



East Hampton Public Schools

Superintendent's Update

Week of May 2, 2016

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.



Teaching creates all other professions.

~ Anonymous

Calendar



Monday-Friday, May 2-6 – National Teacher Appreciation Week

This week we honor our East Hampton teachers - the greatest staff of teachers in Connecticut!



Wednesday, May 4 – National School Nurse Appreciation Day

Please take time to thank our wonderful nurses in each building.



Wednesday, May 4 – Superintendent's Advisory Council at the Central Office, 9:00-10:15 AM. On the first Wednesday of each month, the Superintendent holds a more formal "coffee and chat" meeting for parents and community members. This month's agenda focuses the future of technology in the East Hampton Schools. ***Don't miss this meeting!***

- **Wednesday, May 4 – ACES: All Children Exercising Simultaneously at Memorial School.** This will be East Hampton's 22nd year participating in this event in which thousands of children throughout the nation will exercise for fifteen minutes to promote the importance of physical fitness.



- **Thursday, May 5 – Center School Grade 5 demonstration of Band Instruments to Memorial School Grade 3, 8:50-10:30 AM.** The Center School instrumentalists will introduce Grade 3 students to the whole array of band instruments for study when they arrive at Center School in the fall.



Friday, May 6 – Coffee with the Superintendent of Schools at the Central Office, 7:30 – 9:30 AM. The coffee will be brewing, so please feel free to stop in!

- **Friday, May 6 – Grade 3 Dance at Memorial School in the Cafeteria, 7:00-8:30 PM.** The Father/Daughter; Mother/Son; Special Person Dance - luau style this year so wear your favorite luau shirts and floral dresses for the evening! Please join the EHES PTO for their final event of the 2016 school year. Dance to the hits with the Bubble Party Guy! Snacks and refreshments are included with admission of \$15.00 per couple. Have your photo taken in the free photo booth and bring home a keepsake of the dance!
- **Sunday, May 8 – Mother's Day.**
- **Monday, May 9 – Board of Education Policy Subcommittee meeting in the High School Library, 5:00 PM.**
- **Monday, May 9 – Board of Education Meeting in the East Hampton High School Library, 6:00 PM.**

- **Tuesday, May 10 – NEW DATE: Town Council Meeting in the Middle School Library, 6:30 PM.** At this meeting, the Town Council will vote on the Town and School Budget. The hope is that the State of Connecticut will have a budget plan that determines aid figures to Towns and Schools by this point in order to allow towns to proceed with their own budgets.

- **Wednesday, May 11 – Middle School PTO Meeting in the Middle School Library, 7:00 PM.**
- **Thursday, May 12 – The Center School Chorus visits the High School Chorus, 9:30-10:45 AM.** The Center School students will have a chance to sing and learn from members of the East Hampton High School Chorus.

- Thursday, May 12 – Elementary PTO Meeting at Center School Library, 6:30 PM.
- Thursday, May 12 – Middle School Band and Choir Concert at the Middle School, 6:30 PM
- Thursday, May 12 – High School Talent Show in the East Hampton High School Auditorium, 7:00 PM.
- **Friday, May 13 – Professional Development Day. No School.**

• **Monday, May 16 – NEW DATE: East Hampton Town Meeting in the Town Hall, 7:00 PM**

• ~~Tuesday, May 17 – STEAM EXPO at the Middle School, 5:00-8:00 PM.~~ A student showcase featuring students and teachers from all four buildings demonstrating projects in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math. **This event has been postponed until the fall.**

- Wednesday, May 18 – Senior Class Awards Evening in the East Hampton High School Auditorium, 7:00 PM.
- Thursday, May 19 – Elementary PTO Mother's Day Tea, 6:00-7:30 PM.
- Thursday, May 19 – High School PTO Meeting, 7:00 PM. This is the final meeting of the year. New members and the parents of students currently in Grade 8 are encouraged to attend!
- Friday, May 20 – East Hampton High School Honors Breakfast, 7:30 AM.

• **Friday, May 20 – East Hampton Cafeteria and Custodian Appreciation Day.**

- Friday, May 20 – Middle School Celebration Dance at the Middle School, 6:30 PM.
- Saturday, May 21 – Junior/Senior Prom at Fantasia in North Haven.
- Monday, May 23 – Board of Education Policy Subcommittee meeting in the High School Library, 5:00 PM.
- Monday, May 23 – Center School Band and Choir Spring Concert in the High School Auditorium, 6:30 PM.
- Monday, May 23 – Board of Education Meeting in the East Hampton High School Library, 7:00 PM.



New Date:

Tuesday, May 24 – Budget Referendum
East Hampton Middle School, 6:00 AM - 8:00 PM

- Thursday, May 26 – East Hampton High School Music Department Spring Concert in the High School Auditorium, 7:00 PM.



Friday, May 27 – Coffee with the Superintendent of Schools at the Central Office, 7:30 – 9:30 AM. Start the Memorial Day weekend off with a coffee!

- Friday, May 27 – Nominations due for recognition as an East Hampton Public Schools “Good Apple.” Nominations are due to the building Principals. Please nominate one of our outstanding teachers or staff members. All employees are eligible!
- Friday, May 27 – East Hampton High School Senior Picnic.
- Monday, May 30 – Memorial Day. No School.



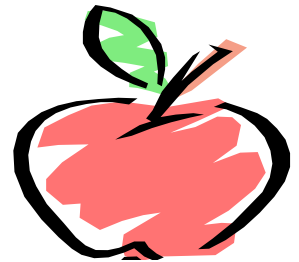
Monday, May 30 – East Hampton Memorial Day Parade and Remembrance Ceremonies. The parade assembles at the high school at 8:30 AM and steps off at 9:00 AM. Organizations interested in marching or entering a patriotic float should contact Lou Carillo at 38 Middletown Avenue, East Hampton, (860-462-3711).

- Thursday, June 2 – Middle School Art Celebration / PTO Ice Cream Social, 6:00-7:00 PM.
- Friday, June 3 – Center School Spelling Bees: Grade 4 at 9:30 AM & Grade 5 at 1:00 PM.
- Friday, June 3 – Hartford Yard Goats Baseball sponsored by Elementary PTO.
- Wednesday, June 8 – Middle School PTO Meeting in the Middle School Library, 7:00 PM.

- **Friday, June 10 – Last Day of School of School for East Hampton [High School, Middle School, Memorial School](#).** The last day of school is a half day of school. Note: The Center School will also have a half day on Friday, June 10.
- **Friday, June 10 – PTO Movie Night at Center School.**
- **Sunday, June 12 – East Hampton Graduation Exercises for the Class of 2016 at the Memorial School Front Lawn, 6:00 PM.**
- **Monday, June 13 – Last Day of School of School for East Hampton [Center School](#).**
- **Tuesday, June 14 – Flag Day.**
- **Wednesday, June 15 – 24th Annual Bellringer Golf Tournament sponsored by the East Hampton Sports Boosters at the Glastonbury Hills Country Club.** All proceeds from the event are used to support the athletic programs at East Hampton High School. Sponsors, golfers, and volunteers are needed! Contact the booster club for more information at ehhsboosters@easthamptonct.org or call Mark Vickery at 860-308-4202.
- **Sunday, June 19 – Father's Day.**
- **Monday, June 20 – First Day of Summer.**

Get your event on this Calendar; it's sent every Monday morning to all East Hampton Public Schools teachers, staff, parents, and families!
If you would like a school/community event listed please forward dates and information to Paul Smith: psmith@easthamptonct.org.

Notes



Help us honor the East Hampton "Good Apples!"

Nominations now being accepted!

One of the most valuable assets of the East Hampton Public Schools is our more than 300 employees — the teachers, bus drivers, office staff, custodians, paraprofessionals, food service workers, administrators, and all others who contribute daily to the education of East Hampton children. Each has an integral role to play in the overall successful operation of the school system.

To recognize the outstanding contributions of the many people who are helping to ensure that East Hampton Public Schools are "Educating for Excellence," the **GOOD APPLE AWARD** was established and continues as a proud tradition of our district. ALL employees of the East Hampton Public Schools are eligible to receive a Good Apple Award. Please note — past recipients of the Good Apple Award may be considered.

- Nominations may be made by employees, parents, students and friends of the East Hampton Public Schools.
- Nomination forms may be obtained from the Superintendent's Office or any School Principal's office.
- Nominations must be submitted to the appropriate School **Principal** no later than **Friday, May 27, 2016.**

Nomination forms were e-mailed to staff and families last week. Nomination forms can also be found on the school's website – click here.

We will recognize the East Hampton Good Apples on Wednesday, August 31 at the annual Convocation.

Budget Update 2016-17

Last week, the Town Council voted to postpone any decision on the town and school budget until their next scheduled meeting, which is **Tuesday, May 10**. Other towns have done the same thing - pushing back their town meetings and referendum, due to the state's lack of clarity on town and education funding. East Hampton will now hold the Town Meeting on **Monday, May 16** in the Town Hall at 7:00 PM and the Budget Referendum on **Tuesday, May 24** in the Middle School from 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Please note: Due to the fact that the Referendum has been officially announced for May 24, the weekly **Superintendent's Update** can only include budget information that lists the date, time, and location of the budget referendum.

Prior to this date there has been information shared with details of the 2016-17 Budget. That information cannot be shared in an electronic fashion any longer due to recent legislation. If you would like further information regarding the budget, you are always welcome to meet the Superintendent, Paul K. Smith in person, or call (860-365-4000), or e-mail (psmith@easthamptonct.org), or visit for "Coffee and Chat" during a scheduled time or at your convenience.

Teaching Principles

In his weekly letter, the *Marshall Memo*, Kim Marshall takes on cognitive science principles that have an impact on effective teaching and learning. He summarizes the work of Daniel Willingham (University of Virginia) and Paul Bruno (a former middle-school teacher) as follows:

A. How do students understand new ideas?

- ***Students learn new ideas by linking them to what they already know.*** This means it's **essential for teachers to develop and refer to prior knowledge**. Teachers should also make frequent use of analogies, elaborate on them, and help students see how prior knowledge connects to what is to be learned.
- ***Students must transfer information from working memory to long-term memory.*** Because working memory has limited capacity, **students can be overwhelmed if too much information is presented at once**. Effective teachers make content explicit through carefully paced explanation, modeling, and examples; present new information through multiple modalities; and make good use of worked problems.
- ***Learning doesn't progress through a fixed sequence of age-related stages.*** Rather, the **mastery of new concepts happens in fits and starts**. "Content should not be kept from students because it is 'developmentally inappropriate,'" says the report. "To answer the question 'is the student ready?' it's best to consider 'has the student mastered the prerequisites?'"

B. How do students learn and retain new information?

- ***Information is often withdrawn from memory just as it went in.*** For students to remember what information means and why it is important, **we need to get them thinking about meaning when they encounter to-be-remembered material**. Effective teachers assign tasks that require explanation or require students to organize material in meaningful ways. Stories and mnemonics are also helpful in getting students to impose meaning on hard-to-remember content.
- ***Practice is essential to learning new facts, but not all practice is equally effective.*** For long-term mastery, it's best to **space practice over time and interleave questions from different content areas**. Frequent quizzes with low stakes, and students testing themselves, help establish long-term retention through the "retrieval effect." At a metacognitive level, it's good for students to understand this principle of long-term memory.

C. How do students solve problems?

- **Each subject has basic facts that support higher-level learning by freeing working memory and illuminating applications.** In reading, these include phonics and letter-sound pairings; in math, they include basic facts such as the multiplication tables.
- **Effective feedback is often essential to acquiring new knowledge and skills.** Good feedback is specific and clear, focused on the task rather than the student, explanatory, and directed toward improvement rather than merely verifying performance.

D. How does learning transfer to new situations in or outside the classroom?

- **To transfer learning to a novel problem, students need to know the problem's context and its underlying structure.** It's important for students to have sufficient background knowledge to appreciate a problem's context.
- **Examples are helpful to learning new ideas, but it's often hard to see the link to other examples.** Having learned to find the area of a table top, a student might not see how this applies to finding the area of a soccer field. Explicitly comparing the examples helps students remember the underlying similarities. With multi-step procedures, students need to identify and label the sub-steps so they can apply them to similar problems. It's also helpful to alternate concrete examples and abstract representations.

E. What motivates students to learn?



Mindset!

- **Beliefs about intelligence are important predictors of student behavior in school.** Motivation is improved if students believe that intelligence and ability can be improved through hard work, and if adults respond to successful work by praising effective effort rather than innate ability. It's also helpful for teachers to set learning goals (e.g., mastering specific material) rather than performance goals (competing with others or vying for approval).
- **Intrinsic motivation leads to better long-term outcomes than extrinsic motivation.** Teachers need to keep their eye on whether a task is one that students are already motivated to perform; whether a reward is verbal or tangible; whether a reward is expected or unexpected; whether praise is for effort, completion, or quality; and whether praise or a reward occurs immediately or after a delay.
- **It's difficult to gauge one's own learning and understanding.** That's why students need to learn how to monitor their own learning through assessments, self-testing, and explanation.
- **Students will be more motivated and successful when they believe they belong and are accepted.** Teachers should reassure students that it's natural to have doubts about belonging – but those feelings will diminish over time. Teachers can also encourage students to see critical feedback as a sign that others believe in their ability to meet high standards.

F. What are common misconceptions about how students think and learn?

- Teachers need to recognize and dispel a set of incorrect beliefs about teaching and learning:
 - Misconception #1: Students have different “learning styles.”
 - Misconception #2: Humans use only 10 percent of their brains.
 - Misconception #3: People are preferentially “right-brained” or “left-brained” in how they think.
 - Misconception #4: Novices and experts think in all the same ways.
 - Misconception #5: Cognitive development progresses in age-related stages.

Please visit: *The Science of Learning*, is at http://www.deansforimpact.org/the_science_of_learning.html

Thoughts



Turning the learning over to students.

We talk about the need to have “**engaged**” learners in the classroom. When I walk into classrooms, I am always most interested to see what the *students are doing*. While I know we have wonderful teachers, the key in any classroom is not only to have students being active in the learning process, but for students to “own” their learning.

Great teaching is about coaching and mentoring, setting our students on a journey of discovery in which the learner has a dynamic role and a voice in the learning process. Turning the learning over to students requires more of an artistic skill than one first imagines. Lecturing students and hoping that some learning is transferred by the process does not promote 21st century learning. Walking into a classroom to a group of students who are passively listening is one of the signs that very little learning is taking place at the moment. There is always the need to give instructions and relay content, but the “giving” and “relaying” create the lowest level cognitive actions in the classroom. Walking into a classroom in which 20 students are active and not all doing the same thing is a sign that students are in control of their learning in an authentic learning environment for deep, productive, and lasting learning.

This is not a new concept in education, yet it is one that still one that is not the standard model in the typical classroom. And yet, the term “engagement” is anything but new. The sentence below, describing 21st century learning was written in **1994 – over 20 years ago**. We know that the 21st century skills that we want students to master require a way of teaching that involves active participation. How can we teach this way - every day, every lesson?

21st Century Learning is Engaged Learning

“What does engaged learning look like? Successful, engaged learners are **responsible for their own learning**. These students are **self-regulated** and **able to define their own learning goals** and **evaluate their own achievement**. They are also **energized by their learning**; their joy of learning leads to a lifelong passion for solving problems, understanding, and taking the next step in their thinking. These learners are **strategic** in that they know how to learn and **are able to transfer knowledge to solve problems creatively**. Engaged learning also involves being **collaborative**-that is, **valuing and having the skills to work with others**.”

Valdez et al, *Designing Learning and Technology for Educational Reform*, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, **1994**
(<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/engaged.htm>)

“What a classroom engaged in real learning looks like” from The Washington Post By Valerie Strauss

Aleta Margolis is the founder and executive director of the Center for Inspired Teaching, a D.C.-based nonprofit organization that works with teachers, principals, and entire school faculties to foster the best teaching practices. In a recent post wrote a post titled “Letting kids move in class isn’t a break from learning. It IS learning.” Margolis wrote about how teachers incorporate movement into active learning. Now in this post, she looks at other instructional elements that indicate best practices in teaching. What should you see in a classroom where students are engaged in deep learning?

By Aleta Margolis:

A classroom designed to build students’ independent thinking and analytical skills looks radically different from the norm, and one of the joys and challenges of showcasing this type of instruction is providing the necessary context. So we have created a visual aid for visitors who come to see our Inspired Teachers’ classrooms — a “bingo card” that provides structure and offers terms for what guests observe. The current bingo card contains eight items:

Independent problem-solving. In a middle school social studies classroom, students are prompted with a question: “Where does chocolate come from?” It’s then up to the students to determine what sources to locate and reference in order to find an answer – **building their skills as researchers and their comprehension** of a complex lesson on production processes and global markets. The teacher explains, “I used to think it was good teaching to stand in front of a class and lecture and have students quietly doing work alone at their desks, but I don’t think that anymore. BLISS, an Inspired Teaching program, taught me what a great classroom looks like: **it’s a place where students are doing as much of the talking and thinking and problem solving as the teacher**. It’s a place where students are tackling questions and problems that are relevant to their daily lives. This kind of classroom helps prepare students to be thinkers—and that is the most important skill a teacher can teach.”

Students struggling and persevering. During the morning meeting in an early childhood classroom, a student is charged with writing a difficult sentence for his literacy level. Instead of jumping in and finishing the message for him when he takes a long time, the teacher stands back as her student thoughtfully considers each sound and letter. His classmates wait patiently, helping him sound out each word; when he completes the task, they celebrate his success together. **The teacher intentionally creates the kind of classroom environment where this productive struggle can occur, knowing that it encourages independent thinking and supports deeper learning.**

Physical movement and serious play. As I described in my piece on movement, teachers can incorporate physical tasks such as “indoor ice skating” into their instruction, allowing students to deepen their understanding of concepts from geometry to geography as they **simultaneously refine their motor skills and build spatial awareness**.

Students imagining creative approaches to challenges. Eileen Pascucci, a Teacher Leader in Inspired Teaching’s SCALE program, describes how she makes way for students to use their imagination: “Instead of handing them an entire lab that’s already mapped out for them, step by step by step, like all the old lab manuals do, I have been much better at **stripping away all of the unnecessary so they can discover it themselves**.” In order to teach a unit on osmosis and diffusion in her ninth-grade biology class, Eileen tasks students with planning and carrying out their own investigations into what happens when gummy bears are soaked in a variety of solutions.

Real world connections. For the high school students enrolled in Real World History, an Inspired Teaching course offered in partnership with D.C. Public Schools, drawing **connections between textbooks and the world around them** is a critical part of coursework. In one project, students learn about the Great Migration by interviewing elder Washingtonians who migrated from the South about their reactions to Jacob Lawrence’s “Migration Series,” featured at the Phillips Collection.

Wide variety of student work and types of assessment. At the end of summer school for elementary students taught by the Inspired Teaching Fellows, a Learning Showcase **displays student work that can’t be captured by tests alone**. There are pickles students made in chemistry class, statistical graphs showing results from a survey of their classmates on gardening habits, and drawings that demonstrate understanding of many key concepts, from the way plants grow to how to sequence a story.

Student-led discussions. After participating in a Paideia seminar on reparations, Real World History students independently organize a viewing and discussion of the film “Selma” with students from a local independent school. Students engage in a discussion about the civil rights movement, the current state of civil rights in the United States, and **the role they might play** in movements such as #blacklivesmatter.

Social-emotional skills and empathy. Teachers at the Inspired Teaching Demonstration Public Charter School explain how empathy is seamlessly integrated into their lessons, both as a cognitive skill — building understanding of others’ perspectives in order to develop a more sophisticated worldview — and as a social-emotional one. When a student is disruptive, she is asked, “How is your behavior affecting the classroom community? Are you it helping it or hurting it?” When a student articulates his thoughts about how the mayor is doing in her first term, the teacher turns it into a discussion about what others might think, why they may or may not have voted for the mayor, and how to change fellow citizens’ minds if you disagree with them. In this way, **building the skill of empathy enables a supportive and productive classroom environment**.

The next time you have the opportunity to visit a classroom, take a moment to observe closely. Do you see compliance or true engagement? Are students pulling facts out of a book or are they building independent problem-solving skills and meaningful connections?

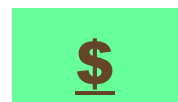
Just as in life, the answers in excellent classrooms need to be earned and never spoon-fed. The same is true for the questions. When you visit a classroom and are able to fill your bingo card, you're seeing inquiry-based instruction that empowers students and positions them to be leaders of their own learning. Every child deserves that type of education. What other "bingo card boxes" would you add to the list?



Have a great week!
Paul Smith



The Superintendent of Schools sends out text message using **Remind**. If you would like reminders about East Hampton Public Schools events or immediate updates on school cancelations in the winter directly from the Superintendent of Schools [click here](#) and simply enter your mobile phone number.



Please click the dollar sign to get information about the 2016-17 Budget from Paul K. Smith, Superintendent of Schools. Any parent or community member is welcome to schedule a personal appointment with the Superintendent if you have budget questions. You are also encouraged to stop in for coffee at one of the regularly scheduled, **Coffee with the Superintendent** meetings.



Please click on the calendar for the 2016-17 school calendar. Next year's school calendar is now available to parents. The 2016-17 school year will begin after Labor Day in order to accommodate the high school construction project. Please review the calendar and plan your vacation time accordingly.



Are you following the East Hampton Public Schools on Facebook? You should follow us to get simple reminders and updates on all the great things going on in our schools. Click on the Facebook icon and "like" us!



Come and have coffee with the Superintendent of Schools some morning or evening. It's a great chance to learn what's going on – especially if you want accurate information right from the source. The Update has a list of coffee dates – and you can always find them on the school's website.

