

Dear Friends,

We've had a great start to the school year and we cannot tell you how excited we have been to see the eager response of our kids and families as another year gets underway. A huge thanks to all of you who attended our Back to School Rally on the Town Green, and Kindergarten Open Houses. Most importantly, thank you to each of you who have been working hard to establish excellent attendance habits in your home at this early and important part of the school year. At EHPS, we're looking to *Hit the Mark* with attendance this year and sincerely appreciate your help!

Despite the flush of success and excitement, we look ahead to School Year 2020, as an important year to continue and grow good work across our district, schools and classrooms. We wanted to use this column to introduce our high-level priorities and hope to continue the conversation with you at any point regarding this work.

2019 2020 Themes

To Do: To Learn:

This year, our major teaching focus is on how we can better engage our students in their own learning to make learning more successful for them. Jumping off the old SAT word analogy questions, the theme of *To Do is To Learn*, focuses our teachers on promoting student centered environments where our classrooms are filled with student voices and opportunities for practice, application and interaction. We know that when our students "do", they "learn" and as such our goal is to make sure that our kids are the ones lifting the weight, carrying the cognitive load and engaging with each other rather than sitting as passive receptors of content. **Tips for Home: Ask your child how many questions he or she answered in class, who they worked with in groups or how they practiced what the teacher taught.**

You get what you need:

Quoting the Rolling Stones, this theme highlights our efforts to prioritize the growing level of student social emotional needs that we see in classrooms. These challenges are real, serious and must be supported in order for our kids to successfully learn. The empowering truth, is that we believe that by treating students with love, respect, consistency and structure, we can help them develop skills and strategies to make better decisions in life. To that end, we commit this year to doubling down on Social Emotional Learning through Second Step and School Connect. In addition, we are also developing multiple district programs to better support our most needy students and providing further staff training regarding Trauma Informed Practices. **Tips for Home: Ask your child what they are learning in Second Step or what they are learning about SEL, review the "Quick Guides" for parents that should be coming home on a quarterly basis for tips on how to promote self-control, mindfulness and de-escalation techniques, contact your school principal, support staff or teacher if you have concerns regarding your child's social emotional skills—together we can help!**

Make Professional

As a district we have long been aware that our most valuable district asset when it comes to helping our kids succeed is a high-quality educator and faculty member. When we look out at our faculty, we see an amazing team of talented and diverse staff that fill our classrooms, offices, hallways and common areas. As we have gotten the "right people on the right bus" our next step is to commit to growing and improving their professional skills and ability to

better serve our kids. This year, the district has launched a comprehensive study of all professional development and is working to improve the relevance, efficiency and meaningfulness of these times. We want our roughly 50 hours of dedicated district professional development to be hours that our teachers' value, look forward to and most importantly recognize as vital to their self-growth. Simply put, East Hartford is going to get better, when we get better! **Tips for Home: Support your teacher by developing a strong home to classroom relationship based on respect, communication and transparency. One of the best ways to help your child's teacher succeed with your child is by forming a strong united team—be on that team!**

**Hit the Mark
(Attendance
Matters!)**

Our final district focus point centers on student attendance or as we call it around here, making sure our kids Hit the Mark! Last year over 15% of our student body was chronically absent (18 or more days) from school. Attending and being present in school is one of the greatest predictors of student success and one of the most impactful things our parents/guardians can do to make a difference. At EHPS, we monitor attendance closely and make every effort to reach out to engage you in the necessary supports to be sure your child is in school but we need your help! This year, we have launched comprehensive efforts to improve home-school communication with families regarding attendance as well as enhanced our schools' efforts to intervene in challenging cases. Thanks in advance for your help to make sure your child gets to school every day! **Tips for Home: Know how many days your child missed last year, have discussions with your child regarding the importance of getting to school, develop routines at home regarding bed time, waking up/breakfast, contact your school and let us know how we can support your child's needs, don't give in 😊**

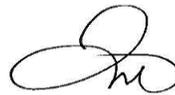
Thanks for taking the time to learn about our plan. As always, we are eager to hear your feedback, ideas and suggestions as we continue to grow and improve together!

If we can be of service to you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience (Mr. Hall—hall.br@easthartford.org, Mr. Quesnel – 860-622-5107 or quesnel.nd@easthartford.org).

Let's *Hit the Mark* together here at EHPS!



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