



EAST ROCHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT School District News

Fall 2020

Welcoming students back to school!

Teachers and staff waited eagerly the morning of September 10, standing at each of the entrances being used during arrival this year. After working from home for six months, teachers couldn't wait to get back inside the classroom with their students.

Through the fog that covered the campus that morning, students began making their way to the school. They were greeted by the teachers who were waiting outside and you could tell there were smiles underneath their masks.

Students reconnected with friends they hadn't seen in months, carefully following the social distancing guidelines put in place by the district.

Upon entering the building, students passed through a check-in to make sure they had completed their health screening. Then, they were on their way to class.

Teachers used the first few days to welcome students, discuss what things would look like this year and focus on their social-emotional well-being, allowing students to ease into their new learning environment.

By the end of that first day, it was clear students and teachers were ready to overcome any hurdles they might face this year!



Robert Hendy (teacher)- "For me, every start of the school year has a level of excitement and nervousness. This year, those levels of excitement and nervousness seemed a bit amplified. Despite many new guidelines for the students and faculty, the kids did a great job being flexible and patient as we all engaged in a new teaching and learning style."

Zoe Zutes (senior)- "It went as well as anyone could imagine. I knew going into school things were obviously going to be different, but knowing that everyone else felt as nervous and as excited as I was made me feel a lot better."

Marisa Capuano Philp, Elementary Principal- "The first days of Elementary School went smoothly due to the wonderful efforts of our faculty and staff. Our school was filled with joy at the return of our students and families."

Casey van Harssel- Jr./Sr. High School Principal- "While opening day is always a special day, hearing student voices in our hallways and classrooms made this opening day even better! It was wonderful to see and feel the excitement from all in attendance. What impressed me most was the understanding from students that they each have a responsibility in making our summer plans into reality, so all can remain safe and able to learn within both hybrid and fully virtual models."



Our District's Mission

The Mission of the East Rochester School District is to prepare students to be college and career ready and to provide a quality education in a safe environment where all students develop the abilities, attitudes and values necessary for responsible, productive citizenship.

Our Vision

The Vision of the East Rochester School District is that students will learn through the highest quality instruction which recognizes each student's strengths, talents, interests, learning styles and rates of learning, using developmentally appropriate methods.

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Message from the Superintendent

Dear East Rochester Families,

Thank you for your patience, understanding and active role throughout these last few months. I know it has been a trying time of uncertainty. It has become obvious through these first few weeks of the 2020-21 school year how committed our staff, our students and our families are to education.

New technology has been introduced to both families and teachers, lessons have adapted as new opportunities present themselves and, yes, many questions remain about what the rest of the year will hold. I understand uncertainty can be accompanied with frustration and I want to express my appreciation for everyone's ability to adapt to ever changing guidance from the New York State Departments of Health and Education.

Best,

Jim Haugh
Superintendent of Schools



Temporary changes in administration

There have recently been a few changes in administration at East Rochester Union Free School District.

Middle Level Academy (MLA) Assistant Principal Kevin Cafalone is providing temporary oversight for facilities and operations while the district conducts a search for the next Director of Facilities and Operations.

The district is happy to welcome back former interim administrator Liz Konar to replace Mr. Cafalone as MLA Assistant Principal. She began the role on Monday, October 5, 2020 and says she is excited to return to ER and help in any way she can!

Mrs. Konar is familiar with East Rochester, having spent three years in the district, beginning in 2013. During her time in ER, she was high school principal, elementary school principal and supported the administrative transitions. Since leaving ER, Liz served as Assistant Principal at Victor High School. She has also mentored principals at various districts.



Smooth start to new health screening process



Due to COVID-19, anybody who enters East Rochester schools is required to complete a health screening. A link to the questionnaire is sent to families and employees each morning, with questions pertaining to any possible symptoms of the Coronavirus. Any individual with new or unusual symptoms is required to stay home and follow safety measures before returning to school.

ER families have adapted well to the new morning routine, contributing to the smooth start to the school year. Thank you to all the families for your support in keeping our school and students as healthy as possible throughout this unique year we are all experiencing.

The district will continue this screening process throughout the year in order to keep everybody in our schools as healthy and safe as possible.

Adapting to a new way of learning

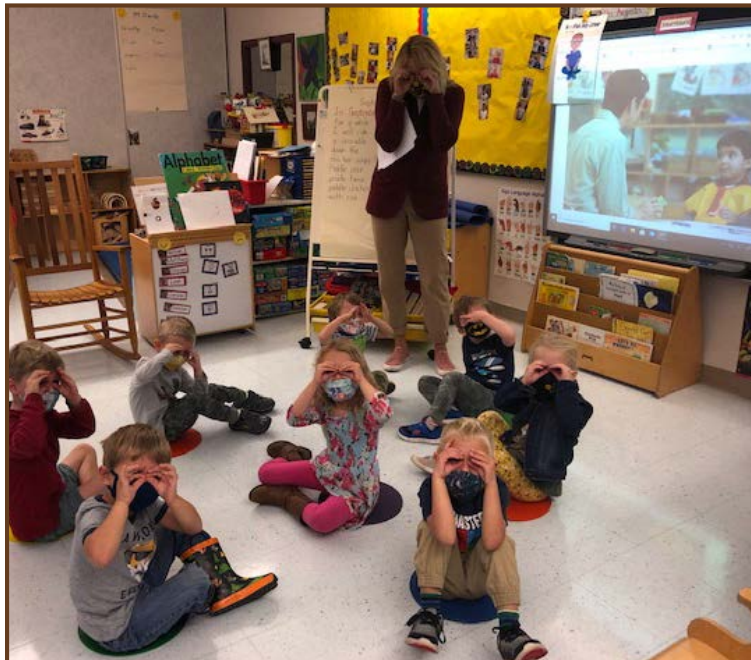
It has been six long months since students filled the hallways of East Rochester schools, but now they're back! Students returned to school in early September, facing new challenges, new rules and new responsibilities. Students and families made the transition back to school a smooth one by following new guidelines and procedures, asking questions and adapting to new ways of learning.



A lot is different for students this year, starting with their arrival to school. Families have worked with the district over the last few weeks to make the new health screening process part of their normal, everyday routine. Arrival has become much smoother, as a result.

Technology is being incorporated into learning for both in-person and remote students, allowing for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Students are able to complete assignments, check in with their teachers and hold class discussions through new digital platforms.

There has also been a shift toward social-emotional learning, even more so than in past years. Students are facing situations nobody ever imagined they would have to face and doing so on a daily basis. The team at ER is here for them and will do what it takes to help every student be smart, healthy and most of all, happy.



Technology keeps students united

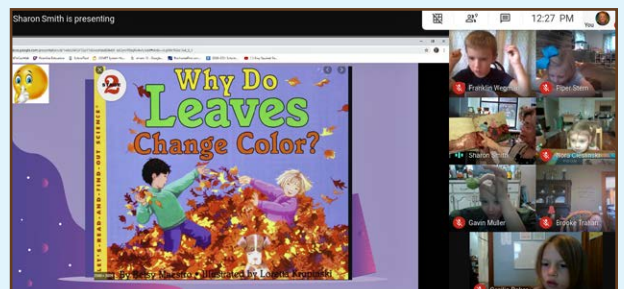
A major component of this new way of learning is adapting lessons to a blended learning model, ensuring students at home are able to participate and connect, virtually. Teachers at ER have embraced new technology tools, creating lessons that are fun and inclusive of all students. Here are just two examples of what this looks like.



Elementary teacher, Barbara Miller, has created a virtual classroom that includes a scavenger hunt for different objects, with a different activity at each one. She says she uses the virtual classroom as a way to share helpful resources for families including mindfulness activities, math facts practice, typing practice and social-emotional learning work.

Kim Mason is a second grade teacher at the elementary school and has a remote learner in her class. To include the remote learner, one of the class's reading groups provides synchronous learning by streaming lessons live.

Students throughout the district have expressed their enjoyment of the fun new learning tools and are happy to be able to connect with their classmates at home.



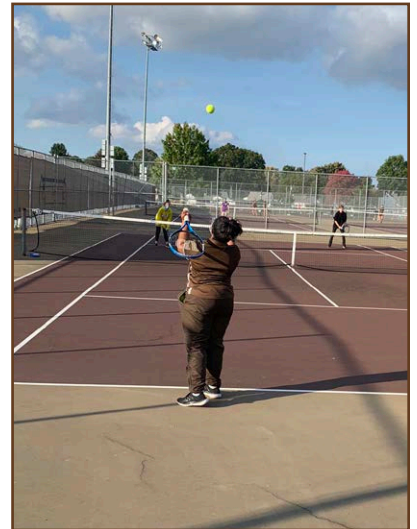
Sports return to ER

The Bombers are back! The East Rochester Girls Varsity Field Hockey, Girls Varsity Tennis, Boys Modified, JV and Varsity Soccer along with Girls JV Soccer are back on the fields and courts.

Each sport had their first game during the first two weeks of October, with two fans per athlete gathering to cheer them on. Crowds were required to wear masks and remain socially-distanced, but that didn't stop them from coming out to support our teams!

"The hope with fall sports is to bring excitement to the community with sportsmanship, winning and ultimately Section V Championship Blocks," says Athletic Director Jeffrey Onze. "Thank you to the ER community for their support of ER Athletics!"

High risk fall sports will be postponed until March 1, 2021, and will be known as "Fall Sports Season II." This includes football, volleyball and potentially competitive cheer.



Music and Art programs find unique ways of teaching this fall

Music teachers have been adapting lessons this fall to ensure they are following all safety precautions. Teachers recently began to teach in person lessons, providing PPE for instrumentalists and instructors. In early October, teachers were also able to begin modified ensemble rehearsals, with roughly 12-24 students in the auditorium at a time to maintain proper social distancing.

High School Art Teacher Ms. Pleninger is teaching the entire ninth and eleventh grade classes this year, rather than offering a variety of elective art courses. Students are able to work in the high school art studio while at school and work remotely using art "supply kits" which include a variety of art papers along with paints and drawing tools. They are watching videos with tutorials on art techniques or information on art and artists, visiting virtual art museums and creating art in their homes.

Art and Music teachers in the elementary and middle school are traveling with carts from room to room. "Going into the classroom space helps the younger students acclimate to the "new" activities," says Elementary Art Instructor Ed Mandara. "They feel safer and are able to open up and explore their creativity." Instruction is also being posted virtually to Google Classroom for in school and remote learners. These lessons include studying famous artists Pablo Picasso (paintings), Piet Mondrian (geometric shapes) and Roy Lichtenstein (line creations). A variety of materials such as watercolor paints, markers and specialty paper are provided for both remote and in school students. Supply kits are updated bi-weekly according to the lesson requirements.

Music teachers are also finding fun ways to teach students when pushing into classrooms. One of these fun lessons included students moving around the room in a new way every time the song changed. The kindergartners were laughing as they hopped like frogs, slithered like snakes and raced like a cheetah around the classroom, all while maintaining appropriate distancing!!



Due to the fluidity in how schools will operate this year, teachers at ER used four professional development days to prepare before students returned.

Sessions focused on helping teachers develop a deeper understanding of the blended learning model, diving deeper into leveraging technology to support student learning, social and emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching practices. Teachers were offered different training sessions throughout the day, some required and some optional. Between sessions, teachers were able to organize rooms and begin implementing what they learned during their training.



The teaching assistants and aides in East Rochester have been providing essential support as the district has reopened, taking on new roles to allow for the transition to smaller class sizes.

“Anything dealing with remote learning is a new responsibility [for teaching assistants and aides],” says Elementary Principal Marisa Capuano Philp. “They are crucial to our work with our remote students.”

Without the flexibility and diligence of the teaching assistants and aides, it would not be possible to allow students in grades PreK-8 to attend school four days a week.



The nurses in our schools- Julie Colvin and Kristine McCarthy- have been vital in keeping our students and staff healthy and safe. From their involvement in the district's reopening plan to the health screenings they administer each day, it would be impossible to be learning in-person without them. They have opened their offices to individuals who fell ill. They have provided comfort and guidance to families during times of uncertainty. They have done all of this, on top of everything they were doing before the pandemic closed schools. For these reasons, and many more, the nurses in East Rochester deserve a tremendous "thank you."



Capital project update

Work on the Capital Project continues, with the recent completion of the new single-point-of-entry to the building. The majority of the project has been completed including a new music room, hallway tile, lettering on the front of the school building as well as new roofing on the Elementary and MLA roofs. The district's new generator will soon be connected and fully operational!

Work will continue outside the front of the building, as the courtyard near the flagpole is completed. That work should be done by the end of fall. Contractors will continue work on the second band room and the maintenance facility through the winter months.



Additionally, the Smart Schools Bond Act project to upgrade the district's informational technology backbone will continue through December. The contractor is in the process of running new cables throughout the building and has been upgrading IT closet spaces.

The district would like to thank the community for your support as we work to "Maintain Our Investment!" Work completed during this project has improved the district's overall building envelope and is creating an even safer and better learning environment for our amazing students.

New band room



The ongoing capital project for East Rochester Schools includes a renovated, expanded area for instrumental music in the Junior-Senior High School. The middle level bandroom (shown above) is nearly complete.

The room can easily be set up for a 50 piece band, with room to spare. It has currently been reorganized for 20-25% capacity, as students begin using it with social distancing. The Music Department is excited to use this room with students, and is looking forward to the day the entire band can play together in the new space!

What's new with the East Rochester Alumni Foundation?

2020 has certainly been a year to remember. Just like everyone else, the East Rochester Alumni Foundation had to adapt to the changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic in March. For our Board of Directors, it meant having virtual meetings via email rather than in person meetings in the Superintendent's conference room. Thanks to our president Carl Tobin, we were kept up to date on foundation business and were able to make decisions about grants and other important matters. Although certain grants were no longer feasible because of the pandemic, other grants were refashioned. For example, we had approved a grant for the senior trip and were able to use that money to give each senior a gift instead. Another new grant helped fund the outdoor graduation ceremonies that took place in July.

The cancellation of the annual Sam Urzetta Alumni Classic golf tournament was a huge disappointment for the foundation as well as all the alumni who look forward to golfing and catching up with old friends. It became obvious that we would not be able to sponsor this event and keep people safe, so the decision to cancel was made. This also resulted in not awarding the ERAF Distinguished Alumni Award which is normally presented at the golf tournament. Mark your calendars, as we are looking forward to hosting this great event on August 6, 2021.

ERAF had a new slate of officers beginning in July, 2020. Our new president is Tom Quinzi; vice president, Helen Tortorici; secretary, Patty Pullano; and treasurer, Robert Clancy who is a new member of the board this year. We are grateful to our outgoing president, Carl Tobin, and our outgoing treasurer, Jerry Cilento, for their hard work, guidance and dedication for many years. President Tom Quinzi is continuing to keep us informed and active through our monthly virtual meetings.

Hopefully in this new school year, teachers and staff will think of ways our grants can make a difference for our ER students. With the challenges ahead, the foundation is ready to help in any way we can.

Visit our website for information <http://www.erschools.org/alumni>

Look for us on  <http://www.facebook.com/groups/416173435069959>

ERAF Meeting Schedule*

September 21, 2020

October 19, 2020

November 16, 2020

December 21, 2020

January 18, 2021

February 15, 2021

March 15, 2021

April 19, 2021

May 17, 2021

June 21, 2021

*Virtual until further notice

East Rochester PTA News:

The ERPTA is still holding our annual membership drive! There is ZERO obligation when joining, but we always welcome new ideas and volunteers to help lead PTA sponsored events!

Joining is easy- head to our member hub at eastrochester.memberhub.store

The ERPTA is currently selling ER Bomber hats- a winter beanie hat or a sport golf/baseball hat for \$20 each. You can order those on our memberhub store as well!

Upcoming events:

- Be on the lookout for information about our Scholastic Book Fair in early November. The book fair will be all virtual this year!
- Box Tops- While Box Tops can still be cut out and sent to school, the program is moving to a fully digital version. There is an app, and once set up, all you have to do is scan your receipts for our PTA to get funds based on your qualifying purchases!

In remembrance

This past February our community lost two special friends—Jeanette D'Agostino Banker (ER Class of '49) and Barbara Steve Stoner (ER Class of '45). Both of these women left a legacy of caring and helping others, and both were well-known to the ER Alumni Foundation.

The field of education was the focus of Jeanette D'Agostino Banker's life. Earning her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at SUNY Brockport, Jeanette began her career as a teacher in the Rochester City School District. She then spent 31 years as an Associate Professor of Education at SUNY Brockport. She was a demonstration teacher and student teacher supervisor at the campus school. She founded American International Schools Overseas, and was responsible for the entire program.



After retiring, Jeanette continued to volunteer at the College at Brockport and supported students by influencing the creation of more than a quarter of the scholarships provided by the Brockport Foundation.

Jeanette never forgot East Rochester and her family's pioneer roots. She donated to East Rochester the original painting created for our village's centennial in 1997 (more than 1200 reproductions sold). She also gave yearly in support of our Alumni Foundation and in 2016, received the Alumni Foundation's Distinguished Alumni Award.



Barbara Steve Stoner was also an educator, receiving her Bachelor's degree at SUNY Cortland. While she spent her first years teaching in Dansville, much of Barb's career was in ER as a physical education teacher.

Quilting was a favorite pastime of Barbara's and she gave many quilts to the Comfort Quilts program of the Genesee

Valley Quilt Club. These quilts were donated to hospitals for cancer patients, children's wards, battered women's shelters and nursing homes.

Barbara was a very active volunteer, giving much time to the Girl Scouts, East Rochester College Club and Camp Good Days and Special Times. She and her family were also hosts in the ATAD student foreign exchange program. Barb was one of the first Board members of our Alumni Foundation. In speaking of her time on the Foundation Board Barb said, "It's pure pleasure to work with people I enjoy so much on projects to help out our ER school kids." As a Foundation board emerita, Barb continued to support our fundraisers and endeavors.

Jeanette and Barbara represented the best in all of us. We will miss their never-ending kindness and support.

Submitted by Anita Mance



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Resources available on district website

Over the last few weeks, parents have been inundated with information on a wide array of school-related matters. The high volume of information can become overwhelming. To help parents find answers to some of their questions, the district has created a "Resources" tab under the "Reopening Plan 2020" section on the district website.

The "Resources" page includes the district's Return to School Handbook, a link to the district's Reopening FAQ page and recordings of the Virtual Town Halls that were held in August. As the school year progresses, more resources will be made available on the "Resources" page.

If you have any questions that aren't addressed in the Reopening Plan or on the Resources page, please contact the district's COVID-19 Coordinator at ercovid19director@erschools.org.

Upcoming Dates:

Tuesday, November 10

PreK Parent Teacher Conferences
Board of Education Meeting, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, November 11

Veteran's Day- No School

Friday, November 13

Grades 6-12 Marking Period Ends

November 16-18

PTA Virtual Book Fair

Friday, November 20

PreK-5 Parent Teacher Conferences

November 25-27

Thanksgiving Recess

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connected!



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