



# East Hampton Public Schools

## Superintendent's Update

### Week of June 20, 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.



You know you're on the right track when you become uninterested in looking back.

~ Anonymous



## 2016-17 Budget Passes!

### 1282 - Yes, 846 – No


Thank you for support to make sure that  
the budget passed on the first try!



**Please note: This is the last issue of the Superintendent's Update of the school year.**

There will be a Summer Update in July and a Back-to-School Update in August that will be emailed to all staff and families. If you have any dates for the Calendar section or other information for those issues, please send to [psmith@easthamptonct.org](mailto:psmith@easthamptonct.org).

## Calendar

- **Monday, June 20 – First Day of Summer.**
- **Monday, June 27 – Board of Education Meeting in the East Hampton Middle School Library, 7:00 PM.**
- **Monday, July 4 – Independence Day. (All School Offices are closed.)**
- **Monday, August 22 – Board of Education Meeting in the Middle School Library, 7:00 PM.**
-  **Friday, August 26 – “Back to School” Coffee with the Superintendent of Schools at the Central Office – 94 Main Street, 7:30 – 9:30 AM.** Start the year off with Coffee and Chat with the Superintendent.
- **Monday, August 29 – New Teacher/Staff Orientation in the Middle School Cafeteria, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM.**
- **Monday, August 29 – Grade 4 Welcoming Event at Center School, 4:00-6:00 PM.** All incoming 4<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to visit Center School, tour the campus, meet their teacher, and visit their classroom before the school year officially begins.
- **Wednesday, August 31 – East Hampton Public Schools Convocation: Breakfast in the High School Cafeteria 8:00-9:00 AM followed by Convocation in the High School Auditorium 9:00-10:30 AM.**
  - Presentations will include the Good Apple Awards and Recognition of the Rookie Teacher of the Year, the Paraeducator of the Year, and the Teacher of the Year.
  - Professional Development Activities will follow in the afternoon.
  - Paraeducators and other non-certified staff are invited to participate in the activities.
- **Thursday, September 1 – Professional Development.** Programs will begin at 8:00 AM in each building.
- **Thursday, September 1 – Kindergarten Class of 2029 Meet and Greet Bus Ride at Memorial School, 9:00-9:45 AM.**
- **Thursday, September 1 – Classroom “Sneak Peek” at Memorial School, 3:30-5:30 PM.** Students in Grades PK – 3 and their family members can come to Memorial for a quick greeting and peek into next year's classroom.
- **Friday, September 2 – Professional Development.** Programs will begin at 8:00 AM in each building.
- **Monday, September 5 – Labor Day.**
- **Tuesday, September 6 – First Day of School 2016-17.**

- **Monday, September 12 – Board of Education Reception for new staff members of the East Hampton Public Schools in the High School Library, 6:00 PM.** Principals will introduce new staff to members of the Board of Education and a light reception will follow.
- **Monday, September 12 – Board of Education Meeting in the High School Library, 7:00 PM.**
- **Wednesday, September 14 – Middle School Open House, 6:30 PM.**
- **Thursday, September 15 – Center School Open House, 6:30 PM.**
- **Tuesday, September 20 – Memorial School Open House for Pre K, Kindergarten, and Grade 1, 6:30-8:00 PM.**
- **Wednesday, September 21 – High School Open House, 7:00 PM.**
- **Thursday, September 22 – Memorial School Open House for Grade 2 and Grade 3, 6:30-8:00 PM.**



**Friday, September 23 – Coffee with the Superintendent of Schools at the Central Office – 94 Main Street, 7:30 – 9:30 AM.** Come in for a cup, say “Hi,” and head off – or stay for the “Coffee and Chat.”

- **Friday, September 23 – Jog-a-thon at the Memorial School.,**

**Get your event on this Calendar; it's sent 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](mailto:psmith@easthamptonct.org).

## Notes

### ***East Hampton Board of Education Highlights (6/13/16)***

- A special congratulations to two Center School Students who were recognized at the Connecticut Invention Convention this year: Emma Braga and Samantha Kearney. In addition to Connecticut honors, Emma's invention resulted in her competing in the National Invention Convention in Washington, D.C.
- Honored by the Board of Education on Monday evening were the 2016 retirees from the East Hampton Public Schools: Robert Wylie, Aileen Vrooman, Carol Van Deusen, Barbara Pomfret, Vicki Wasserman, and Peggy Puzzo.
- The Superintendent shared information about the district's policy being online through CABE, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. The link will go live in August. Users to the site can type key words and all policies containing the words will be listed.
- The June district enrollment finished the year with increases in each school over last June. Out of district magnet school attendance was down by 23 students.

School	June 2015	June 2016
Memorial School	617	639
Center School	282	289
Middle School	428	433
High School	502	516
Learning Center <small>Half East Hampton / Half East Haddam</small>	6	8
Outplaced Special Education	12	13
Out of district: Vo-Ag (Middletown)	3	10
Out of district: Magnet Schools	110	87
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1995</b>

- Nancy Briere, Director of Curriculum and Regina DellaVolpe, Teacher presented information to the Board on the 2016-17 Teacher Evaluation program. East Hampton's plan was approved by the state for next year.
- Karen Asetta, Business Manager presented information on the school's cafeteria program. The Board voted to participate in the state's Healthy Food Program and Certification.
- The Board approved the following policies:
  - 5141.3 Health Assessments and Immunizations
  - 5141.4 Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault

- 5145.511 Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program
- 5145.14 On-Campus Recruitment
- 6111 School Calendar
- 6114 Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness
- 6114.1 Fire Emergency (Drills)/Crisis Response Drills
- 6142.101 Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)
- The Board reviewed the following policies for possible approval on June 27:
  - 1112.5 News Media Relationships
  - 1221 Citizen's Advisory Committees for the Board of Education
  - 1325 Advertising and Promotions
  - 1411 Law Enforcement Officials
  - 2300 Statement of Ethics for Administrators
  - 1212 School Volunteers
  - 1250 School Visitors
- The Board will hold a summer retreat for professional growth on July 13 from 4:00 – 8:00 PM, location TBD.
- The Board approved Chromebook purchases in the amount of \$39,864 from the vendor, SHI as part of the state's technology grant awarded to the East Hampton Public Schools.
- The Board approved the use of a visitor management system (RAPTOR) as part of security measures for screening guests to all four schools.
- The Board approved the district's participation in the "Special Friends" program as part of a grant from the state to support Primary Mental Health (Memorial School).
- The Board endorsed a grant application by the local prevention council that would result in a "prevention coordinator" for middle school and high school students (and those up to age 25) that will focus on prevention and education about alcohol and drug use (particularly opioid addiction).
- The Board approved the new District Goals for 2016-17. They will be shared with teachers and the school community in July 2016.



### ■ *How about some coffee over the summer?*

The Superintendent of School is in all summer - and that means the coffee is always brewing. Come and join the Superintendent for coffee before the fall "coffee and chat" mornings begin again. Anyone is welcome to make an appointment anytime during the summer with the Superintendent of Schools by calling 860-365-400 or e-mailing [psmith@easthamptonct.org](mailto:psmith@easthamptonct.org). (No taxpayer dollars used for coffee, cream, or cups!)

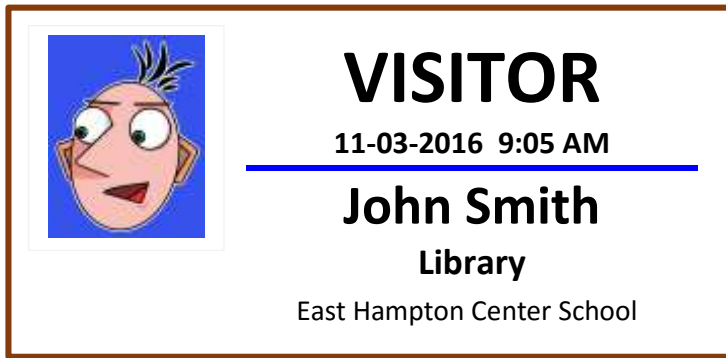


### ■ *The safety and security of our students is our prime responsibility.*

Beginning the first day of school, **Tuesday, September 5** all of our Main Offices (Memorial, Center, Middle School, and High School) will abandon the paper sign-in sheets for visitors and use the **RAPTOR automated visitor management software**. This system allows our school offices to confirm that visitors (parents, guests, repair persons) are who they say they are by requiring driver's license or other government-issued identification. This automated software instantly checks names against all registered sex offender lists in the United States or alerts related to court orders or child custody.

The processing of visitors is very quick and conducted in the background of office action so visitors are not inconvenienced or made to feel that they are being scrutinized. This system is secure for visitors as the scanner only compiles the data necessary for screening.

The system issues a badge that is to be worn that includes photo, name, "VISITOR" status, date, time, and location of visit. The photo prevents badges from being shared with anyone else. The name is included indicating that the individual has been screened and cleared. By including the date, time, and destination, the badge indicates the approved entry period and location.



Please note: Once an individual has presented their photo ID, it will not be necessary to have a photo ID for subsequent visits during that school year as the software retains the photo. The visitor still undergoes background check by the system and a photo visitor badge is still produced.

**Badges are required for visitors entering the building past the main office during the school day.**

You will see this sign at entrances of all EAST HAMPTON schools:



## Thoughts

**Teaching our children skills for success (character, grit, and perseverance) by modeling, believing in, demonstrating, and cultivating them.**

Once I read the expert included below, I just had to go out and buy the book, *Helping Children Succeed*. It's going to sound logical, but the case made by the author, Paul Tough, is that the deep learning skills that we hope to pass on to our students: collaboration, character, creativity, critical thinking, etc., are not "taught" in the traditional manner of teaching

According to Tough they are skills that are absorbed by children in **environments** where those attributes flourish. Our model for schools is to create an atmosphere where there is character, where creativity flows, and where critical thinking is the norm if we want students to gain these skills. By modeling the skills we want to see in children and by creating environments in which students rely on those skills, we will see the development of deep-learning, noncognitive advances.

If we want our students to demonstrate grit and perseverance, don't rely on a lecture, a film, or a presentation. We need to create classroom experiences that demand grit as the norm – and provide the mentoring, coaching, and advising as teacher and mentor.

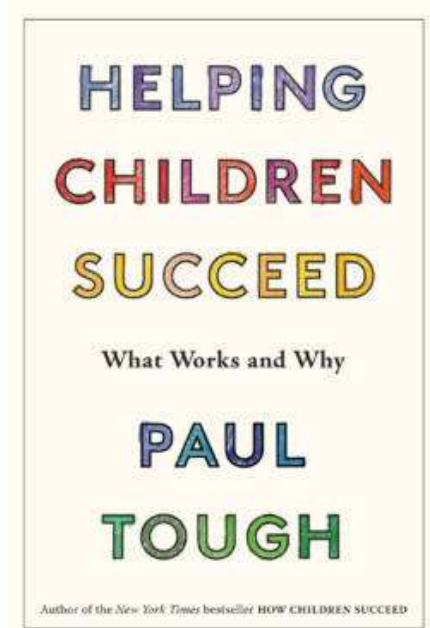
In fact, Paul Tough has a great point that you shouldn't even need to use the word "grit" or "perseverance" in the classroom. Just create the environment. Just do it!

## Why Character Can't Be Taught Like The Pythagorean Theorem

In [MindShift](#) By Paul Tough

*Excerpted from the book "[Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why](#)" by Paul Tough.*

*He is also the author of "[How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character](#)" and "[Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America](#)."*



Because noncognitive qualities like grit, curiosity, self-control, optimism, and conscientiousness are often described, with some accuracy, as skills, educators eager to develop these qualities in their students quite naturally tend to treat them like the skills that we already know how to teach: reading, calculating, analyzing, and so on. And as the value of noncognitive skills has become more widely acknowledged, demand has grown for a curriculum or a textbook or a teaching strategy to guide us in helping students develop these skills. If we can all agree on the most effective way to teach the Pythagorean theorem, can't we also agree on the best way to teach grit? In practice, though, it hasn't been so simple. Some schools have developed comprehensive approaches to teaching character strengths, and in classrooms across the country, teachers are talking to their students more than ever about qualities like grit and perseverance. But in my reporting for *How Children Succeed*, I noticed a strange paradox: Many of the educators I encountered who seemed best able to engender noncognitive abilities in their students never said a word about these skills in the classroom.

Take Elizabeth Spiegel, the chess instructor I profiled at length in *How Children Succeed*. She teaches chess at Intermediate School 318, a traditional, non-magnet public school in Brooklyn that enrolls mostly low-income students of color. As I described in the book, she turned the I.S. 318 chess team into a competitive powerhouse, one that regularly beats better-funded private school teams and wins national championships. It was clear to me, watching her work, that she was teaching her students something more than chess knowledge; she was also conveying to them a sense of belonging and self-confidence and purpose. And among the skills her students were mastering were many that looked exactly like what other educators called character: the students persisted at difficult tasks, overcoming great obstacles; they handled frustration and loss and failure with aplomb and resilience; they devoted themselves to long-term goals that often seemed impossibly distant.

And yet, in all the time I spent watching her teach, I never once heard Elizabeth Spiegel use words like grit or character or self-control. She talked to her students only about chess. She didn't even really give them pep talks or motivational speeches. Instead, her main pedagogical technique was to intensely analyze their games with them, talking frankly and in detail about the mistakes they had made, helping them see what they could have done differently. Something in her careful and close attention to her students' work changed not only their chess ability but also their approach to life.

Or take Lanita Reed. She was one of the best teachers of character I met — yet not only did she not talk much about character, she wasn't even a teacher. She was a hairdresser who owned her own salon, called Gifted Hanz, on the South Side of Chicago, and she worked part-time as a mentor for a group called Youth Advocate Programs, which had been hired by the Chicago schools department to provide intensive mentoring services to students who had been identified as being most at risk of committing or being a victim of gun violence. When I met Reed, she was working



with a 17-year-old girl named Keitha Jones, whose childhood had been extremely difficult and painful and who expressed her frustration and anger by starting a fistfight, nearly every morning, with the first student at her high school who looked at her the wrong way.

Over the course of several months, Reed spent hours talking with Keitha — at her salon, at fast-food restaurants, at bowling alleys — listening to her troubles and giving her big-sisterly advice. Reed was a fantastic mentor, empathetic and kind but no softy. While she bonded and sympathized with Keitha over the ways Keitha had been mistreated, she also made sure Keitha understood that transforming her life was going to take a lot of hard work. With Reed's support, Keitha changed in exactly the way character-focused educators would hope: She became more persistent, more resilient, more optimistic, more self-controlled, more willing to forgo short-term gratification for a chance at long-term happiness. And it happened without any explicit talk about noncognitive skills or character strengths.

Though I observed this phenomenon during my reporting, it was only later, after the book was published, that I began to ask whether the teaching paradigm might be the wrong one to use when it comes to helping young people develop noncognitive strengths. Maybe you can't teach character the way you teach math. It seems axiomatic that you can't teach the quadratic equation without actually talking about the quadratic equation, and yet it was clear from my reporting that you could make students more self-controlled without ever talking to them about the virtue of self-control. It was also clear that certain pedagogical techniques that work well in math or history are ineffective when it comes to character strengths. No child ever learned curiosity by filling out curiosity worksheets; hearing lectures on perseverance doesn't seem to have much impact on the extent to which young people persevere.

This dawning understanding led me to some new questions: What if noncognitive capacities are categorically different than cognitive skills? What if they are not primarily the result of training and practice? And what if the process of developing them doesn't actually look anything like the process of learning stuff like reading and writing and math?

Rather than consider noncognitive capacities as skills to be taught, I came to conclude, it's more accurate and useful to look at them as products of a child's environment. There is certainly strong evidence that this is true in early childhood; we have in recent years learned a great deal about the effects that adverse environments have on children's early development. And there is growing evidence that even in middle and high school, children's noncognitive capacities are primarily a reflection of the environments in which they are embedded, including, centrally, their school environment.

This is big news for those of us who are trying to figure out how to help kids develop these abilities — and, more broadly, it's important news for those of us seeking to shrink class-based achievement gaps and provide broader avenues of opportunity for children growing up in adversity. If we want to improve a child's grit or resilience or self-control, it turns out that the place to begin is not with the child himself. What we need to change first, it seems, is his environment.



Enjoy the summer!  
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 cancellations in the winter directly from the Superintendent of Schools [click here](#) and simply enter your mobile phone number.



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.