



Shaping Futures Together

To: Dr. Donna Leake
 From: Carole McCombe
 Date: February 2, 2023
 Subject: February Report to the Board of Education

Field Trips:

- The Washington, D.C. trip will be from May 16 – May 19, 2023. Students in both grade 7 and grade 8 will attend.
- Students in grades PK, 2, 3, and 4 take monthly walking trips to the Eastford Public Library on separate, designated days.
- Students in grades 3 and 4 will travel to the CT Science Center in Hartford on February 15 to explore hands-on science activities and the traveling exhibit, the *Forest of Illusions*.
- Select students in grade 6 will attend and perform in the Band Ensemble portion of the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) honors festival on March 30, 2023. The festival will be held at the CT Convention Center.

Virtual Field Trips through the Center for Interactive Learning (CILC)

Authors on Call, iNK Think Tank	Does your Pet Have a Story? by Aline Alexander Newman	Grades 1 and 2	02-03-2023
---------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	----------------	------------

Eastford Readiness Program:

The Readiness Program has 17 enrolled. Ten students are 4-year olds who will move on to kindergarten next year.

Eastford Readiness Council Update:

Meetings are held virtually on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM. The Council is exploring state and federal grants available for programs that receive School Readiness Funding. A Wage Enhancement Grant and an Enrollment Based Grant are two that we are currently looking into. The Council is also updating policies and procedures to be ready for NAEYC re-accreditation in the spring of 2025 and they are preparing to send out their annual Needs Assessment Survey.

Update on Grants:

School Mental Health Workers Grant: This is a new grant through the Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Health, Nutrition, and Family Services. The purpose of the grant is to assist Connecticut school districts in hiring and retaining additional School Mental Health Workers (SMHW), which by their definition includes school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, and licensed marriage and family therapists. We just received word that we have been accepted for this grant. The grant money can apply to school mental health workers and related services for this school year, next school year and a portion will be available for the third school year.

School Safety Grant Program (SSGP):

The State just opened another round of funding available to public and non-public schools for areas of school safety. We will convene our School Safety Committee and see what we need to prioritize and then submit our application. The grant is due by the end of March.

Data on Student Progress:

We are working with students in grades 5-8 to develop learning portfolios that they will be able to share with parents during our spring conference times. We are piloting Student-led conferences for grades 5-8. A letter will go home to families on February 3 outlining this process. Teachers will be working with students to prepare them to share with families about their learning. Teachers in grades 3-8 are utilizing the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) to monitor student progress toward mastering standards. The IABs are resources from the State Department of Education and they align with the standards and types of questions students will see when they take the Smarter Balanced Assessments in the spring. Students will also take the NWEA assessment in Language Arts, Math and Science in March. These results are also used to monitor student progress toward mastering standards and to guide instruction.

The Science of Reading:

We are requesting a waiver from the State of Connecticut to exempt us from the requirements under new legislation regarding the Science of Reading. The waiver will allow us to continue using the materials we currently have to support Language Arts in grades K-3 as long as we can document that our curriculum and resources provide in-depth instruction and proper screening and assessment in all the elements required under The Science of Reading legislation. The waiver process requires an audit of our ELA program and assessments in grade K-3, and extensive documentation regarding our curriculum, program resources, assessments and student outcomes over the years. The waiver will be written and submitted by the end of February.

High School Information and Open Houses:

Ms. Murana is providing students and families with information on area high schools and the application process. This information is available on her page on the school website, in the Newsletter and on a bulletin board near her office. Most schools have already held an Open House for prospective students and students have had presentations from all but E.O. Smith and ACT. Students are able to shadow high school students at schools that they are considering attending.

At this point, 7 students are considering The Woodstock Academy, 3 students are considering Ellis Tech, and one student is considering Killingly Agriculture Education.

Update on School Sports and the Gym Renovation Grant:

Mr. Kernan will provide an update on our winter and spring sport seasons and progress toward applying for funding for renovations to the school gym.

Professional Development:

- I continue to work with EastConn staff on a regular basis to incorporate the Eastford “Portrait of a Learner” (POL) into our existing and developing curriculum documents and continue our work on building a positive learning community with the goal of developing students as “leaders of their own learning”. I attend monthly Regional collaborations through EastConn with the State Department, area administrators and curriculum directors. There is additional focus this year on The Science of Reading and new CSDE requirements that will impact reading and language arts curriculum and assessments beginning July 2023.
- EastConn staff support our math teachers throughout the year as they navigate our new math program, Illustrative Mathematics (IM). ELA teachers also receive support on integrating Units of Study with our Portrait of a Learner.
- On February 17 we have an early dismissal day for staff professional development in the afternoon. Staff will participate in CPR refresher training, ELA and math support, and work on materials that support students with student-led conferences.

Community and other events:

- Ms. Murana hosts a monthly grandparents’ group at the school. Families with grandparents as the primary caregivers are invited to attend for coffee and conversation.
- The February after school enrichment calendar has been shared with families. Students have the opportunity to sign up for programs through Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium, as well as STEM programs, crafts, art club and academic support offerings. On many days we have upwards of 50 students staying after school for either academic support or an enrichment activity.
- On February 6 students in the lower grades will celebrate the 100th day of school.
- On February 10 the middle school students will have a Dance in the evening.
- On February 11 the Congregational Church of Eastford will hold their annual Cupcake Wars. This cupcake tasting and decorating contest is open to the public. Mr. Kernan and Ms. Murana will be distinguished judges.
- We will celebrate Read Across America day during the week of February 27-March 3. Student athletes from The Woodstock Academy will come to read with students in grades PK-5 and students in grades 6-8 will have a guest reader from the Judicial Department. The week will be filled with reading related theme days and other activities that encourage reading.
- On March 8 the Eastford Readiness Program will sponsor “Books and Blocks” from 9:30 to 10:30. This is an opportunity for children ages birth to 5 to visit the school, interact together and learn about the Readiness Program.
- On March 28 students in grades PK-4 will be showcased in musical performance called “The Alphabet Adventures of Sometimes Y.” There will be an in-school performance and an evening performance.
- On April 4 students in grades 2-8 will be demonstrating their talents in the Eastford School Talent Show. This will be held at 6:30 PM.

Special Thanks to:

- All our volunteers who keep our parent groups up and running. Everyone is busier than ever so we really appreciate their service to our school and our students.