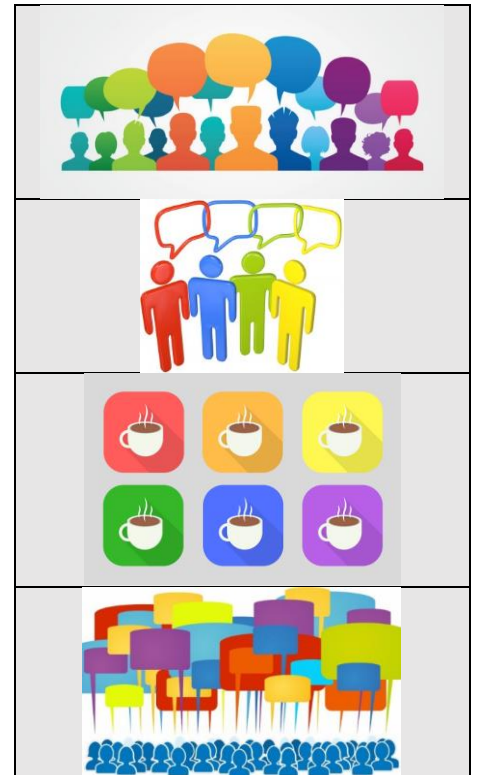
- Thursday, February 15
- Thursday, March 15

**Attend the Coffee and Chat** with the Superintendent:

- Friday, January 26
- Friday, February 16
- Friday, February 23
- Friday, March 9

**Attend the Board of Finance meetings:**

- Monday, March 12 (Middle School – 6:00 PM)
- Friday, March 16 (Location TBA – 4:00 PM)



**School CALENDAR update!**

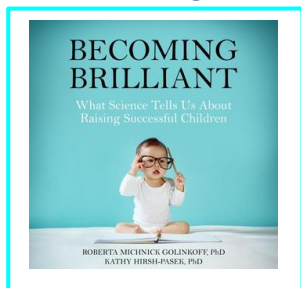


As you are aware, the schools have had five days of NO SCHOOL (including the October wind event) making the last day of school for students **Tuesday, June 19**. The school district is working closely with Project Graduation, who is hoping to have our High School Graduation on June 20 or 21 as those are evenings that they can schedule their Safe Graduation event.

If the district has seven snow days prior to the February long weekend, the Board of Education has the option of taking days from April Vacation. If possible, we will avoid that because it is the only full week for families to go away as the February break has been reduced to a long weekend. This year, should the weather pattern continue, capturing back the Thursday and Friday of April may become a reality.

**Teachers and families were informed via email last week that Friday, March 9, which is scheduled as NO SCHOOL for students due to a Professional Development Day will be CHANGED to a regular day of school.** The Professional Development Day will be re-scheduled and held after the last day of school for students. The change of status to a regular day of school on Friday, March 9 makes the last day for students (for now!) as **Monday, June 18** and the last day for teachers as Tuesday, June 19.

## Coming next month! Book group: *Becoming Brilliant*.



Please join Superintendent of Schools, Paul K. Smith, for a book discussion on *Becoming Brilliant*. There are two chances to participate in the discussion.

1. **Thursday, February 15** at the Superintendent's Advisory Council (94 Main Street) from 9:00-10:15 AM.
2. **Friday, February 16** at the Friday morning "Coffee and Chat" (94 Main Street) from 7:30-9:30 AM.

Get the book, *Becoming Brilliant: What Science Tells Us About Raising Successful Children*. It's a great read! **And, once read, you'll see the role that parents play in helping to educate their own children.**

Even if you don't read all of the book – or any of it – the discussion will still be great.

[Click to order from Amazon on Kindle or paperback.](#)

(If you prefer not to buy your own copy of the book, but still want to participate contact [psmith@easthamptonct.org](mailto:psmith@easthamptonct.org) for a copy! – We want yo

## East Hampton Board of Education Highlights (1/16/18)



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.

- The East Hampton Board of Education meeting began with a visit from State Representative Melissa Ziobron, who discussed the status of municipal funding and the state budget. She indicated that the General Assembly returns to Hartford in February and will begin addressing ways to mitigate the state's budget deficit. In addition, she spoke to the new calculations of the Education Cost Sharing Grant from the state. The new formula weighs heavy on factors including median household income, the number of students on free or reduced lunch, and the number of English learners in a town.
- The Superintendent shared his recommendations for the 2018-19 Budget. (Copies were emailed to teachers and families and can be found on the school's website.) The opportunity exists over the next three Board meetings for Principals, teachers, and citizens to offer input and suggestions to the Board of Education as they review the proposal before finalizing their budget on Monday, February 26.



## Thoughts

### Revisiting a classic from 1998 - and still fresh after 20 years!

Just take a quick peek at the two boxes at the top of the next page highlighted in blue text and it's not hard to see that the ideas from the book, *Powerful Learning*, are as "powerful" as they were 20 years ago when the book was first published. When this book was introduced, the ideas highlighted a new direction for classrooms based on the science of education and early brain research on how children learn. That science has truly advanced – and these ideas are no longer "statements" about learning, they are "facts" about learning.

As you read through the list in Figure 2, check off the various "conditions for powerful learning" that you personally create in your classroom. Then, review Figure 1 and check off the "summary statements" that are present in your daily instructional routine. **Twenty years after this book was written, every great practitioner should be able to check off all 20 statements!**

**Ask yourself:** *Would my students agree with the Figure 2 conditions I have identified as being present in my classroom?*

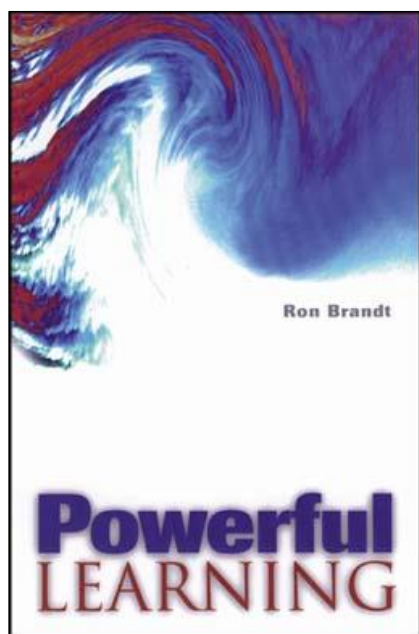


Figure 1: Summary Statements About Learning

1. People learn what is personally meaningful to them.
2. People learn when they accept challenging but achievable goals.
3. Learning is developmental.
4. Individuals learn differently.
5. People construct new knowledge by building on their current knowledge.
6. Much learning occurs through social interaction.
7. People need feedback to learn.
8. Successful learning involves use of strategies—which themselves are learned.
9. A positive emotional climate strengthens learning.
10. Learning is influenced by the total environment.

Figure 2: Conditions for Powerful Learning

In general, we can say that people learn well under the following conditions:

*What They Learn - How They Learn - Where They Learn*

1. What they learn is personally meaningful.
2. What they learn is challenging and they accept the challenge.
3. What they learn is appropriate for their developmental level.
4. They can learn in their own way, have choices, and feel in control.
5. They use what they already know as they construct new knowledge.
6. They have opportunities for social interaction.
7. They get helpful feedback.
8. They acquire and use strategies.
9. They experience a positive emotional climate.
10. The environment supports the intended learning.

## ***Powerful Learning by Ron Brandt***

### **Chapter 1. Conditions for Powerful Learning**

If there is anything educators ought to know about, it is *learning*. We say that students come to school to learn. Our job is to get them to learn. We tell students to “learn this,” and we report how well they learned it to parents and policymakers.

We have a general idea what learning is and how it happens. After all, we ourselves have done a lot of learning. And we know some tried and true ways to expedite school learning: give a reading assignment and conduct a recitation, have the student write a paper or solve a make-believe problem, explain something and ask the student to explain it back, or give a test. We use these approaches because we are expected to use them and because they work fairly well.

Much learning takes place in other ways, of course. Young children learn to walk and talk through a natural process of trial and error. Some accomplished artists and musicians are described as self-taught. People solve problems and make scientific discoveries—clearly a form of learning—without being directed by a teacher.

Educators are sometimes intrigued by the contrast between traditional school practices and the way learning takes place in other settings. The respected cognitive researcher Lauren Resnick talked about it in her 1987 presidential address to the American Educational Research Association (Resnick 1987). And before her, generations of teachers undoubtedly looked for ways to somehow make better use of their students' natural learning abilities. Now, with new information from cognitive psychology and brain research, educators have more authoritative knowledge on the subject of learning than ever before.

When I began working on this book I found that several new statements on learning were in preparation or already had been produced. My colleagues at ASCD and I decided not to duplicate these works here, but to build upon them for a slightly different purpose. First, I quote insights about various aspects of learning from three of these documents, revealing an impressive consensus among rather different sources. Next, I propose conditions under which people seem to learn best, also based on the three works. Then I offer examples from recent articles in *Educational Leadership* that I think illustrate how these conditions can be created in schools. Finally, I speculate about how knowledge about learning may apply to organizations as well as to individuals.

The major sources for this book are the newest version of “Learner-Centered Psychological Principles” prepared by a work group of the American Psychological Association (APA), a document called *Teaching for Effective Learning* by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (Scottish CCC), and a book by Renate and Geoffrey Caine, *Education on the Edge of Possibility*. I will also mention “Principles of Learning: Challenging Fundamental Assumptions” from the Institute for Research on Learning (IRL), Menlo Park, California. According to these documents, the following can be said about human learning:

**People learn what is personally meaningful to them.** Researchers say that **learning is most effective when it is “active, goal-directed,” and “personally relevant”** (APA 1997). Because “the search for meaning is innate” (Caine and Caine 1997), learners concentrate most on the learning tasks that are personally meaningful to them. Those who want to influence the learning of others should try to create as much correspondence as possible between institutional goals and learners' goals. For example, with the approach called problem-based learning, students acquire valuable knowledge and skills as they investigate real, important problems, such as how to reduce water pollution in a nearby stream.

In other words, **people learn when they want to learn**. Because “acquisition of complex knowledge and skills requires extended learner effort and guided practice” and because “what and how much is learned is influenced by the learner's motivation” (APA 1997), **those who wish to encourage learning must be concerned with what learners feel a need to learn.**

Everybody knows the importance of motivation, but teachers are often troubled by the apparent mismatch between student interests and what the teacher is obliged to teach. Sometimes part of the answer may be found in the way a topic is handled. “Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty” (APA 1997). For example, students may learn about a topic and develop new skills by preparing a report in an unusual way, such as writing a magazine article or producing a video program.

**People learn more when they accept challenging but achievable goals.** Because “there is no limit to growth and to the capacities of humans to learn more” (Caine and Caine 1997), **educators must not underestimate what students can do.** “We all have much greater potential for learning than is commonly recognized” (Scottish CCC 1996). **“Effective learning takes place when learners feel challenged to work toward appropriately high goals”** (APA 1997). **Learners learn more effectively when teachers demonstrate confidence in their students' abilities and provide “scaffolding” to enable them to perform well on complex tasks.** For example, a choral group is more likely to present an outstanding performance when the conductor chooses a technically difficult selection for them to sing, convinces them they can do it, and provides expert coaching.

**Learning is developmental.** Because “there are predetermined sequences of [mental] development in childhood” (Caine and Caine 1997), **education is most effective, especially for young children, “when differential development . . . is taken into account”** (APA 1997). Similarly, adults who have relatively little experience with a topic (novices) typically approach it differently from those who know more about it (experts). For example, a person with no technical training or experience would probably need more concrete, step-by-step instruction as he learned to make a simple engine repair than someone who had more training and experience but was not familiar with the particular engine involved.

**Individuals learn differently.** Because “every brain is uniquely organized” (Caine and Caine 1997), **individuals use “different strategies, approaches, and capabilities,”** some of which result from “differences in learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds” (APA 1997). As Howard Gardner contends in his theory of multiple intelligences, “there is no such thing as a single general intelligence” (Scottish CCC 1996). “Self-awareness . . . helps us . . . use our preferred styles . . . to learn more effectively” (Scottish CCC 1996). Schools and other organizations can aid student learning by providing for different ways of learning.

**People construct new knowledge by building on their current knowledge.** Researchers have found that people learn by “link[ing] new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways” (APA 1997). Building on what they already know, learners “search for meaning . . . through ‘patterning’” (Caine and Caine 1997). Because “learning is messy” (Scottish CCC 1996), an orderly presentation is not necessarily bad, but by itself it may be insufficient. As learners encounter a topic in a variety of ways, they “construct” what they come to know about it.

For example, a person who has attended a class about a new computer program needs to try the program out within a short time. If she has never used a computer but has used a typewriter, she will begin using what she knows about typing, which in some cases will be helpful but in other cases will not. If she has worked with computers before, she will probably be able to use knowledge about them to learn features of the new program more easily. As she uses the program to do

a task, she will probably make mistakes and have to correct them. She also may consult an instruction manual or a friend who knows the program. Getting one thing clear at a time, she eventually will become comfortable with the program as a whole—or at least those parts she needs to know.

**Much learning occurs through social interaction.** For years, researchers studied learning as experienced by individual learners, but in recent years they have come to see it as inherently social. In 1992, Gaea Leinhardt called this “the most radical” of all the “new ideas” about learning. “The brain is a social brain” (Caine and Caine 1997), so “most learning involves other people” (Scottish CCC 1996). Because “learning is influenced by social interactions [and] interpersonal relations” (APA 1997), teachers and others who want to promote learning need to pay close attention to the social setting. Students should sometimes work in pairs or learning teams. When teaching the classroom group as a whole, the teacher should strive to develop “a community of inquiry.” This means that some teacher-student interaction should go beyond recitation, in which there is a correct answer the teacher expects to hear, and become real discussion, in which students offer conjectures and respond to others’ ideas.

The idea that “learning is fundamentally social” is at the heart of a tightly integrated set of principles published by the Institute for Research on Learning (n.d.). The Institute sees learning as “inseparable from engagement in the world.” Its seven principles of learning imply that schools should strive to be constellations of small “communities of practice” in which members are continually “negotiating meaning.” This idea is elaborated in Etienne Wenger’s *Communities of Practice* (1998).

**People need feedback to learn.** One explanation for the power of social interaction is that, among other things, it provides feedback to learners. Feedback—information from outside regarding the accuracy and relevance of our thoughts and actions—is essential to learning. “Ongoing assessment . . . can provide valuable feedback” (APA 1997). “The entire system [body, mind, and brain] interacts with and exchanges information with its environment” (Caine and Caine 1997). This suggests that educators must try to make sure that learners receive accurate, useful, and timely feedback. For example, writers need to know from readers whether their message is clearly understood and, if not, what changes would help.

**Successful learning involves use of strategies—which themselves are learned.** “Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes” (Caine and Caine 1997), including “thinking and reasoning strategies” (APA 1997). For example, people frequently “can learn how to learn” by “sharing aims, planning targets, and reviewing achievement” (Scottish CCC 1996). This critical aspect of self-management is sometimes called metacognition or executive control. To help develop it, young people should be coached to think ahead to make sure they have the time and necessary tools for a project and that they have envisioned the steps they will follow to complete it. Then they should be reminded to monitor their own progress as they proceed with the project.

**A positive emotional climate strengthens learning.** Research evidence also suggests that “our ability to think and to learn effectively . . . are closely linked to our physical and emotional well-being” (Scottish CCC 1996). “Motivation to learn . . . is influenced by the individual’s emotional states” (APA 1997). Thus “an appropriate emotional climate is indispensable to sound education” (Caine and Caine 1997). The relationship between emotions and learning is complex. Strong emotions actually enhance memory, but in general, people learn poorly in stressful environments—and schools by their very nature can be stressful. Schools and other organizations can foster learning by stimulating positive emotions: curiosity, excitement, laughter, enjoyment, and appreciation.

**Learning is influenced by the total environment.** Because “learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception” (Caine and Caine 1997), it “is influenced by environmental factors” (APA 1997). This means that educators need to attend to all aspects of the setting—physical, social, and psychological—where learning is supposed to take place. For example, students are probably more likely to remember a play if they act it out, complete with simple costumes, than if they only read it.

These general principles summarizing what is known about how people learn (Figure 1) suggest conditions under which students will learn especially well. These conditions are summarized in Figure 2. They encompass the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, how they go about learning, and the setting in which the learning takes place.

Be a “powerful” practitioner!



Paul K. Smith



26 Miles of Hope