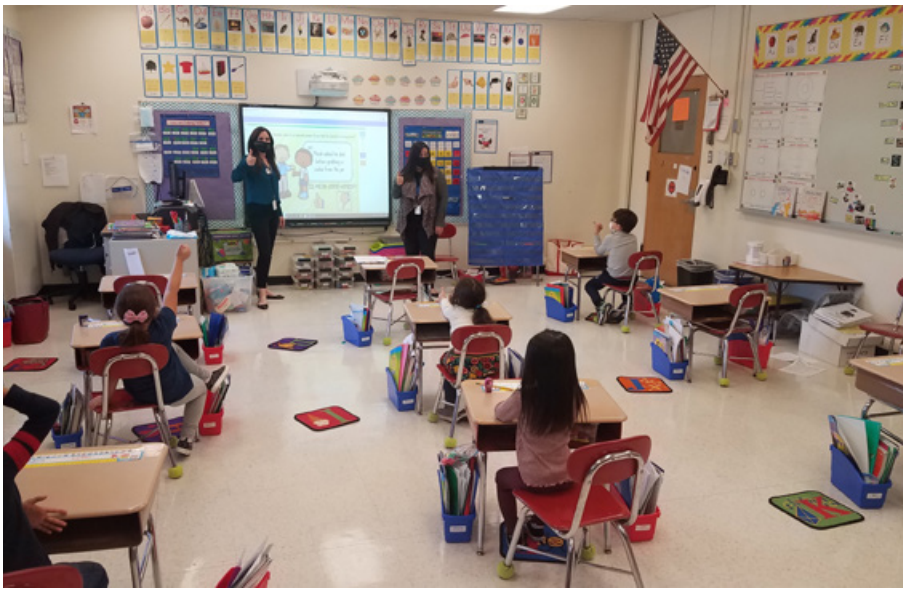


Eastchester Eagle

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EASTCHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Eastchester Schools Reopen With A Focus on Health and Safety



Waverly psychologists Melissa Schaer and Marcie Gatchalian present a lesson on being honest to first graders.

The Eastchester Union Free School District is committed to educating the whole child. We present to you the first in a two-part series of initiatives to support the Social and Emotional Learning of students. In this edition, we take a closer look at the K-5 program.

Students at the Waverly School call psychologists Melissa Schaer and Marcie Gatchalian the “Feelings Teachers” because they speak to the kindergarten and first graders about comfortable and uncomfortable feelings. These vital lessons help to form the foundation for the social and emotional well-being of each student.

“We are teaching them coping skills that they can utilize. The students learn how to recognize an uncomfortable feeling in their bodies. We have them check in with their belly, their heartbeat, their shoulders, and then talk about what it feels like,” said Schaer. Then the students name that feeling and employ coping strategies like belly breathing or they repeat a positive phrase like “I can do this” to defuse a situation.

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A Message from School Board President Sally Veltidi

Dear Eastchester Community,

I would like to welcome our families back to the Eastchester Union Free School District and introduce myself to those of you whom I have not had the occasion to meet. I am Sally Veltidi, your School Board President. In addition to my role in the District, I am an Eastchester resident and the Superintendent of Parks, Recreation, Senior Programs and Services for the Town of Eastchester since 2011.

My love of education and the desire to help the youth of our town runs deep. In addition to my work in recreation, I am an adjunct professor at CUNY Lehman College in the Recreation Department. In July of 2016, the voters of Eastchester placed their trust in me and elected me to the Board of Education. I have served on many committees and I have acted as a liaison between the community and board members.

I am honored to take on the role of President of the School Board this year and collaborate with the entire board as we enact policies for the benefit of Eastchester students. As we all know, this year is unlike any year we have experienced, and I have been amazed and humbled by the ability of this community to work together to bring us to this juncture and I look forward to where we will soar in the future.

Although this year is different, there are many things that remain the same. We are all here for each other, we are all here to work together, and we are showing that we are Eagle Strong.

Thank you,
Sally Veltidi,
Eastchester School Board President

Eastchester Schools Reopen With A Focus on Health and Safety

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Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Dr. Noreen Urso said, "Programs exist in all our buildings with age-appropriate methods to foster social and emotional wellness. Our principals work with our teachers and psychologists to incorporate many activities and methods. One program is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), which offers tools to help students practice positive behaviors."

The District has also partnered with the PTA Council which formed a Social and Emotional Learning Committee that has provided webinars with experts in this field to offer parents additional

guidance. Supervisor of Guidance Kristen Shearer sits on that committee.

At Greenvale and Anne Hutchinson, School Psychologist Lindsay Kline works with teachers and families to incorporate SEL in their daily lessons and lives as the District embarks on the Second Step Program, which includes a focus on mindfulness. Second Step explores many topics such as emotional regulation, friendship skills and problem-solving. Kline explained how the concepts transfer from the class to home. She also encourages families to practice self-care and routines to sustain emotional wellness.

College Board Recognized AP Teacher/Reader

If you have ever had questions about the scoring process involved in Advanced Placement or AP exams, Eastchester High School teacher Douglas Weisman is the one to ask. Over the past nine years, Weisman served as a reader and graded exams with other teachers from around the nation.

Last spring, Weisman took on the role of scoring leader and assisted other teachers nationally and internationally as they scored these competitive examinations from home. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the educators could not meet in person, and Weisman offered his expertise to teachers, from multiple time zones, over the phone when they had a question about a student's answer.

The College Board recognized Weisman in October for his excellence and contributions guiding other teachers during the pandemic and made this statement in a letter:

"The circumstances in which this work was completed was unprecedented, and Douglas Weisman helped ensure AP students could pursue college credit and placement opportunities even in the midst of school closures and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic."

Weisman reflected on the experience. "It was incredibly rewarding to see the process," commented Weisman. "The College Board recognized that what we did was exceptional. Despite the pandemic, the process worked, and the students still received their results."

K-12 Supervisor of STEM Dr. Jerrod Blair applauded Weisman for his commitment to this process. "I commend Mr. Weisman on his leadership, hard work and contributions to the scoring process with the College Board. Participating in scoring provides invaluable insight into the AP exam, which Mr. Weisman can harness and use to enhance instruction for our AP Psychology students. I also commend Mr. Weisman on his careful balance of unprecedented and challenging virtual instruction with this exciting opportunity."

Weisman plans to use what he learned to assist students in his AP Psychology class as a tool to craft and sculpt their writing for next May's AP examinations.



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

Our Board of Education meetings have resumed in person each month in the Eastchester High School cafeteria, located near the turf field. The meetings are also streamed live and via Zoom. Please log onto the Board of Education section of our website www.eufsdk12.org for meeting dates and times.

Eastchester Honors High School Students and Alumni Heroes



From left to right: Eastchester High School seniors Mark Tamburro and Angelo Sperandio. Eastchester High School alumni Robert Ballasedis and Michael Cupo.

When a group of friends went out for an afternoon of Jet skiing along the Long Island Sound, they never expected their actions would earn them the title of hero.

On Oct. 13, EUFSD Superintendent Dr. Robert Glass and the Board of Education honored Eastchester High School seniors Angelo Sperandio and Mark Tamburro along with alumni Michael Cupo and Robert Ballasedis, who rescued survivors from a seaplane crash.

“What they did was heroic,” said Dr. Glass. “You have exemplified great character, great citizenship and everything that we hope to instill in you.”

The group of friends said they instinctively knew what to do when they witnessed the crash. “We saw the debris go up in the air and what happened. We started yelling ‘Go, go, go,’” said Angelo. The group then bolted for the shore.

Despite having no formal medical training, the young men removed the pilot and a passenger from the aircraft crediting their knowledge, in part, from their classes at Eastchester High School and their coaches. Angelo is a varsity football quarterback and Mark is a defensive lineman and tight end.

Coach Fred DiCarlo said they “went above and beyond” what would be expected from a teenager and “acted well above their ages.”

“Our coaches train us to be leaders and that is what we did in this situation. We did what we had to do, we helped,” said Mark.

Angelo, Mark, Michael and Robert exemplified what it means to be Eagle Strong.

Eastchester Adds Safety and Security Coordinator

The Eastchester Union Free School District welcomed former Eastchester Police Lieutenant Jeff Hunter as the new Safety and Security Coordinator at the end of the summer. The Board of Education approved the creation of this part-time position at its July 28 meeting. Hunter is employed by the Altaris Consulting Group and works both in Eastchester and another area school district. He is part of a larger consulting team that supports the EUFSD.



The focus of the position is assisting the District in safety, security and emergency preparedness. On a daily basis, Hunter collaborates with District and building administrators to coordinate lockdowns, fire drills and other safety and security details in all five school buildings and Central Office.

In a recent interview, Hunter said it was a natural fit after serving for more than two decades on the Eastchester police force; nearly half of that time was spent as a liaison to both the Eastchester and Tuckahoe school communities. He served on several Eastchester districtwide safety committees and is a parent of two Eastchester High School students.

“When I acted as a liaison with the school districts, it was not because I was forced to do so,” Hunter said. “I wanted to take on the role and I developed many positive relationships with both districts. As a parent, there is no one more interested in improving and maintaining the highest standard of safety and security for the students and the community.”

A primary objective in Eastchester is to help close preparedness gaps and in the event of an incident, utilize the most effective practices to manage the response.

“Altaris conducts periodic safety and security assessments in Eastchester and one of my functions as a coordinator is to take the identified improvement opportunities and help the District progress towards making the improvements,” said Hunter. “Altaris has many clients in the tri-state region; as a team, we collaborate and implement nationwide best practices that we find successful in other school districts.”

“Mr. Hunter’s law enforcement expertise, along with his knowledge and commitment to the Eastchester community will be a wonderful asset to our District,” said Superintendent Dr. Robert Glass. “We meet on a regular basis and discuss the latest safety protocols and directives to keep our staff and students safe.”

Hunter spent the first days in the new position reviewing emergency response plans and assisting with the interviewing and training of school security personnel. The Eastchester Board of Education appointed Briger Security Services as its new security service provider this summer, replacing Summit Security.

STEM Challenge

Fifth grade students at Anne Hutchinson became engineers for a day when they participated in the Paper Plate Marble Run Challenge.

Students in Jennifer Rogan's and Deanna Santoro's classes constructed a toy using only a paper plate, three straws, paper, scissors and tape. The students first drew their designs in their notebooks and then began building.

"Your marble run must have a start and a finish and there must be at least five obstacles for your marble to go through," said Santoro. After giving the students a few more instructions, she then turned on engineering music – the theme from Super Mario Brothers – and her students got down to work.

They drew, cut and colored on their plates and discovered how sometimes they needed to adjust their plans. The STEM project incorporates science, technology, engineering and math.

"I added paper to make the start and I added straws for the outline and then you go under a (paper) tunnel and then there is

a (paper) rock to avoid another tunnel," said fifth grade student Adriana Weigand as she placed her marble on the plate.

Throughout the lesson the children shared their ideas and some of the challenges they faced, teaching them a valuable lesson. "Even if you are a great engineer, you can't do it without teamwork," said Goki Matsumoto.

During another class, students participated in Can You Build A Tower? where they replicated famous landmarks like the Empire State Building, Seattle Tower and the Statue of Liberty.

The students used materials such as index cards and tape and they had to consider proportions. Often, the fifth graders reworked their designs for the structures to remain upright.

"STEM projects help the students to be better problem solvers," said Rogan. "As we go through the school year we try to

build upon previous experiences and once they encounter difficulties, they are able to build on that and say, 'How can I do this better next time?'"

Rogan also noted how STEM projects teach students to be flexible and critical thinkers.



Eastchester Middle School Spirit Week

Eastchester Middle School staff and students celebrated Spirit Week by wearing neon colors and spirit gear throughout the week of October 5 to show how proud they are to be Eagles!

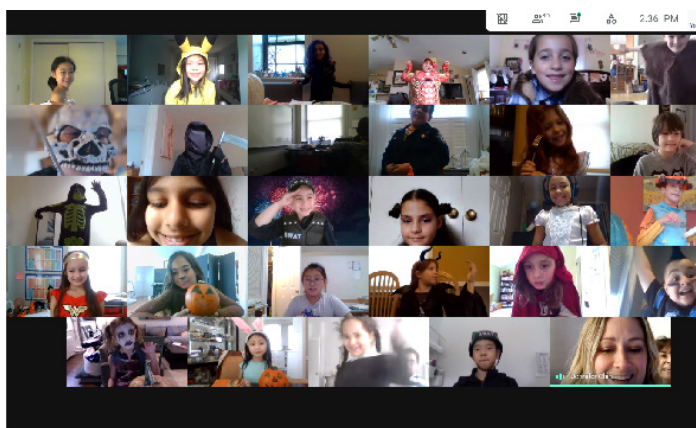
"We always enjoy Spirit Week at Eastchester Middle School as a way to unite the school community at the start of the school year. It is especially important that we come together this year and celebrate being an Eagle since we cannot all join together each day."

— Principal Josh Elder



Halloween Happenings

Our students enjoyed some spooky fun this year when they wore Halloween themed pajamas and participated in pumpkin decorating and other crafts. Thank you to all our faculty, staff and PTAs for your time and support.



Eastchester High School Spirit Week

Here is a look back at Eastchester High School Spirit Week held **October 13 – 16**. Students and staff wore their pajamas to school and their Eagle spirit gear each day.

“Spirit Week is one of the only times throughout the year when the whole student body comes together and shows their appreciation for Eastchester High School through a means of dressing up and showing off their Eagle pride. This year more than ever, the Eastchester Government Organization tried to make Spirit Week bigger than in the past.”

— EGO President
Brian Kim-Koutsis



Athletics Resume in the Eastchester School District

On a bright and sunny October weekend, Eastchester High School athletes returned to the fields and faced their rivals. Section 1 Athletics resumed for a limited number of teams this fall after the COVID-19 crisis cut last year's season short. The pandemic also threatened sports for the 2020-2021 academic school year, leaving teams and parents wondering about the new season at the start of the school year.

In Eastchester, the girls and boys varsity soccer and junior varsity soccer teams competed as well as the girls tennis team and the boys and girls cross country track teams.

"It was great to see the student athletes on the field, competing to the best of their abilities," said Athletic Director Tom Lehman. "This is exactly what the students needed."

The health crisis has changed how sports look this year, but Lehman said students and coaches adapted well. All athletes must present their coaches with their completed ezSCRN app before every practice and game and wear masks. Athletes are limited to two spectators per game, and they too must complete COVID screening forms, have their temperature taken, and wear masks at athletic events.

With the planning behind them and the health protocols in place, Lehman said he and the teams could focus on their sports. "I can

interact more with the coaches and students and advocate for them."

Lehman joined the District in July and looked forward to the start of the season. "I can work with the coaches more on the field, not on a Zoom meeting, and we can mimic what we teach in practice during an actual game. We can prepare for each game."

Cross country captain Neel Viswanathan, a senior, is happy to be racing after an eight-month hiatus. "Practices are very different as we can no longer run in large groups on the track, and we have to keep our masks on at all times. However, our first meet gave us a sense of normalcy."

The girls tennis team finished their season before the pause but co-captain Anselma Petrie said the pandemic interrupted her year-round training. She too feels refreshed to be back on the courts although there are some adjustments.

"We are playing shorter eight-game pro sets, which are challenging because you must be really focused from the beginning and cannot afford to start slow," said Anselma.

"In addition, we must keep our masks on during the matches, which is not something I am accustomed to. However, these challenges have helped me as an athlete, as I have improved my focus and have learned to start strong from the very first game."

At the time of this printing, winter sports are scheduled to begin in early December, according to the guidance of Section 1 Athletics.



Photo Credit: Annie Manevitz

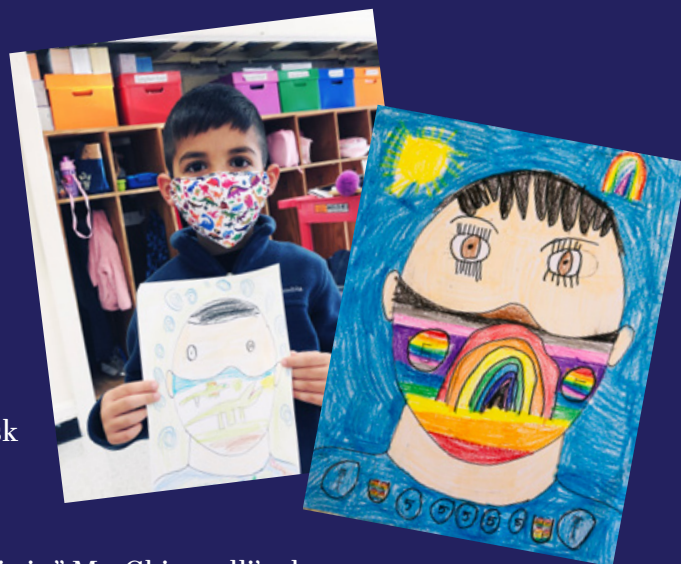
Self-Portraits With Masks

Waverly art teacher Samantha Larrea's recent project with Waverly students offered them the opportunity to express themselves during these times without using words. Kindergarten and first grade students designed masks, and first graders drew self-portraits wearing masks.

"This project provided a visual image to help our young students communicate their thoughts and feelings without words," said Ms. Larrea. "The lesson also documents a moment in history and normalizes mask-wearing." Principal Mari Doyle introduced the concept, "I wear a mask for you – you wear a mask for me."

While drawing their self-portraits, students shared these thoughts: "The unicorns on my mask make me happy" and "I am concentrating so hard because I want my picture to look realistic." Ms. Chiappelli's class agreed that they liked to look at each other's masks, with what the children described as cool designs.

Some students found wearing a mask difficult at times and said that they miss seeing Ms. Larrea's face and smile. She explained why people wear masks when they are not at home, to keep everyone safe.



National Merit Semifinalists

The Eastchester Union Free School District recognized four Eastchester High School seniors named by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) as National Merit

Semifinalists. Michael Fang, Wesley Miller, Kyoko Saito and Kanta Sakabe are among 16,000 students across the country who achieved this distinction.

"We are proud of Michael, Wesley, Kyoko, and Kanta for being named as semifinalists in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship competition. This award recognizes that our students are in the top 1% of all students nationally in the Class of 2021," said EHS Principal Dr. Jeffrey Capuano.

The seniors are now competing for more than 7,000 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$30 million.

To become a finalist, the students must submit a scholarship application which includes their academic record and detailed information about their participation in extracurricular activities, community activities and demonstrated leadership abilities.

National Merit Scholarship winners will be announced between April and July.

Scholarships are underwritten by the NMSC and 400 business organizations and higher education institutions devoted to the pursuit of academic excellence.



Context Clues

Students in Angela Poli's fifth grade class learned a skill that they can take with them to Eastchester Middle School and through their entire educational journey. The Greenvale students utilized context clues to increase their vocabulary.

Context clues are hints that an author adds to a passage to help a reader understand a difficult word. The author may use a synonym, antonym, provide the definition, or the students can make an inference about what the words mean.

During a recent class, students used this strategy to determine the meaning of the words fond, murky, and rummage from a class novel they are reading "Night of the Spadefoot Toads" by Bill Harley.

Student Evan Tinoco said context clues have already improved his reading comprehension.

"They help us understand the meaning of certain words and make reading easier." When asked what he did previously, Evan said, "I would skip the word."

Mrs. Poli explained the importance of this lesson. "Context clues help students to increase their comprehension and vocabulary; which in turn enables them to become better readers and writers. As our students continue through elementary school and beyond, it is vital that they possess the tools and strategies to learn new words."



Kids' Korner

In Kids Korner, we hear from an elementary school student who shares his/her experiences in the Eastchester School District.



Fifth grader Stella Kowalski tells us what she likes about Greenvale.

Greenvale is a great school! One of my favorite parts of Greenvale is the great principal and teachers. Everyone is so helpful and amazing. When I first started in second grade, I was super nervous. Then, Dr. Stinchcomb made his first morning announcement which made me feel more comfortable. Now I look forward to the announcements every day, which tell me the weather, the day of the week, the date and anything that is going to happen that day. All of my teachers made sure that I learned and made friends in my class.

Another great thing about Greenvale is the amazing students. When I was in third grade, none of my close friends were in class with me but the students were so caring and kind that I was able to make friends with them easily. Some of them turned out to be my closest friends!

Greenvale is also awesome because there are so many great activities. One of my favorite activities was pumpkin decorating. It lightened up my day! I also really liked Colonial Day in fourth grade and how we had a list of Colonial activities to do. Even though we did them at home, it was still awesome!! In third grade, we had International Day. I still remember it now in fifth grade; it was so cool to learn about the different countries and cultures. I am looking forward to some more great activities for this year.

I will really miss Greenvale next year, but I look forward to Middle School. Throughout my life, I will always remember that I am Greenvale Great!!

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Virtual Lockers

Getting an assigned locker in a school hallway could be considered a rite of passage. Not only do lockers serve the functional purpose of storing books, but lockers also allow students to express their creativity and their individuality with pictures and other decorations. This school year, the hallways look a little different at Eastchester Middle School and Eastchester High School. Students are not using their lockers to allow for social distancing.

Many students have created virtual lockers on their computers to fill this need. The students imported pictures that represent what makes them unique or photos that express a hobby or interest and place them in a virtual locker. Sixth grader Cassidy Pordage admits he was disappointed when he first learned he wouldn't have a physical locker this year. Still, he enjoyed the Virtual Locker Project. Cassidy selected a photo of his favorite food – pizza, his favorite soccer team logo and a picture of a boat. "It reminds me of the things I like to

do and if someone else has the same things, we can talk about it," said Cassidy.

Sakura Stram posted a photo of her dog, a lake where her grandparents live and a winter scene – all expressions of her personality.

Middle School teacher Clare Delongchamp explained the lesson to the students, which teaches them essential computer skills that they can use throughout the school year. The sixth graders also practiced submitting an assignment.

"An important part of every new school year is getting to know one another and building a classroom community," explained Delongchamp. "Operating in a different environment this year required new ways of getting to

know one another and being able to build in technology skills at the same time was an added advantage."

Eastchester High School teacher Alexandra Bloshenko also presented the lesson to build relationships with students.

