

July 20, 2020

EMES Mission Statement

“The purpose of our school is to teach all children to become competent, caring citizens and life-long learners through a challenging and relevant curriculum.”



Alicia Lyford, Principal

2020-2021 EMES Family Newsletter

Dear EMES Families -

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying this beautiful Vermont summer. I find that there is nothing better than fresh air, abundant sunshine, and extended hours of daylight after the spring we all had sitting indoors in front of our computers! While I still participate in Zoom meetings more often than I would like, I have been able to spend time just simply enjoying the summer with my family. We spent 10 days in Maine just following our in-service, and it was such a gift to be near the ocean once again with my husband and children. We weren't sure we would be able to make the trip this year and I feel so fortunate that we were able to safely enjoy one of our favorite places. I am hopeful that you too have been able to experience some of your favorite summer pastimes despite all that is going on in our country and our world.

As promised, I am writing to share some updates with you, and as we move closer to the start of the school year I will write on a more regular basis. As you recently read from Superintendent Olkowski, we are working on reopening our schools in a way that ensures safe learning environments for our students, their families, and our staff. Our district leadership team and five task forces are working on the countless details of our reopening plans, and I am pleased to inform you that EMES staff participates on each of these teams:

Health and Facilities: Lisa Gariboldi, Todd Hill, Jodi Parker, Elizabeth Wirth

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: Arlyn Brucoli, Kathy Christy, Alicia Lyford

Social Emotional Learning: Mary Beth Langevin, Beth Parker

Policy/Finance/Communications: Michael Sherwin

Logistics: Claire Gallagher

As you saw in Superintendent Olkowski's letter, these task forces are working from the guidance we have received from the AOE, the VT Department of Health, and the CDC, and are ever evolving. If you have not read through the latest AOE guidance, you can find it [here](#). Like you, we still have many unanswered questions, but we are doing all that we can to find answers to our questions and will communicate these out to you as our plans unfold. You can find the highlights of the guidance on page 3 of this newsletter.

I spent the majority of the last week physically laying out each classroom space so that students can safely sit 6 feet apart facing the same direction as the guidance indicates. We are also working on identifying secondary indoor and outdoor spaces for our students to spread out to work as well, and are developing schedules so that students stay with their one "pod" or classroom each day and not mingle with others.

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More details of these plans will come out soon. but for now, please know that we are looking forward to welcoming you and your children back for in-person learning at EMES.

One of the biggest things you can do to help prepare your child(ren) for in-person schooling this fall is talking with them about the importance of wearing masks in reducing the spread of germs. I cannot stress enough how important it is for them to practice wearing a mask for extended periods of time throughout the day. Speaking from experience, wearing a mask in the grocery store is nothing like wearing a mask for extended hours each day. It *is* something you can get used to, but waiting until mid August is not the way to do it. It will be important for students to become comfortable wearing masks at school and this summer can be a great opportunity to practice this. We will provide times throughout the day to take “mask breaks” safely, but much of our time together will be while wearing masks. If you or someone you know enjoys making masks and would like to donate homemade masks, we will happily take them off your hands for student use!

In closing, I urge you to please fill out the latest parent survey. We received so much valuable information from you in June when we surveyed you about your spring experience and hopes for the fall, and now that we are getting closer to the start of the year, we need your input again! This information will help us with our transportation needs, scheduling, and instruction plans. Thank you in advance for giving us your feedback!

Best,
Alicia



Some examples of classroom layouts adhering to the 6' recommendation, facing the same direction. Each classroom has a combination of tables and desks



Our wonderful food service delivering summer meals from the EMES kitchen!

New Learning Management System:

As a result of our experience with remote teaching/learning this past spring and the feedback we received in our caregiver survey, it became clear that we need a uniform method for communicating with families regardless of the school their student may be attending. Our Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA) task force investigated learning management systems (LMS). A good LMS provides many useful capabilities for in-person, hybrid, and remote learning scenarios. These features include curating and sharing instructional resources, managing assessments, standards-based grading, student/parent portal, and integrations with our existing IT systems. The CIA task force chose **Canvas** to be used by all teachers across the district to deliver instruction and assessment regardless of whether we are in school or operating remotely. Canvas will be our one stop shop for class calendars, instruction, activities, assessments, feedback, and scoring in the upcoming school year. More information, including training, will come in August.

July 2020 Parent Survey:

Our goal is a return to in-school instruction in August with a number of health and safety measures in place. Before we can build a new academic schedule for each student, we need to have a better idea of the comfort level of our families around in-person learning. Please complete the following short [survey](#) based on what you know today, by Wednesday, July 22 at 3:00pm. This information will help us continue our planning process and allow us to prioritize the health, safety, and wellbeing of our students, their families and our staff. Your responses on this [survey](#) do not commit your child to these plans but will allow us to continue our planning process.



Important Highlights from AOE Guidance (and what they will look like at EMES):

- Students and staff will be asked to stay home if they are not feeling well.
- Facial coverings will be required for all staff, students, and all others when at school and on school transportation. Considerations will be made based on medical, and age-appropriate recommendations.
- Parents will be asked to complete an online health screening survey for their children every day before they get on the bus or get dropped off. This includes checking temperatures and answering Covid19 related questions.
- Physical distancing will occur in classrooms and hallways.
- Students and staff will be asked (and given time) to practice good hand washing hygiene.
- Spaces where students usually congregate (cafeteria, gym, library) will not be used for traditional purposes.
- We will be limiting people allowed into the building to faculty, staff, students and people who support the educational needs of students.
- Parent/caregiver visits will be minimized and are required to occur only in the school office by appointment.
- We are implementing specific additional cleaning and disinfecting protocols each day.
- All students will be assigned seats in their classrooms and on the school bus.
- Students should expect to receive and eat their meals in the classroom or outdoors (weather dependent).