

August 2015

Dear Egremont Elementary School Parents & Guardians,

"When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts."

~ Dalai Lama



On behalf of the EES Family & Community, it is truly my pleasure to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to you as we begin the 2015-2016 school year at Egremont Elementary School. September is the time of year to reconnect with old friends and welcome new friends. To those families who are new to EES we extend an especially warm welcome and best wishes for an exciting and productive year in your new school. We hope that you will quickly feel at home and become involved in the activities of our school through the PTO and your child's classroom program.

Research shows that parent/guardian involvement in a child's education benefits the child. These benefits are higher levels of academic achievement, positive attitudes, and greater maturity and responsibility. Because the benefits are so solid, I urge you to take part as much as possible in the life of our school. It does take an entire village to raise a child. All parents and guardians are considered members of the PTO. There are literally hundreds of ways to be involved in PTO activities in both big and small ways depending on the amount of time you have. You may want to consider working with the School Council. There are also many opportunities to help in the classroom, with field trips, and by attending some or all of the many school events. We send home important information about events each week in student *Friday Folders*, but periodically notices go home during the week so it is a good idea to check backpacks on a daily basis. Updates are also posted on our website. From time to time we may also make automated or personal phone calls to parents/guardians. It is important we have current phone numbers and email addresses on file.

Our staff is committed to working with students and their families as a team. The rigorous curriculum is directly aligned to the Massachusetts State Standards. To help each child achieve to his/her fullest potential, the school provides both enrichment and intervention supports for students. We will continue to provide instruction in compassion and other social skills. The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) believes that compassion and empathy play a fundamental role in children's positive social development, capacity for cooperation, and inter-personal relationships---and so does the Egremont staff.

In planning for next school year, I have made some changes to teaching assignments. I would like to communicate the rationale for these changes. It is my deep belief that the hallmark of a great school is to continuously work to improve learning for each and every child. As the leader of Egremont School, I see this is as my most important responsibility and I take it very seriously. Therefore, creating strong and effective teacher teams at each grade level each year is a top priority for me as I work to ensure positive and effective teacher collaboration on behalf of children's learning. In considering teaching assignments, my goal is to create grade-level teaching teams whose collective and collaborative efforts will enhance children learning. This work includes analyzing teacher strengths, and reflecting on the many factors that contribute to making effective teams. In doing this, my most important consideration always is what will be best for children's learning. Since we are still in the midst of hiring, I will announce and welcome our new staff in the first *Week Ahead* publication.

I ask that you review the *Family/Student Handbook* which is available on the school's website. Although the entire handbook should be reviewed annually, for your convenience, **all changes or updates are in red**. The handbook is written for both parents/guardians and students and I ask that you discuss it with your child. Hard copies will be coming home the first week of school.

School Breakfast and Lunch will be provided to all students at no charge this year. Breakfast begins at 8:20 a.m. each day. Students joining us for breakfast should enter through the side cafeteria doors.

Important dates for beginning of the year events.

****Watch for additional information in the Friday Folders and on our web site.****

Event	Date	Times	
School Council Meeting	8/31	5:00 p.m.	Library – everyone is welcome!
First Day Grades 1 – 5	9/1		First day of school for students in grades 1 – 5. Please note that the first day of school is a half-day . Students begin their school day at 8:40 a.m. and are dismissed at 11:35 a.m.
Kindergarten Parent/Guardian Orientation	9/1	10:00 a.m.	This is an “adults only” meeting.
Kindergarten Back to School Picnic New Families in ALL Grades Also Welcome!	9/1	5:00 – 6:00 pm	This is a chance to meet new friends, tour the school, and take a bus ride. The teachers are not present at this event.
First Day of School Kindergarten	9/2		Kindergarten families may escort their children to their classrooms. Please join us for “Kookies and Kleenex” in the hallway after you say farewell to your child.
Welcome Back Assembly	9/4	9:15 a.m.	Wear Blue and Gold!
New Student Get Acquainted Meeting	9/4	2:00 p.m.	With Mrs. Rush & Mrs. Heath
New Family Get Acquainted Tea	9/9	9:00 a.m./ 6:00 p.m.	Cafeteria
PTO Meeting	9/9	6:30 p.m.	Cafeteria
Volunteer Training	9/11	9:00 a.m.	Science Room
Back to School Night Grades K - 2	9/16	6:00 p.m.	More info to come!
Back to School Night Grades 3 - 5	9/17	6:00 p.m.	More info to come!

First grade through fifth grade students will begin the first day of school on SEPTEMBER 1st by lining up according to class in the front of the building. Please help your child find his/her classroom teacher. Teachers will hold up signs indicating their name and grade level. At 8:40 the bell will ring and students will move into the building with their teachers. In the event of inclement weather grades 3 – 5 will line-up in the gym and grades 1 and 2 in the cafeteria. Kindergarten students will begin school on SEPTEMBER 2nd. Teachers will meet the students and families in the front of the school. In the case of inclement weather, families and students will be welcomed in the kindergarten hallways.

As always, we encourage our school community to support Egremont’s “Go Green” efforts by using our digital resources. Our school website is: egremont.pittsfield.net. Please make sure that your email addresses are up to date with the school office so that you are receiving our weekly newsletter – *The Week Ahead* and PTO Meeting Minutes.

Please feel free to contact us with your questions or comments. Thank you for your continued commitment to your child's education and unwavering dedication to Egremont Elementary School.

See you in September!

In Partnership,

Your teacher for the 2015 – 2016 school year is _____, room _____.