Eastmont Academy Provides Flexible, Hybrid Learning

BY DOMINICK BONNY

Taylor and Rylan Nunn, Eastmont Academy students, attend a field trip with their parents, Cara and Josh, to the Leavenworth Reindeer Farm. The trip was one of the academy’s Out & About in Our Community Family Activity days.

As the nation emerges from the pandemic and life returns to something resembling normal, the way we’re educating our children is still undergoing big changes.

The Eastmont Academy, which last year was fully virtual, has become more of a hybrid model this year, says Rae Hughes, the 3rd, 4th and 5th-grade teacher for the academy.

“This year we’re taking more of a hybrid stance,” Hughes said. “So the kids come to campus for two days a week and then they do the rest of their work at home.”

With the reduced time on campus comes an increase in responsibility and accountability. Even though the students aren’t on campus full time, they are still expected to complete their schoolwork.

That’s where parents come in, said Katie Moore, the educator in charge of the 5th through 8th graders in the program.

“We’re a parent-partner program,” she said. “So what that means is that we provide an educational experience for our students who choose to do some of their coursework at home under the supervision of their parents.”

Her students come in on Tuesday mornings from 9 to 12. This gives them a chance to

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Focus On: District Messages

February 2022

Superintendent’s Message: Students Are Our Priority

COVID continues to be a primary factor in the daily lives of educators as we work with students, families, and our community. It seems that just as our teachers’ and students’ abilities to adapt and improve, something changes in recommended safeguards and prevention measures.

Since March 2019, we have all been quick to share our opinion on what we disagree with in how this pandemic has been managed, including myself. Yet recently, I was challenged by another superintendent that we as educators and community members must turn the corner as citizens and a community from what we are against, to what we are for. Agreeing on what we are for is much easier with students’ health and safety, quality instruction, and getting all students to graduation.

In today’s varied political climate, I continue to share that as a public school district, Eastmont serves the community best by striving to be an entity (similar to Switzerland) that is not on one side or the other of the political spectrum, but rather remains neutral with student success as our primary and constant focus. Once students graduate, they will venture out and determine their own opinions and beliefs as citizens, voters, parents, community members, and future leaders.

Safety in a Pandemic

The requirements to operate safe schools with COVID in our community continue to be updated by the Washington State Department of Health and the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) as conditions change. As a public school district, we are obligated to follow these requirements. If there are options for implementation, we examine what works best for our unique situation as a district and community, get guidance from our local public health officer, and then update our daily practices and expectations. We communicate current required safeguards in a weekly electronic bulletin. To receive these updates and future emergency messages, please visit the District’s website at www.eastmont206.org and click on the Community Sign-up Information – Powered by ParentSquare link.

We ask for your compliance with our requirements whenever you are on our campuses or at events. Failure to do this may result in cancelation of games and events, school closures, loss of revenue, L & I fines, or litigation for non-compliance, given we are a public entity. Please know that when the opportunity is available to return to pre-pandemic operations, Eastmont will do this as quickly and as safely as possible.

District Updates

Superintendent Search

February will be a busy month as the Board reviewed applicants on the 7th to determine those for a first interview on the 15th and 17th. The two or three finalists from those interviews will be invited back for a second interview during the week of the 22nd. Ideally, the Board will select and have a new superintendent under contract by the first of March, which will start in Eastmont on July 1. This person likely involve being at some District events prior to the July 2022-23 school year. More information on this process can be found on the Eastmont website under Superintendent Search.

Finances

Eastmont welcomes our new Executive Director of Financial Services, Caryn Metskar. Caryn graduated from Eastmont and is excited to now to be serving our District and the community. Her goal is to provide District leadership with the financial information they need to ensure good use of public funds, meet all audit requirements, and continue to maintain fiscal health as a priority of the District.

Reconfiguration and Attendance Area Revisions

Hundreds of students and staff moved for the 2021-22 school year as we transitioned from K-4 elementary schools to K-3 elementary schools and from one to two junior high schools. This process will be completed with the start of the 2022-23 school year as all elementary schools expand to serve K-6 and both junior highs will offer programs for grades 7-8.

Emergency and community growth forecasts continue to show this configuration of students in our schools will provide growth capacity at all levels for the next 10 years for Eastmont.

Construction Update

Construction is basically completed with 20 new classrooms, four cafeterias, and three kitchens in use and the new restrooms and concessions and long-term (10 – 30 years) school and support service needs. The current study on this is funded from a State grant that has been allocated to hire school architects, engineers, and planners who are experts in this area. Once finished, a formal report is to be drafted for the Board with recommendations regarding possible future State and locally funded projects. The Board will also select community input on priorities as they determine those projects that would be funded with 100% local levies.

Focus On: Management

February 2022

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Joy Dawe
DIRECTOR DISTRICT #4 - AT LARGE

Joy Dawe grew up in Missoula, Montana. She continued her education at the University of Montana in Missoula and earned a B.A. in business with a marketing emphasis. She was a stay-at-home mom for a number of years, raising her four children with Lonnie, her husband of 29 years, and worked part time in children’s ministry. When her youngest started school, she decided to return to school herself and earned her RN degree from Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake. Since then, she has worked as a labor and delivery nurse and OR circulating, and is currently a medical/surgical nurse. Two of her family members have attended East Wenatchee schools: their son, Skylar, graduated from Eastmont last year and is currently at the University of Idaho, and her youngest son, Micah, is a junior at Eastmont High. Her daughter and granddaughter also live in East Wenatchee.

Joy decided to run for the school board because she could see how the COVID-19 pandemic was negatively affecting her children. “As my boys were expressing their frustrations, we discussed different ways to make changes in our community, and the importance of standing up for your beliefs. Serving on the school board is a great way to make changes, as well as support the efforts that have been made so far,” she said.

Joy enjoys the outdoors. “I feel blessed to be in this area where there is so much to explore,” she said. In the winter, she likes snowboarding and showshoeing, and in the summer she loves exploring new trails to hike and mountain bike.

Jason Heinz
DIRECTOR DISTRICT #3 - EASTMONT CENTRAL

Jason Heinz was raised in Wenatchee and graduated from Wenatchee High School in 1998. Jason has lived in East Wenatchee since moving back to the area 17 years ago. He holds an associate of applied science degrees in forestry management, parks and recreation, and wildlife management from Spokane Community College.

Jason has worked for the U.S. Forest Service in wildland fire management for the past 24 years and has two daughters that attend Eastmont Schools.

Jason has served on numerous youth athletic boards within the area, including the East Wenatchee Events Board. He has also coached a number of basketball and fastpitch teams in the Wenatchee Valley.

Jason likes to spend free time outdoors mountain biking, skiing, hiking and wildlife viewing. Most importantly, he enjoys attending his daughters’ athletic events.

Jason ran for the Eastmont School Board because the decisions made by the school board not only affect his two daughters, but also their friends, peers, and every other child within the school system. “I also wanted to bring a new perspective and renewed energy to the board, to not settle for the status quo, but to strive to be better and more transparent to the tax payers of East Wenatchee,” he said.

One of his goals as a school board member is to hire the most effective and efficient Eastmont School District superintendent. “We need leadership skills, command presence, and the ability to make decisions that are in the best interest of the students and staff as foundational principles for the selection of this vital position,” he said.

Jason said another important goal is to have all students not just meet but exceed state standards and graduate, but also to prepare them for after graduation. “There shouldn’t be a cookie-cutter method of learning within Eastmont School District. Students learn in different ways and some excel in different formats of education.”

Jason sees each of these areas as opportunities for the school board to stand behind our educators, students and community as a solid support base.

He has been especially impressed by the resolve of the entire district through the pandemic, including educators, support staff, and students. “I think our educators truly love the children. As challenges are presented, they work together to figure out the best approach and make changes that are beneficial to our kids,” she said.

Josh enjoys the outdoors. “I feel blessed to be in this area where there is so much to explore,” she said. In the winter, she likes snowboarding and showshoeing, and in the summer she loves exploring new trails to hike and mountain bike.
Multilingual Learning Breaks Barriers at Eastmont

Eastmont’s commitment to multilingual learning is a cornerstone of our philosophy of inclusion. It benefits not just students who come from households where English is a second language, but also encourages students of all backgrounds to become multilingual and learn about other cultures.

Teacher Spotlight: Joanne Johanson

Joanne Johanson is an empowering and influential teacher that flies low under the radar but has everything to be admired. Her cheerful personality and endearing character foster lasting bonds.

She has managed to successfully exit English Language Learners (ELLs) at a high rate while working to ensure that all newcomer students have a schedule throughout their high school career that is best for their language experience.

Joanne works above and beyond to ensure that as a school and district we create services that place students’ needs at the forefront. Mrs. Johanson has been working with ELLs for many years and has continued to build strong relationships with each one of her students. Students not only look for “Mrs. J,” as they call her, for academic support but more importantly for social-emotional support.

She cares for students and helps them find jobs, buy groceries, or acts as a social worker. She understands the need for a holistic approach and works to meet all of the student’s basic needs so that they can succeed.

Students often walk into her classroom just to say hi, to inform her of their latest job endeavors, or even to share their progress at home.

We asked Mrs. Johnson about her experience in the program:

Q: How long has the multilingual program been in existence?
A: The program has been in existence for many years as it’s state and federally-funded. The program was recently renamed from Bilingual to Multilingual as the state is shifting the title to ensure we are viewing this program from an asset-based perspective.

Q: What is the goal of the program?
A: Our district goal is to advance academic language development and academic achievement for ALL children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators.

Q: How many students are involved? And what age/grade ranges?
A: The program includes over 1,000 students district-wide in all grades from K-12.

Q: How can parents get their children involved if they’re interested?
A: Parents are encouraged to help their children by sharing this common understanding of the value of their native language and the fact that learning a new language will enable them to reach higher levels of learning. Parents are also encouraged to contact the local Migrant Bilingual Achievement Specialist at each school site if they have further questions and also participate in our Informed Parents series.

The first Multilingual Mentorship meeting took place at Eastmont Junior High in January as a part of the Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) Bilingual Education Initiative (BEI). RWT-BEI is a high school teacher academy program to recruit, prepare, and mentor bilingual students to become future bilingual educators in the state of Washington using the Career and Technical Education (CTE) department.

Benefits of Mentorship

- Make a positive difference in someone’s life
- Be the bridge that connects the institution with the students
- Mold the next leader
- Connect and build lifelong relationships with faculty & staff
- Access one-on-one mentoring
- Exchange of knowledge
- Receive specialized support & resources

Mentor  Mentee
**Academy**

**Focus On: Activities**

**Bowling Team Strikes Up Friendships in Postseason**

By Russ Alman

Even though the season has already ended, the Eastmont Bowling Team still meets every week to bowl at Eastmont Lanes just for fun. Seven players competed at regionals and state this year and finished third at state.

“Can you hear them chattering down there?” Coach Christy Binge asks as she points to the team laughing and socializing in the background. It’s a week after the Eastmont Girls Bowling team’s season ended. But they’re together again, bowling just for fun at Eastmont Lanes.

The Eastmont team is feared and respected throughout the Pacific Northwest for their skill and determination. They have taken the state championship three out of the past six years and this year took third place. But their team spirit goes well beyond the regular season.

“So, two weeks ago, pretty much I had to decide who was going to go to districts, and that’s only 7 people. And those same 7 people went to state,” Binge explained. “So we had to say goodbye to everybody else on the team – like, abruptly.”

**Focus On: Activities**

**Drama Stages Creative Mousetrap Performance Through COVID Challenges**

By Oliver Lewis

In November 1956, Agatha Christie's play *The Mousetrap* opened at The Ambassador's theater in London. The production holds the distinction of the longest initial run of any play in history with over 27,500 performances. It ran continuously until March 2020, when it closed during the COVID-19 lockdown.

In December 2021, the Eastmont High School Drama Club performed *The Mousetrap* as their first play since the pandemic began, with resounding success. The play was directed by Marcus Bingham and starred Emilija Foreman as Mollie Ralston, Michael Blank as Giles Ralston, Gavin Willis-Hundley as Christopher Wren, Juliette Schmudder as Mrs. Boyle, William Olson as Major Metcalf, Hannah Blank as Miss Casewell, Victoria Conner as Paravicini, and Rawan Kappler as Detective Sergeant Trotter.

“Every person is suspicious, every person is a red herring,” Hannah Blank explained about her character. “We had to work really hard to read our body language and carefully articulate it so at one point all of us were under suspicion.”

The entire play was performed while maintaining mask and practicing social distancing, offering a unique challenge to the actors and technical crew. Actors focused on clearly enunciating their words and projecting their voices to overcome the muffling effect from the masks. Meanwhile, the technical crew learned how to set up and configure wireless microphones to project the actors’ voices loudly and clearly.

Blank had a unique perspective since she has worked as a tech in previous productions at the high school. “Trying to work through some of that, plus teaching some of our new techs how to mic with masks, is definitely difficult,” she said. “You have to project more than normal and just trying to be spatially aware on the stage to try and maintain distancing... are definitely some challenges we’ve had all along the way.”

Ken Sinko, technical director for the auditorium at the high school, was very impressed how the students handled the unique requirements of the production. “These kids are amazing. They do things constantly that surprise me, astound me and make me so very proud that I can be part of this program,” he said.

The world has changed a great deal since 1956, but one thing that remains the same is the love of Agatha Christie’s vibrant characters and witty words.

**Winter Athletics Update – Go Cats!**

By Russ Alman

Girls bowling finished third at state, continuing their tradition of success. Five of their 6 trips to state have resulted in a third place or better finish.

Winter sports are finishing up and athletic director, Russ Waterman, has a number of shout-outs for teams and coaches.

The EHS boys wrestling team sent 9 athletes to regionals, two of whom won their weight classes at districts. Three of the boys finished in second at regionals and competed at state. The girls wrestling team sent three athletes to regionals.

The boys swim team members earned a ticket to state. Darcy Bruggman, boys and girls swim team coach, was awarded the Big 9 Boys swim coach of the year. She was also awarded this honor last fall for the girls team, so congratulations again to Coach Bruggman!

Winter competed in the medium non-tumbling category at state in early February and took second place against 7 other schools, earning the first trophy for cheer in Eastmont school history.

Girls basketball finished strong with a close, tough loss to Wenatchee. As of this writing, boys basketball has earned a birth in the state playoffs.

Spring sports begin on February 28, so if your student athlete has not already registered, please do this as soon as possible.

For the latest sports updates, visit Eastmont Wildcats on Facebook and visit the new Eastmont sports website at eastmontathletics.com.
Bus Drivers Needed
Full Time & Substitutes

Have you thought about becoming a bus driver for the Eastmont School District? We offer paid in-house training and will help you move through the steps needed to complete the process to become a certified bus driver.

View all open positions available in Eastmont Schools at eastmont206.tedk12.com/hire/

Benefits – including medical insurance and retirement – are included!

Full-Time and Substitute Drivers
• Pay starts at $21.67 per hour
• In-house training (paid)
• Work directly with kids
• Additional routes and trips available in the future

Substitute Bus Drivers
• On-call work schedule
• Flexible hours
• Potential to become a permanent Eastmont bus driver

Eastmont School District will begin accepting new kindergarten registrations on March 1st at the Eastmont School District Office.

Students must be at least 5 years of age by August 31st to enroll. Registration packets are available in the following locations:

1. At www.eastmont206.org in the “Parents and Community” tab.
2. At Eastmont School District Office, 800 Eastmont Avenue.

Please register early to ensure your child’s spot at one of our schools.

Follow Eastmont Schools on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for breaking news and updates from around the district. Search and find Eastmont profiles using the usernames on each platform.